

FORGING a NEW MORAL and POLITICAL AGENDA

The civic role
of religion
in Los Angeles,
1992–2010



Center for Religion and Civic Culture
University of Southern California

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THE CIVIC ROLE OF RELIGION IN LOS ANGELES, 1992-2010

Richard Flory, Brie Loskota, and Donald E. Miller



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY In the nearly 20 years since the 1992 civil unrest, the Los Angeles faith community has significantly expanded its role in the public sphere. The social response to the Rodney King verdict was a watershed moment that provided an opportunity for congregations and other religious bodies to establish relationships across racial, ethnic, and economic divides. Faith-based organizations also launched efforts to meet short-term needs. Since 1992, significant demographic and political events have altered the landscape of Los Angeles, and of the faith community. While faith groups have always participated to varying degrees in the public sphere, over the past two decades they have become expected partners in dealing with social issues. This has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of faith-based nonprofit organizations and a diversity of approaches to the problems they seek to address.

In the immediate aftermath of the civil unrest, faith groups established programs to address the symptoms and the underlying social issues of a fractured city. Many of these efforts lasted less than three years, but they accomplished the goal of quelling tensions and expanding interfaith and interethnic understanding. Other efforts had the organizational capacity to sustain coalitions and bolster community development activity. Between 1995 and 2010, political developments such as Charitable Choice legislation in 1996, the promotion of faith-based initiatives during the administrations of Presidents Bush and Obama, and the needs of overburdened public agencies, have served to increase the public activities of the faith community. These expanded efforts mirror the pluralism in Los Angeles and its inherent complexities.

Currently, faith groups in Los Angeles exhibit five primary approaches to addressing the public sphere: 1) *Charity* in the form of volunteerism and service provision; 2) *Organizing* efforts intended to nurture community leadership; 3) *Advocacy* that involves speaking out on behalf of marginalized populations or addressing issues of discrimination or injustice; 4) *Community development* to improve economic opportunities and well-being of communities; and 5) *Interfaith dialogue* to foster understanding between different religious traditions. If most of the work by faith groups is directed toward charitable activity, the development of interfaith groups has seen the most growth since 1992. While the level of activity has increased in all five areas, partnership across the religious spectrum remains a key area for growth and opportunity.

The challenges that face the Los Angeles region, including the ongoing economic crisis, immigration, and the specter of a cataclysmic natural or human-made disaster, require responses from all sectors of society, including religious communities. Perhaps the most powerful contribution that the faith community can make is to change the civic discourse of Los Angeles by reframing the region's challenges as issues that demand moral rather than purely political responses. Despite its limitations, the faith community, rightly organized around its highest ideals, can be both an example of a principled commitment to the public sphere and the source of commitment to creating a Los Angeles in which all of its citizens can flourish. The faith community must realize the common denominator of helping the poor and the disenfranchised, and regain its prophetic voice to hold politicians, policymakers, businesses, and the media accountable in order to advance the public good.

PREFACE Perhaps the most important moment in the life of Los Angeles in the past twenty years was the civil unrest that erupted in the wake of the verdicts in the Rodney King assault trial. Both during and after the city went up in smoke, the religious community played an important and unexpected role in bringing the city back together and helping to heal the wounds and bridge the differences that led to the conflagration. In this report, we revisit the efforts of the faith community to bring the city of Los Angeles together and to create better opportunities for individuals, families and communities in the wake of the 1992 civil unrest.



In 1994 we reported our efforts to identify, describe and understand the many religious groups that set out to bridge the cultural, racial, and economic differences that had divided Los Angeles and led to the unrest.¹ Almost twenty years after many of those religious groups first entered the public sphere, this report examines what became of these attempts from within the faith community to heal the social fabric of Los Angeles and to improve opportunities for those in underserved communities. In this we were particularly interested in both the relative successes and failures of these groups, seeking to understand lessons for the faith community in its efforts to engage the civic sphere of Los Angeles.

A second set of questions emerged as we were underway with this project. It became clear to us early on that while 1992 was in many ways a watershed moment in the life of the city of Los Angeles, many changes had taken place over the intervening years that had led to a drastically increased, and diverse, faith presence in the efforts of many different groups to engage the public square. Thus we expanded this project to understand the current efforts of the faith community as it engages important social and political issues in Los Angeles. Our effort in this is not intended to be an exhaustive account of the many congregations and faith-based organizations (FBOs) working in Los Angeles, rather, as a resource to examine the role that the faith community currently plays in the public life of Los Angeles and its potential for helping to make the city and region a better place for all who live here.

INTRODUCTION In the immediate aftermath of the 1992 urban unrest in Los Angeles, there were numerous efforts by faith communities to address the anger unleashed by the Rodney King verdicts. A broad spectrum of religious groups—from individual congregations to quickly formed coalitions—organized clean-up crews and the delivery of food, clothing, and other resources to the affected communities. People from a wide range of faith traditions were mobilized in these efforts and new relationships developed across the city.

In addition to providing emergency assistance, there were many groups who felt that their religious commitments required them to make a sustained effort to heal the divisions that separated people of different races, ethnicities and social classes. These efforts included citywide or regional interfaith organizations, such as the Interfaith Coalition to Heal L.A., intra-religious efforts that brought together leaders and lay organizers from within particular faith communities, and “covenant” relationships between congregations, often with one of the partners from an affluent suburb and the other an urban area more closely affected by the unrest.² For example, Jewish congregations from L.A.’s Westside joined with inner-city congregations, such as First African Methodist Episcopal Church. Similarly, suburban churches, such as All Saints Episcopal in Pasadena, established partnerships with predominantly African American congregations in South Los Angeles.

While it is tempting to critique the long-term impact of these efforts, since many partnerships lasted only a few months or a couple of years, an alternative view is that the civil unrest created the occasion for members of various faith communities to establish relationships across boundaries—social, religious, economic, racial and ethnic—which set the stage for the city’s vibrant interfaith networks. In addition, one can plausibly argue that the civil unrest was a major impetus for renewing the faith community’s engagement in addressing a number of seemingly intractable problems, such as poverty, homelessness, violence, and disparities in educational performance.

Covenant relationships *bring congregations from different economic, ethnic, and religious populations into sister/brother relationships—into partnerships directed toward the nurture of cross-cultural understanding and of mutual assistance.*

The religious and social ecology of Los Angeles



As the population of Los Angeles has grown, so have the many religious congregations and other faith-based nonprofits. Since 1990 the number of religious congregations has grown substantially, and since 1995, the number of faith-based nonprofits has more than doubled.³

In many ways, Los Angeles is a microcosm of the United States as its demographic character becomes increasingly complex. By any number of measures, Los Angeles is the most ethnically and religiously diverse city in the world. Virtually every religion is represented in the Los Angeles region. Many of these religions were transported by immigrants, but Los Angeles has also been a source of religious innovation, giving birth to global Pentecostalism in 1906, as well as religious movements that revive old religious forms and create hybrid expressions of traditional spiritual practice.

