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FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY ORGANIZING: THE STATE OF THE FIELD

A report of the findings of a national survey conducted by Interfaith Funders, Jericho, NY

Co-authored by Mark R. Warren and Richard L. Wood [\(1\)](#)

January 2001

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All the above individuals contributed significantly to the success of the project and to the findings reported here.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY ORGANIZING: THE STATE OF THE FIELD

Co-authored by Mark R. Warren and Richard L. Wood⁽¹⁾

A report of the findings of a national survey conducted by Interfaith Funders, Jericho, NY

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I. Introduction: the Democratic Promise

Faith-based community organizing (FBCO) strives to make a powerful contribution to American democracy. The groups involved in faith-based organizing seek to strengthen public life by grounding democratic action primarily in the faith institutions that structure the daily lives of families and communities. Faith-based community organizations (FBCOs) work to develop the leadership that emerges from these institutions, and from other organizations like schools and unions, into effective leaders for their communities. FBCO groups seek to build effective power for organized communities to unleash their energy and creativity toward shaping public policy that best meets community needs. While many FBCO groups concentrate their work in low-income communities of color, their vision goes farther. They seek to bring diverse

communities together to expand participation and cooperative capacities in the public sphere. This report assesses FBCO's accomplishments in meeting these ambitious goals thus far, and considers the future challenges facing the field. More broadly, we hope this report will foster a deeper understanding of faith-based organizing among funders, scholars, and other observers; and further reflection and long-term strategizing among organizers and other participants in the field.

II. Research Design

The report summarizes the results of a survey of all local, faith-based community organizations that we were aware of and that were active in the United States in 1999. FBCOs generally follow a model created by Saul Alinsky in the 1940s and developed by the Industrial Areas Foundation through the 1970s. They share a common set of characteristics, as discussed in the report: interfaith, broad-based, locally constituted, multi-issue and nonpartisan. Only organizations that practice this model of faith-based community organizing, and are currently functioning, that is, have an office address and a paid organizer on staff, were included in the survey. Although groups were asked about their collaboration with others at state and regional levels, we did not directly survey any statewide or regional organizations, with one or two exceptions. Of the 133 local organizations identified by these criteria as constituting the universe of the field at that time, 100 responded to the survey.

We asked respondents, typically the lead, that is, head organizers, a series of questions regarding their institutional membership, funding, staff, leadership training, and governing boards. Using answers from the 100 organizations that responded, we estimated figures on these issues for the field as a whole and present our findings in Sections III-IX and Tables 1-8. The second part of the survey consisted of nine open-ended questions, again answered by lead organizers, on the following topics:

- collaborative projects;
- outreach efforts to religious constituencies and social groups less commonly involved in this model;
- experiences in electoral politics, social service provision, or economic development;
- issues the organization has addressed or hopes to address in the future;
- internal challenges the field faces in addressing those issues;
- diagnosis of the current state of the field; and
- the possible role(s) of Interfaith Funders in advancing the field.

We summarized our findings from the responses to these questions into four subject areas and present them in Sections X-XIII.

III. Overview of the Field

Faith-based community organizing is a national phenomenon that extends a significant reach into American congregations and communities. The 133 local FBCOs are active in 33 states

and the District of Columbia. Six states, California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and Ohio, claim half of the organizations. The other half reside in 28 states representing all other regions of the United States.

The FBCO field includes about 4,000 member institutions, of which 87% are religious congregations, and 13% are non-congregational institutions (NCIs) like unions, public schools and a diverse array of other community organizations. The religious congregations involved represent between 1 and 1.5% of all congregations in the country. Depending on how we estimate the size of these congregations, FBCO reaches between 1 and 3 million people, and a smaller number who are involved through unions, schools, and other institutions. This should be considered significant since historically, very few organizations have ever incorporated more than 1% of Americans into their membership. We estimate the leaders of FBCO to include nearly 2,700 people serving on governing boards, and roughly 24,000 core leaders actively engaged at any one time through the work of 460 professional organizers. Their combined efforts drew an estimated 100,000 people to at least one large public action over the 18 months leading up to the survey, which should be understood as a minimum figure for active support for the field's organizations.

We trace the age and geographic spread of FBCO from early concentrations in the Southwest Central region (including Texas) and the Pacific coast to its current extension through most of the country. We also discuss the variation in size of FBCO groups and compare newer to older organizations. Most organizations are fairly young, with half founded since 1991, including 41% founded since 1994. We conclude that FBCO is rapidly growing and that the trend is toward larger organizations working in broader geographic areas.

IV. Engaging Religious Communities in Public Action

FBCO groups have engaged a wide variety of religious congregations in public action to improve their communities. Catholics make up about 33% of the congregations, while Baptists (including Missionary) hold about a 16% share. The survey showed a varied representation of liberal and moderate Protestant denominations including, in order of concentration from highest to lowest, United Methodists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists (UCC); together, these make up about 33% of congregations. Assuming the Baptists are mostly black, which we surmise from observations of the field, the three clusters of religious communities that make up the core of FBCO are Roman Catholic, black Protestant, and liberal/moderate Protestant denominations. There is some wider religious presence as well, with Jewish, Unitarian Universalist, and black evangelical (mostly Church of God in Christ) congregations each constituting 2% of the member congregations.

The survey also reveals who is not participating at significant levels in FBCO. White evangelicals and fundamentalists are noticeably absent, considering their prominence in American society. A cluster of theologically conservative Protestant denominations including, for example, Assembly of God, Nazarene, Apostolic and Wesleyan, constitutes less than 3% of the field's congregations. The participation of Jewish congregations at less than 2% might be

considered low, given the historic importance of Jewish participation in social justice efforts. Meanwhile, non-Christian congregations other than Jewish and Unitarian Universalist constitute less than 1% of the congregations in the field; yet Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu congregations are growing in importance in urban America. We discuss outreach by FBCO groups to these religious communities in section XI of the report.

V. Expanding the Base: The Participation of Non-congregational Institutions

Since FBCO groups are largely composed of religious institutions, their increasing ability to draw other kinds of institutions into public action is significant. Such efforts expand the membership base of FBCO and foster new forms of public collaboration between congregations and secular based institutions. Non-congregational institutions (NCIs) now represent nearly 13% of all member institutions in the field; 42% of these are public schools, 15% are labor unions, 7% are neighborhood associations, and the remaining 36% include a diverse array of community organizations. Participation of non-congregational institutions is not evenly distributed across the field. More than half (57%) of all FBCO groups have NCIs in membership. For these groups, NCIs constitute a significant share of their membership at an average 18%. Typically, groups work with one type of NCI. Details about this finding and the geographic patterns of NCI membership are discussed in the report.

VI. Bringing New Constituencies into Participation and Fostering Interracial Cooperation

Another strength of faith-based organizing is its ability to bring Americans from a variety of racial groups and new constituencies including new immigrants into collaborative public action on behalf of their communities. The FBCO field is remarkably diverse, especially given the racial segregation of American social and political life. Institutions whose membership is predominantly white/Anglo make up 36% of all member institutions, predominantly African-American institutions comprise about 35%, and predominantly Hispanic institutions about 21%. Interracial institutions - those that do not have one predominant racial/ethnic group - make up most of the rest with nearly 6.5% of the total. Meanwhile, predominantly Asian institutions are barely present, at just over 1%, and even less so are Native American institutions, at only .02%. Meanwhile, a significant number of immigrant communities are involved in faith-based organizing. Almost 11% of all institutions that are members of FBCO are predominantly immigrant in composition. Of those immigrant institutions, 57% are Hispanic.

The organizations themselves are somewhat less racially diverse than the field taken as a whole. About one-tenth are composed entirely of institutions that are predominantly of the same racial group, e.g. all white, all black or all Hispanic. About two-fifths have institutions of predominantly one racial group in dominance. About half of FBCO groups are each composed of a racially diverse group of member institutions. The survey suggests that faith-based organizations are becoming more internally diverse since younger organizations tend to be more racially diverse than older ones. The racial diversity of FBCO is discussed further in regard to the governing boards in Section VII and organizing staff in Section VIII.

VII. Promoting New Leadership

One of the highest priorities for faith-based community organizations, and one of the most important contributions they make to democratic life is engaging and developing new leadership. The survey reveals that thousands of people are involved in FBCO groups and trained through their work. Most leaders are trained at the local level, but the four large FBCO networks (Industrial Areas Foundation or IAF, Pacific Institute for Community Organization or PICO, the Gamaliel Foundation, and Direct Action and Research Training Center or DART) also train about 1,600 leaders yearly at national, multi-day training sessions. The survey did not collect data on the composition of those trainees, nor on those regular participants we call the core leaders of the FBCO groups. However, we do report on the composition of the 2,700 members of the governing boards of FBCO groups, their official leaders. Just over one-quarter are clergy and about three-quarters are lay people. The board members are almost equally divided between men and women, and are quite diverse racially. About 43% of governing board members are white, 32% are black, and 21% are Hispanic. Only 2% are Asian, and Native Americans are largely absent. There is not so much diversity in the age composition of governing boards; members of these boards are generally middle-aged or older.

VIII. Creating an Infrastructure of Organizers

A critical task for FBCO has been the development of a corps of trained and seasoned professional organizers. Organizers play the critical role in recruiting and training the field's leadership, and preparing them to be effective public leaders for their communities. The survey reveals that the FBCO field has taken important strides toward fostering a fairly large, experienced and diverse group of organizers.

Faith-based community organizations do their work with small paid staffs. A majority employ only one or two organizers, but many have three or four, and several have up to eight organizers. The 460 paid organizers in the field as a whole have, on average, worked for their current local organization for about three years, and for their current network for six years. Moreover, quite a number have many years of experience. Almost 20% of organizers are significantly experienced with at least 10 years in faith-based community organizing, and perhaps more years of other organizing experience before that. Nevertheless, the majority (57%) of organizers are less experienced having begun work for their network within the five years prior to the survey.

Professional FBCO organizers are fairly diverse racially, religiously, and on gender lines, but few are young. Half are white, nearly 29% black, and 16% Hispanic. Asians make up 2.7% of the staff with Native Americans at less than 1%. Catholics make up 36% of organizers, with most of the rest from a variety of Protestant denominations. About 6% are Jewish. About 56% of FBCO organizers are men and 44% are women, but men are much more likely to be supervisors, with 43% of male organizers, and less than 20% of female organizers holding supervisory roles. White organizers are much more likely to be supervisors than black or Hispanic organizers, with the Asian, Native American and mixed groups too small for meaningful

comparison. A partial explanation might be that white and male organizers have been working in their networks for two to three years longer than the other groups. The overall picture that is suggested by the survey is the transformation of the organizing staff of FBCO from a largely white, male group to one that increasingly includes people of color and women.

IX. Securing a Financial Base

One of the critical challenges facing the field is securing an adequate financial base to support its work, that is, to pay for salaries of professional organizers, basic organizational overhead and costs for extended training for leaders. Leadership development takes time and requires a long-term investment.

