

Faith Works:

Religious Communities
Building Neighborhoods

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary	5
Introduction	7
I. Shifting Neighborhoods:	25
Why a Faith Initiative?	
II. Inspiration in Action:	35
Why Care for the Neighborhood?	
III. Process:	39
How Faith Initiatives Build Neighborhoods	
<i>Case Studies</i>	
Networking	43
Technical Assistance	53
Mentoring	62
Racial Understanding	75
Developing Youth Leadership	87
Conclusion	93

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Faith Works: Religious Communities Building Neighborhoods tells the story of two unique partnerships between congregations and community foundations. The FAITHS Initiative of the San Francisco Bay Area, supported by the San Francisco Foundation, and the Faith Initiative of South Santa Barbara, supported by the Santa Barbara Foundation, are solving problems and changing the ways that people think about the religious community. The Center for Religion and Civic Culture believes that these initiatives are important models for philanthropic and religious leaders to consider as they work to improve neighborhoods. “At its most creative,” says Craig McGarvey, Program Director in Civic Culture at The James Irvine Foundation, “the combination of philanthropy and religion is an extraordinarily powerful force for positive change in California’s communities.” We wholeheartedly agree with this assessment.

Religious congregations can be unique contributors to community building efforts. Temples, synagogues, mosques, and churches are often the first places that people turn to for social services and, thus, they have a natural connection to the needs of the community. Moreover, congregational leaders often have the pragmatism to implement their visions for the community. They maintain connections with key stakeholders and decision-makers and work to influence public policy. They also build social capital by crossing faith, class, and racial divides.

When the strengths of congregations are supported and enhanced by local community foundations, tremendous change occurs. In 1994, a grant of \$34,250 from the San Francisco Foundation and an additional \$20,000 in seed money, began the FAITHS Initiative. Since 1994, this relatively modest sum has leveraged \$3.8 million in grants from 22 foundations. Over 350 congregations and nonprofit organizations now participate in the federa-

tion and address issues from affordable housing to youth leadership development. Two years ago, the Santa Barbara Foundation (with support from The James Irvine Foundation) started to fund its own coalition, the Faith Initiative. Today, nearly 50 congregations and nonprofits are involved and, although they were community stakeholders before, their level of participation in community issues has drastically increased.

Through its research, the Center for Religion and Civic Culture has identified four major areas of success in the FAITHS Initiative and the Faith Initiative of Santa Barbara County. First, the initiatives connect people, forming new relationships and networks for collective action. Second, the initiatives build the capacity of religious institutions by providing technical assistance, mentoring, professional development, and aiding racial understanding. Third, they provide small grants and/or training and connections to leverage additional funds. Finally, the FAITHS Initiative has implemented a successful youth empowerment program in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The investment of community foundations, with support from The James Irvine Foundation, has fostered vital partnerships between the faith community and philanthropic organizations. These partnerships have created environments where congregations and faith leaders have a voice in their communities and the skills to effect change. We applaud their efforts and hope that other foundations and faith community members will emulate their innovative model.

INTRODUCTION

The citizens gathered in the gymnasium of St. Joseph's Parish in Fremont were concerned about changes taking place in their community. As religious leaders from more than 30 congregations, they had witnessed the effects of rising housing costs as many of their members were forced to move out of their neighborhoods. They believed that the economic policies of their local governing institutions were not adequately addressing the needs of the constituency and they had assembled to develop strategies for more equitable housing policies.

Further south, in Santa Barbara County, a similar meeting was taking place at the Goleta Presbyterian Church. Here, too, unprecedented growth was forcing housing costs to rise far above the level that many people could pay. The interfaith group of clergy and laity was pushing for government changes in affordable housing policy.

Both of these meetings are part of a larger story that is being written by women and men of faith in houses of worship, community centers, foundation offices, and city council chambers in the San Francisco Bay Area and in Santa Barbara County. The Foundation Alliance with Interfaith to Heal Society Initiative of the San Francisco Bay Area (FAITHS) is a network of approximately 350 congregations and nonprofit organizations that was formed in 1994. The Faith Initiative of South Santa Barbara County is younger and has around 50 groups in its alliance. Both of these efforts were born out of local community foundations that recognized the importance of working with congregations to provide opportunities for growth and social change for people and communities.

The two initiatives have worked diligently to maintain ties with both the foundations and the community to ensure their success. The FAITHS Initiative maintains a direct connection with its funding agency because its

director and staff are employed by the San Francisco Foundation. Staff, in turn, have established a leadership team of religious leaders that helps to shape the initiative. The executive director of the Faith Initiative in Santa Barbara was hired by the Santa Barbara Foundation, but, he operates independently of the foundation. He has organized a group of leaders that has become the steering committee for the initiative.

In 1999, The James Irvine Foundation approached the Center for Religion and Civic Culture with a request to study the two faith-based initiatives that they were funding through local community foundations. The Irvine Foundation has invested considerable resources in community organizing and other faith-based activities. “Irvine has sought partnerships with the civic work of organized religion for several reasons,” says Craig McGarvey, Program Director in Civic Culture at The James Irvine Foundation. “We’ve gone to congregations because that is where the people are collaborating voluntarily to make things better in their neighborhoods. It is also where the poor people are; the church is the one institution that remains in every low-income community. Too, it is where the newcomers are, for religion is the port of entry for immigrants to America.” Moreover, adds McGarvey, congregations often provide both physical space for meetings and the inspiration for inclusive dialogue. “The local school is often not open on the weekends, but the church or mosque or temple or synagogue is,” he says, “And it is where the values base lies: respect for human dignity despite difference, desire to reach out and include.”

The notion that congregations collaborate, include disparate constituencies, foster volunteerism, and represent open community space runs counter to some traditional perceptions among philanthropic organizations. Crudely stated, many believe that religion is about right-wing anti-abortion activists who are not interested in collaborating with others for the good of the community. Others think that religion is about saving souls and is not very interested in the environment in which that soul is living. Another common view casts religion as an arm of the government providing social services for low-income people, such as feeding the hungry and caring for the homeless.

While these perceptions are not entirely erroneous, there are changes occurring in the faith community that public perception has not

yet discerned. Faith-based community organizing is promoting significant change in neighborhoods across the county. Even secular community organizing groups have acknowledged the efficacy of congregations to impact the political process. Community organizers are empowering people to take ownership of their own communities and their destinies. Community organizations with nonprofit status have hired trained organizers to work within congregations.

These community organizations, while linked to religious congregations, remain independent of particular congregations or denominations.¹ Often, they use the model of organizing in particular cities or metropolitan areas consisting of interfaith teams from a number of religious congregations. Sometimes these coalitions are joined with schools, neighborhood associations, and labor unions. First, they conduct research on a given issue and then they negotiate with the key players that wield political and economic power. The organizations then make their voices heard by mobilizing thousands of people to participate in political actions where decision-makers are asked to commit to specific policies outlined by the group. In this manner, the organizations have helped to reshape government policy on housing, economic development, public schools, policing, working-class wages, and other issues.²

The FAITHS Initiative and the Faith Initiative of Santa Barbara have similarities with traditional community organizing efforts, but they also differ in significant ways. Both initiatives do not place trained organizers within congregations. Instead, they come alongside congregations to discover what is needed and then assist by providing the contacts, training, and sometimes resources, that are needed to help congregations fulfill their missions. Like community organizers, they bring together groups of congregations around issues of common concern.

The supporting community foundations act on the premise that the local leaders know the community and understand its needs, but they require some assistance to meet those needs. To that end, the foundations often provide funding or provide linkages to other foundations. This issue is one of the most important ways in which the initiatives differ from other

¹ Richard Wood. *Faith In Action: Religion, Race, and Democratic Organizing in America*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 2002 (forthcoming).

² Richard Wood. p. iv.

faith-based community organizing. Funding for all types of community organizing is rarely adequate so the models presented here are examples of the ways in which community foundations can empower and support such efforts.

This union of foundation resources and community wisdom wins praise from community members and funders alike. “The San Francisco Foundation and The Santa Barbara Foundation have made excellent partners for Irvine,” says Craig McGarvey. “We have learned that, at its most creative, the combination of philanthropy and religion is an extraordinarily powerful force for positive change in California’s communities.”

By supporting these models of faith-based initiatives, the San Francisco Foundation and the Santa Barbara Foundation are unique among their peers in California. Research conducted by the Center for Religion and Civic Culture found that although the majority of the community foundations in California make some faith-based grants, the percentage of their total grant-making in this area is very limited. In 2000, of the 34 community foundations we surveyed in the state, only six foundations gave over 15% of their giving to faith-based organizations. Only three made 20% to 35% of their grants to faith-based organizations and seven gave less than 10%. Seven community foundations did not make faith-based grants.

We believe that community foundations, like the San Francisco Foundation and the Santa Barbara Foundation, are well positioned to support initiatives in the faith community. They represent neutral spaces where people of all faiths can come together. They provide key funding links that are vital for any type of community work. Even strategically placed small grants have made huge differences in what congregations can accomplish. The foundations demystify the funding game. They can empower leaders by establishing connections with other foundations and secular organizations that can collaborate with them in community change efforts. Moreover, community foundations, if they acknowledge and understand the leadership that congregations provide, will have additional insight into making successful investments in neighborhoods.

Through its research, the Center for Religion and Civic Culture has found four primary ways that demonstrate why it is important for community foundations to work with the religious community.

1. Religious institutions can connect community foundations to a larger base of organizations that provide social services in the community. There is no doubt that religious institutions have long been at work in our cities, caring for the disenfranchised, feeding the homeless, providing shelter and meeting other needs. Scholars have observed that religion brings order out of chaos and provides structure and meaning for people. Thus, it is no wonder that congregations are often the first places that people turn to when they are in need. Churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples often respond to needs in the community as soon as they arise. Congregations are connected to the people in ways that few other institutions are and they stay in communities, even when others leave.

2. Leaders of congregations are often sophisticated visionaries within their communities. They are connected to a broad spectrum of community-based organizations and have the ability to organize to change structures and policies that keep marginalizing those communities. Providing social services is not enough for these religious leaders. Inevitably, this has led them to advocate for social justice since, in their perspective, unjust structures and policies must be changed.