Table 1:
Number of Religious Congregations, 1990-2009
All Religions (Congregations)



Source: <http://www.thearda.com/DemographicMap/>
Accessed 12/6/2010

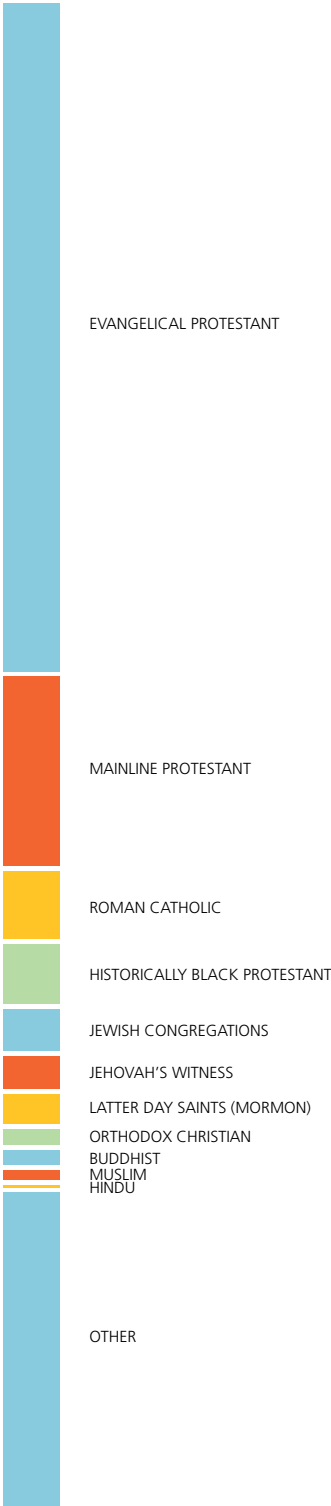
The official count of religious congregations in Los Angeles County numbers nearly 6,000, but this certainly does not include the hundreds, even thousands of “store front” churches, immigrant congregations, and groups that are not listed in the phone book or do not have official IRS registration. The diversity of the city’s religious ecology is apparent on church marquees that sometimes list services in four or five languages. In addition, many churches host multiple congregations under one roof. Still others meet in homes, social halls, schools, warehouses and other unexpected venues.

Table 2:
Number of congregations for major religious groups
in Los Angeles County, 2009

<i>Major Religious Groups (Congregations)</i>	<i>2009</i>
Evangelical Protestant	2,722
Mainline Protestant	773
Roman Catholic	276
Historically Black Protestant	243
Jewish Congregations	171
Jehovah’s Witness	133
Latter Day Saints (Mormon)	121
Orthodox Christian	65
Buddhist	61
Muslim	39
Hindu	11
Other	1,281
Total Number of Congregations	5,896

Source: <http://www.thearda.com/DemographicMap/>
Accessed 12/6/2010

Note: Muslim count is based on the 2009 Islamic Shura Council of Southern California directory. Catholic count from all parishes listed on the Los Angeles Archdiocese website. These sources result in slightly different total counts of congregations between Table 1 and Table 2. These counts are for individual congregations, not adherents or membership within religious groups. For adherent and membership statistics, please see data sets available at www.thearda.com.



Los Angeles is quickly becoming an ethnic non-majority city. Latinos, the fastest growing segment of the population since at least 1990, now represent approximately 47% of the population. Over the same time period, the number of African Americans has declined with many having moved from historic inner-city enclaves to the suburbs, resulting in an increase in commuter congregations in their former neighborhoods. And the decline of the city's white population has created major realignments of religiously based political influence, with many of the mainline denominations struggling to redefine their identity as multi-ethnic communities.

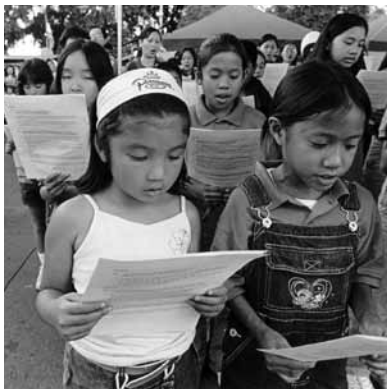


Table 3:
Number of Religious Non-Profits,
LA County, 1995-2010

1995	4,191
1996	4,365
1997	4,703
1998	4,945
1999	5,298
2000	5,447
2001	5,902
2002	6,199
2003	6,931
2004	7,177
2005	7,295
2006	7,473
2007	7,802
2008	8,090
2009	8,388
2010	8,604

Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics (<http://nccs.urban.org/index.cfm>).
Accessed 11/23/2010

Table 4:

Race and Ethnicity in Los Angeles County 1990-2009

	1990	2000	2009
Total Population (count)	8,863,164	9,519,338	9,848,011
<i>Race</i>			
White	57%	49%	50%
African American	11	10	9
Asian	11	12	13
Other Race	21	24	25
<i>Hispanic Origin</i>			
Hispanic origin (of any race)	38%	45%	47%
Not Hispanic or Latino		55	53
White Alone		31	29
Black or African American Alone			7

Source: The U.S. Census Bureau (<http://factfinder.census.gov>) Accessed 12/6/2010; updated 1/17/2011.

Notes on the data: The 2009 data are U.S. Census Bureau estimates. The U.S. Census Bureau considers "two minimum categories for ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. The federal government considers race and Hispanic origin to be two separate and distinct concepts. Hispanics and Latinos may be of any race." http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/epss/race_ethnic.html. The 1990 Census data is not directly comparable to 2000 and 2009.

**Table 5:**

Diversity: English only spoken in home, Los Angeles compared to United States and New York City

	2000	2008
Los Angeles County	46%	44%
City of Los Angeles	42	40
United States	80	80
New York City	52	52

Source: The U.S. Census Bureau (<http://factfinder.census.gov>) Accessed 12/12/2010



Successes, failures, and contributions of civic religion, 1992-1995

Immediately following the civil unrest of 1992, faith groups began to work toward creating a more unified city, with informal partnerships or covenant relationships being a prime expression of the desire to heal the breach in the social contract that binds together people from different social, economic, racial and ethnic groups.

While most of these groups dissolved after a few years, there were other organizations that had larger aspirations. Perhaps most visible, both in 1992 and for years after, were the efforts of Rev. Cecil Murray of First African Methodist Episcopal Church (FAME). Murray had already established close ties between his church and city officials, as well as with other religious and civic groups. During the unrest and in its aftermath, he became a key actor in many additional community development efforts and programs in the city until his retirement in 2004. Another organization—New City Parish, a coalition that began with five Lutheran churches in Los Angeles—grew out of the responses of like-minded pastors whose initial aim was to provide food and clothing to people displaced by the unrest. The coalition grew to nine churches and developed into an organization that is still active today in the civic life of Los Angeles. These examples raise the question of what led to longer-term success, in both organizational and programmatic terms, and ultimately what these and other groups have contributed to the civic life of Los Angeles since 1992. In what follows, we outline several reasons for both the short-term and long-term successes of these efforts.