The survey reveals that faith-based community organizations conduct their work with modest financial resources; the median annual budget of these organizations is \$150,000. Faith-based organizations draw upon several sources for their income: (1) membership dues at 22%, (2) Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) at almost 19%, (3) other faith-based funders at just over 12%, (4) private foundations and corporations at nearly 30%, and (5) local fundraising at about 5%. Funding from membership dues is a priority because this protects the organization's integrity and keeps it focused on members' goals. Newer FBCO groups rely heavily for initial funding on CCHD, from whom they receive an average of 24% of their budgets.

X. Collaborative Work Beyond the Local Organization

The report discusses three kinds of collaborations beyond the local FBCO: *network*, *cross-network*, and *local area collaborations*.

Network collaborations, with sister organizations in a single network, are fairly common and increasingly important in the field, as they have helped FBCOs deal with more complex issues and work in the broader statewide and regional political arenas. As described by one organizer:

We're very involved in the [network's statewide project]. That project really energizes our people. They get challenged and stimulated at a new level, and get to experience a bigger power arena that they've not experienced otherwise and that works differently from the local arena. They bring back new energy, new ideas to our local organization, plus new research and strategies.

Some organizers see an emerging need for *cross-network collaboration*:

Networks could be brought together by a focus on going up against bigger targets. For that, we need more power, have to work together. If all you're doing is civic improvements, then you're not going to need different kind of allies. Those things are important, but they don't demand that you really pull together bigger allies, other networks. It's not happening anywhere in the U.S.

As this organizer notes, such efforts are rare, having been thwarted by historic rivalries and relative isolation of organizers within their networks. One exception and enlightening quotes from organizers, pro and con, will be presented in Section X of the report.

Local area collaborations, also common, are joint efforts with other community groups, most often labor unions, universities, and in some areas, public schools. Though not as institutionalized as network collaborations, local area collaborations offer rich potential for strategic growth. Collaborative efforts with labor unions include a broad cross-section of the union movement and vary from strategic labor-community alliances to transitory conversations focused on a specific issue. Organizers see strong potential as well as difficulties in this work:

Labor collaboration has been very positive and fruitful. [Local labor council] has been impacted culturally by their relationship with us in terms of their operation of meetings, [which are now] shorter, more on time, have relational components. This has changed labor's vision of "church people". We worked together with [a labor local] to create a training program for workers that recruits trainees from our institutions. Church leaders from our organization are beginning to become actively involved in supporting labor organizing campaigns.

The difficulties cited by organizers focused on the contrasting cultures of the two forms of organizing:

The negative [in working with unions] is also organizational culture They're more into mobilizing people than organizing people, tend to be more staff-driven than leader-driven, like we are. They'll have all these business reps that operate like our leaders, but are paid staff.

Relationships with universities vary from policy analysis by individual professors to ambitious evaluation research of FBCO efforts, to joint efforts that are partially institutionalized. Relationships with public schools primarily revolve around education reform efforts, and can be long or short-term, depending on the issue and constituencies involved. All of these collaborations afford FBCOs opportunities to extend their reach, magnify their visibility and broaden their constituency.

Collaborations broaden our base and bring some expertise on deeper issues that we can't get ourselves, like economic development. But often they don't understand our model. There's some tension around how we approach action. [Minister's organization] doesn't like our conflict orientation, don't [sic] understand it. Also, our most precious resource is our leaders' time, and these kinds of collaborations, if we don't do them well, can squander that. So we have to evaluate the pros and cons of each one... You can't never [sic] collaborate, there are too many benefits to it, but you can't collaborate blindly, either.

Thus, the challenge with collaborations is to stay focused on the stated common issue, clearly abide by limits on expenditures of organizational resources, and to be discerning about selection of collaborative projects. Such collaborations offer rich potential for strategic growth in faith-based organizing, but organizers must be careful not to squander time or organizational focus on collaborations that are going nowhere.

XI. FBCO's Experience with New Religious and Social Constituencies

FBCO lead organizers say they are reaching out to new constituencies beyond the Roman Catholic, historically black, and liberal/moderate Protestant churches that continue to provide the institutional core of the field. Such new constituencies include both religious groups and new social sectors. The most common such outreach efforts are to evangelical or Pentecostal congregations, Jewish congregations, and new immigrant groups, with about half of all FBCOs reporting contact with each of these. Though these efforts clearly vary in intensity, the following generalizations appear to be warranted:

- Outreach to evangelical/Pentecostal congregations primarily involves work in African-American and Latino communities; so far, this has not increased membership of these congregations in FBCO organizations;
- Few outreach efforts to white evangelical churches exist, with the exception of the innovative efforts of Marilyn Stranske and Mike Miller through Christians Supporting Community Organizing (CSCO), a national organization working to engage evangelical and Pentecostal congregations in FBCO. Given the huge number of such churches in American society, this group represents a large and growing potential constituency, but one that may be difficult to draw into the field; and
- Outreach efforts to new social constituencies, especially a remarkable variety of immigrant communities, have been much more successful, at least in some areas of the country.

The outreach to new religious constituencies raises important questions of how best to bridge relations between traditions. One respondent summarized a successful approach as follows:

Our approach in board meetings, task forces, committee meetings has been to invite people to reflect and pray in their own faith traditions, and over time everybody gets exposed to a little bit of various traditions. At actions, in public actions, we ask people to use more universal language, or we'll have three or four different faith traditions pray at the same action.

The main report includes further analysis and quotes from organizers regarding outreach efforts.

XII. Areas of Engagement by FBCO

FBCO engages in a wide variety of issues, most frequently in the areas of public education reform, economy and labor, affordable housing, and policing and neighborhood safety. The

scope of issue work varies from "bread and butter" issues for local campaigns that might affect only one neighborhood, to coordinated statewide campaigns. Organizers were asked specifically about their work on economic development, social service projects, and electoral politics. They reported conflicting experiences with economic development and social service projects:

[It's had a] negative effect, due to the focus on programming. This takes lots of time away from the tasks of organizing. I'm not sure if we'll do any more of this.

As the initiator of [an anti-violence project], we gained credibility and respect in both the churches and the greater community. This effort helped [the organization] in its organizing initiative.

More broadly, organizers reported a wide variety of such projects, with benefits including new credibility and legitimacy and the opportunity to form new relationships and to achieve concrete results that improve local communities. But they noted the strong risk of distracting leaders and diverting resources from the core work of community organizing -- creating a vehicle for the organized exertion of democratic power. On balance, their tone was wary:

[The project] developed a name for itself, but over the last couple of years this has had a negative effect on the core organizing work as we have branched out into [other] issues. The cooperatives absorbed an inordinate amount of energy and moved the culture of the organization away from organizing. The organization has made a conscious shift back toward organizing as the core of their work.

Respondents reported limited engagement in traditional, non-partisan electoral work such as voter registration, get-out-the-vote drives, etc. Some described involvement in large-scale bond issues or in building broad, long-range issue agendas to which candidates were held accountable. For example:

We ran a school bond measure for \$195 million for repair and construction that got 79% of the vote... We've also been involved in others that lost. [Interviewer: Benefits and problems?] We won! We demonstrated to the political community that our organization knows how to do this; we got out of just protest politics and into the real political arena. But it's a driven kind of activity that doesn't develop leaders as much as local organizing.

Other reported successes included one organization sponsoring the first cross-racial political forum in their local area of the rural South and another having doubled the Hispanic vote in one city in the Southwest. Thus, when FBCO has gotten involved in electoral politics, it has sometimes had real benefits.

On balance, non-partisan political activities linked to electoral politics may represent a potent area for FBCOs to build power, but like social service projects they can become a debilitating

drain on core organizing activities. When they can be linked to core organizational interests and focus on areas for which participants have a great deal of ethical passion, such as electorally-centered activities may be inviting, strategic areas for leaders. Alternately, some FBCO leaders and organizers may choose to forego electoral strategies entirely.

Both development/social service work and electoral politics represent areas of strategic choice and significant experimentation within contemporary faith-based organizing. Participants might learn a great deal from one another's experience in both areas.

XIII. Strategic Self-Assessment

When asked about future issues on which they hoped to work, lead organizers most commonly mentioned public education, health care, regionalism, and living wages. They expressed satisfaction with their organizations' work, but have serious concerns about the question of scale.

Faith-based [organizing] is getting more potent, stronger, with increased expertise. The field is getting more complex and more potent in terms of value. The control of wealth and of electoral politics by a few is a challenge to faith-based work... Faith-based groups are in tension with the values of wealth and political control. This is why faith-based groups are so important.

[FBCO is] still primitive, emerging but primitive. We're doing some good things, but do not have the kind of sophisticated organizers across the board that we need.

Need to develop the ability to act regionally and on a statewide level in order to address metropolitan-wide issues and to impact policy and legislation which can only be changed on the statewide level. Need to figure out how to impact national policy making.

Thus, FBCO faces a series of strategic questions: Will the field be able to generate sufficient power to address the issues that, in the new economy, severely impact their constituencies? Will their spheres of influence be expansive enough to deal with decisions that affect their communities but are made at the regional, state, national and global levels? In reflecting on how FBCO can confront these challenges, organizers highlighted the need to address challenges of strategic vision, organizational capacity (both personnel and money), broader scale organizing around more complex issues, and greater cross-network contact. They offered rich and provocative insights into the nature of each need, detailed in the full report. Organizers also asked that those funding FBCO strive to strengthen the flow of resources to the field; take a stronger strategic role with other funders and, more controversially, with the networks; foster research useful to the field; promote research on FBCO itself; and help strengthen the recruitment, training, and development of professional, faith-based organizers. Some organizers

were quite reflective regarding the nature of the democratic dilemmas facing American society; for example, one noted:

The two institutions responsible for protecting the public square are the churches and the unions, the instruments of civil society that allow different values to play in the decisions that get made. Well, if you look at those two institutions, they have internalized the values of the market culture. So those very institutions are extremely weak.

The full report analyzes organizers' views of how faith-based organizing can address these dilemmas, and the challenges the field faces as it strives to do so.

XIV. Conclusion: Toward a Continuing Democratic Conversation

Faith-based organizing has come of age. [We are seeing] growth of new organizations and growing discussions of regional cooperation on organizing campaigns. We are building the potential to have real impact on our region, which is exciting. I believe that a limit of this approach to organizing is that we have a limited capacity to build toward larger social change as we focus on narrow, attainable goals. Longer term thinking about sustaining our organizations and building toward larger agendas is needed.

The report concludes with a summary of the findings of the survey with regard to the accomplishments of faith-based community organizing as a force for democratic renewal and the challenges the field faces to expand its scale and scope of organizing. We also offer a list of questions deserving further research and dialogue among stakeholders in the field, on the topics of: congregational development, outreach to new religious and social constituencies, recruitment of a talented and diverse organizer staff, collaboration, and political reform.

In regard to the accomplishments of faith-based community organizing, this report shows that FBCO represents one of the largest and most dynamic efforts to build democratic power, promote social justice, and strengthen public life in the United States today. FBCO has grown rapidly in the recent period and is now a truly national phenomenon with a broad reach into American congregations and communities. FBCO is one of the few forms of organizing in America that actively engages people in civic and political participation, training thousands of people in the skills of public leadership. It also offers one of the few venues in which Americans work together across racial lines, and does significant work with new immigrants. FBCO groups address an impressively broad range of issues important to the health and vitality of families and communities, doing so with modest financial resources.