3. Religious institutions can be powerful forces for change, especially when crossing faith, class, race and other divides. Some scholars have observed the erosion of American society’s store of “social capital”—the quantity and quality of ties between individuals through both personal networks and voluntary associations. Faith-based community organizing, however, is a means of building social capital and countering this erosion. More importantly, faith-based initiatives foster trust and cohesion between people and groups on opposite sides of social divides. These initiatives draw people from different faith traditions, ethnic groups, and economic classes into shared efforts for change.⁴

⁴ Robert Putnam, in his book *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), talks about two types of social capital. “Bonding” social capital links people within communities together, fostering social trust and cohesion among people within a neighborhood, town, religious congregation, racial or ethnic group. “Bridging” social capital links people across these kinds of communities, fostering social trust and cohesion between people and groups on opposite sides of social divides. Richard Wood summarizes this well in *Religion, Faith-Based Community Organizing, and the Struggle for Justice*, Cambridge Handbook of the Sociology of Religion. (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

4. Congregations often have members who are connected to public and private stakeholders that can affect policy. Members are also volunteer resources for communicating policy issues at the neighborhood level and can support city initiatives that will benefit the community.

The stories of the Faith Initiative of Santa Barbara and the FAITHS Initiative of San Francisco demonstrate the impact such efforts are having in their communities. The faith community is indeed a place where creative thinking and strategic action are making a significant difference in the lives of people. We hope that other community foundations will consider establishing similar initiatives in their cities.



The faith initiatives help congregations move beyond basic human service provision to advocate for policy changes.

“**...religious institutions**
have long been at work in our cities,
caring for the disenfranchised,
feeding the homeless, providing shelter and meeting
other needs.”

Clergy and lay people alike are motivated by their faith traditions to care for the sick, teach the young, and foster projects for community improvement.



“... **the church** is where

the values base lies:

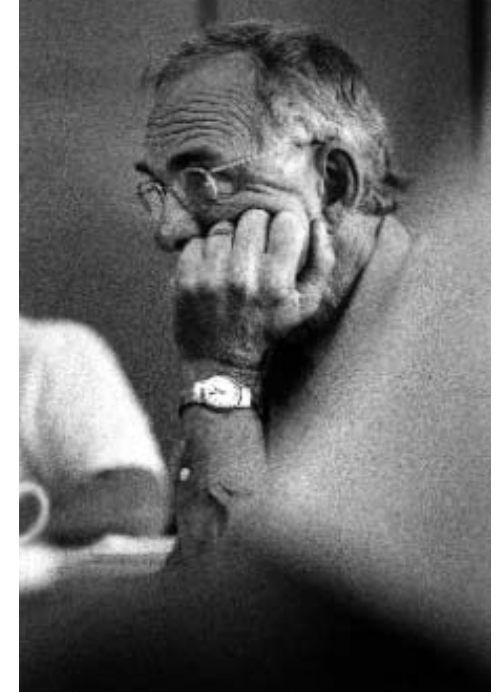
respect for human dignity
despite difference, desire to
reach out and include.”



Congregations in Santa Barbara County and the San Francisco Bay Area are welcoming people, providing social services, and advocating on behalf of low-income populations.

“Religion is the **port of entry**
for immigrants to America.

... it is the one institution that remains
in every low-income community.”



“Leaders of congregations are often sophisticated **visionaries** within their communities.”

Contrary to some traditional perceptions, religious leaders are often skilled and pragmatic community leaders. Through faith initiatives, congregations are working together to implement their mission.



The FAITHS Initiative of the San Francisco Bay Area and the Faith Initiative of Santa Barbara County are bridging economic and ethnic gaps by giving disparate congregations a chance to develop relationships as they work together for change.

“... the **faith-based initiatives**
foster **trust** and **cohesion**”

**between people and groups
on opposite sides of social divides.”**



The investment of community foundations is producing positive change in many areas through the efforts of people like Sister Elaine Sanchez (left). Armed with training at FAITHS events, she spearheaded an affordable housing development in Fremont. Other congregations are involved with vocational training and economic development projects.



“... the combination of
philanthropy and **religion**

is an extraordinarily powerful force
for positive change in California's communities.”



I.

Shifting Neighborhoods:
why a faith initiative?



“Perhaps the most important role
of faith initiatives is

pulling people
together.”

In the 1990s California experienced unprecedented growth and change. When results from the 2000 U.S. Census were released in March 2001, newspaper headlines across the state proclaimed “the changing face of California.” California, the nation’s most populous state, had also become one of its most diverse. The surging Latino and Asian populations edged whites out of the majority for the first time since 1860, when census data were first recorded.

The explosion in the high-tech economy created unprecedented economic growth, making California’s economy the sixth largest in the world. Unfortunately, not everyone benefited from the economic rise; there was an underside to the expansion. A study based on census figures showed that the percentage of Californians living in poverty remained constant throughout the 1990s despite changes in federal welfare policy that reduced welfare caseloads.⁵ While the booming economy attracted workers from around the world, the number of low-income Californians remained the same—only now they were less likely to obtain welfare benefits. In addition, unlike previous waves of immigration, many new immigrants tended to be less educated and poorer. They came to work in jobs located primarily within the service sector of the state’s economy, but these were often jobs that did not pay a livable wage.

California had become richer and more diverse, but simultaneously, more punitive. The number of state prisoners soared in the 1990s, growing more than twice as fast as the population of the state as a whole, despite the fact that the crime rate was down for most of the decade. Even more disturbing was the fact that blacks in California were more likely to be imprisoned than at any point in history, facing an incarceration rate 6.7 times that of whites.⁶

Members of faith communities were deeply concerned about the impact of welfare reform and other policy changes affecting disadvantaged groups. During the 1990s, the passage of several ballot measures curbed (or proposed to curb) benefits for immigrant and minority groups. The communities served by the faith initiatives felt the impact of Propositions 187,

⁵ *Oakland Tribune*, “Welfare Loads Go Down, But Poverty Stays,” August 17, 2001

⁶ *San Francisco Chronicle*, “Number of State Prisoners Soared in the ‘90s,” August 9, 2001

209, and 227.⁷ Proposition 21, a measure that reflected California’s increasingly punitive mood, required courts to try more juvenile offenders as adults. Many people observed that this legislation mirrored a national trend that was epitomized by welfare reform. There was widespread disillusionment as advocates perceived that political leaders were abdicating their responsibility for low-income people.

The nation as a whole appeared to be suffering from compassion fatigue in the midst of unprecedented prosperity. On August 12, 2001, the *Los Angeles Times* ran an article entitled: “‘90s Boon Stingy on Public Good.” The article pointed out what many in the faith community already knew: the prosperity of the 1990s was a “peculiarly private affair.” For the first time in the nation’s history, a period of economic boom had no corresponding public investment. According to the article, “Doubts about the government’s ability to tackle large tasks and a rise in not-in-my-backyard politics blocked many undertakings even when money was available.” The national sentiment seemed to be “to each his own.”

This social and economic change was the backdrop against which the FAITHS Initiative in the San Francisco Bay Area, and then later the Faith Initiative of South Santa Barbara County, took root. The community leaders that came together in these coalitions were especially attuned to the effects of economic trends and policy shifts on poor and low-income people. Many of them had been involved for generations in social service provision and advocacy on behalf of low-income people. The Rev. Eunice Shaw of Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland explained the long history of her community’s participation in social services:

The African-American church has always been the epicenter for community activities...[T]hey also provided social services from the church, because that’s the place where people felt comfortable and safe... So the African-American church has always been involved in social services.

⁷ Proposition 187, passed by California voters in 1994, proposed making “illegal aliens” ineligible for public social services, health care services, and school education at all levels. Although voters approved the initiative, its provisions were never implemented as a result of court challenges. Proposition 209, which passed in 1996, prohibited “preferential treatment” (affirmative action) in public education, employment, and contracting. Proposition 227, which passed in 1998, required public education to be conducted in English.

Indeed, the acknowledgment that the church had always been involved in social services led Joe Brooks, a program officer for the San Francisco Foundation, to explore opportunities for partnership with efforts in the faith community. “In many ways,” Brooks said, “these folks were here before we arrived, are likely to be here after we’re gone, and in many neighborhoods, the only name in town. Doesn’t it make sense for us to figure out a way to be supportive?” In November 1993, the San Francisco Foundation invited 15 interfaith leaders to discuss congregation-based activity related to social service delivery and social action.⁸ This conversation evolved into the FAITHS Initiative, a network of over 350 congregations, faith-based organizations and other nonprofits.

A similar situation occurred in Santa Barbara. For several years the Santa Barbara Foundation gathered leaders of nonprofit organizations, business leaders, and others to discuss issues of common concern and to find ways to collaborate. In early 1999 the foundation realized that houses of worship were often conspicuous by their absence from meetings about community issues. Since the foundation knew that congregations were providing effective social services, they began to discuss the situation with local religious leaders. They hoped to develop a mechanism by which people of faith could routinely participate in community-building agendas. These discussions planted the idea that eventually became the Faith Initiative of South Santa Barbara County.

Congregations see both faith initiatives as opportunities to address pressing social issues at a time when unified efforts are urgently needed. Our interviews suggest that congregational leaders are sophisticated social observers who understand that social services alone will not change the plight of disenfranchised people. The faith initiatives provide groups and individuals the opportunity to come together to challenge the forces that marginalize the poor in strategic, systemic, and organized ways. Members of the faith initiatives articulate a distinction between “charity” or social services that merely ameliorate suffering and “social justice” that addresses root causes. They argue vigorously for approaches that seek social justice. This distinction is key to understanding the role of the FAITHS Initiative in the Bay Area and the Faith Initiative in Santa Barbara. At the

⁸ *The FAITHS Journey: A Documentation of the FAITHS Initiative, November 1993 to September 1997.*

heart of these initiatives is a deep understanding of these communities and the demographic, economic, and political changes that have converged to create the context for what one faith leader described as “a new social movement.” The leaders we interviewed emphasized the need for structural change to create a society where congregations and charities would not need to feed and clothe the poor. Their goal is to put an end to poverty and put themselves out of business.