“Those organizations that really had their purpose in rebuilding L.A., a lot of us disappeared because whatever goals they set were met, at least to their satisfaction.”

Chip Rawlings, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

“When there is a crisis, a lot of good people respond. The sustainability is always questioned because there is so much going on.”

*Rabbi Emeritus Steven Jacobs,
Temple Kol Tikvah*

Short-Term Crisis Response

Most of the efforts coming out of the 1992-era were organized with a short-term goal in mind, such as to clean up the areas affected by the unrest or to create a sense of community among diverse groups of people. Many of these efforts received enthusiastic media attention despite their modest goals. Other efforts, such as “Hands Across L.A.,” organized by the Interfaith Coalition to Heal L.A., were largely symbolic efforts to show that people in a city as large and diverse as Los Angeles were more united than divided.

Because these events and relationships were initiated primarily in response to a crisis and often oriented toward a particular issue, rather than the underlying conditions, they did not lend themselves to long-term efforts to address larger problems facing the city.

Organizational Capacity, Structure and Resources

Owing primarily to the fact that most of these efforts were born out of a crisis, most of these partnerships lacked any real organizational structure to sustain their efforts. Given the limited resources of many congregations, however, faith-based organizations often had no choice but to move on to the next critical issue that they were equipped to address. The few exceptions to this general rule were those organizations that had existing structures of community development and policy advocacy that could be adapted to the new efforts as well as the relationships necessary to make the efforts successful.

The two examples noted above—the programs initiated and sustained by First A.M.E. Church under Rev. Cecil Murray and the development of the New City Parish in response to the 1992 crisis—represent two different ways that organizational structures were effectively utilized. FAME used its existing organizational structure to create FAME Renaissance, a community development organization associated with the church. A key to the success of FAME Renaissance was the hiring of Mark Whitlock, a former banking executive, to become the executive director. FAME was able to capitalize on Whitlock's knowledge of the financial world and create an expanded community development organization. New City Parish used the existing relationships among several Lutheran churches, first to create an organized response to the needs caused by the civil unrest, and then to develop a larger structure through which they could sustain ongoing programs to address the needs of the communities they serve.

Population Change

Among the factors that led to the 1992 civil unrest was the rapid demographic change that took place between the 1980s and the early 1990s in Los Angeles. As the Latino population increased and the African American population decreased in the same communities, many shared the view that the two groups were competing for resources such as jobs and housing, which stoked underlying tensions. This demographic trend has continued since the 1990s, one result being that many of the African American churches in South Los Angeles are now primarily commuter churches, with their members living as far away as Riverside and San Bernardino. A drive up Vermont Avenue, Hoover Street, or Figueroa Street reveals that many churches are only open for weekend services. This has the potential to reduce the commitment to the community where the church is located.⁴



Generational changes have also affected the demographic makeup of traditionally African American communities since 1992. In our interviews, we found that while the events of 1992 loom large in the minds and experience of some, the civil unrest has little to do with the lives of others. The leaders of several faith organizations were either too young to remember the civil unrest or they did not live in Los Angeles or California at the time. Thus, while 1992 remains symbolically important as a sort of touchstone for many L.A. communities, it does not have the same resonance with many of the groups active today as it did for the first several years following 1992.



Demographic change has also taken place in organizations—leaders retire, move to other positions or geographic locations, and members move away or drop off. The effect of the changes on organizations can be variable, but what is clear is that in faith-based groups most of the energy for community engagement usually comes from a motivated individual within the organization, and that knowledge is rarely institutionalized in such a way that it can live on after the individual has left the organization. The result is that each time a key person leaves, the knowledge they have gained over time often leaves with them.

In sum, the urgency of the crisis in 1992 created the key impetus for mobilizing the faith community in Los Angeles to enter the public sphere in a significant way. Even though most of the efforts lasted less than three years, they accomplished the primary tasks that they had set out for themselves, to create a greater sense of interfaith and interethnic understanding in the city. For those few groups with larger goals, the key to their success was the leadership of a key individual and the ability to leverage existing relationships and organizational structures to support their programs.





The social context of faith-based organizations in Los Angeles, 1995-2010



variety of events and political developments since 1995 have served to motivate the faith community to become more active in a public way. Beginning with former President Clinton's Charitable Choice/welfare reform legislation in 1996, and continuing through the faith-based initiatives of former President George W. Bush and current President Barack Obama, the opportunity for faith organizations to undertake civic engagement has been aggressively promoted by public agencies, resulting in a larger range of faith-based organizations engaged in public life.⁵ Public institutions are also increasingly looking to utilize faith-based services, outreach, and leadership because of their unique access to different populations, their presumed effectiveness in a wide range of arenas, and because they may have the organizational ability to deliver specific services to their local community.

Beyond political developments, events like 9/11 and the 2006 immigration reform protest marches in Los Angeles have also served as motivators for the inclusion of an even larger and more diverse set of faith organizations to be involved in the public sphere. In particular, Muslim organizations, from mosques to medical clinics, have become more and more involved in interfaith endeavors, and in working on different social justice campaigns in Los Angeles. Also, immigrant residents have capitalized on using organizing skills learned in their home countries to engage issues here in Los Angeles.



More recently, the recession of 2008-2009 has dominated many of the efforts of the faith-based community. Not only are more people out of work, and in need of affordable housing and food, clothing and short-term shelter, but various faith groups have been working with both public agencies and financial institutions to create a system that rewards entities that establish community-minded business strategies. Other groups have worked with nonprofits and financial institutions to establish mortgage modification programs. Faith-based organizations are playing a key role in advocating for the rights of L.A.'s most vulnerable populations.



These expanded efforts resulted in multiple programs, committees and organizations that mirrors the pluralism represented in the Los Angeles faith community. The primary difference between 2010 and 1992 is that faith groups are, in many ways, *expected* to play a public role in Los Angeles, whereas in the 1990s, there was no such expectation, even though many religious organizations did so on a regular basis and others rose to the challenges presented by the unrest. Today, groups are also expected to fill gaps left by the shrinking ability of public agencies to meet basic needs. Further, in 2010, there are not only many different faith groups—both congregations and FBOs—but there are seemingly almost as many different approaches to addressing pressing issues, each within their own networks and with varying levels and kinds of success in their endeavors. The result is that as opposed to the citywide efforts at unity in 1992, there is now a greatly expanded, though fragmented, imperative for faith-based groups to effect positive social change.





Faith groups in the civic sphere of Los Angeles

Currently, faith groups in Los Angeles exhibit five different, although sometimes overlapping, approaches to meeting the needs they see in the public sphere:

1) *Charity* in the form of volunteerism and service provision in which groups seek to alleviate immediate problems for individuals and families; 2) *Organizing* efforts intended to nurture community leadership and develop public policy initiatives; 3) *Advocacy* that involves speaking out on behalf of marginalized populations or addressing particular issues of discrimination or injustice; 4) *Community development* to improve economic opportunities and well-being of communities; and 5) *Interfaith dialogue* to foster understanding between different religious traditions, often using a variety of the strategies listed above.