While recognizing the important accomplishments of FBCO, we must also note the significant challenges it faces if it is to continue to grow in size and impact. In particular, FBCO groups need to broaden their base of organizing, and they need to achieve the capacity to leverage power beyond the local level, eventually to the national level. FBCO groups have begun serious

efforts to achieve these goals. They have endeavored to expand beyond their traditional base to work with a variety of non-congregational institutions like unions and schools, and to reach out to new religious and social constituencies. Many groups collaborate now at state and regional levels so that they can achieve more ambitious policy goals. Both of these processes need to continue and expand for FBCO to develop the power to confront large-scale economic and political institutions. Meanwhile, FBCO groups continue to struggle to acquire adequate funding for their work and a sufficient number of qualified organizers. FBCO will need to deepen staff training and continue to build strategic relationships with other institutional forces like unions. Recent experimentation in all of these areas offers promising directions for action.

In this regard, faith-based organizing faces a series of strategic choices about how best to accomplish these goals that will be crucial to the future of the field. In our view, the field can benefit from a broad and continuing dialogue both within faith-based organizing and with leaders from other institutional sectors. If the field can successfully address its challenges, FBCO promises to become one of the cornerstones of a more democratic future for all Americans.

MAIN REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION: THE DEMOCRATIC PROMISE

Faith-Based Community Organizing (FBCO) strives to make a powerful contribution to American democracy. The groups involved in the FBCO field seek to strengthen public life by grounding democratic action in the faith institutions that structure the daily lives of families and communities. They work to develop the leadership that emerges from these institutions into effective leaders for their communities. FBCO groups seek to build power for organized communities to unleash their energy and creativity to shape public policy that best meets their needs. While many FBCO groups find their work concentrated in low-income communities of color, their vision goes farther. They seek to bring diverse communities together to expand participation and cooperative capacities in the public realm. This report assesses the accomplishments made by FBCO in meeting these ambitious goals and considers the challenges FBCO faces. More broadly, we hope this report will help foster a deeper understanding of faith-based organizing among funders, scholars, and other observers, and stimulate reflection among organizers and other participants in the field.

FBCO finds its roots in the model for community organizing created by Saul Alinsky during his work in Chicago's stockyard neighborhoods in the 1930s. Alinsky sought to organize communities through their institutions, like churches and neighborhood associations, fostering active participation by those excluded from political power. Alinsky founded the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) as a training institute for his organizers. At the time of his death in the early seventies, the IAF had a few projects scattered throughout the country. The IAF then proceeded to systematize the training of organizers and establish permanent relationships with its local

projects. It also began to root its organizing more deeply and centrally in faith institutions and their values.⁽²⁾

Four national networks follow a faith-based community organizing model and structure the work of most FBCO groups: the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the Pacific Institute for Community Organization (PICO), the Gamaliel Foundation, and the Direct Action Research and Training Center (DART). Smaller, regional networks include the Organizing Leadership and Training Center (OLTC) in Massachusetts, the InterValley Project in the Northeast, and the Regional Council of Neighborhood Organizations (RCNO) in Philadelphia. In addition, some independent faith-based organizations are not affiliated with any national, regional, or local network.

The networks structure leadership training and typically coordinate staff development. Through these activities, the networks influence the work of local projects. Many networks also seek to coordinate strategy at state and regional levels. In fact, local organizations have worked together in their networks to pursue state level campaigns in such places as Texas, California, Louisiana, Arizona, Maryland, Florida, Minnesota, Massachusetts, and Colorado. Although the networks play an important role in structuring the FBCO field, this study did not seek to address their work. Moreover, although local organizations were asked about collaboration at state levels and in other ways, no direct information was received from state, regional or national organizations, with one or two exceptions.⁽³⁾

We use the term faith-based community organizing as the best way to describe the type of organizing conducted by all the groups in the field. We are aware that some participants think other descriptors best capture the nature of their work. Terms used by various organizing networks and observers highlight other shared characteristics. These include institutional organizing, values-based organizing, broad-based organizing, congregation-based organizing, and relational organizing. Whatever term is used, FBCO groups appear to share a common set of characteristics that make them distinctive, as follows:

- Faith-based: The membership of faith-based community organizations is drawn primarily from faith institutions like congregations. FBCO groups work hard to ground their organizing in the values and traditions that come from religious faith;
- Broad-based: FBCO groups strive to be as inclusive of the diversity of communities that make up their local organizing area as possible. They are typically interfaith, and many include in their membership schools, unions and a variety of other community-based institutions like neighborhood associations. To varying extents, they bring community leaders together across lines of race, income, and gender;
- Locally constituted: FBCO groups are locally constituted, conducting their organizing in areas that range from large neighborhoods to entire metropolitan areas. Although these groups are linked into the national and regional networks discussed above, their emphasis remains on local organizing;
- Multi-issue: The organizations are explicitly multi-issue. Their purpose is to train local leaders in how to effectively address pressing issues facing their communities, as the leaders determine them (in consultation with each other and with organizers);

- Staffed by professional organizers: FBCO groups hire professional organizers whose main responsibility is the recruitment and training of local leaders. The leaders work with the organizations on a voluntary basis. Using a relational organizing approach, organizers teach people how to build relationships within and across their institutions as a basis for public action; and
- Political, but nonpartisan: FBCO groups seek to exert power in the public arena based upon the strength of these relationships and their member institutions. The groups are usually incorporated as nonprofit 501-C (3) or 501-C (4) organizations.

Alinsky's model has evolved into an organizing approach increasingly capable of projecting power into the public arena. In recognition of the past accomplishments and future promise of FBCO, Interfaith Funders committed significant resources to undertake a national survey of the field. The research project was designed to offer a current assessment of the state of FBCO nationally, to map its growth and distribution, and to identify important issues facing the field. This report of the survey's findings will be widely disseminated in an effort to foster discussion and analysis among FBCO stakeholders and observers. It is Interfaith Funders' intention that the report will stimulate reflection about the challenges and opportunities faced by the field; provide a national lens through which to view practices, strategies, and impact; and supply a tool for sharpening practice and assessment of faith-based community organizing. We hope that discussion of the report's findings will help foster dialogue and build relationships among organizers, community leaders, funders, and scholars. Finally, we hope that broadly publicizing the study's findings will promote public understanding of faith-based community organizing and its potential to contribute to American society.

II. THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The report summarizes the results of a national survey conducted by Interfaith Funders of all local faith-based community organizing groups active in the United States in 1999. Interfaith Funders coordinated the development of the survey and the interview process, with consultation by scholars, funders and FBCO practitioners. The research project sought to identify all local organizations in the country that followed the model of faith-based community organizing described above and were currently functioning, that is, had an office address and a paid organizer on staff. By these criteria, projects that were still at an early stage of development or ones that had languished into inactivity were not included in the survey.

Using these criteria, researchers identified 133 organizations that they were aware of, that were operating in the FBCO field in 1999. Typically the most senior paid organizer on staff of the organization, the lead organizer, collected the information necessary to answer the survey questions. Then, Interfaith Funders board members and staff, or diocesan directors of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, called the organizers and filled out the questionnaire via telephone interviews. In some cases, organizers faxed information to the interviewer, including lists of member institutions and members of the governing boards, and demographic data on the local community. Respondents were asked about their organizations' participation in broader networks and partnerships of various kinds, but, with one or two

exceptions, no state, regional or national FBCO organizations were directly surveyed. Interfaith Funders assured all respondents that no results would be reported that could identify any particular organization or network, or its characteristics.

Of the 133 organizations identified as constituting the universe of the FBCO field, 100 responded to the survey. Although this response rate of 75% is fairly high by survey standards, we are left without information about the 33 organizations that did not participate. In addition, all organizations did not respond to all questions, leaving us with conclusions on some issues that were based on slightly fewer than 100 organizations, or cases. This situation is noted where relevant. In an effort to extrapolate the results from this survey to reflect patterns in the entire universe (all 133 groups in the field), a weight was created as the ratio of potential respondents to actual respondents, specific to network affiliation.⁽⁴⁾ This is the best procedure available to allow us to describe the FBCO field as a whole, but it is not perfect. We have to assume that the organizations that are not included have characteristics similar to those that are. This is a reasonable assumption, but not a perfect one. In addition, a number of organizations in the New York/New Jersey area did not participate in this survey; therefore, their characteristics and experience are not well represented in our description of the field.⁽⁵⁾

III. OVERVIEW OF THE FIELD

Faith-based community organizing is a national phenomenon. The 133 identified organizations in the FBCO field are active in most states across the country, as shown by [Figure 1](#) (following the [Questionnaire](#)). Thirty-three states and the District of Columbia have at least one local faith-based organization. Six states incorporate half of all of the organizations, and these states can be found across the country. The states with the highest numbers are California (19), Texas (11), New York (11), Florida (10), Illinois (8) and Ohio (8). For purposes of analysis in this report, we have divided the country into six regions.⁽⁶⁾ The number of FBCO groups in each region is as follows:

Northeast	35
Midwest	35
Pacific	23
Mountain	6
South	17
Southwest Central (including Texas)	17
Total	133

The locations of FBCO groups are taken from the known universe of all groups in the field. In everything else that follows in this report, however, figures for the field as a whole are estimated from the results received from the 100 groups that participated in the survey.

The FBCO field incorporates a large number of institutions, as about 4,000 institutions are official members of the organizations in the field. Of these, about 3,500 (or 87.5%) are religious congregations, while 500 (or 12.5%) are non-congregational institutions like unions, schools and other community organizations.⁽⁷⁾ The 3,500 congregations active in FBCO comprise between 1 and 1.5% of all congregations in the country.⁽⁸⁾ Depending on how we estimate the numbers of people who are members of these congregations, the FBCO field reaches between 1 and 3 million people.⁽⁹⁾ Scholars who have studied civic participation throughout American history note that very few organizations have ever incorporated more than 1% of Americans into their membership.⁽¹⁰⁾ Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that FBCO has achieved a significant size and a broad reach into American communities.