San Francisco Bay Area

In many ways, the San Francisco Bay Area encapsulates the trends that California and the nation as a whole experienced in the 1990s. Growing racial diversity and economic growth, along with cuts in public benefits and entitlements for minorities, have created new challenges for community organizations and social service providers. On the one hand, the Bay Area enjoyed unprecedented economic prosperity brought about by the high-tech economy and the dot-com gold rush. On the other hand, economic prosperity had adverse effects on the area’s poorest residents, who found themselves priced out of the housing market and displaced from their homes and neighborhoods.

“Gentrification” is a word used by local politicians to denote the revitalization of inner-city neighborhoods by the infusion of upper-income residents, but for leaders in the FAITHS Initiative it has become a watchword. Since members of their congregations and communities continue to be displaced, a founding member of the FAITHS Initiative expressed the concerns of many: “If the vision is to upscale through gentrification, then what happens to the poor?” A pastor in the San Francisco Mission District said that members of his congregation were being offered checks by their landlords to move out. For some people, the financial incentive was too much to pass up. More often than not, others were forced to move because they were unable to afford the increasing rents.

Even after the dot-com bust, Bay Area headlines continued to call attention to the plight of moderate and low-income residents. In April 2001, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported on the “exodus” of the working poor from the city and described the difficulty of finding housing for families with Section 8 vouchers. The pattern was equally apparent in Oakland, where rents shot up an average of 25 percent from the previous

year. In June 2001, the *Oakland Tribune* stated:

Rents in neighborhoods that once served as a refuge for the poor appear to be universally on the rise. Rental listings for the average one-bedroom apartment in West and East Oakland jumped from \$695 in the first quarter of 2000 to \$949 in the first quarter of this year, a 36 percent increase.

The displacement of low-income residents and housing issues were primary concerns for faith leaders in the East Bay. “There’s really nowhere to go, not here in Oakland,” said the Rev. Ken Chambers. Attesting to this, the 2000 Census figures revealed a new phenomenon of “black flight” as the African-American population in Oakland declined for the first time since 1860.

In light of the changes affecting the Bay Area and the political climate of the state, leaders in the FAITHS Initiative saw an important opportunity for the faith community to come together and become a voice for social justice. Today, regardless of the issues of the day, FAITHS stresses the need to recognize that social and economic justice, racial reconciliation and understanding, and youth leadership and development are all important avenues for addressing the issues that affect communities. They also realize that the unsung work of developing relationships and partnership is a crucial component of their efforts. The Rev. Michael Yoshii, pastor of Buena Vista United Methodist Church and a founding member of FAITHS, realized that working as an individual is not sufficient to create change:

We have to get smart about how to do this...and not get caught up in whatever things that hold us back from working together; because if we don't work together, we're going to get caught always retreating...[We have needed] a place where we could sort stuff out and create a more proactive agenda.

From the beginning, the FAITHS Initiative has been regarded as a place to define and support a progressive role for the faith community. For many people we interviewed, this role consists of giving a face and a voice to people with low or very low incomes in a climate where they are generally blamed, punished, and often misrepresented. Maurine Behrend of the Interfaith Poverty Forum explained that faith leaders have a special role to play in the larger society because of their experience with people in need.

“We’re talking about real people that are real to us,” she says, “and we care about them.”

Real people were also affected by changes in California’s policy toward immigrants. The Rev. Mauricio Chacon described the challenge of working with immigrants in the wake of Proposition 187 and the need for the church to help them cultivate a public voice. “A lot of [immigrants] from Mexico and Central America [come from] countries where their voice is not heard,” he explained. “Our role is to make them realize that their voice is important.”

Many members of the FAITHS Initiative expressed concern that President Bush’s faith-based initiative is another way for the government to mislead the public while abdicating its own responsibility to the poor. Coming together with others in the FAITHS Initiative has provided an opportunity for concerned people of faith to “get smart” about Bush’s policy and examine the capacity of congregations to become the government’s safety net. This is one instance where social justice issues have taken precedence over service delivery. Congregational leaders have become advocates for low-income people out of concern that many will slip through cracks in service delivery. “With 11.8% of communities in the United States being below the poverty level,” Charlene Tschirhart of Catholic Charities explained, “there’s no way the churches are going to deal with 32 million poor people!” Without a living wage and health care, she says, the problems will not go away. For Tschirhart and other FAITHS members, there is a distinction between providing relief for low-income people and fundamentally altering society by advocating for social justice.

It is the commitment to social justice that leads members of the faith initiatives to advocate for affordable housing at a time when low-income people are being priced out of their communities. At a housing organizing workshop sponsored by the FAITHS Initiative in January 2001, the speakers framed the need for housing in terms of justice and equity for low-income people, and placed the struggle for housing within the larger struggle for justice in which the faith community is playing a leading role. The Rev. Glenda Hope, director of the San Francisco Network Ministries, urged those present to “commit to work for justice and compassion, knowing that what you do is part of God’s greater work and will prevail.” Maurine Behrend of the Interfaith Poverty Forum described the mounting

anger she felt towards landlords and developers as she became more involved in the housing crisis, and her realization that she needed a deeper prayer life to sustain her in the struggle. “Basically we are confronting evil...,” she said, “and that is hard.” The value of the FAITHS Initiative, she said, is in “empowering the faith community to address the great social issues of the day.”

Members of the FAITHS Initiative see the current political situation as an opportunity for a new social movement on behalf of the poor. Glenda Hope explained that since the end of the Civil Rights movement, another primarily faith-based movement, there has not been a progressive movement for significant social political and economic change. She believes that in some small ways the FAITHS Initiative is filling that gap. “We are beginning to see the beginnings of a movement...We can connect with each other for political change.”

Joe Brooks says that FAITHS has called attention to what was already happening in the community. The initiative began to give a visibility to the actions of the community-based religious institutions. FAITHS brought the groups together and created a synergy that was translated into action. This action has also been working quietly to build relationships between groups that do not usually come together. It has also meant supporting congregations to gain the capacity to be able to bring their vision to fruition. And it has meant a large investment into developing the leadership of young people within the congregations.

Santa Barbara County

While much smaller in population than the Bay Area, Santa Barbara’s demographics demonstrate a changing environment. In 1970 Santa Barbara had a population of 265,800. By 2000 it had grown to 393,573. Much of this growth has been within the immigrant communities. In 1970, for example, 82.25% of the population was white, but by 2000 this population had declined to 58.14%. By 2000, Hispanics had become the largest ethnic group, constituting 34.99% of the total population, up from 12.43% in 1970.

The Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department reports that the growth in the population has meant that housing demand exceeds supply, with very little undeveloped land available for development due to constraints of steep slopes and sensitive habitats. Despite the county affordable housing program focused on low-income families, the Santa Barbara housing market remains one of the most expensive in the state, challenging the ability of moderate and middle income families to afford housing. Furthermore, the city’s successful efforts to bolster retail commercial and tourism related businesses resulted in new service sector jobs. Consequently many immigrants have been hired in the county, but they earn significantly less than is necessary to buy a home at the median home price of \$659,000.

With a growing housing crisis and expanding social service requirements in Santa Barbara, it was no wonder that Charles Slosser, director of the Santa Barbara Foundation, approached Pastor Richard Ramos about convening a group of clergy and religious leaders to start a faith initiative. “We needed to develop some mechanism whereby the faith community could participate in various community building and community problem-solving forums that we, as a community foundation, get invited to all the time,” said Slosser. To do this, Ramos and Slosser decided that it was important to conduct a survey in order to determine what issue was most pressing for the congregations in Santa Barbara. Not surprisingly, affordable housing became the rallying issue that has coalesced and shaped the Faith Initiative of Santa Barbara County.

The Faith Initiative in Santa Barbara has effectively brought together a very diverse interfaith group of religious leaders, along with city and county officials who are involved in planning housing in the county. So successful have their efforts been that in March 2000 voters passed Measure

II.

Y, an extension of the California Constitution's Article 34, which would allow the city to develop affordable rental units at the rate of 181 units per year in perpetuity. While this may seem insignificant considering the need, it is a positive step and puts the need on the radar screen of the city council. Members of the Faith Initiative partnered with the City of Santa Barbara Housing Authority to produce a campaign kit about the affordable housing crisis. This kit was mailed to over 150 houses of worship and available at community meetings. The faith community helped Measure Y pass with 65% in favor and 35% opposed.

Affordable housing remains as the primary focus of the Faith Initiative, but there is now discussion of expanding into other areas. Members of the coalition are concerned with many issues, including AIDS, job creation, childcare, public health and environmental issues, and substance abuse. Working groups have now been established to help shape the future work of the Faith Initiative.

Inspiration in Action: why care for the neighborhood?



As the research unfolded we were struck by the amazing range of activities in which the various congregations are engaged. These activities are engaging not just the those on the lower end of the economic scale, but also middle and upper class members who feel the impact of demographic shifts. For example, they have developed programs for teaching English as a second language to those newly arrived in their communities. They have set up childcare centers to address the needs of parents. Numerous congregations have been involved in human service provision such as shelters and feeding programs for the homeless, food pantries, job training, tutoring, and other after-school activities for youth. Other congregations have tended the sick, cared for those with AIDS, and conducted the funerals of many who die. These congregations are key institutions within their communities, listening to and caring for the people living there. Religious leaders are so involved with their constituents that they have been drawn into advocating for them. This has moved them to demand policies that include the concerns of the disenfranchised, whether the issue is proper housing allotments, better health care policy, or living wages.

What motivates the leaders of these faith communities to do what they do? We asked this question in order to understand why they have remained within the communities for generations, supporting and caring for the residents. The responses we heard focused on personal spiritual journeys, the context of their faith traditions, and about the changes they see in others as a result of their presence.

Personal spiritual journey

Members of the clergy consistently articulated a connection between their individual faith and the practice of their work in the community. “It’s spiritual,” says Rev. Michael Yoshii, “from my perspective the work that we do that is community-related is all about the realm of God and my understanding of what it means to be in mission as part of a community of faith...”