Charity

A recent report on volunteerism in American life from the National Conference on Citizenship⁶ showed that over 35 percent of those who perform volunteer service do so through a religious organization. Much of the work of faith-based organizations and congregations is staffed by volunteers who want to put their beliefs into action in a tangible way. Charitable activities include food programs and the provision of clothing and short-term shelter. These projects can be found in individual congregations, as well as denominational structures and large-scale formal organizations.

For individual congregations, charity services operate in addition to their other programs and ministries but may also be related to other civic efforts, such as interfaith alliances or community orga-



"We have, on average, about 100-120 families that we feed each week on Saturdays and they come here to receive bags of groceries and other items."

*Jihad Turk, Director of Religious Affairs,
Islamic Center of Southern California*

nizing. The Islamic Center of Southern California, for example, has focused many of its public efforts around interfaith initiatives and outreach with other community groups, but in the last few years has also opened up a food pantry that partners with the Los Angeles Regional Foodbank to serve needy families in the surrounding community. In addition, the Islamic Center has established an alliance with QueensCare, a Christian faith-based organization, in order to provide basic healthcare screening, such as blood pressure testing and flu shots.

Examples of this sort can be multiplied many times over across the Los Angeles area. Many congregations and FBOs have a fundamental commitment to provide the basic necessities for the neediest members of their communities. In fact, charity is the primary mode of civic engagement for most groups rather than community organizing or development. This is not to suggest that these groups are not interested in effecting positive social change in Los Angeles; rather, the particular way they understand how change happens is expressed through action that aligns with their religious worldview. One example of this would be the Dream Center located in Echo Park. The Dream Center, a large Pentecostal Christian organization, operates over 200 social outreach ministries with a reported budget of \$650,000 per month. These ministries range from food distribution to personal recovery programs for addicts. The Dream Center operates programs from a religious perspective that is intended to provide assistance and to bring about personal transformation. Transforming the individual, when multiplied thousands of times, is the way organizations like the Dream Center envision achieving larger social change.

Food Trucks go out to serve the community five days a week, going to 31 sites in some of the poorest areas of Los Angeles, including many of the inner city projects and high crime areas, to both the young and the elderly. They reach 1,500 people in over 400 families each day they go out. Each month they're able to feed over 32,000 people in over 9,000 families.⁷

Dream Center website description

While the provision of basic services is a vital part of the civic efforts of faith-based organizations, these efforts are by definition stop-gap measures, or as more than one person told us, a “band-aid” on the problems in Los Angeles. Nevertheless, without these efforts, many more people would go hungry or find themselves living on the street. For example, a majority of the groups that work with the Los Angeles County Regional Foodbank network, which is currently providing food assistance to about 10 percent of the population in Los Angeles County, are religion-related organizations. Our calculations show that 71 percent of food pantries, 50 percent of kitchens and 30 percent of shelters are run by faith-based agencies affiliated with churches, mosques, synagogues and other religious organizations.⁸ However, while faith-based organizations that provide this and similar types of charity relief are an essential part of the social safety net in Los Angeles, it is important to keep in mind that these efforts do not seek to solve the underlying causes of homelessness, hunger, lack of housing and other related issues.

**“Shelters are not housing.
They are not a fix; they are
a band-aid and there are not
enough.”**

*Susan Stouffer, Peace with Justice Organizer,
United University Church*



“Every major faith tradition speaks to justice. Every major faith tradition says pretty firmly that there is a God who believes in justice. What we try to do is to translate those collective religious values into the creation of just public policy.”

*Jared Rivera, Former Executive Director,
LA VOICE-PICO*

Faith Communities and Organizing

There are several organizing groups in Los Angeles that involve faith communities, each of which has a general focus on policy issues in areas such as education reform, building healthy and safe neighborhoods, addressing issues of housing and homelessness, health care, immigration, and prisoner reentry. Two of the most well known groups are the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) organization One LA, and the PICO⁹ affiliate, LA Voice. One LA, which was formed in July 2004, is the product of several years of work to combine many related IAF organizations into one regional organization. Its goal is to “publicly recognize and take responsibility for civic life in Los Angeles County.”¹⁰ LA Voice is the result of the 2006 merger of two PICO affiliates. In contrast to One LA, which also includes in its membership groups beyond the faith community such as schools, unions and secular nonprofits, LA Voice is rooted exclusively in religious congregations focused in four parts of Los Angeles: West L.A., Hollywood, East L.A., and South L.A. Its 26 member congregations include Catholic, Protestant, and an increasing number of Jewish and Muslim congregations.

Two other important organizing groups in Los Angeles are Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE), and Regional Congregations and Neighborhood Organizations (RCNO). CLUE was founded in 1996, bringing together religious leaders of different faiths to “support low-wage workers in their struggles for a living wage, health benefits, respect and a voice in the corporate and political decisions that will affect them.”¹¹ CLUE is also an interfaith organization and includes diverse religious representation: mosques, synagogues, and various Christian congregations (African American, Latino Pentecostal, Korean, and others). RCNO was originally established in Philadelphia, but was relocated to Los Angeles in the mid-1990s. Unlike the other organizations noted above, RCNO has a particular niche in the faith-based organizing world, focusing on small to medium size (250-member or less) African American congregations as the site of most of its efforts.

Beyond their differing strategies of community engagement and core constituencies, these groups share a commitment to pursue social justice and to build the social capital and leadership capabilities of the people in the communities they serve, with the goal of producing more active participants in the civic sphere. This in turn increases the capacity of communities that have often been shut out of public discussion and expands the public square to include a broader range of voices and perspectives on important public matters. When we asked about successes in their work, leaders from these organizations pointed to a number of “wins,” like getting a “living wage” law passed and working with Los Angeles City Council members to pass a “responsible banking” ordinance¹² intended to reward banks for community-minded business strategies.

But they also measured success in other ways. For instance, they pointed to the importance of nurturing the kind of deep relationships that would be essential if their organizations were to have success at promoting positive social change over the long term.

Another area that organization leaders highlighted as a measure of success are the many community leaders that these organizations have cultivated. These civic fellow travelers, many from immigrant backgrounds, now understand the role that faith communities can play in addressing policy issues and other community concerns.

“It’s a long, slow, patient work of one-on-one meetings, of training sessions and debating and arguing with people that you really like, but who might not think the same way as you do.”

*Samuel Chu, Chair and Board President,
One LA-LAF*



Advocacy

Many groups from within the faith community pursue advocacy efforts for or against different social and political issues. These efforts, however, are not univocal; individual religious groups often harbor different or even competing perspectives. The debate on Proposition 8 (2008), which restricted the right to marry to heterosexual couples, provides a case in point. Several religious groups, most notably the Latter Day Saints and the Catholic Church (including Cardinal Roger Mahony), were strong proponents of the passage of Proposition 8, while the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles¹³ and the Board of Rabbis of Southern California lobbied against it.¹⁴ Other groups, such as the Muslim Public Affairs Council, declined to take a position on the matter.