Thousands of people participate directly in civic and political action through faith-based community organizations. At the highest level of leadership of the local groups, about 2,700 people serve on their governing boards, and 460 professional organizers staff them. Beyond these officials, nearly 24,000 core leaders participate actively in FBCO organizations at any one time. Specifically, that is the total number of people who attended a task force, committee, or board meeting, or did work on an organizational project over a two-month period in 1999. Groups had an average of 178 each.⁽¹¹⁾

Organized public support for FBCO groups is significant. Respondents were asked for the number of people who attended the groups' three most recent organization-wide public meetings. These meetings were typically held within 18 months of the date the survey was conducted in 1999. In an effort to estimate the maximum support for the field, the highest figure reported from each group was summed, resulting in a total of over 100,000 people. The purposes of these meetings, however, varied between organizations. Many, perhaps most, have held bigger meetings. So this figure is not the highest measure of public support, but the best figure we have.⁽¹²⁾

The FBCO field is composed of organizations that are fairly young, and the field appears to be rapidly growing. The average founding date for faith-based organizations is 1991. This suggests that most FBCO groups are less than 10 years old. The oldest was founded in 1972, making it 27 years old at the time of the survey. Of the 133 organizations in existence in 1999, 10 were founded in the period 1972-1979, 11 in 1980-1984 and 17 in 1985-89. The pace of growth appears to have accelerated after 1990, as 40 were founded in the period 1990-1994 and another 55 were founded in the years 1995 to 1999. In other words, fully 41% of the FBCO groups operating in 1999 were founded after 1994 and 71% were founded since 1990, making them ten years old or less ([Table 3](#)).⁽¹³⁾

The survey results suggest that FBCO groups were more concentrated in the Pacific and Southwest Central regions in earlier periods and have been spreading more rapidly in the recent

period to the other regions.⁽¹⁴⁾ [Table 2](#) shows that organizations in the Southwest Central and Pacific are, on average, older than organizations in the other regions, based on their year of founding.

FBCO groups vary considerably in size. The average faith-based community organization has 30 institutional members ([Table 2](#)). [Table 3](#) shows that some are fairly small, with 37% having less than 20 members. About half have between 20 and 40 member institutions. Others are quite large; 11% have between 40 and 69 members, while a few have over 100. The largest has 230 member institutions. The survey also shows that newer organizations are typically larger than older ones ([Table 1](#)), suggesting that the average size of FBCO groups is increasing.⁽¹⁵⁾

Another measure of organizational capacity is the number of regular participants. On average, we reported above that faith-based organizations incorporate about 178 community leaders in regular participation. But [Table 3](#) shows that there is significant variation here as well. A few incorporated less than 20, while over a quarter involved more than 250 leaders.

Thirty percent of FBCO groups do their work with only one paid organizer. Another 27% have two organizers on staff. About 13%, though, have more than four organizers, with the maximum number being eight ([Table 3](#)).

FBCO groups also vary in their geographical scope of organizing, or what we have called their service area. Here, we also find that the survey suggests a shift over time ([Table 1](#)). The older groups tend to be organizing in city and metropolitan areas. The younger groups are more likely to do county or multi-county organizing. Admittedly, these units are imprecise. Moreover, some of the older organizations may have reorganized themselves to expand to larger territorial units; so the survey, if anything, probably understates the trend to larger scope.

In sum, the survey shows that FBCO is now a truly national phenomenon with a significant reach into American congregations and communities. The field emerged most strongly in the Pacific and Southwest Central regions, and spread through rapid growth in the 1990s. Large numbers of Americans participate actively in FBCO groups, which operate with small paid staffs. The trend is toward larger organizations conducting their work in broader geographic areas.

IV. ENGAGING RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN PUBLIC ACTION

FBCO groups have engaged a wide variety of religious congregations in public action to better their communities. As noted above, congregations provide the core institutional base for FBCO. As the community-level institutions that play such an important role in structuring social and political life have declined, congregations remain one of the most vital community centers. Yet, congregations have often remained focused on internal religious life, only relating to other community residents through acts of charity or service provision. One of the important accomplishments of FBCO groups is their engagement of the resources and rich community life of congregations in broader public action on behalf of community needs.

What kinds of religious communities participate in FBCO? As [Table 4](#) shows, Catholics make up about 33% of the congregations, while Baptists (including Missionary) hold about a 16% share. We also find a variety of Protestant denominations fairly well represented, including (in order of concentration from highest to lowest) United Methodists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists (UCC); together, these make up about 33% of congregations. Assuming the Baptists are mostly black, which we surmise from observations of the field, the three clusters of religious communities that make up the core of FBCO are Roman Catholic, black Protestant, and liberal/moderate Protestant denominations. There is some wider religious presence as well, with Jewish, Unitarian-Universalist, and black evangelical (mostly Church of God in Christ) congregations each constituting about 2% of the member congregations. [Table 4](#) also shows how the regions vary in denominational participation.

The survey also reveals who is not participating at significant levels in FBCO. White evangelicals and fundamentalists are noticeably absent, especially considering their prominence in American society. A cluster of theologically conservative Protestant denominations (including, for example, Assembly of God, Nazarene, Apostolic and Wesleyan) constitutes less than 3% of the field's congregations. Given the importance of Jewish participation in social justice efforts historically, the 2% figure for their participation might be interpreted as low. Meanwhile, non-Christian congregations other than Jewish and Unitarian-Universalists constitute less than 1% of the congregations in the field; yet Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu congregations are growing in importance in urban America. We discuss outreach by FBCO groups to these religious communities in Section XI of this report.

V. EXPANDING THE BASE: THE PARTICIPATION OF NON-CONGREGATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Since FBCO groups are largely composed of religious institutions, their increasing ability to draw other kinds of institutions into public action is significant. Such efforts expand the membership base of FBCO and foster new forms of public collaboration between congregations and secular based institutions. Non-congregational institutions (NCIs) now represent almost 13% of all member institutions in the FBCO field. Of the NCIs, schools represent about 42% of the total nationally, unions about 15%, and neighborhood associations nearly 7% ([Table 4](#)). A wide variety of other community based organizations make up the remaining 36% of NCIs. This diverse category includes housing cooperatives, civic organizations, community and economic development corporations, religious associations, etc.

The participation of NCIs is not evenly distributed across the field. Forty-three percent of FBCO groups have no NCIs as members. For those who do have NCIs in membership (57% of all FBCO groups), on average these institutions constitute about 18% of the group's membership, a fairly significant proportion. As seen in [Table 4](#), FBCO groups in different regions work with different types of NCIs. In the Southwest Central region (which includes Texas), schools make up almost all NCIs. They are also significant in the Pacific, Mountain and Midwest regions. Unions play a more significant role in the Northeast, Midwest and Mountain regions, while other community based organizations play more important roles in the Northeast, Midwest and Pacific

regions. The South has few NCIs. The small number of neighborhood associations in the field, though, tend to concentrate in that region.

[Table 3](#) reveals how certain types of NCIs are distributed among organizations. Fully 87% of faith-based organizations have no unions in membership. Only a very small percentage have more than three unions in their membership. Seventy-six percent have no schools as members, but some have sizeable school membership. Over 11% of faith-based organizations have more than five schools in their membership.

We can conclude that just over half of FBCO groups work in a significant way with NCIs. The field as a whole engages a variety of types of NCIs that are concentrated differently across the regions. Where NCIs constitute a substantial part of the base of FBCO groups, collaboration between faith and non-faith based institutions appears significant.

VI. BRINGING NEW CONSTITUENCIES INTO PARTICIPATION AND FOSTERING INTERRACIAL COOPERATION

Another strength of FBCO is its ability to bring Americans from a variety of racial groups, as well as new immigrants, into collaborative public action on behalf of their communities. American democracy suffers from a strong bias in participation toward the more affluent, while low-income communities of color still remain under-represented and disempowered. Moreover, few political organizations bring Americans together across racial lines to build relationships and work cooperatively. The survey reveals that FBCO has made some important strides toward these goals.

The FBCO field is quite diverse racially in its institutional membership, with white, black and Hispanic institutions all well represented. As revealed in [Table 4](#), institutions whose membership is predominantly white/Anglo make up 36% of all member institutions. Predominantly black institutions comprise about 35% of institutions, with those predominantly Hispanic about 21%. Interracial institutions, that is, those that do not have one predominant racial/ethnic group, make up the rest with nearly 6.5% of the total. Meanwhile, predominantly Asian institutions are practically absent, as are Native American institutions at only .02%. [Table 4](#) also shows how the participation of institutions with different predominant racial characteristics varies across the regions.

The FBCO field works to incorporate a significant number of immigrant communities. Almost 11% of all institutions that are members of FBCO are predominantly immigrant in composition ([Table 4](#)). Of those immigrant institutions, 57% are Hispanic, 17% white, 15% black, 6% Asian and 3% interracial.

Although the institutional membership of the FBCO field as a whole is remarkably racially diverse, especially given the context of marked segregation in American society, the picture is somewhat different if we look at the organizations themselves. Here we find that 9% of older and 12% of younger faith-based organizations are composed entirely of institutions that are

predominantly of the same racial group, e.g. all white, all black or all Hispanic ([Table 1](#)). Another 47% of older and 34% of younger organizations have institutions of predominantly one racial group in dominance, that is, comprising more than 60% of their membership. About 44% of older and 54% of younger organizations are composed of a racially diverse group of member institutions. The survey suggests that faith-based organizations are becoming more internally diverse since a higher proportion of younger organizations are multiracial compared to older groups, 54% to 44%.

VII. PROMOTING NEW LEADERSHIP

One of the most important contributions FBCO can make to democratic life is engaging and developing new leadership. The groups themselves give the highest priority to leadership development. Because of their emphasis on institutional and relational organizing, the leaders that emerge through FBCO are often well connected to their communities. The survey reveals that FBCO engages thousands of community leaders at various levels, and that this leadership is quite diverse along gender and racial lines.

We have several measures of the numbers of leaders engaged by FBCO groups. The four major networks supplied the numbers of leaders each has trained in multi-day training sessions at the national level in 1999. This total is 1,604 for all of the networks combined.⁽¹⁶⁾ FBCO groups emphasize training at the local level where many more leaders have been trained. But those who attend the national level training must make a sizeable commitment as they typically travel for up to ten days and pay some of the costs of the training and lodging.

We reported above that 24,000 core leaders participate regularly in FBCO groups, leading issue campaigns and organizational projects. We also reported that at least 100,000 supporters attend public actions of the groups on a fairly regular basis. FBCO groups generally refer to these people as leaders as well, in recognition of the fact that they have taken some action on behalf of their communities. We have no further information on the composition of those who attend public actions, of the core leaders, or of the trainees who attend national level network training programs. We do, however, have more detailed information on the composition of the governing boards of FBCO groups.

The governing boards of faith-based organizations include about 2,700 people. Although the meaning of board membership may vary across organizations, this is our best measure of the people who are the official leaders of the FBCO field. [Table 5](#) reveals that just over one-quarter are clergy and about three quarters are lay people. The board members are almost equally divided in number between men and women, although there are slightly more women.

The members of the governing boards, like the composition of the institutional membership of the field, are quite diverse racially ([Table 5](#)). About 43% of governing board members are white/Anglo, 32% are black, and 21% are Hispanic. However, only 2% are Asian and Native Americans are largely absent.

There is not so much diversity in the age composition of governing boards. The members of these boards are generally middle-aged. Most are in the forties or fifties, while less than 5% are under the age of 30 ([Table 5](#)). [Table 5](#) shows the regional distribution of governing board characteristics.

VIII. CREATING AN INFRASTRUCTURE OF ORGANIZERS

A critical task facing FBCO is the development of a corps of trained and seasoned professional organizers. The organizers recruit and train the leadership that emerges from the institutions in the field, preparing them to be effective public leaders for their communities. The survey reveals that the FBCO field has taken important strides toward developing a fairly large, experienced and diverse group of organizers, even if each particular FBCO organization functions with a small number.