For people who are not professional clergy, their personal spiritual journey has often motivated them to work for social change within their own vocations. Rob Pearson, executive director of the Housing Authority of Santa Barbara, says that his motivation stems from his faith. “My faith is essential to who I am and also in how I look at the world. As I have grown

in my faith,...I’ve realized that it’s not a private thing, that it has social implications....Out of my own understanding of who Jesus is and his call to servanthood,... I realized that I have to do the same thing.”

The tradition of faith

The Rev. Glenda Hope of San Francisco Network Ministries has worked for 29 years in the Tenderloin, an area in San Francisco that has seen more than its share of people with AIDS. She is regularly called upon to perform memorial services for people who die there, sometimes once a week, sometimes three. Wearing a stole, she takes both Hebrew and Christian scriptures and makes the prayers as inclusive as she can. In the Tenderloin, she sees people that are overwhelmed with unresolved grief, both among low-income and people with illnesses and those who work with them. According to Hope, her faith tradition plays a central role in her actions:

My own faith is part of knowing that what I do is part of God’s great movement of love because it will prevail and so I am not going to go away...There is a connection with people through the centuries who share the same faith and same faith-source and same direction for things we work for. In the Tenderloin I have seen many caregivers, service providers, come and go, they burn out, there is a turnover. In general, it is the people of faith who are the ones who stick. You cannot run on your own power or you become callous and do the work but not feel.

Wilson Riles has been working for his community for many years, thirteen of which were spent as a member of the Oakland City Council. After leaving elected office, he became regional director for the American Friends Service Committee and a member of FAITHS. In an interview, he described the motivation for his work in social justice:

I became very much attracted to Hinduism, particularly to Mahatma Ghandi, and I kind of stayed in that line, that one of your tracks to God is through community service, through working with your community and family, and working towards justice...I attempted to do this work within the city council. I found that very difficult because it’s not a very spiritual place, so...I sought [American Friends Service Committee] out as a place where I could do that kind of justice work and also be in an environment where people had that type of spirit also.

Impact of actions on the lives of others

Others talk about how rewarding it is to see the results of their efforts in the lives of people in the community. This motivates them to keep working. Julia Caplan has been working with the Jewish Youth for Community Action, a part of the Jewish Family and Children's Services, since 1998. "I think the most exciting thing for me about doing this work is watching the young people in the program take leadership, and actualize their projects," she says. "Not only do they have great skills, but they love this program, and they really feel like they get to express themselves fully. That's what's most exciting for me..."

The Rev. Mauricio Chacon of Iglesia Presbiteriana de la Mision, cited a simple example that illustrates the fact that small acts of kindness can have a profound effect on a person's life. This in turn serves as a source of motivation to keep working. He tells of a woman from Bolivia whose 34 year-old daughter had polio and had not had a new set of leg braces since she was fifteen years old. Chacon was able to connect this family with a company in Michigan that gave a new set of braces to her at no cost. Now, he says, "She stops almost twice a week just to say, 'Thank you, thank you! You helped us a lot.' This is what motivates my ministry. To see these happy faces!"

III.

Process: how faith initiatives build neighborhoods



If the religious community has been involved for so long in such a variety of different activities on the streets of their neighborhoods, why would they want to join an initiative such as FAITHS in San Francisco or the Faith Initiative of Santa Barbara? What role or roles do these initiatives play?

Religious institutions provide what some sociologists call “free social space” for individuals and marginalized groups to network and gain information and skills.⁹ Linking their efforts with others can serve as a way to use these skills for effecting broader, community-wide changes. Our research identified four major areas where these coalitions have been successful: 1) networking and connecting people, 2) building the capacity of congregations to do their work more effectively, 3) providing and leveraging funds, and 4) working with youth to become leaders within their congregations and communities.

Over and over again people talked to us about the importance of coming together with people of different religions, not just to address common problems, but to learn from each other, gain understanding of other religions and ethnicities, and to connect for political change. Glenda Hope says, “Being alone is disempowering. Getting together for fellowship, this is strengthening.”

Both faith initiatives provide a neutral space where these diverse groups of people can meet. In San Francisco, Francisco Herrera of the Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights says, “FAITHS...creates a wonderful space of neutrality where people can come together and dialogue, which definitely leads to a lot of open doors in many places.” He also states that workshops and gatherings serve to break down racial and cultural barriers: “FAITHS...provides a space to demystify and break down not just stereotypes, but build relationships based on values and trust. That has been powerful.”

The staff at the FAITHS Initiative in San Francisco describe their role as creating partners across barriers. They link the faith community, not just with each other, but with funding organizations, nonprofit and community organizations, and government agencies. They value the importance of the mix, variety, and differences. Many of those we interviewed told how FAITHS staff will ask them questions such as, “Who is missing at this table?” These questions serve to help them be more inclusive, to provide a place for those who are marginalized, or who simply are not on the radar screen. Tessa Rouverol Callejo, a FAITHS director, frames it within the context of congregations needing to respond in a new and fresh way to address the problems and issues facing them:

There is a process going on of congregations who do not look alike or who are not from the same denomination, are from different ethnic backgrounds, who are coming together on common issues in a new way... And people have to figure out how to be a community in a different way... People are crossing sectors, they are crossing denominational lines, they're crossing the race line more and more. That, I think, is what has excited people around the FAITHS table.

⁹ Darren E. Sherkat and Christopher G. Ellison. “Recent Development and Current Controversies in the Sociology of Religion,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1999. 25:363-94.

The Santa Barbara Foundation also sees the role of getting people to the table as vitally important. According to Charles Slosser, president of the Santa Barbara Foundation, getting the faith community to participate in community discussions was an important step.

It became apparent to us that if we were going to work with the faith community, it would have to be under an ecumenical umbrella of some sort. That it would have to involve all of them or it wasn't going to be something that we would be able to fund. So from the very beginning it was seen as a way to bring together all of the various houses of worship and faith-based organizations in the community. It was really to make sure that we have a fully-engaged population. There are a lot of people in our faith community who, for a variety of reasons, haven't been full participants in all of the things that we do in our community to make it a better place to live.

Another benefit of coming together in faith coalitions is that members learn what resources are available to them; they become aware of the different individuals, congregations and agencies that are serving the community and that are available as support and help for others. They realize that they are not alone in the community and that there is no need to “reinvent the wheel.” As Laura Takeuchi of the Japanese American Services of the East Bay said:

[This network] is so important in terms of getting those churches to a point where they could see there're other things out there that could help them, they don't have to reinvent the wheel, they don't have to all hire a social worker, they don't all have to hire a public health nurse, they can do things differently, they can use the services out there, they can work together to better utilize resources.

The Faith Initiative of South Santa Barbara County

Perhaps the most important role of the Faith Initiative of South Santa Barbara has been pulling people together. As stated earlier in this report, a survey of leaders made it very clear that affordable housing was the major issue that was pressing on the community. But how to address this in a way that would make change happen is a much more difficult task. Richard Ramos and Charles Slosser were convinced that the city could not adequately address the problem, nor come up with viable solutions, unless all members of the community were participants in the decision-making process and contributed to solutions. Thus, the Faith Initiative has focused on bringing diverse constituents to the table to ensure that the previously excluded groups are part of the conversation. The Rev. Steve Jacobsen of the Goleta Presbyterian Church describes the value of such a network:

For me to be in a group where there is somebody from the county health [department], and somebody from low-cost housing, and somebody from the Sierra Club, and somebody from the Buddhist tem-

ple, and somebody from the synagogue, and somebody from the Pentecostal church, it was great!... I loved that because everybody is different. We're all kind of funky in our own ways, but we're all nonprofit, and we're all trying to gather common people's altruism and call to do what's right.

Father Nicholas Spier of St. Athanasius Church echoes that same sentiment:

The one thing about the Faith Initiative is that it is bringing people together that normally don't get together, and working on a project that they all can agree on. You know, from a religious community, environmental community, what is common here? I think in a lot of ways, it has been a bridge for people in the community to sit down and start talking about things.

Dana Van Dermay, executive director of a parish nurse program in Santa Barbara, tells of the impact this kind of networking has had on her personally:

"It's changed me body, mind and spirit...my way of thinking socially. It's given me a greater vision of things. The secret is networking, linking up with other people because I'm not an island onto myself. I didn't put this pro-gram together, God did and the community."

It is not only the members of the faith community that are enriched by participating in the coalition. Government officials often expressed how much they were learning about the community through the eyes of these religious leaders. Gil Garcia, a member of the Santa Barbara City Council, an architect, and a candidate for mayor, feels that it is important for people to come together in "the oneness of the human spirit." There is a need for strong social community. "So I am trying to focus in a way that is trying to reinvent government to reconnect itself to one partnership that integrates a sense of community. Integrate and coordinate services to become a community and create a sense of balance." Thus, while the members of the faith community are very grateful for the opportunities to network with city officials, city officials are also expressing the value added of such coalitions.

In the process of getting together to work on affordable housing, members of the coalition get to know one another and begin to share resources. Sister

Alicia Martin of St. Vincent's House speaks about her connection to other programs in the Faith Initiative:

One of the churches in Goleta heard about our program through the Faith Initiative and they sent us money at Christmas time for the moms and for the girls. So that's helpful and then any donations that we receive ...like clothing or furniture or whatever, what our moms don't use—I call the Isla Vista Project [another member organization of the Faith Initiative] and they say "Yes, we can use them." So we share those kinds of resources.

Affordable housing may have been the catalyst for bringing these people together in Santa Barbara, but there are strong indications that this coalition will begin addressing other issues within the community. Such is the value of these faith initiatives: it is in getting to know one another that common problems surface and common solutions can be found.



The Rev. Richard Ramos, executive director of the Faith Initiative of South Santa Barbara County, stands on a parcel of land that will be developed into affordable housing.

netwo rking people together



Workshops help to educate and train community members to work more effectively and strategically. Rob Pearson (left), executive director of the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara, works with the coalition.