Those of us who supported Prop 8 and worked for its passage did so for one reason: We truly believe that Marriage was instituted by God for the specific purpose of carrying out God's plan for the world and human society. Period.

*Cardinal Roger Mahony*¹⁵

The Board of Rabbis of Southern California therefore urges its members and the Jewish community to oppose Proposition 8 which would eliminate the equal rights of gay men and lesbians to civilly marry and deny them equality under the law.

*Resolution from the Board of Rabbis of Southern California*¹⁶

As Episcopal Bishops of California, we are moved to urge voters to vote "No" on Proposition 8. Jesus calls us to love rather than hate, to give rather than to receive, to live into hope rather than fear.

*Statement from the Episcopal Bishops of California*¹⁷

At the same time, religious groups that oppose each other on one issue are often strong partners on other issues. For example in contrast to its stand on Proposition 8 and its attempt to limit rights to one segment of the population, the Catholic Church and Cardinal Roger Mahony have strongly promoted immigration reform, prompting many Catholic parishes to partner with liberal mainline churches to address this issue.

Our highest priority today is to bring calm and reasoning to discussions about our immigrant brothers and sisters.... Let's not allow fearful and ill-informed rhetoric to shape public policy. Let's put a human face on our immigrant friends, and let's listen to their stories and their desires to improve their own lives and the good of the nation.

*Cardinal Roger Mahony*¹⁸

These cases point to the diversity of perspectives in the faith community, and suggest the challenges of maintaining alliances on important issues facing the region.



Community Development

Several faith-based community and economic development organizations were active in Los Angeles before the civil unrest of 1992, while others were established in the mid-1990s. Most famously, First African Methodist Episcopal Church (FAME) launched FAME Renaissance in 1992 with the intention of rebuilding south Los Angeles “economically, socially, mentally and politically.”¹⁹ Over the 13 years that Mark Whitlock was in charge of FAME Renaissance, the organization raised over \$400 million through various public and private partnerships, including federal, state, county and city agencies, as well as from prominent corporations like ARCO, Disney, Warner Brothers, DreamWorks, Wells Fargo Bank, Bank of America, Comerica Bank, CitiCorp and City National Bank. Among the array of initiatives established at FAME Renaissance was a transportation program through which people in the community were able to get to jobs and to health clinics, a welfare to work program, a venture capital fund, and a small business loan program.



Since the retirement of Rev. Murray in 2004, the West Angeles Community Development Corporation (West Angeles CDC) has taken a leading role in Los Angeles faith-based community development. West Angeles CDC has had a number of successes such as building affordable housing, establishing small business development and many different public education programs, particularly around financial literacy and homeownership. West Angeles CDC also demonstrates its leadership by providing symposia and conferences to create learning opportunities for other community development organizations.

Our mission is to increase social and economic justice, demonstrate compassion, and alleviate poverty as tangible things of the kingdom of God, using the vehicle of community development. What we're saying then is that livable wage jobs, decent affordable housing, and an atmosphere of peace are things that demonstrate God's love to his people, and we're to be walking, living, breathing examples of that community.

Dr. Lula Ballton, Chief Executive Officer, West Angeles Community Development Corporation

There are a number of other faith-based community development organizations in Los Angeles, although few have achieved the success of FAME Renaissance in its heyday. Still, these are vital institutions in their communities, providing needed energy for affordable housing and homeownership assistance, education, small business development programs and similar efforts. Three such organizations are Ward Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), an "independent affiliate" of Ward African Methodist Episcopal Church; Korean Churches for Community Development (KCCD); and the Vermont Village Community Development Corporation, which is associated with the Crenshaw Christian Center. While each of these organizations is Los Angeles-based, the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA) is national in scope but has 11 affiliates in the Los Angeles region.

The common thread that holds all of these faith-based community development organizations together is their emphasis on the need to approach community development in a holistic way, addressing not only issues of economic development but also the well-being of the people who live in the communities they serve.

"Everything that we have done, we have done through partnership. And as a result of that we have people of all colors who care about our success because our success is their success. Our failure is their failure."

Hyepin Im, President and CEO, Korean Churches for Community Development

Interfaith Dialogue

If most of the energy of faith-based organizations is directed toward charity work, then the development of interfaith groups is the area that has seen the most growth since 1992. Many of the original efforts to “bring the community back together” after the civic unrest were oriented around dialogue within religious traditions, such as between Catholics and Protestants, as well as between different traditions, such as Christians and Jews. Outreach between ethnic congregations also figured into the mix. Although interfaith efforts in Los Angeles obviously pre-date the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, since 9/11 Muslims have become key participants in every interfaith dialogue group, whereas this was not true in 1992. After 9/11 most interfaith groups understood that they needed to include Muslims to be truly “interfaith.” Still, it is important to note that the primary impetus for this development came from Muslim leaders themselves, who understood the importance of becoming more visibly involved in interfaith efforts and more deeply engaged in the civic life of Los Angeles.



9/11 was the defining moment for the entire country and brought out the best and the worst in people. That no major anti-Muslim event happened spoke volumes about the character and tolerance of the American people. Although there was and is a lot of Islamophobia, there was also an awareness about Islam and Muslims. Muslims moved and made a conscious effort to move into the mainstream and become part of the local polity.

Dafer Dakbil, Director, Omar Ibn Al Khattab Foundation

These interfaith groups tend to be dominated by the more progressive elements of their participant traditions, although they are not exclusively the domain of progressives. Nor should the term “progressive” suggest that participants are somehow less committed to the particularity of their faith expressions, rather, that people participate in interfaith groups because of their strong religious convictions and experiences.

This also does not mean that interfaith groups are the exclusive domain of people who agree on everything. On the contrary, the groups tend to succeed because of the relationships forged during disagreements.

Sometimes we disagree. When you talk about Proposition 8, that was a campaign that was very heavily supported by the Roman Catholics and the Mormons. Well, I have relationships with the Roman Catholics and the Mormons, so it's a balancing act. We walk a fine line here of being true to our principles, being prophets, and at the same time being decent ordinary human beings who respect other people.

Rev. Albert Cohen, Executive Director, Southern California Ecumenical Council

The respect accorded to others illustrates the importance of interfaith groups and their work. The first and most obvious benefit of interfaith efforts is to expose people of different faith traditions to each other in order to expand mutual understanding. For example, the Christian-Muslim Consultative Group (CMCG) has developed an educational curriculum to help people understand traditions other than their own. The CMCG was founded in 2006, when a meeting of Christian and Muslim leaders in Los Angeles and Orange County was convened by Rev. Dr. Gwynne Guibord, then ecumenical officer of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, and Jihad Turk, religious director of the Islamic Center of Southern California. The group discussed the need for an ongoing leadership conclave that could address issues of common concern to Christians and Muslims in the post-9/11 context. The educational curriculum that

“No one is asking you to change [your beliefs]. You can be a part of this because they want you to be authentic.”