FBCO groups do indeed perform their work with small paid staffs. As reported above, over half of the groups have only one or two organizers on staff. Several have seven or eight organizers on staff, but they are the exception ([Table 3](#)). Some organizers work part-time, and others have supervisory responsibilities. On average, organizers devote 87% of their time to local organizing work ([Table 6](#)).

Although each organization has a small staff, together they employ a total of 460 professional organizers. In addition, some of the networks have small numbers of supervisory and other organizing staff that operate at regional or national levels who were not included in this survey. The survey reveals that organizers have worked for their current local organizations for about three years on average, and for their network for an average of closer to six years ([Table 6](#)). Moreover, quite a number have many years of experience. Almost 20% of organizers started working for their network before 1990, giving them at least 10 years of experience in faith-based community organizing, and perhaps more years of other organizing experience before that. In contrast, fully 57% of organizers began work for their network within the five years prior to the survey. [Table 8](#) gives the range of years of experience of organizers in the field.

The survey suggests that many organizers entered the profession, or at least began working for their current network, in midlife. The average organizer is about 41 years old, but few are young. [Table 8](#) shows the age distribution of organizers. Only 16% are under the age of 30. Since a majority of organizers joined the field in the last 5 years, it is reasonable to conclude that FBCO recruits few young organizers.

The organizing staff operating in the FBCO field is fairly diverse racially ([Table 6](#)). Half are white, nearly 29% black and 16% Hispanic. Asians make up 2.7% of the staff with Native Americans at less than 1%. Although, historically, FBCO organizers have been thought of typically as white, the survey shows that this is no longer the case.

The organizers represent a diverse religious affiliation as well ([Table 6](#)). Thirty-six percent are Catholic, almost 12% are Baptist, and most of the rest belong to a variety of Protestant

denominations. About 6% are Jewish, which is higher than their proportion of the population as well as of the institutional membership of the field.

About 56% of FBCO organizers are men and 44% are women. [Table 6](#) examines organizer characteristics by gender. Here we find that of the organizers working for local FBCO groups, men are much more likely to be supervisors. Forty-three percent of men and less than 20% of women hold supervisory roles. These differences might be partially explained by the fact that men have been working for their networks for an average of two years longer than women.⁽¹⁷⁾

Looking more closely at the organizers working for local FBCO groups according to their race ([Table 7](#)), shows that white organizers are much more likely to be supervisors than black or Hispanic organizers, with the Asian, Native American and mixed groups too small for meaningful comparison. As with gender, this difference might be partly explained by the longer tenure held by white organizers, on average, with their network (almost seven years, compared with four or five years for black and Hispanic organizers respectively).

The overall picture that is suggested by the survey, then, is the transformation of the organizing staff of FBCO from a largely white, male group to one that increasingly includes people of color and women.

IX. SECURING A FINANCIAL BASE

One of the challenges facing the field is securing an adequate financial base to support its work, that is, to pay the salaries of professional organizers, cover training costs for leaders, and pay basic organizational overhead. Core funding to support long-term organizing in America's communities has proved hard to come by for many community-based efforts. Leadership development takes time and requires sustained investment. Moreover, protecting the integrity and independence of FBCO groups requires adequate attention to raising funds from those constituents who directly participate in its efforts.

The survey reveals that most faith-based community organizations conduct their work with modest financial resources. As shown in [Table 2](#), the median annual budget of these organizations is \$150,000. The survey, however, reveals a wide range of annual incomes, with the highest being close to \$700,000.

Faith-based organizations draw upon several sources for their income ([Table 2](#)). FBCO groups prioritize raising money from their own member institutions as a way to protect their integrity and keep the groups focused on the goals of their members. The survey reveals that, on average, about 22% of the income of FBCO groups comes from the dues of member institutions. The Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) provides another 19% of the income for the groups. Other faith-based funders together provide just over 12%. The contributions of private foundations and corporations were reported together in this survey, and, as such, supply nearly 30% of group funds. Local fundraising by the organizations adds another 5%.

Comparing newer and older organizations, [Table 1](#) reveals that newer groups rely heavily on CCHD as well as other religious foundations for initial funding. CCHD alone provides an average of 24% of their budgets. The older organizations rely less on religious foundations and more on private, secular foundations and corporations as well as local fundraising.

X. COLLABORATIVE WORK BEYOND THE LOCAL ORGANIZATION⁽¹⁸⁾

Lead organizers were asked to report on their experience collaborating with other organizations beyond the local FBCO, including other faith-based organizing efforts within their network or outside of it, labor unions, or outside organizations of any kind. Whereas the earlier discussion of

non-congregational institutions involved only those that were formal *members* of the FBCO, here organizers reported on ties to a broader array of institutions with which they sustain relationships. Overall, they reported an impressive number and variety of ties to outside organizations, but because of variations in interview depth, it is difficult to assess how substantial they really are. However, some clearly involve significant investments of time and relational work by organizers and leaders. We have grouped these collaborations into three types: *network, cross-network and local area*.

Network Collaboration: Relations within FBCO networks:

By far the most common extra-local ties are to other FBCOs within one organizing network. All the networks have institutionalized opportunities for building connections among local projects and between local organizers and supervisory personnel from the network (whose authority may be official or informal, depending on the setting). Thus, over a fifth of respondents noted they were engaged in some kind of regional collaboration, nearly all with others in their own network; and another fifth were engaged in a statewide collaboration of some kind. In both cases, these ranged from rather tenuous, exploratory conversations to full-blown statewide organizing drives. Local organizations have worked together to pursue state level campaigns in such places as Texas, California, Louisiana, Arizona, Maryland, Florida, Minnesota, Massachusetts, and Colorado. With one exception discussed below, each of these statewide campaigns occurred among groups within the same network. There are also regional or emerging statewide efforts underway in other states. In a variety of cases, these state and regional efforts have succeeded in projecting power in political arenas formerly out of reach of faith-based organizing, and re-directing public policy and resource flows there. As one respondent noted:

We're very involved in the [network's statewide project]. That project really energizes our people...They get challenged and stimulated at a new level, and get to experience a bigger power arena that they've not experienced otherwise and that works differently from the local arena. They bring back new energy, new ideas to our local organization, plus new research and strategies.

Organizers expressed some concern that regional efforts that focus on producing large actions may weaken local organizing work, and that a constant metro-wide focus weakens work in individual congregations, but generally, lead organizers are most enthusiastic about building collaborative ties within their own networks, to influence public policy in bigger political arenas than is possible solely from an organizing base within one local area. Further discussion and thoughts from organizers may be found under "Strategic Self-assessment" in Section XIII.

Cross-Network Collaboration: Ties to FBCO organizations beyond own network:

Few respondents reported any substantial contact with FBCO networks other than their own. The most substantial exception involves a collaboration between one network and an independent organizing project to affect regional development strategy in a large metropolitan area of the Northeast. Efforts to institute cross-network collaboration were reported in three cities, but these appear to have been short-lived. Other than this, the only ongoing contacts reported at the time of the interviews were occasional conversations between a few organizers who know one another personally, and sporadic efforts at courtship between the networks and independent organizing efforts. Generally, organizers' comments appear to reflect rather strong isolation within networks, and little knowledge about or understanding of other networks. In some settings, this isolation is exacerbated by norms against informal communication with outside organizers. In Section XIII, we discuss the call from some organizers for more contact with other networks. However, it is significant to note that when asked how important cross-network collaboration was, one lead organizer expressed strong hostility, at least to the idea of funders encouraging it:

It's a non-starter, irrelevant, pointless. Just help networks do a good job of finding organizers; leaders will do the collaboration when they see it in their interests... Power will attract power. We had tensions with the labor movement, but we're working with them now, because they had people and money and power. When they [other networks] see it in their interests, they'll come to us.

Given historic rivalries between networks and individuals, such attitudes are not uncommon, and are reinforced by relative isolation within the networks. Asked the same question, another organizer noted that as long as organizations focus solely on very local issues, there is little likelihood they will feel any great desire to work together:

Networks could be brought together by a focus on going up against bigger targets. For that, we need more power, have to work together. If all you're doing is civic improvements, then you're not going to need different kind of allies. Those things are important, but they don't demand that you really pull together bigger allies, other networks. It's not happening anywhere in the U.S.

However, as we will discuss later, at least in some places, faith-based organizing is already going up against bigger targets, and some organizers believe this is the path FBCO must take to effect systemic change in the future.

Local Area Collaboration: Organizational ties beyond faith-based organizing:

Recall that about 13% of FBCO member institutions are not religious congregations, as reported above. This includes about 2% of member institutions that are labor unions, about 5.5% that are public schools, about 1% that are neighborhood organizations; the remaining almost 5% are an array of community organizations of varying kinds. By this measure, as noted above, this field is truly dominated by religious congregations. However, these institutions often participate in FBCO in ways other than formal membership; the membership figures mask the significant involvement by these kinds of organizations. At this point, we broaden our lens to consider the role of non-faith-based institutions as non-member collaborators in faith-based organizing. Labor unions, universities, community colleges, and public schools all figure prominently in local area collaborations.

1. Unions

The majority of reported extra-organizational ties (i.e. *beyond* the respondents' own network) were to labor organizations. In addition to working with Central Labor Councils and State Federations affiliated with the AFL-CIO, faith-based groups collaborated with a wide variety of individual local unions from teachers to farm workers. Specific unions mentioned included: the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and their Justice for Janitors program; both national teachers unions, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT); the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) and the Communications Workers of America (CWA), which are now merging; the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW); Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union (HERE); the United Farm Workers (UFW); the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (UBC); and the Iron Workers. In all, the directors of 40% of the organizations claimed such ties, which again varied from transitory links to substantial collaborative efforts.⁽¹⁹⁾ Respondents varied in their stance toward these collaborations with labor, with some expressing strong appreciation:

Labor collaboration has been very positive and fruitful. [Local labor council] has been impacted culturally by their relationship with us in terms of their operation of meetings, [which are now] shorter, more on time, have relational components. This has changed labor's vision of "church people". We worked together with [a labor local] to create a training program for workers that recruits trainees from our institutions. Church leaders from our organization are beginning to become actively involved in supporting labor organizing campaigns.

The state AFL-CIO is a member of [our organization]. We are doing labor-clergy luncheons with them. Labor has opened up statewide organizing meetings to clergy. Next year the AFL-CIO and we will sponsor a training program for labor leaders and clergy... We have provided clergy for worker rights hearings. This relationship has helped our leaders understand some of the economic and work related issues more clearly.

Those lead organizers less convinced of the benefits of collaborating with labor unions generally focused on the contrasting cultures of the two forms of organizing:

The negative [in working with unions] is also organizational culture; they're more into mobilizing people than organizing people, tend to be more staff-driven than leader-driven, like we are. They'll have all these business reps that operate like our leaders, but are paid staff.

Labor organizations do not always see the need for focusing on relational work. Labor's focus is on campaigns and starting unions, versus talking face-to-face. Unions are out to get members, but not really getting people to envision what they want to engage on politically. The new union movement isn't really about a new, more radical vision. They [just] want a bigger market share.

Others spoke of what they saw as labor's desire to use FBCO support for their issues, without a corresponding willingness to place union support behind FBCO issues. "Labor hasn't been able to or hasn't turned out people for our actions."