“The one thing about
the **Faith Initiative**
is that it is bringing people together
that normally don't get together.”

n e t w o r k i n g



Through the Faith Initiative, leaders from the faith community become part of the city planning process.

n e t w o r k i



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n e t w o r k i n g

Building Capacity

Both faith initiatives are firmly rooted in the belief that by building the capacity of the members, much more can be accomplished towards meeting the goals and objectives of the group. Thus, the initiatives focus much of their efforts on providing help where congregations express a need. As some of the leaders express it, the goal is to make things happen, whatever it takes. Dwayne Marsh, formerly executive director of the FAITHS Initiative and now with PolicyLink, in Oakland, says that the role of the initiative is “to fill the gap in order to boost the capacity of churches to do things.” This means coming alongside the members, listening, talking, and discovering what the expressed needs are. The next task is to match the available resources, both material and intellectual, to meet those needs.

There are a variety of ways in which faith initiatives provide the special boost that the congregations need to accomplish their goals.

Technical Assistance and Support

Both initiatives often organize workshops for members and invite experts with the skills needed to come and lend their expertise to the group. For example, the FAITHS Initiative in San Francisco often contracts with the Center for Ethics and Popular Education in San Francisco to come and provide training that is focused on organizational development, board development, fundraising, and macro-economics among other things. At other times, there are workshops that will guide congregations in the area of applying for grants. Congregations and nonprofit agencies are taught how to write a proposal. Some congregations told us that FAITHS had helped them in the most basic task of understanding how to file for nonprofit status so they could begin to receive more funds to support their programs. Teresa Saucedo of Manos Unidas, a nonprofit organization born out of the Iglesia Presbiteriana de la Mision, told us that the church had not really thought it an option to organize their community services under a nonprofit organization.

The denomination does not have much history in this area. She describes it this way:

It really was the...people at FAITHS who provided the basic encouragement and support as well as the technical expertise to say, "This is an option, and this is how you go about doing it." They continued to help us...even being aware of some of the pitfalls as the church set up a board...

Downs Memorial United Methodist Church

Downs Memorial United Methodist Church is nestled between three cities in the East Bay: Oakland, Berkeley and Emeryville. It has been a predominantly African American community but recently the demographics have shifted as it has become a very attractive community for people who either work in San Francisco or San Jose and cannot afford to live in those cities. The pastor, Kelvin Sauls, sees this shift as causing a division in social class—an economic split as he puts it. There are still many elderly living in the community, and many poor who still live there. But there are also young families moving in, with a higher economic base. Seniors on fixed incomes begin losing their homes to these younger, more affluent families.

Downs Memorial has been serving this community for over 40 years. A primary focus has been what Rev. Sauls calls the "Health and Wellness" approach, caring for the whole body. This includes preventive health education, screenings for diabetes and blood pressure, and talk about diet and nutri-

tion. But talking is not all they do. For many years the church has had a feeding program for the poor. Their goal is to always provide a nutritious and well-balanced, hot "sit-down" meal for those who come. On any given Wednesday, for example, they serve between 200-300 sit-down hot meals. Every other week the church coordinates with the Alameda County Food Bank and distributes between 150-200 bags of groceries that will help families get by for a couple of weeks. One Wednesday a month the church partners with a program at Children's Hospital called "Karries Kids" which sends a mobile health station out and examines and immunizes children. They also have a very active AIDS ministry. "The impetus for developing this ministry," says Rev. Sauls, "is because we feel that we want to treat the whole person. And you can't be whole if you're sick."

Now the vision of the leaders has expanded. Across the street is an old firehouse that the church plans to convert into a community center with 17 units of affordable housing. The facility will contain a computer-learning center to train community members to qualify for jobs and not be left on the other

side of the "Digital Divide." There will be job training and placement, and expansion of the feeding and after-school programs they currently run. The City of Oakland has granted the church the piece of property and \$1.3 million to develop it. They have applied for another \$1.4 million from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and are awaiting a decision.

Rev. Sauls, the senior pastor, and Mr. Harold Fields, the church treasurer, feel that it was FAITHS that helped them organize into a nonprofit organization in order to formalize their vision and to leverage funds. They feel that without this help, they would not have moved beyond the traditional services that they provide. They did not have the necessary connections, nor the ability, to begin the work of providing affordable housing to their community.

As they said:

The FAITHS Initiative was instrumental, very, very instrumental in us being able to put this project together. They helped us with the applications, they helped us with who to contact... Because of the FAITHS Initiative we were able to create a 501 (c)(3) ... called the Downs Community Development Corporation... When we first started, we were talking to Landon and Tessa and Dwayne [FAITHS staff] every day! FAITHS Initiative has... enabled us to create a CDC [community development corporation], and as a result we were able to respond to an RFP [request for proposals] and that response led to a partnership with both the City of Oakland and the Oakland Community Housing Incorporation ... FAITHS walked us through and got us the right partners.



Serving meals is a special opportunity to get to know people in the community.

This is an option, **how**
and this is **how**
you go about doing it.

technical
assistance



The FAITHS Initiative helped Downs Memorial United Methodist Church to create a community development corporation to expand its services beyond providing meals.



They helped us with the applications,

technical

they helped us with who to contact...

assistance



Downs Memorial United Methodist Church supports an active after school program for community children.



“Downs Memorial United Methodist Church has become a greater resource for the community as a result of its participation in the

FAITHS Initiative.”

technical assistance



Downs Memorial United Methodist Church has a strong vision for improving the community's future.

Mentoring

One of the ways that the FAITHS Initiative in the San Francisco Bay Area realized that they could build the capacity of faith-based organizations was to develop a mentoring program. More experienced churches or congregations could teach what they knew to others who were ready to take a leap forward in their own programs to impact their communities in a deeper way. Technical assistance by itself was not enough. These less-experienced organizations needed to have coaches that could guide them through their struggles and broaden their vision about what is possible. The leadership at FAITHS believes that change may happen more quickly in these smaller congregations because there is a mutual interest and there is less of a shift in the institution that needs to happen to go forward. New ideas do not take as long to come into fruition, as they might in a large congregation.

Out of this desire to see mentoring take place was born what FAITHS calls “The Shadow Project.” In this program, a large, experienced congregation that is accomplishing significant things within the community is matched with smaller congregations that need some help to move forward.

ical assistance

mentoring

CASE STUDY 3

The Shadow Project

The leadership at FAITHS and at the San Francisco Foundation examined how they could strengthen congregations and organizations that were willing to move beyond their four walls. As they observed those congregations in both San Francisco and the East Bay, they found that Glide Memorial United Methodist Church in San Francisco, and Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland were prominent in their communities. So they identified some small to medium-sized congregations that could work with these mega-churches and encouraged the larger churches to take on a mentoring relationship with them.

The first step was convening Tuesday evening meetings of the selected smaller congregations at the foundation offices. Out of these sprang an assignment to gather some research within the congregations and their surrounding communities. The next step was to bring in representatives from both Allen Temple and Glide Memorial to share their experiences. At this point the smaller

churches would gather and talk about how it was relevant to them. And the final component was that staff from the smaller churches would visit the larger ones and “shadow” members of the larger churches as they went about their daily activities. They would discuss practical issues such as how to identify people within the congregations who have specific gifts to work in the programs; how to establish and maintain a group of volunteers; how to motivate them.

The part of Oakland where the Westside Missionary Baptist Church is located is predominantly African American, and is experiencing the pains of other low-income communities in the Bay Area where residents are being displaced to make way for housing gentrification. At the same time, it is a community with very few services, where residents have had to travel long distances outside their community to have access to groceries, banking and other services. When Rev. Ken Chambers, senior pastor of the church, first came to the church eight years earlier, he immediately began tackling some of the issues that he encountered. Since

then, he has partnered with other community organizing groups and congregations in his part of the city to work on economic development. His vision has been large and he has realized that his church needs to work in a variety of different ways to build the neighborhood. FAITHS chose his church to participate in “The Shadow Project” in order to help the small congregation of 150 members gain the knowledge and insights that might help move them along to the realization of their vision. Westside Missionary Baptist Church was invited to shadow Allen Temple Baptist Church. With a congregation of over 5,000 members, Allen Temple had already established its own community and economic development corporation that was working at a variety of levels within the city.

According to Ken Chambers, Allen Temple provided key education for his fledgling efforts. “We had a couple of meetings with some of our board and staff members and one of their [Allen Temple] community development executive directors,” says Chambers, “and we would go over real life examples. And they just talked through real life circumstances.” Ken realized that Allen Temple was huge and could afford to hire a lot of consultants to do community development, and thus was a very different

set-up from what his small congregation could do. But even this was insightful, he says:

It was a good experience for us to see another way of doing community economic development, totally different from ours...It was good to see that other piece, and it's always good to see the accomplishment, all they've accomplished through the process, and it is encouraging for us to continue on.

Allen Temple has also strengthened its own ministries through participation in the FAITHS Initiative. Durelle Ali, Director of Allen Temple Housing and Economic Development Corporation, says through the relationship with FAITHS they discovered that there was little coordination between the various programs and ministries at Allen Temple. The multiple ministries within the church were functioning so independent of each other that often they did not even know the other existed. This realization provided the opportunity to reorganize. The directors of these ministries began to meet regularly and to coordinate their services. Because of their participation with FAITHS, Allen Temple realized that even a large congregation with a lot of experience needed help to reflect on their own work. As Rev. Eunice Shaw said,

FAITHS felt that if there were gaps in how we did ministry that they could help us solve, then they could use us as a teaching mechanism for other churches who were interested in doing some of the same things that we were doing. So it was kind of like a partnership in that they were funding us to help us be more efficient, more productive, and we were also providing a service to them by making it possible for other churches to learn from us, and also prosper in their own ministries.