*Michael Mata, Urban Development Director,
World Vision USA*

CMCG has developed is the “Standing Together” study program that can be used in different settings, such as churches and mosques, to “bridge the gap between Christians and Muslims.”²⁰

There are many other interfaith groups operating in Los Angeles, each committed not only to exposing members and their congregants to other religious perspectives, but to genuine dialogue and understanding of other faiths. Some of these groups, such as the Interreligious Council of Southern California and the South Coast Interfaith Council, have been in existence for many years. Others, such as the Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace (ICUJP), and New Ground: A Muslim-Jewish Partnership for Change, were established in response to recent events beyond Los Angeles, but have resonance in the local multi-faith religious community.



Summary Conclusions

The net result of the many programs and faith organizations operating across these five general areas (Charity, Organizing, Advocacy, Community Development, and Interfaith Dialogue) is that there is now a “new normalcy” attached to the inclusion of faith groups in an array of civic efforts across the city and county. Still, networks across the spectrum of the faith community, regardless of which area of activity they emphasize, are, for the most part, closed organizational systems that rarely interact with other networks. Instead, they tend to focus their efforts on particular issues—neighborhood economic development, easing tension between different constituencies, and narrowly defined policy initiatives—that limit the scope of their work. This has led to the paradox of a significant amount of activity on the part of different faith groups, but few opportunities for existing networks to grow or to partner with other networks, in order to create synergy across the religious spectrum and across all of Los Angeles.





Future Challenges

The challenges facing the Los Angeles region in the coming years are immense, and we are just beginning to understand them. For example, the economy is slowly recovering from the recession of 2008-2009, and although some economists have declared that the recession is over, others have argued that full recovery will take a decade to attain, if indeed full recovery is possible. The effects of the recession and the slow recovery extend beyond economic issues and impact the everyday lives and futures of individuals, families and communities.

Economist Daniel Flaming, writing in the recently released “Annual State of the City Report,”²¹ has shown that job losses in the current recession are much more severe in Los Angeles than in other parts of the United States. Flaming argues that with the loss of employment and income, families are “more likely to sink into poverty, require public assistance, lose their homes, experience family dysfunctions, and have increased susceptibility to health problems.”²² However, this is not simply an issue of losing employment. There is also the reality that younger people just coming onto the job market, either from college or high school, may face years of unemployment or under-employment, potentially creating a generational cohort that may never know full-time employment in their lifetime. At the same time, as demographer Dowell Myers has argued, Los Angeles has an increasingly aging population that is moving inexorably toward retirement. Myers shows that the ratio of older Los Angeles residents to working age residents will more than double between 2000 and 2030, resulting in a flood of retirees who will threaten to overwhelm public resources with the needs of aged dependents.²³



These developments, brought into sharper relief as a result of the recession and the significant loss of jobs, are symptoms of the increasing inequality of American society. While the immediate needs of food, shelter and clothing are necessary and important concerns, there are also larger social effects that correlate with inequality and present significant challenges to the fabric of life not only in Los Angeles, but in American society generally. For example, recent research suggests that the extreme levels of inequality we are seeing now in the U.S. can undermine social trust and community life, effectively corroding society from the inside out.²⁴ Social unrest and riots are a predictable consequence of failed expectations and dramatic levels of social inequality.



A second challenge facing Los Angeles is immigration. One-third of Los Angeles residents are immigrants, with almost one-half of the workforce foreign born, and two-thirds of those under the age of 18 are the children of immigrants.²⁵ The future of Los Angeles is in large part dependent upon how well these immigrants and their families are successfully integrated into its social, civic and economic fabric. Not only do immigrants and their families represent the future economically—who else will shoulder the burden of paying for the aging baby-boomers?—but they are important more generally in terms of the social and political health of the city. Unfortunately, many barriers block the advancement of immigrants, especially in the area of quality public education, which is the key to better economic opportunities and fuller social participation and civic engagement. Education is the key not only to economic success, but has effects beyond purely financial considerations. For example, college graduates have a much lower unemployment rate than non-college graduates. Also, they are more likely to make it to the middle class, and have more stable marriages and family lives. Hence, improving access to quality public education and encouraging completion of high school and college are not only crucial components to the inclusion and advancement of immigrants into the social fabric of Los Angeles, but to the future of the region.²⁶

A third, perhaps more frightening problem that seismologists describe as inevitable, is the occurrence of a sizable earthquake that will destroy important components of the Los Angeles infrastructure, including roads and buildings, and disrupt daily life for millions of people. In the worst case scenario, portions of the region will be cut off from outside assistance, including communication, medical resources, food and water. Those with a memory of Los Angeles that stretches back to the early 1990s and the Northridge earthquake, or even earlier to the 1970s and the Sylmar earthquake, can remember the collapse of portions of Interstate 10 and Interstate 5. With "the big one," those results may be multiplied many times, and we must ask which institutions in the region will be able to care for the immediate needs that result and assist in recovery over the longer term.





The role of the faith community



While the faith community is not equipped to solve the current economic crisis, to bring about immigration reform solely on its own, or to address all the problems associated with a large natural disaster, it does have a legitimate role to play in both the civic discourse and practical plans of action intended to address the challenges that are facing Los Angeles. For example, the large number of Baby Boomer retirements in the next decade, as well as the numbers of currently unemployed and under-employed, represent an opportunity for the faith community to tap into a large pool of talent that could be used in creative and important ways to meet the challenges confronting Los Angeles. In this, the faith community could take a leading role in organizing retirees, the unemployed and under-employed into an army of volunteers to help provide needed services that the government will find increasingly difficult to offer, from staffing libraries and parks, to tutoring and mentoring young people.

Looking toward the next decade, there are three basic responses that the faith community might make to address the challenges listed previously. The first possibility is that faith-based coalitions remain vital but largely uncoordinated and fragmented. The second possibility is that faith communities retrench and pull back from public engagement and look primarily to the care of their own members. The third possibility is that the faith community could seize on the immense challenges facing Los Angeles and forge creative, coordinated ways to partner together in social policy advocacy, charitable work, and community and civic engagement. Rather than waiting for the next occasion of civil unrest, the faith



community could address the fundamental issues that lead to riots and unnecessary bloodshed and destruction of property.

This third option holds the most potential for dynamic and inventive approaches to the problems facing Los Angeles in the coming decade. Beyond any practical approaches to addressing challenges, such as mobilizing retired Baby Boomers and large numbers of unemployed people, perhaps the most powerful contribution that the faith community can make is to the civic discourse of Los Angeles by reframing the challenges that face the region as issues that demand a moral response, rather than simply as political or economic problems. The faith community has the opportunity to provide a moral frame for seeking solutions to important issues confronting our city rather than simply striving for pragmatic short-term solutions. The reason the great religions have persevered is that their sacred texts and traditions are strewn with examples of moral failure. But it is in the midst of despair that the prophets find their voice. And this is such a time.