One respondent synthesized his positive experiences this way:

When you mix labor and church people, the labor folks are clear that they're about people's incomes and standards of living. They bring that consciousness into the mix, help church people come down from the heavens, to see what people really are living, the nitty-gritty. Church folks are good on what else is happening in these people's life, it's not JUST about money, but also the schools in the neighborhood [and other issues]. It's the mixing of union and church that has all kinds of benefits.

Thus, collaborative relationships between FBCO and labor are quite diverse; it appears that this is an arena of significant potential growth, offering the possibility of expanding both FBCO's and labor's influence. However, taking advantage of this potential is likely to require extensive work and mutual learning, in order to build bridges between very different organizational cultures.

2. Universities and Community Colleges:

A second common collaborative relationship reported by lead organizers was with universities and other institutions of higher education:

We have connections with two universities and three community colleges. Both are working on economic development with us. Also, there's an academic service center through the Department of Education that services 60 school districts. This center assists students to pass the state college entrance exam.

Approximately 35% of organizations reported collaborations with universities and/or community colleges. These were of four distinct varieties: (1) the most common academic collaborations involved FBCO organizations drawing on academic expertise for evaluation research regarding projects in which the organization was engaged, such as community development corporations, housing initiatives, public school reform, etc. In some cases foundations had required outside evaluation research as a condition for granting funds; in other cases FBCO staff initiated this relationship for organizational evaluation; (2) some organizers have built ties to university faculty or to think tanks affiliated with academic institutions, in order to receive policy research relevant to a specific issue campaign like job training, school reform, healthcare, housing connected with the Community Reinvestment Act, etc. These policy development collaborations often went beyond simply using policy statements from such sources, to active collaboration in developing new initiatives, learning from prior efforts in other locations, and giving academics the opportunity to shape real world implementation of their ideas, etc.; (3) a smaller number of these relationships had been initiated by academics who wanted to study faith-based organizing; and (4) a few university-FBCO partnerships had been set up to provide technical expertise in a specific area to the organizing effort. For example, several such partnerships draw on community colleges to provide job training services for which the organization had fought, and a few organizations reported that local university-based academics had trained them in computer mapping (GIS) technology that had proven valuable in issue work around toxic waste sites and public school reform.

In assessing the value of these partnerships, organizers primarily cited the public credibility of academic expertise, the new ideas that academic institutions brought to the relationship, assistance from individual faculty members in refining the organization's stance on particular issues, and referral of university students as potential new organizers. Most organizers spoke of these partnerships in utilitarian terms, focusing on ways in which academic institutions and faculty can be useful to the organizing; relatively little was said about faculty as dialogue partners or about the role of universities in fostering public dialogue.

3. Public Schools and Other Community Organizations:

Finally, organizers reported an array of contacts or collaborative relationships with non-member organizations too varied to be reasonably grouped. The most common of these were public schools, parent-teacher associations, and other groups connected to schools. Note that, whereas school *members* of FBCOs are heavily concentrated in Texas (with 67 of the 117 FBCO-member public schools located there), collaborative *ties* to schools were widely reported by organizations throughout the country. These ties revolved around efforts to reduce class size, provide all-day kindergarten, create smaller schools-within-schools, enhance school-to-work transition programs for high school students, bring high technology vocational

programs into the schools, expand after-school programs, reduce institutional discrimination against children of immigrants, oppose the elimination of bilingual education, provide a safer school environment, and build or better fund public libraries and athletic facilities. As this partial list suggests, such collaboration with schools, parents, and school-related groups are a common tactic when FBCOs engage in issues related to public education.

Other community organizations collaborating with FBCO as non-members included Chambers of Commerce, Community Development Corporations, hospitals, community foundations, the Center for Community Change, environmental groups, neighborhood youth groups, Democratic Clubs, immigrant organizations, ACORN, job cooperatives, and Farm Bureaus; and local chapters of the NAACP, Urban League, Sierra Club, League of Women Voters, Habitat for Humanity, Legal Services Corporation, and Catholic Charities.

Thus, labor organizations, universities, and public schools represent the vast majority of non-congregational, non-member institutions collaborating with FBCOs (though religious congregations continue to provide the core institutional base for this movement). Overall, the respondents saw collaborative relationships beyond their networks as potential sources of real benefits, but also as entailing great risks of wasted time, energy, and resources:

Collaborations broaden our base, and bring some expertise on deeper issues that we can't get ourselves, like economic development. But often they don't understand our model. There's some tension around how we approach action. [Minister's organization] doesn't like our conflict orientation, don't understand it. Also, our most precious resource is our leaders' time, and these kinds of collaborations, if we don't do them well, can squander that. So we have to evaluate the pros and cons of each one... You can't never [*sic*] collaborate, there are too many benefits to it, but you can't collaborate blindly, either.

Collaborations can waste a lot of time. The challenge is to be very, very focused and NOT to be seduced by meaningless panels, boards that go nowhere with no action, even if they're well meaning.

Lastly, organizers in rural areas and smaller cities noted that organizing efforts located outside of major metropolitan areas have fewer opportunities for collaborative relationships with other organizations. They suggested the need for wider exposure and more networking opportunities.

Summary:

Though local religious congregations remain the core institutional sponsors of faith-based organizing, two kinds of collaborative efforts beyond the local FBCO are common: *network collaborations* and *local area collaborations*. With a few exceptions, nearly all network collaborations are within a single FBCO network; that is, most FBCOs are members of a national or regional network, and collaborate with other members of that network in training

organizers and leaders, formulating policy analysis, developing strategy, and doing regional or statewide work.

Local area collaborations are not institutionalized to the same degree as network collaborations, but are relatively common, and consist mainly of efforts with labor unions, universities, and, in some areas, public schools. Projects with labor include a broad cross-section of the union movement and vary from long-term, labor-community alliances to transitory conversations around a specific issue. Relationships with universities vary from policy analysis by individual professors, to ambitious evaluation research of FBCO efforts, to partially institutionalized FBCO-university collaborations. Such collaborations offer rich potential for strategic growth in faith-based organizing, but organizers must be careful not to squander time or organizational focus on collaborations that are going nowhere.

XI. FBCO's EXPERIENCE WITH NEW RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL CONSTITUENCIES

The core constituency of FBCO efforts has traditionally been made up of heads of families who are members of urban Roman Catholic, historic black Protestant, and liberal/moderate Protestant congregations. As discussed earlier in this report, these constituencies remain core to FBCO today. However, in an effort to broaden their impact, faith-based organizers in some areas have reached out to new constituencies in recent years. The lead organizers interviewed were asked about their efforts to work with evangelical, fundamentalist, and Pentecostal Christian congregations; Jewish congregations; other non-Christian congregations; and immigrants, parents, workers, and youth, i.e. as members of these groups, rather than simply as members of congregations.

New Religious Groupings:

Recall that Jewish, Unitarian Universalist, other non-Christian, and evangelical/fundamentalist/Pentecostal Christian congregations combined make up less than 12.5% of the congregations involved as *members* in FBCOs.⁽²⁰⁾ Again, we broaden our lens to consider other non-membership forms of involvement from these religious sectors.

When prompted regarding Jewish and evangelical/Pentecostal/fundamentalist involvement in organizing, a large number of lead organizers said such congregations were indeed involved, at least to some degree. Forty-seven percent of organizers interviewed noted some contact with Jewish congregations and 56% noted some contact with evangelical or Pentecostal congregations. Very few claimed contact with congregations identified as "fundamentalist." Less than 12% reported no contact with any of these groups. It is difficult to assess precisely how substantive this involvement may be, however. As noted earlier, some Jewish congregations (less than 2%) participate as full members of FBCOs, but the language used by lead organizers in the open-ended questions was often that of being "in conversation" with Jewish congregations in their area. Though most of these contacts appear to be with Reform or

Conservative synagogues, several noted they were in conversation with Orthodox synagogues, but again, it is hard to assess how important a dialogue this may be at present.

The extensive number of contacts reported with evangelical and Pentecostal Christian churches suggests that lead organizers recognize the significance of this burgeoning sector of the American religious spectrum. These Pentecostal and evangelical churches appear to be primarily African-American, especially Church of God in Christ and Latino congregations, and less frequently, white evangelical congregations. This may partly stem from the fact that white evangelical congregations tend to be located in more affluent neighborhoods or in the suburbs, but some respondents also suggested that these churches: (1) have less fully developed the social dimension of Christian teaching; or (2) have memberships with different economic or political interests. Several respondents, mostly in southern California, reported that their organizations were working with Christians Supporting Community Organizing to engage evangelical and Pentecostal pastors and lay leaders in organizing.⁽²¹⁾

Respondents noted potential benefits and significant obstacles to collaborating with evangelical or Pentecostal churches, whether minority or white. Among the benefits cited were the scriptural fluency common in these churches, the fact that they "bring lots of diversity" to an organization, and the belief that evangelicals "are less likely [than other church-goers] to explain away the demands of scripture if they understand those demands." Organizers reported that the most significant obstacle to working with these strands of Christianity was the theological or cultural divide separating them from FBCO. They said these churches "tend to be otherworldly," "do not have much trust of us," do not see this work as "part of their definition of their mission," or "see no need to hold systems accountable." A few noted that evangelicals sometimes feel marginalized by the Catholic and liberal/moderate Protestant culture that has been central to faith-based organizing, and one noted that his organization lost some evangelical members due to the fact that some member churches accepted gay and lesbian members or had female pastors. One organizer summed up the experience of working with these congregations in these terms:

It takes two or three years to build trust, overcome the distrust across interfaith lines. Evangelicals and Pentecostals have lots of distrust about interfaith work, and about the word 'interfaith.' Jewish congregations have distrust of being involved in anything that seems Christian-dominated. They have lots of sensitivity to the language that's used, to the religious cultural stuff that's used. Our approach in board meetings, task forces, committee meetings has been to invite people to reflect and pray in their own faith traditions, and over time everybody gets exposed to a little bit of various traditions. At actions, in public actions, we ask people to use more universal language, or we'll have three or four different faith traditions pray at the same action.

The question of how to combine faith traditions in one organization becomes even more pointed given the remarkable diversity of congregations represented in faith-based organizing. In addition to the religious communities discussed above, lead organizers reported having done

outreach, sought membership, or held exploratory conversations with the following traditions (with rough counts in parenthesis): Islam (23), Unitarian Universalist (10), and Buddhist (8), with smaller numbers of contacts with congregations of the Adventist, African spiritualist, Christian Science, Hindu, Mormon, Religious Science, Sikh, and Word of Faith traditions.

We note that, as reflected in the above quote, at least two strategies exist for handling religious diversity. One strategy encourages participants to speak strongly from their own traditions, with other participants translating this into their own faith languages. Another strategy is to ask all participants to pray in neutral terms that seek to avoid any language that is not acceptable in other traditions. The former strategy places a burden on everyone to learn something about others' cultures; the latter strategy runs the risk of so diluting faith language that it no longer "moves" participants. Deciding when to adopt which strategy represents an important area of continuing experimentation and discernment in faith-based organizing, with important consequences.