The relationship between Allen Temple and Westside Community Development Corporation took an additional interesting turn. In spite of its small size, Westside Community Development Corporation developed a vision to open a supermarket in the community. They calculated that residents were spending \$32 million a year on food access outside of this community. So it was an interesting dialogue that developed between the larger Allen Temple and the smaller Westside corporation when they discovered that Allen Temple was also competing for the shopping center. Together, they came to the negotiating table and through it learned about the different style of working and organizing. They discovered that there were two very different approaches, but both successful in their own way. "And," says Chambers, "[Allen

Temple] backed off from the shopping center, and it cleared the way for us, which was very appreciated." In its first year, the supermarket made around \$7 million and they are hopeful that this second year will show an increase over that. Gateway Foods and Shopping Center in West Oakland stands today as a symbol of what can be done when one small congregation joins forces with others to change the community.

This small congregation that once needed a lot of help and mentoring is itself being a mentor to other congregations that need help.



The Rev. Ken Chambers with an employee of Gateway Foods and Shopping Center in West Oakland.

it is **encouraging** for us
to continue on...

m e n t o r i n g

small congregations
that need some help
to move forward



The Shadow Project matches small congregations with more experienced ones in order to provide key education and assistance for community projects.



mentor



large congregations
with a lot of
experience





Allen Temple's resources and experience make it an ideal mentor for smaller congregations. The mentoring project also strengthened its own ministries by increasing communication between ministries that functioned independently.



m e n t o r i n g



Participation in the Shadow Project also helps larger congregations, such as Allen Temple Baptist Church, to become more efficient and more productive.

**“...we were providing a service to them
by making it possible for other churches to**

learn from us...”

m e n t o r i n g

Professional Development

Without a doubt, both faith initiatives are intent on building the knowledge base of the faith communities that form a part of their networks. Often houses of worship are left out of discussions that are taking place in city offices where decisions are being made that have a direct impact on these congregations. Thus, there is a strategic intent in these faith initiatives of bringing government decision makers and planners into the same room with these religious leaders in order to educate and to dialogue. Many of the meetings and workshops that are held invite guest speakers to share on the particular topics being discussed. FAITHS sees itself as playing the role of “translator,” being a bridge between these two different groups of people in order to “demystify” and to provide the necessary information that the community needs in order to carry out their goals effectively.

For example, a FAITHS working group on affordable housing laid the plans for convening regional Bay Area religious communities to develop theological grounding and educate participants about local, state and federal policy issues that were affecting the housing situation. At several of these meetings, CRCC researchers witnessed mayors and vice-mayors sitting in the audience with religious clergy and lay leaders. Members of city councils and planning departments were present and often called upon to inform the gathering about decisions being made to help alleviate the housing crisis. A panel of experts from local and state housing organizations gave informative presentations on key issues and areas of priority in the current policy climate. Participants received invaluable information on housing laws, policies, procedures, and opportunities for action; and housing advocates were connected to a base of people who were willing and well positioned to mobilize for their cause. These civic leaders then engaged in open dialogue with the participants. All of this was important for the faith communities as they began to develop a strategy for holding their cities accountable.

Sister Elaine Sanchez, along with Sisters of the Holy Family in Fremont, has worked for seven years to spearhead an affordable housing project. Initially, she felt too busy to attend FAITHS events, but training helped to change her mind. Sister Elaine found that training was important to counter the negative perceptions and stereotypes people often have of

nuns, and increase their credibility in the community. Armed with the new found knowledge, she could advocate for the concerns the nuns had on issues of housing for the poor. The training, she said, “was a wonderful way to educate people from the faith community.” Maurine Behrend, of the Interfaith Poverty Forum in the East Bay also found FAITHS training instrumental for her own housing advocacy. “We needed to be trained,” she says. “and we needed to see that the problem could be [solved]...If it would not have been for FAITHS we would not be able to be doing this work...It isn’t just addressing the issues and learning about the issues, it’s really empowering you to be a witness for what you believe in the larger community, and that, I think, is such a good role. I really think it’s us at our best.”

Knowledge building goes both ways. Once these faith communities have sufficient knowledge and education about an issue, they are poised to inform the general public about those same issues. One example is welfare reform. Members of the FAITHS Initiative documented ways in which the community was being impacted by welfare reform and published it in a pamphlet entitled “Public Policy and Theological Reflections: Welfare Reform.” They then held a press conference to announce this document that went out to not just the faith community but also to the policy-making community. Legislators in Sacramento reported back that the document was really helpful and insightful and educated them about issues such as Charitable Choice. As Charlene Tschirhart of Catholic Charities says, “So we gave it to the legislators and to the faith community so that the faith community could educate and get beyond the subtlety that Welfare Reform was for the poor! Basically, to understand the ins and outs of it, but along the way it helped people understand the issues of poverty. So this is just one example of a response.”

Racial Understanding

Gathering together to discuss issues of common concern, members of faith communities have realized that many of the problems encountered in their communities have racial and ethnic oppression at their very root. Participants in a November 1993 convening by the FAITHS Initiative had cited racism as one of the biggest and most important challenges to which the faith community must rise.¹⁰ Thus, the FAITHS Initiative has worked toward breaking down the barriers that separate people, to strengthen the entire community.

The race initiative is a way of building the capacity of the congregations to deal with the issues that threaten to segregate and keep their neighborhoods from developing. Racism, they believe, is behind much of the mistreatment of immigrants and undocumented people. Getting to know one another, and understanding the issues facing each other, is a way of breaking down those barriers. In the Mission District of San Francisco, an area with a primarily immigrant population, children run the risk of becoming acculturated to a milieu of racism and become racists themselves, according to Teresa Saucedo of Manos Unidas. It becomes very important, therefore, to help children understand and appreciate their own culture so that they can do the same for other cultures. Teresa adds, “A part of what we’re doing here is building self-esteem through reinforcement of culture, and appreciation of the culture through art and music.”

The FAITHS Initiative has provided bridges between the faith community and other community organizations that are working on these issues. For example, they partnered with KQED and its Television Race Initiative to inform and educate their own community. According to Yvette Martinez of KQED, they did a screening of a film of the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] called “Well-founded Fear.” After the screening they had a dialogue with people of faith, all members of the FAITHS Initiative: Betty Canton Self from the Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights, Rabbi Allen Bennet from Temple Israel, and the Rev. Kelvin Sauls from Downs Memorial United Methodist Church. This resulted in a rich interchange that helped name some of the issues within the community

¹⁰ *The FAITHS Journey: A Documentation of the FAITHS Initiative, November 1993 to September 1997.*

and gave guidance from people of faith on how to work on the problems.

Working together and engaging in honest dialogue have provided opportunities for people to understand and come to know people from outside their own ethnic group. Says Francisco Herrera of the Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights:

Just the fact of sitting around with people of different ethnic groups and races...has an impact for me as a Latino who works among Latinos who is always with Latinos...I am always making inroads, connections with people from other cultures, but to sit around and dialogue with counterparts from other cultures, just that act is really a wonderful piece. Secondly, the themes in the economic justice series and other workshops that we have done with them, provides a space to demystify and breakdown not just stereotypes but build relationships based on values and trust. So that has been powerful.

FAITHS also has supplied funding and guidance to a small African American congregation that has decided to reach out to the growing Latino community in their neighborhood. Eileen Hardware of Moriah Christian Fellowship says,

We have increased the multi-racial aspect of our congregation. We have done outreach in Spanish and in English. We collaborate with St. Andrews Catholic Church, and (hopefully) bring the main churches in the area to address all the issues that confront different races, which are the same ones for each race: housing, child-care, etc. We increased the Hispanic voter registration through working with them. FAITHS helped us with some of the expenses in helping them.

racial understanding

CASE STUDY 4 Pescadero Community Church

Pescadero is very different from its neighbor to the north, San Francisco. Located in the south west corner of San Mateo County, it is a tiny town with somewhere between three and four thousand people. The sign in Pescadero actually says population 400 and hasn't changed in 100 years! Half of the community is Spanish-speaking. Most of them are agricultural laborers making minimum wage, others work at the mushroom factory for \$10 an hour and some benefits. The non-Spanish speaking community is mostly Anglo, some Portuguese or Italian, either owners of nurseries or professionals, many of whom commute over the hill to Silicon Valley.

Rev. Wendy Taylor came to Pescadero Community Church in 1997. The rents have doubled in the last five years, making it extremely difficult for agricultural workers to find housing, she says. Part of this has been due to the shifting economics with the loss of growth of agricultural products such as brussels sprouts and artichokes, once the mainstay of the com-

munity. And the crunch of housing in the San Francisco Bay Area has prompted some farmers to sell their land to developers. The changing demographics have presented a challenge to Rev. Taylor, but her ability to speak Spanish, and her knowledge of Latino cultures, have been an asset in trying to establish what she calls "Puente" (bridge).

Pescadero Community Church has begun to build bridges between the English and the Spanish speakers in the community. And it has started around bikes. Rev. Taylor began a Bible study in Spanish and found:

There were a lot of folks who either got a ride to work or walked to work but they had no transportation. Some were riding bikes, and I said 'Well, great, but it's dark!' And they said, 'Well, we don't care.' And I said, 'I do! I don't want to meet you at a funeral!' Thus began an effort on her part to find reflectors for those bikes. As word spread in the community, she began receiving requests for more reflectors, even from workers who did not own bicycles. "So we started hustling for bikes. Other churches and some of our church members, and this past year even the Sheriff's Department, have started to bring us bikes...I

have a community service kid who has started fixing up bikes.

The bicycles paved the way to understanding the lives of the agricultural workers. Finding that many of them were cold in the winter, Rev. Taylor and her church members began collecting blankets to distribute during the cold weather.

As Rev. Taylor has gotten to know these workers, she has begun to play a role of what she says is “ the theological thing.” To her this means becoming a voice for the voiceless. For example, when one of the workers was wrongly accused of having stolen some equipment from one of the ranchers, Rev. Taylor spoke on his behalf to a defense lawyer who provided him with legal counsel. The little case was won and it served to build another bridge between the rancher and the pastor. The rancher came and asked her to come directly to him the next time she heard of a problem. Now she has several ranchers who have asked for the same thing. Some have even started to donate money for bikes. “That’s a big deal for a community that doesn’t usually cooperate on behalf of the Mexican community,” she says.