Despite its limitations, the faith community, rightly organized around its highest ideals, can be both an example of a principled commitment to the public sphere and the source of a commitment to creating a Los Angeles in which all of its citizens can flourish. Moral imagination seems to be in short supply these days. Mayors, governors, and members of congress simply have their red pens in hand, axing programs, cutting budgets, and thinking about survival rather than imagining what this country could and should be. We are in a moral recession, driven by an economic recession, in which people have lost their vision for what is humanely possible. As a result, issues are being framed in extremely limited and defensive ways, and creative thinking about solutions has diminished.

Rising above the current tide of pessimism will not be easy. Many of the leaders we interviewed commented on the difficulty of putting together a coherent approach to addressing important social issues in Los Angeles. Both the geographical and political fragmentation of Los Angeles, and the diversity of the city's many active faith organizations, offers little hope that the religious community can be unified in its response to current and future challenges. Yet a diversity of opinion about solutions, based on legitimate differ-

ences, is the essence of a vital democracy. The role of the faith community then is not necessarily to speak with a unified voice—this only happens when there is state-supported religion—but to be a moral conscience for the different interest groups and policy makers in the city and region.

One practical way to address this fragmentation and diversity of perspectives is to develop a series of “mini-summits” including faith and community leaders, representatives of the business community, and leaders from different public agencies, organized both regionally and thematically around the issues that face Los Angeles. This would result in at least two important developments for the faith community. First this would be an important first step toward developing new relationships and mutual learning within the faith community and between the faith community and important community stakeholders and policy makers. Second, these summits would provide occasions for high-level moral debate between different religiously motivated actors, and between leaders of the faith community, public officials and other community leaders. The summits would be the opportunity for public officials, business leaders, and others who generally have to deal with short-term solutions to acute problems, and the faith community, whose responsibility is to hold up larger issues such as equality and justice, to have important discussions about how to meet the challenges we face. While the social services that faith groups provide are important, and in many ways indispensable, they should augment, rather than come at the expense of theologically and philosophically grounded debate about what constitutes a good society where all can flourish.

However else the faith community responds to the challenges facing the Los Angeles region, it must recover what seems to have been lost—its prophetic voice. Many leaders we interviewed noted that the role of religion in the public square has largely been reduced to addressing issues related to individual rights and personal morality. Similarly, the increasingly popular “prosperity gospel” has limited the scope of religious faith to individuals seeking blessings from God, usually with material rewards like cars, clothing and houses. This is perhaps understandable for people struggling to be a part of the American dream, but it is at root a withdrawal from



the public square that serves to enrich religious leaders and their institutions, and impoverish their followers and communities.

Without minimizing the importance of individual rights and the inherent discrimination in initiatives like Proposition 8, or the appeal of the prosperity gospel to those who feel left out of the American dream, the faith community must recapture its collective prophetic voice as it addresses social issues that go beyond debates over individual morality. Given the challenges outlined above, it must demonstrate a more forceful commitment to reduce the extreme inequality in American society, and to remove the roadblocks to upward mobility for immigrants and others. Members of the faith community can speak most powerfully from within their own traditions, but also from common ground across different traditions. At the same time, it is important to remember that religion is an incredibly volatile and powerful medium, and while it has great potential to advocate for good, it also has the potential, and history, of being a force for evil in the world. Thus voices of reason and compassion from within all religious traditions need to prevail in the conversation about the public good.



Ideally, the common denominator linking all of the diverse religious groups in Los Angeles is their commitment to help the poor, disenfranchised and downtrodden. "Speaking truth to power" is a legitimate and time-honored tradition reaching back to the Hebrew prophets, and echoed in Christianity and Islam, who sought to keep rulers and the privileged accountable to the people they served. This is a necessary counterweight to the general call for the individualized spirituality that currently dominates discourse about the role of religion in the public sphere. As such, the faith community in Los Angeles must regain its public voice, with the intention to keep politicians, policymakers, the business community and media accountable to the public and the public good.



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Publication Coordinator

Tim Sato

Photography

Jerry Berndt and Donald E. Miller

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APPENDIX: METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

We began our research efforts for this project with a list of organizations and individuals who were actively a part of the many efforts in the post-1992 era. This list included the famous, whether politicians, actors, or other public figures, and the unknown—to the public anyway—people who had different visions for improving both their local communities and the city of Los Angeles. As we interviewed people from this list, we asked questions related to their experiences in 1992, and also utilized a “snowball” sampling frame to ask what organizations and individuals within the faith community that they were currently aware of, that were working in different ways to serve the people of Los Angeles. We also utilized organization websites, library sources, media reports and other similar sources, and were able to visit a few events by different organizations, in order to round out our understanding of the many different ways that the faith community is engaging the civic sphere. In the end, we interviewed sixty individuals that are representative of the different efforts from the 1992 era and of current organizations and their efforts.

In addition to this report, we have produced a map of all the faith groups that we are aware of as well as a list that provides location, contact information, and a brief statement of the goals and activities of each group, as described by the groups themselves. These can be found at <http://crcc.usc.edu/religion-in-LA>. The list is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all faith groups active in the city, but are representative of the many different types of groups that are pursuing civic engagement as a fulfillment of their religious commitments. We hope that these resources can be used by both faith groups and public officials as they all work to improve the lives and communities of Los Angelenos.

NOTES

¹ "Politics of the Spirit: Religion and Multiethnicity in Los Angeles," Center for Religion and Civic Culture, University of Southern California, 1994.

² "Politics of the Spirit."

³ This count of nonprofits includes all IRS registered "religion related" nonprofit organizations in Los Angeles County. IRS data files are available for analysis at the Urban Institute's National Center for Charitable Statistics (<http://nccs.urban.org/index.cfm>).

⁴ On this theme, see Omar McRoberts, *Streets of Glory: Church and Community in a Black Urban Neighborhood*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

⁵ For different analyses of the faith-based initiative efforts, see for example, Lew Daly, *God's Economy: Faith-Based Initiatives and the Caring State*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009; John J. Dilulio, *Godly Republic: A Centrist Blueprint for America's Faith-Based Future*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007; Rebecca Sager, *Faith, Politics, and Power: The Politics of Faith-Based Initiatives*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

⁶ "Civic Life in America: Key Findings on the Civic Health of the Nation," The National Conference on Citizenship, Corporation for National and Community Service, September 2010. Available at <http://www.ncoc.net>.

⁷ <http://www.dreamcenter.org/outreach/FoodTruck/index.html>. Accessed 11/15/2010

⁸ See <http://www.lafoodbank.org/> for reports on hunger in Los Angeles. The numbers of faith-based groups participating with the LA Regional Foodbank were calculated using the different lists of its partner agencies available [lafoodbank.org](http://www.lafoodbank.org).