Expanding beyond the black Protestant, liberal/moderate Protestant, and Roman Catholic core of traditional organizing culture brings wider credibility, new ethical insight, new constituencies, and greater diversity into the organizing world, but it must be undertaken in ways that sustain the flow of commitment and motivation within organizing. If faith-based organizing accomplishes this, it will have a great deal to teach the wider political culture about appropriately combining faith and politics across the religious spectrum of contemporary American society.

New Social Constituencies:

1. Immigrants

When asked about their outreach to immigrants and youth, 50% of organizers reported work with immigrant communities⁽²²⁾ suggesting that, at least in some cities, faith-based organizing has recognized the importance of the vast influx of new immigrants of recent years. Recipients of this outreach are primarily Mexican, but a remarkable array of specific populations were mentioned in the interviews, including Brazilians, Cambodians, Cape Verdeans, Chinese, Filipinos, Guatemalans, Haitians, Hmong, Koreans, Liberians, Polish, Portuguese, Russians, Salvadorans, and Vietnamese. Religious congregations are the dominant conduit for this work; public schools are secondary; and migrant labor communities, day laborer co-ops, ethnic associations, and labor unions provide some means for collaborative outreach, although, from this data, it is hard to determine how significant the latter forms of outreach may be.

Some of the more innovative work in the field is dedicated to reaching immigrants. This includes one network that offers a separate introductory national training in Spanish, and a few local organizations with initiatives focused on immigrants:

We are placing considerable emphasis on organizing Mexican immigrants in our area. These people are farm-workers or employees at a meatpacking plant.... [who we reach through] three Roman Catholic parishes that are members. These

immigrants have been recruited to attend [our faith-based organizing network's] four-day training for Spanish speakers. One church sent five of its immigrant leaders to training.

Our organization has created a separate organizing track to reach immigrants. [We do this] as an empowerment step, followed by bringing these immigrant leaders together with second and third generation Hispanic leaders. This process has been necessary to overcome the tendency for Spanish-speaking immigrants to drop out when meetings are dominated by English-speaking Hispanics. The goal is to empower immigrants so they can participate on an equal basis with whites and English-speaking Hispanics.

2. Youth

Though 35% of organizations reported some kind of outreach efforts to youth, most of these appear to be very limited, either because this group is "off the maps" of most organizers or because it is "hard to get continuity" of commitment from this age group, as one respondent noted. Some organizations draw fairly extensively on young people to give testimonies at public actions regarding how a given issue affects them, but relatively little focused work seems to be dedicated to organizing within this age group. How successful such outreach might be is difficult to assess, given the contrast between the culture of organizing and much of contemporary youth culture, but some organizations have had limited success:

[Our organization] has been working with youth from [a local high school] in response to a KKK clan rally. 80 to 100 youth are expected for [an upcoming action]. The youth will be engaged in discussing some of the issues that affect them and one issue will be cut to work on.

The new constituencies are primarily youth. The feeling in the member congregations is that youth must help solve the youth problems of the county (like violence). Many youth say they do not feel safe. Some of the active youth are from member congregations, but others are from public housing, various neighborhoods and the Boys and Girls Clubs.

Some youth were involved in a project in which the community pressed the government to pass a bond issue for a middle school. They were successful. [Interviewer: What are your goals in this work?] To prepare the youth to be our leaders.

Summary:

FBCO lead organizers expressed a desire to reach out to new constituencies beyond the Roman Catholic, historically black, and liberal/moderate Protestant churches that continue to provide the institutional core to the field. Such new constituencies include both religious groups

and new social sectors. The most common such outreach efforts are to evangelical or Pentecostal congregations, Jewish congregations, and new immigrant groups, with about half of all FBCOs reporting contact with each of these three sectors. Though these efforts clearly vary in intensity, the following generalizations appear to be warranted:

- Outreach to evangelical/Pentecostal congregations primarily involves work with such churches in African-American and Latino communities; even there, this outreach has not yet born a great deal of fruit, at least if this is measured by whether such congregations actually join FBCOs;
- There are few outreach efforts to white evangelical churches, or perhaps it has been tried and has been unsuccessful; given the huge number of such churches in American society, this represents a large potential constituency, but one that may be difficult or impossible to draw into faith-based organizing;
- Outreach efforts to new immigrant communities have been much more successful, at least in some areas of the country, and FBCO has sought involvement from a truly remarkable variety of immigrant groups; and
- Finally, about a third of all FBCO organizations reported outreach efforts to each of the following sectors: parents, workers, and youth. But the nature of this data makes it difficult to assess how serious these efforts may be, or to distinguish these efforts from FBCO work with unions and schools, reported above.

XII. AREAS OF ENGAGEMENT BY FBCO

The lead organizers reported that their organizations had addressed the following broad range of issues in the last two years:

Education/Schools: Public school reform, after-school programs, teacher home visits, site-based management, reading in schools, in-school suspension policy, tutoring, charter schools, safe schools

Economics: Economic development, living wages, human development tax, worker rights, workforce development, immigration rights, first source hiring, sweatshops, minority hiring

Housing: Affordable housing, senior housing, *colonias* (poverty housing in border states; mostly work on deed conversion, water access, and waste removal)

Policing: Community policing, gang violence, drugs and crime, anti-police-abuse, more police presence, restorative justice, gun control, police relations

Healthcare Expanded access to healthcare for children, working families and immigrants; public health infrastructure

Race relations: Anti-racism, interracial understanding, anti-hate crime legislation, anti-KKK

Public finances: Bond issues (public school support, *colonia* infrastructure), banking (mostly community reinvestment act), tax-based sharing, equalization

Environment: Environmental clean-up, anti-nuclear work, Superfund

Social services: Long-term care for seniors, welfare rights, senior services

Miscellaneous: Eyesore removal, emergency room closures, public transport, infant mortality, lifeguard training, political corruption

The most common issues cited were those involving public schools, the economy, policing, and housing . These represent the core issue work of most faith-based organizing efforts. What this list does not communicate is the scale on which contemporary, faith-based organizing addresses these issues. Considerable work still occurs around very local issues such as neighborhood improvement, anti-crime efforts, etc. Such "bread and butter" issues were the staple diet of community organizing for many years; they help new groups feel successful, develop new leaders' skills, and sometimes significantly affect the quality of life in neighborhoods. However, many organizers have long recognized that such work does little or nothing to address the social structures and policies that largely determine the quality of life for working families. Their goal is to win issues that generate institutional reform, and strengthen civil society. Many organizations have influenced citywide, countywide, or metropolitan area-wide policy, and in the process have transcended a narrow focus on local issues. Several organizations are even addressing regional and statewide issues, and have won significant victories on statewide policy in large states.

Nevertheless, the latter examples are still the exception. If more organizations are to follow this lead, they will need to meet the dual challenges of maintaining vigorous local roots and fostering participants' ability to influence policy in the broader political arenas that shape their constituents' quality of life.

The lead organizers were also asked about their efforts in two particular areas: economic development/social service work and electoral politics.

Economic Development and Social Service:

Historically, it appears that the typical answer to whether an FBCO engages in economic development⁽²³⁾ or social service projects was similar to that given by one of our interviewees, "No, we empower others to negotiate for what they want." Though this long-time stance in part simply reflects a commitment to empowering people to fight for justice, rather than handing out charity, it has also been driven by an important insight organizers have culled from long experience - in agreeing to administer development or social service projects, they run the risk of subverting the core tasks of organizing. As we will see, this remains a significant tension within organizing.

The interviews suggest that some faith-based organizing staff indeed see significant advantages to engaging in economic and social service projects, and feel significant pressure to do so. About 50% of lead organizers reported having engaged in such efforts, including housing initiatives, mobile home

co-ops, worker buyouts, worker training, worker cooperatives, job cooperatives, credit unions, provision of "micro loans," gang prevention efforts, homework centers, welfare-to-work transition services, immigrant naturalization assistance, land trust funds, and others. Organizers perceive both benefits and dangers to engaging in these projects, and were evenly split between those who saw them mostly interfering with and those who saw them mostly contributing to the core work of organizing. Because the choice to engage in these projects represents an important strategic decision often faced by lead organizers, we quote their responses extensively. Typical comments emphasizing the negative repercussions of such efforts included:

[Homework centers] have been distracting. Leaders have become governors and monitors of that program. [Now we're] stuck in it.

The project has been a negative drain up until now - the leaders of the project refused to organize parents, but now are starting to do that.

We started doing home improvement loans a year ago. It hasn't worked very well, because it took too many of our resources.

We got away from other projects and our core work.

[It's had a] negative effect, due to the focus on programming. This takes lots of time away from the tasks of organizing. I'm not sure if we'll do any more of this.

Churches love it, because it puts them in touch with people in neighborhoods. It's easier to do this than to take on a politician. Too easy to just do this nice, fun, service project.

Unfortunately the programs drained time and resources and there was not a lot of benefit.

Typical comments emphasizing the positive impact of such efforts included:

As the initiator of [an anti-violence project], we gained credibility and respect in both the churches and the greater community. This effort helped [the organization] in its organizing initiative.

The job training project in general has affected the organizing positively, created relationships with groups we would not ordinarily have been in contact with.

Mostly it's been positive. People view it as part of core organizing. Concern we have is do people end up falling in love with program and lose sight of longer-range community organization?

In short, through such projects, some organizers see potential to gain credibility and legitimacy among their potential constituents and in the wider political arena, to form new relationships that potentially foster organizational power, and to achieve concrete results that benefit the communities in which they work. At the same time, they are keenly aware of the need to stay focused on the core tasks of long-range organizing: building power within the organization, fostering the ability of participants to enter into the public arena effectively, and empowering them to hold political and economic institutions accountable to democratic pressures. Some organizations have achieved a workable solution to the risk/benefit equation of economic and social service projects and a reasonable balance between such projects and core organizing work.

This project has broadened the base of relationships between the Anglo and Hispanic communities and brought a deeper understanding of what the conditions are like for immigrant workers. [Negative effects?] Project leaders want to put more energy into social services, sometimes to the exclusion of other issues.

The early efforts [to form co-ops] did not lead to institutional membership and an expansion of organizational power. The co-ops no longer relate to our organization. [One project] seems to have remained meaningful to the congregations as a source of training and employment for their membership. It has provided a credential with the labor movement and with employers as well. The issue was a significant departure from the housing focus of the group and was useful in expanding the group's vision of itself.

But finding a healthy balance is not an easy task, and organizers may find themselves shifting back and forth between roles:

Positively, they have broadened us so that it is hard for people not to pay attention to us. Negatively, although this might not be a direct result of these projects, we haven't gone as deep as we wanted to in our individual units [institutional members]. Our largest church-based action is 100 people.

[The project] developed a name for itself, but over the last couple of years this has had a negative effect on the core organizing work as we have branched out into [other] issues. The cooperatives absorbed an inordinate amount of energy and moved the culture of the organization away from organizing. The organization has made a conscious shift back toward organizing as the core of their work. The housing work was a major distraction, the day-to-day operation really distracted the

organizer. We are now in the process of turning that around. An organizer is now organizing within the housing rather than seeing it as a landlord relationship.