Being a part of the FAITHS network has allowed Wendy Taylor and other members of the community to attend workshops and receive training. Some seed money from FAITHS also enabled the church to begin a more formal outreach into the community, to establish English as a Second Language classes, and to hire a part-time coordinator who continued the work of getting reflectors and bikes. Wendy Taylor’s small white congregation has become a bridge in the community where Mexicans and Anglos can work together for a better place. This new understanding and collaboration between different groups of people has been the goal of the FAITHS race initiative.



The Rev. Wendy Taylor blesses bicycles in Pescadero. The bikes serve as transportation for agricultural workers, but they also build bridges between English and Spanish speakers in the community.

building
bridges

racial
understanding

The efforts of one woman have sparked change in the community. Relationships between Rev. Taylor's small white congregation and agricultural workers are developing through advocacy, English language classes, and the bicycle program.



becoming a **voice** racial
for the **voiceless** under standing





New levels of partnership are developing between ranchers and workers in the city of Pescadero.

Providing and Leveraging Funds

There are two ways in which the FAITHS Initiative in San Francisco and the Faith Initiative of Santa Barbara provide an economic boost to their members: one is by providing small grants that give them “a shot in the arm” to boost their capacity up to the next level; the other is by teaching them how to leverage funds from the foundation world.

Grantmaking

Unquestionably, one of the assets of both initiatives is that they are a part of community foundations that bring with them the ability to make grants to community organizations. Over and over again we were told that even small grants had made a big difference in the programs. Yet, while funds often brought the congregations and organizations to the table, funding soon became only one of the issues that kept them at the table. Joe Brooks, a program officer for the San Francisco Foundation at the time he helped to establish the FAITHS Initiative, explained it in the following manner:

They were looking at us [the FAITHS Initiative] as a source of money; rightfully so, but not much beyond that. We were trying to convince them that it ought to be much deeper than that. It's not about an individual congregation or denomination getting some money. It's about the power of the collective inter-faith community.

Still, money has been a powerful magnet, and a very necessary one. Congregations are working hard to provide services for the community often without the necessary resources to carry out the work, much less to expand and grow. Providing small grants has enabled congregations to undertake activities that help to improve race relations, expand economic opportunity, and to develop essential programs. There are numerous examples.

- With a small grant from FAITHS, the predominantly Anglo San Francisco Zen Center was able to hire an African American Buddhist teacher to try to help them

break down barriers, to create respect and opportunity and to learn from one another.

- Iglesia Presbiteriana de la Mision received a \$5000 grant to establish a community development organization, Manos Unidas.
- Rabbi Allen Bennett of Temple Israel in Alameda received a \$2500 grant to buy a photocopy machine. This seemingly simple investment sparked internal communication and helped to build the morale of a congregation that felt disorganized.
- The Rev. Michael Yoshii, pastor of the Buena Vista United Methodist Church, received funds to produce a publication dealing with the long-term impacts of the internment of Japanese-Americans. Funding provided a means to share what they had learned.
- Jewish Families and Children's Services received \$5000 to publish a booklet on an area of expertise, *Avoiding Volunteer Burn-Out*.

These examples demonstrate the importance of the connection of these faith initiatives with funding organizations such as community foundations. Being able to provide funds while working on broader issues of social and economic justice has been an invaluable tool for these organizing efforts. It was consistently pointed out to us that these small grants were instrumental in helping not just small but also large organizations take a leap forward in achieving their goals.

And the foundation does not have to worry about re-granting but can allow the FAITHS staff to handle these grants, providing an easier and more effective way to give to grass-roots organizations.

Leveraging Funds

Dwayne Marsh, former director of the FAITHS Initiative, believes that the organization demystifies the funding game for the community. "FAITHS," he says, "straddles the line between the community and resources." Many of the people we interviewed testified to the success of this objective. For example, since participating in FAITHS, Rev. Sheila Cook of the Unity Church in Richmond says, "I have a better understanding of how foundations operate,...of what they tend to look for, and [what types of projects] they support."

Both initiatives have also provided workshops that have trained par-

ticipants on how to write grants. They then go the extra step and work with an organization to help them leverage the funds they need for their project by making the necessary connections. The Interfaith Council of San Francisco was one of these organizations. Working with youth in Juvenile Hall, the Juvenile Probation Commission approached the Council because they were concerned about the high recidivism rate of youth who leave Juvenile Hall without any support. The Commission believed that perhaps the faith community could come and give them some help with this intervention. The Rev. Alan Jones told us how FAITHS helped them pull together the necessary funds to establish a program for these youth, calling it "Better Choices":

What Dwayne [Marsh] and Landon [Williams] did so wonderfully was to orchestrate the foundation support for us. At the beginning they held a luncheon for the foundation and invited a whole stack of other foundations to come and hear about the program. We had some kids there. And it generated a funding stream that has continued. And then this connection...has put us as a part of a national program of Public and Private Ventures [PIPV]. Well, they have a major component of their program which is juvenile justice. PIPV is an offshoot of the Ford Foundation but it is channeling federal government money. So we are now recipient to the major grant from the federal government to support a religious program, a chaplaincy program.

What has also been very helpful to many of these faith-based organizations is the fact that these initiatives have served to connect them with other foundations and funding organizations such as the Northern California Grant Makers. Not only have they received publicity through reports put out by the grant makers, they are grateful to have made the connection. FAITHS and the Faith Initiative in Santa Barbara have served as bridges. Teresa Saucedo of Manos Unidas in San Francisco says:

[FAITHS] helped us with the connection to the Northern California Grant Makers and we received seed money from them. So in terms of all they [FAITHS] teach at the fund-raising workshops, what they've really done is let us plug into an existing network rather than having to start from scratch.

Leveraging funds and other resources for the faith communities has been a means for brokering relationships between these communities and the

philanthropic community. In 1994 the San Francisco Foundation invested the first \$54,000 in the FAITHS Initiative. By 1996 that investment had increased to \$316,000. The James Irvine Foundation has been a major investor in both faith initiatives. Craig McGarvey of The James Irvine Foundation describes the investment as an opportunity to leverage the capacity of faith-based organizations for developing community leadership and mobilizing communities to resolve their problems.

*Congregations are stepping into the vacuum created by welfare reform and other cutbacks in federal support. The Irvine Foundation wants to help congregations meet this challenge and play a leadership role in building strong, viable communities. Through our investment in FAITHS, we are building congregations' capacity for delivering services, helping congregations to share important lessons with each other, and feeding these lessons back to the research community so that they can be broadly disseminated.*¹¹

Other foundations also see the importance of supporting these initiatives. Crystal Hayling, former senior program officer with the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, saw an opportunity to enhance the foundation's support for the elderly by tapping the experience of congregations in providing such services. "Where do elderly people go? They go to church. If foundations want to learn more about the needs of the elderly or if they want to expand the capacity of organizations providing services to the elderly, the congregations are the logical place to invest."¹²

¹¹ *The FAITHS Journey: A Documentation of the FAITHS Initiative* November 1993 to September 1997.

¹² *The FAITHS Journey.*

One significant aspect of the FAITHS Initiative in San Francisco Bay Area is the focus they have given to developing leadership among the youth in the congregations. Through the Youth Summer Leadership Training program young people have begun to learn the nuts and bolts of community organizing: how to make presentations, how to write grants, how to relate to foundations, and, importantly, how to understand youth from other socio-economic classes and races.

Lauren Quock, a FAITHS youth leader, explains that the summer in training provided a window of learning that opened her eyes to the issues that were pressing on the community. The youth received training on community-building and economic justice, followed by a summer internship in which they were placed in a local nonprofit organization. All week, the young people were out in the community on their volunteer assignment. On Fridays they assembled back at the San Francisco Foundation where they heard speakers talk, for example, about the motivation for their work, what it is like to work in the Tenderloin district, or working in juvenile justice. Lauren, who is Asian American, told us about her own experience:

The placement I got was working in West Oakland, working with primarily African American and Latino population from age 5 to 13, and it was like a summer enrichment program. We provided crafts and lunch and outdoor activities. I think that helped me more than anything to see how different youth programs worked and to have that hands-on experience as a leader in a different community. It was very helpful to get a new perspective on how you work with new populations.

Part of the experience the youth leaders have is to be able to give out small grants and thus learn the ropes of fundraising. Reflecting on this experience, Lauren Quock says:

We also were doing research on nonprofit faith-based organizations that youth were in, and told them we had a small grant pool that we were going to be making a grant from at the end of the sum-

mer. That really gave me insight into how nonprofits get their funding, and how foundations play into the world of nonprofits.

Organizations that have received these summer youth interns also reported how helpful this has been for them. One such group is Manos Unidas from the Iglesia Presbiteriana de la Mision. Teresa Saucedo, the director, recounts:

Last year we actually got two interns. I'm not sure how we got so lucky! We had two who both just really added a lot to our summer program. Just real enthusiastic, on-the-ball kids that came in and took up some projects within the program, but also helped generate some enthusiasm with the other high school kids that were here through Horizon [another community program] who just kind of signed on, they were just looking for a job, and may or may not have an interest with kids, but I think it sort of infused some enthusiasm with all of the kids.

youth

CASE STUDY 5

Buena Vista United Methodist Church

Founded in 1898, more than one hundred years ago, Buena Vista United Methodist Church was a center of assistance for the Japanese immigrant community in Alameda at the turn of the century, a place for Japanese cultural activities. In the early part of the century, language classes were offered and social programs provided community identity in a time of social segregation for the first generation, or "Issei" pioneers. Organized sports programs and Japanese films were community activities developed as a new generation of "Nisei" or second generation children began to grow in the 1930's and continued into the next generation. The church has a photo gallery that documents the history of the congregation, including the last service before the evacuation of Japanese Americans in February of 1943. Most of the members of the church were re-located to Topaz, Utah, one of ten concentration camps established during the war. After the internment, the church served as a hostel, a place for regathering of the community. As Rev. Michael Yoshii, the senior pas-

tor says, "Many churches, both Buddhist and Christian, on the West Coast served as hostels after the War. Many lived in churches until they were able to find more permanent homes."