⁹ Originally Pacific Institute for Community Organizations. See <http://www.piconet-work.org/>

¹⁰ <http://onela-iaf.org/aboutus/index.php>. Accessed 11/15/2010

¹¹ http://cluella.org/?page_id=2. Accessed 11/15/2010

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¹³ <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/sep/11/local/me-gaymarriage11>; accessed 12/20/2010. For the text of the statement from the Bishops see, http://diocal.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=303&Itemid=215; accessed 12/20/2010.

¹⁴ <http://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=proposition+8,+board+of+rabbis+southern+california&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>; Accessed 12/20/2010. For the official resolution see, <http://www.boardofrabbis.org/images/Resolution-No-on-Prop-8.pdf>; Accessed 12/20/2010.

¹⁵ http://cardinalrogermahonyblogs.blogspot.com/2010_08_01_archive.html; retrieved 12/13/10.

¹⁶ <http://www.boardofrabbis.org/images/Resolution-No-on-Prop-8.pdf>; Accessed 12/20/2010.

¹⁷ As Episcopal Bishops of California, we are moved to urge voters to vote “No” on Proposition 8. Jesus calls us to love rather than hate, to give rather than to receive, to live into hope rather than fear (Statement from the Episcopal Bishops of California).

¹⁸ <http://cardinalrogermahonyblogspota.blogspot.com/2010/04/arizonas-new-anti-immigrant-law.html>; retrieved 12/13/10.

¹⁹ <http://www.famerenaissance.org/about.htm> Accessed 11/27/2010.

²⁰ http://thecmcg.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=56&Itemid=56. Accessed 11/27/2010

²¹ “Los Angeles 2010: Annual State of the City Report,” Pat Brown Institute, California State University, Los Angeles.

²² Daniel Flaming, “State of the Los Angeles Economy,” p. 1, *Los Angeles 2010: Annual State of the City Report*, Pat Brown Institute, California State University, Los Angeles.

²³ Dowell Myers, Janna Goldberg, Sarah Mawhorter, Seong Hee Min, “Immigrants and the New Maturity of Los Angeles,” p. 5-8 in *Los Angeles 2010: Annual State of the City Report*, Pat Brown Institute, California State University, Los Angeles.

²⁴ See Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*, New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010.

²⁵ Manuel Pastor and Rhonda Ortiz, “Immigrant Integration in Los Angeles: Strategic Directions for Funders,” Program for Environmental and Regional Equity, and Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration, University of Southern California, January 2009.

²⁶ See Ron Haskins and Isabel V. Sawhill, *Creating an Opportunity Society*, Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2009.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Richard Flory

Richard Flory is director of research in the USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture and Associate Research Professor of Sociology at the University of Southern California. His Ph.D. is in sociology from the University of Chicago, and his primary research and teaching interests are in the areas of religion, culture, and urban life. He is the author of *Growing up in America: The Power of Race in the Lives of Teens* (Stanford University Press, 2010), *Finding Faith: The Spiritual Quest of the Post-Boomer Generation* (Rutgers University Press, 2008), and *GenX Religion* (Routledge 2000). His research has been supported by grants from the University of Southern California, the Louisville Institute, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Lilly Endowment, the Haynes Foundation, and the John Templeton Foundation.

Brie Loskota

Brie Loskota is the managing director of the USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture. In this capacity, she oversees the strategic planning and daily operations of an interdisciplinary research center that conducts 25 research and community-based projects each year. She has contributed to raising and managing CRCC's annual budget of \$5 million. Additionally, she serves as program officer of the USC Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Initiative, sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation, a \$3.5 million global program to transform the study of one of the world's fastest growing religious movements. Ms. Loskota is a frequent speaker and writer on topics such as interfaith dialogue, faith-based human services, and religious identity among Millennials. She is a regular contributor to Trans/missions, the USC Knight Chair blog on media and religion. She also lectures on religion and society, and religion in Los Angeles. Ms. Loskota serves on a dozen boards and advisory committees focusing on understanding and enhancing the role of religion and religious communities in the public square. She received her M.A. degree from Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles, studied Hebrew at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and completed her B.A. in history and religion from the University of Southern California.

Donald E. Miller

Donald E. Miller is Firestone Professor of Religion at the University of Southern California and executive director of the Center for Religion and Civic Culture. He received the Ph.D. degree in Religion (Social Ethics) from USC in 1975. He is the author, co-author or editor of nine books, including *Finding Faith: The Spiritual Quest of the Post-Boomer Generation*, with Richard Flory, (Rutgers University Press, 2008), *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, with Ted Yamamori (University of California Press 2007), *Armenia: Portraits of Survival and Hope* (University of California Press, 2003), *GenX Religion* (Routledge, 2000), *Reinventing American Protestantism* (University of California Press, 1997), *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide* (University of California Press, 1993), *Homeless Families: The Struggle for Dignity* (University of Illinois Press, 1993), *Writing and Research in Religious Studies* (Prentice Hall, 1992), and *The Case for Liberal Christianity* (Harper & Row, 1981).

He is a sociologist of religion with interest in global religious trends, new patterns of religious practice, and innovative organizational responses to cultural change. In addition, he has done extensive research on genocide, including oral history projects on the Armenian genocide that occurred in 1915 and the Rwandan genocide in 1994. He has received major grants from the John Templeton Foundation, Pew Charitable Trusts, the Lilly Endowment, Inc., The James Irvine Foundation, the John Randolph and Dora Haynes Foundation, the California Endowment, California Council for the Humanities, the Tides Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and Fieldstead & Company.

RESEARCH TEAM

- Project Manager**

Hebah Farrag
- Research Assistants**

Grace Bae Bahng
Surajit Chakravarty
Amna Imam
Veronica Navarette

About the Center for Religion and Civic Culture

The Center for Religion and Civic Culture at USC was founded in 1996 to create, translate, and disseminate scholarship on the civic role of religion in a globalizing world. CRCC engages scholars and builds communities in Los Angeles and around the globe. Its innovative partnerships link academics and the faith community to empower emerging leaders through programs like the Passing the Mantle Clergy and Lay Leadership Institute, for African American church leaders, and the American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute. Since its inception, the Center has managed over \$25 million in grant-funded research from corporations, foundations, and government agencies. In 2002, CRCC was recognized as a Pew Center of Excellence, one of ten university-based research centers. Currently, the Center houses more than 20 research initiatives on topics such as Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity, the transmission of religious values across generations, faith-based non-governmental organizations, and the connection between spirituality and social transformation. CRCC is also involved in the creation of scholarly resources, including the Internet Mission Photography Archive, the largest online repository of missionary photographs that document social change in non-Western cultures. The Center for Religion and Civic Culture is a research unit of the USC College of Letters, Arts & Sciences.

Center for Religion and Civic Culture
USC College of Letters, Arts and Sciences
825 Bloom Walk, Suite 439
Los Angeles, California 90089-1483

(213) 740-8562
fax (213) 740-5810
e-mail: crcc@usc.edu
www.usc.edu/crcc

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