When Rev. Yoshii was appointed to the church in 1988, there were, in his words, "a dwindling" number of "Issei" and a handful of "Nisei" members now in their 70's, and hardly any of the younger generation. Today, with a membership of 170, the church is more pan-Asian, not just Japanese, but Chinese, Korean, and other ethnic groups. And it is also very inter-generational, with a recent influx of younger kids, families, and youth.

In response to a police scandal that erupted in Alameda in 1991, Rev. Yoshii convened a meeting of community citizens who wanted to take some action. This group became the Coalition for Alamedans for Racial Equality (CARE). After responding to the police issue, CARE worked with the school district to establish a district diversity initiative, and then later initiated a Multi-Cultural Student Relations Program. This program provides training for students in cultivating multi-cultural understanding, and has also added a mentoring

program, and an advanced training component. It has also started a parent outreach program to try to get parents involved in school issues. It was through exposure with the FAITHS Initiative that Rev. Yoshii sought funding from the San Francisco Foundation to provide seed funds to start this program. Youth from Buena Vista have also been involved in FAITHS Summer Youth Initiative. That program, along with initiatives through the denomination, has inspired the congregation to create its own youth initiative. Sponsored by Buena Vista's Community Development Program, the youth initiative focuses on faith-based Asian American youth development. Talking about the church's summer Youth Institute, Rev. Yoshii says, "Our first Institute included 5 interns and 12 youth participants. They were exposed to principles of faith and justice, Asian American identity, and exposure to youth organizing. They made visits to AYPAL [a local Asian youth organizing program], CISCO in Concord [a Latino youth organizing program], and field trips to various community locations including Japantown and Chinatown." While the first Youth Institute was only one week long, this past year the time frame was extended to three weeks to allow for more in-depth exploration. While the first year was exclusively church youth, this past year's group of

eleven interns was a majority of youth from the community. A core of these youth are now participating year round in an effort to establish an alternative counseling house for Asian youth and families. A small grant from the FAITHS Initiative was a catalyst in moving this program from the idea stage to reality.

Rev. Yoshii's closing remarks to us summarize his involvement with FAITHS: "Congregational life for a pastor is more than just about organizing, and more than about justice. It's about a whole framework of community life from birth to death and beyond. And that's the beauty of being a part of a community of faith. It includes a broad stroke of all of human life, and that's where I, as a person and as a pastor, get my satisfaction. A direct benefit from being part of the FAITHS Initiative has been the benefit of receiving funding support which has expanded our capacity to do organizing in a way which both creates change in the community, and also builds new relationships for our congregations. I now have staff who can take on the detailed organizing work, which supplements my role as pastor while we expand our ability to serve the community."



Buena Vista United Methodist Church's Summer Youth Institute exposes youth to principles of faith and justice, Asian identity, and youth community organizing.

developing **leadership**
among the **youth**
in the congregations

youth



Children and young people participate in the Summer Youth Institute and other programs at Buena Vista United Methodist Church.

The **future** of every community
lies in its younger generation.

y o u t h

Bridging the divide between generations is
an important goal of Buena Vista.



Parents help out at the Summer Youth Institute, often bringing their babies, too!

youth

Conclusion

Religious institutions offer a unique configuration of specific resources that can be utilized in the process of community building. This is the experience of the two California faith initiatives that have been funded by local community foundations. These initiatives, one in the San Francisco Bay Area and the other in Santa Barbara County, have demonstrated that religious institutions are important assets for the development of California neighborhoods. No matter what size, denomination, or faith, these congregations usually have at least some space and facilities that can be used in the on-going process of community building. They also have a pool of people who are not only well-trained and educated but also have a variety of skills and interests which can be tapped for the community. Their leaders often provide the community with a visionary framework for the development of programs that promote social and economic justice. And, of course, neighborhood congregations have economic power within the community as they purchase supplies and materials locally and at times even invest substantial endowment funds into local community development projects.

The FAITHS Initiative in the San Francisco Bay Area was started because of the vision of one of the program officers of the San Francisco Foundation. Realizing the important role of religious congregations, Joe Brooks pulled together a group of clergy and religious leaders to see how the foundation could better support their own efforts at community building. The conclusion of that meeting was to establish the FAITHS Initiative and build a coalition of community stakeholders working together to address issues of importance to them. This small group of leaders representing approximately 15 different congregations has grown into a coalition of more than 350 congregations, nonprofit and other private and public organizations. In the first year, the San Francisco Foundation invested \$34,250 into this new effort. This allowed Joe Brooks to hire Dwayne Marsh as the director of the project. The foundation also allowed Brooks and Marsh to access the foundation's donors and get them to invest in this faith initiative. Donors gave an additional \$20,000 that first year which became the seed money for hosting workshops, convenings and other meetings and launch the initiative. This initial investment in 1994 has been leveraged to raise \$3.8 million from at least 22 other foundations.

Today the FAITHS Initiative has been fully integrated into the program of the San Francisco Foundation.

Further south in Santa Barbara County, another faith initiative was started in 1999 through the vision of the executive director of the Santa Barbara Foundation, Chuck Slosser. Noticing that religious leaders were absent from the meetings the foundation had been hosting to discuss, plan, and strategize for community development, Slosser began conversations with Richard Ramos, a local pastor who was also concerned about this obvious lack. Together they strategized for ways to bring these leaders to the table. With support from The James Irvine Foundation, the Santa Barbara Foundation provided an initial investment of \$225,000 for the project. Slosser hired Ramos to conduct a survey in order to determine a common issue that might bring them all to the table. Based on the results of this survey, the Faith Initiative of Santa Barbara County was founded to initially address the issue of affordable housing. At least 50 different congregations, nonprofit, public and private organizations have been meeting regularly to advocate and work on affordable housing. Today, though it is still a recipient of foundation funds, this faith initiative is independent of the foundation.

These two initiatives, one large and the other small, one fully integrated in the community foundation, the other independent, one addressing multiple issues the other focusing primarily on one issue, are examples of creative, grass-roots ways that foundations can invest in their communities. This report illustrates the important ways in which the initiatives are working with religious organizations to create change. Our research has identified four major areas where these coalitions have been successful:

Networking and connecting people to one another. These interfaith coalitions are important places where people of different religions can come together not just to work on a problem, but to learn from each other, to gain understanding of other religions and ethnicities, and to connect for political and social change in the community. Our report gives many examples of the important role of working together. The social net that is created when people realize that they are not alone, that there are other resources they can tap into, and that there is no need to reinvent the wheel becomes a strong reason for continued gathering.

Building the capacity of the religious institutions. Both initiatives are firm-

ly rooted in the belief that if you build the capacity of the members, much more can be accomplished towards meeting the goals and objectives of the group. Thus, the leaders of the interfaith coalitions come alongside the members, listening, talking, and discovering what the expressed needs are. Then they work together to meet those needs. Often this involves providing technical assistance and support. Sometimes technical assistance is not enough and less-experienced organizations can be coached by the more experienced ones by getting involved in a mentoring relationship. At times what is needed is more sophisticated professional development. This is often accomplished by providing workshops with experts such as government decision makers and planners, or economic specialists, who can educate and provide a forum for dialogue. These workshops and seminars also serve to educate and inform civic leaders about the important role that religious institutions can play in the strategic plans for the community. Unlike traditional community organizing, these faith initiatives are more collaborative with government officials and less confrontive. This opens the door for dialogue and cooperation in working towards solutions that meet the needs of people in the community. Finally, these two coalitions serve to build the capacity of community religious institutions by providing a forum for racial understanding and communication. Many of the problems that are encountered in the community have racial and ethnic oppression at their very root. Thus these faith initiatives work toward breaking down the barriers that separate people and this helps strengthen the entire community.

Providing and Leveraging Funds. Another important distinguishing factor between traditional community organizing and the faith initiatives that are reported here is that these initiatives are funded by the community foundations in a way that other organizing efforts are not. The FAITHS Initiative in San Francisco remains a part of and thus completely funded by the San Francisco Foundation and the funds they are able to raise from other foundations. They also make grants to coalition members, and although many of these grants are small, they have made a big difference in the programs the organizations have established in the community. Thus the foundation does not have to worry about re-granting but can allow the FAITHS staff to handle these grants, providing an easier and more effective way to give to grassroots organizations.

FAITHS and the Faith Initiative of Santa Barbara County work with the community organizations teaching them how to leverage funds from the foundation world. Participation in these coalitions helps the individual members understand how foundations operate, what they tend to look for, and what types of projects they support. Leveraging funds and other resources for the faith communities has been a means for brokering relationships between these communities and the philanthropic community. It has developed into a mutual dialogue as other foundations also see the importance of supporting these initiatives. This is evident by the approximately 22 foundations that have provided grants to the FAITHS Initiative alone.

Developing Youth Leadership. The future of every community lies in its younger generation. Developing leadership among this group of people is important for the sustainability of efforts congregations are making in their communities. Thus these initiatives play a role in providing programs where young people can learn the nuts and bolts of community organizing and gain experience crossing racial and ethnic barriers to work for the common good. At FAITHS these youth leaders have even been able to learn the ropes of fundraising and the world of grantmaking. Such experience bodes well for the future of the congregations these young people attend. Already, one of these congregations has established its own youth initiative patterned after the FAITHS model to continue this leadership development.

Do we believe that community foundations can have a positive role in building the social capital of communities by establishing and funding faith initiatives? The answer is a resounding YES! The stories in this report attest to that. We believe that both the San Francisco Foundation and the Santa Barbara Foundation have taken bold steps forward in making sure that their communities are ones where all voices have a place at the decision-making table. We encourage other community foundations to examine their own portfolios and find new and creative ways of building their own communities through interfaith coalitions such as these.

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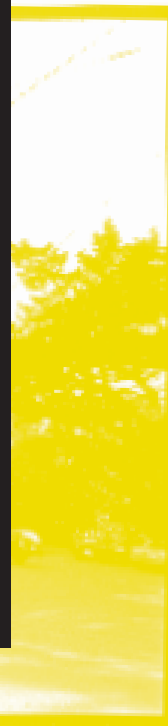
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Religious Communities
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