As we have seen, lead organizers have a wide variety of experiences with economic development and social service initiatives. Given the potential benefits, including funding available, and significant dangers inherent in launching an organization into this terrain, this is an important arena of strategic decision-making for faith-based organizing. Assuming the federal government's "charitable choice" program of providing social services through religious congregations continues to move forward, this area of decision-making for FBCO will grow in significance. One lesson that emerges from these interviews is that the decision to engage in economic development and social service work should not be taken lightly or unreflectively by FBCO organizations; indeed, the "charitable choice" program offers a potential source of funding and new relationships and an opportunity to serve local residents, but also represents an enormous potential diversion of the energy and democratic will embedded in faith-based organizing.

If a given organization chooses to work in this area, one interpretation of the diverse experiences reflected in the interviews is that a smart strategy from organizers is to: (1) engage in traditional organizing work to create the political will for a program, gain funding, and hone leaders' organizing skills; (2) establish a program with good outside evaluation; and (3) spin the program off as a separate entity in order to buffer the core work of organizing from the burdens and distractions of running a social service agency. The organization then faces a key strategic choice - whether to essentially wash its hands of the project and let it operate independently, or to invest time and focus in controlling and monitoring it, through such measures as placing FBCO leaders on the governing board.

This is an area in which organizations in different cities and different regions might learn a great deal from one another, and thus is a potentially fruitful arena for continuing dialogue among organizers.

Electoral Politics:

One form of electorally-linked political action is central to nearly all faith-based organizing efforts - large assemblies at which candidates are asked to support specific policies or to work with the FBCO to address specific issues. Such efforts to "hold politicians accountable" to democratic pressure from working families are a key tool of community organizing. The long experience of FBCO with such "accountability sessions" or "actions," and organizers' expertise in training leaders to conduct them, have been central to these organizations' ability to wield power in public decision-making. Such accountability provides some counterweight to the heavy influence of moneyed interests in American politics.

Beyond this, however, FBCO involvement in electoral work is more limited. A little more than half of the lead organizers reported some activity connected directly or indirectly with electoral politics, mostly in traditional non-partisan electoral work: candidate forums, get-out-the-vote

efforts, voter education work, voter registration drives, publication of voter guides, etc. Less commonly, some FBCO organizations have done joint phone-banking with labor unions or other allies in a specific campaign, and a few have led bond issue campaigns, mostly for public school funding or against anti-immigrant or English-only measures. The brief time spent on this question in most of the interviews makes it difficult to assess this area. While it appears that rather little inventive work occurs in FBCO around electoral politics, this may be because interviewees were wary of being perceived as engaging in partisan activity. Also, some organizers alluded to quite creative work in the electoral area, but did not elaborate due to time constraints in the interviews; it is thus impossible to assess the substance of these efforts. The following represents a typical organizer's summary of the benefits and costs of electoral work:

We have done voter education, candidate forums where we present a platform of issues and ask for their positions, voter mobilization against Proposition 187 and [later] against elimination of bilingual education. [Interviewer: Benefits?] It built leadership skills. [Interviewer: Challenges?] It's labor intensive for a short time - it takes all the organization's time and energy.

The fact that several lead organizers went out of their way to emphasize the "strictly non-partisan" nature of their work may suggest that they are sensitive to accusations of partisan activity, as they must be, given their typical 501c3 or 501c4 tax-exempt status. Probably, faith-based organizing can be accurately characterized as non-partisan, but with the term meaning quite different things, including: 1) essentially no involvement in electoral/institutional politics other than through accountability sessions; 2) a strong commitment to bipartisan relationships, i.e. working with both major parties and/or minor parties, when areas of agreement exist; or 3) a kind of thin veneer, albeit an important one, for organizations whose agendas bring them rather close to the Democratic Party. The last meaning is not intended to suggest deceit on the part of organizations that practice this version of non-partisanship; rather, organizations pursuing government action on certain issues in core urban areas simply find themselves in greater overlap with the agenda of this party. Also, in some places one party is so dominant that it represents the only viable vehicle for electoral collaboration. On the other hand, both George W. Bush and Gary Bauer sought out Southern California FBCOs when they were running for the GOP presidential nomination in 2000, and many organizations hold constructive relations with political officials from both major parties.

One respondent, whose organization had invested considerable effort in electoral efforts, analyzed the experience this way:

We are consistently involved in getting-out-the-vote campaigns. Our leaders collectively got 2000 people out to vote in 1996; we identified permanent precinct leaders.... we do non-partisan voter education. We have gotten our 501-c-4 status so that we can do a report card on the candidates and the issues. [Interviewer: What benefits have you gotten from this?] It creates new voters... some elected officials have more respect for us; it sends a message to the Latino community that the organization is a powerful ally. [Interviewer: Are there problems that come with

it?] Some perceive the organization as too closely allied to the Democratic Party, which can limit recruitment.

Several organizations have essentially sponsored large-scale bond measures, one of the more innovative electoral strategies. One lead organizer reported:

We ran a school bond measure for \$195 million for repair and construction that got 79% of the vote... We've also been involved in others that lost. [Interviewer: Benefits?] We won! We demonstrated to the political community that our organization knows how to do this; we got out of just protest politics and into the real political arena. [Interviewer: Problems?] It's a driven kind of activity that doesn't develop leaders as much as local organizing.

Other success stories include one organization sponsoring the first cross-racial political forum ever in their local area of the rural South and another one having doubled the Hispanic vote in one city in the Southwest. Thus, when FBCO has gotten involved in electoral politics, it has sometimes had real benefits.

On balance, non-partisan political activities linked to electoral politics may represent a potent arena of expansion to help FBCO organizations build power, but like social service projects they can become a debilitating drain on core organizing activities. When they can be linked to core organizational interests (expanding the electorate within organizing's core constituency, giving the organization a higher profile among a key new constituency, winning resources that facilitate other areas of organizing activity) or focus on areas for which participants have a great deal of ethical passion, e.g. anti-hate crime laws, such electorally-centered activities may be inviting, strategic areas for leaders. Alternately, some FBCO leaders and organizers may choose to entirely forego electoral strategies beyond traditional accountability sessions. In either case, sharing their experiences and insights may help organizers and leaders make well-informed strategic choices.

Summary:

Though FBCO engages in work on a wide variety of issues, the most frequent work focuses on the areas of public education reform, economics/jobs, affordable housing, and policing/neighborhood safety. These vary from "bread and butter" issues for local campaigns, sometimes affecting only a neighborhood, to coordinated statewide campaigns. Organizers reported involvement in a wide variety of economic and social service projects, and some benefits from them. However, they also reported extensive difficulties in such efforts, primarily because they tended to distract leaders and drain resources from the core work of community organizing -- creating a vehicle for the organized exertion of democratic power.

Other than accountability sessions, organizers reported limited engagement in electoral work. Among the more innovative such efforts were large-scale bond issues or broad, long-range issue agendas to which candidates were held accountable. Organizers' experience suggests

that creative electoral work, like collaborations, may be a potent area for FBCOs building power, but also represents a potentially debilitating distraction.

Both development/social service work and electoral politics represent areas of strategic choice and significant experimentation within contemporary faith-based organizing. Participants might learn a great deal from one another's experience in both areas.

XIII. STRATEGIC SELF-ASSESSMENT

At the end of the interview, lead organizers were asked about the current state of the field of faith-based organizing, what issues they hoped to address in the future, what internal challenges FBCO as a field must face in order to address those issues, and what role Interfaith Funders should play to help advance the field (and by implication, perhaps what role other funders should play.) We draw on their answers to these questions to synthesize what might be termed a strategic self-assessment of the work of faith-based organizing by its practitioners.

Future issues that organizers hope to address:

When lead organizers were asked to identify issues they hoped FBCO would address in the future, the commonly mentioned issues were public education reform, healthcare, "regionalism" (meaning patterns of development resulting from regional dynamics, such as sprawl,

growing economic and social inequality, racial and economic segregation, and concentrated poverty), living wages, public transportation infrastructure, and immigration (in roughly that order). Noteworthy here is the fact that the strong majority of organizers see a need for FBCO to address more complex issues (what one called "more ambitious" issues) than it has traditionally addressed, and to operate in higher-level political arenas, i.e. beyond local city government.⁽²⁴⁾

In our interviews, some individuals were particularly reflective about the kinds of issues that FBCO would need to confront in the years ahead. They especially emphasized the implications of the "new economy" and rising income polarization:

[We need to address] issues more directly related to people's income. We've done some, but we need to be in it more. The biggest challenge is the growing disparity in income: our poor people are getting poorer. Our people are suffering from this new economy, not benefiting. Also a challenge is the growth in the power and consolidation of large economic interests. Also, here in [local area], we are facing an extraordinary housing crisis, due to cost. That's driven by all the booming companies around here, just a huge economic engine, primarily high-tech. In this region, in the future, it's going to be high-tech plus bio-tech... In the next 15 years this area is going to be the center of the Internet phenomena. It's going to be the new generation beyond software, you can access it off the Internet. A huge developing industry in this - media and entertainment directly from [the] Internet. William Simon and son just put \$300 million into venture capital firms that create

websites and do this kind of media work. A huge industry building around this, with people making \$140,000 per year on this technology. [Interviewer: what internal challenges does that bring to organizing?] It's a question of scale - if you look at what we're up against here, how do we have the power to have a conversation with those kinds of entities. These are behemoths in terms of the kinds of capital they control. Just unimaginable how we'll do this. These people are totally unembarrassed by ending up in the press. The giant industrial machines were rooted in a place that provided a basis for some public conversation. These new ones are more rootless, so there's little basis for conversation. [The local corporate leader's] economic impact is international, and his market is international, and his workforce is international, not really particular to this place. Even the people he socializes with are international. He doesn't belong to a local church.

In other words, the locally rooted power that FBCO organizations have traditionally wielded may be unable to touch such corporate behemoths. The respondent went on to discuss the implication that FBCO must find ways of projecting sufficient power into arenas that matter to such internationally powerful actors, and noted that this would be an enormous challenge, given present capacities. Another lead organizer noted more briefly:

We need to address how resources are distributed, deal with the tax code, with public investment. [This state] has had a long-term disinvestment in the public sector. We have to address the effect of the transition to a service economy; so many service jobs pay no benefits. One out of four people in the state have no health insurance.

According to respondents, FBCO thus faces the challenges of the global economy operating outside of effective political control; a society increasingly divided into a wealthy new elite and service sector workers without benefits, with fewer truly middle class individuals helping bind the wealthy and poor together; a public sector in which little has been invested for decades; and a host of other challenges. This raises the question of the current state of the field. Is FBCO in a position to respond meaningfully to these new societal realities?

Current state of the field:

A high degree of optimism characterizes the majority of responses to the question about the current state of the field, with many echoing what one organizer termed the "growth in size and sophistication" of the field generally. Others articulating an optimistic assessment noted:

Community faith-based organizing is the only way to go... the only way we will make significant change with systems, unions, etc.

Faith-based [organizing] is getting more potent, stronger, with increased expertise. The field is getting more complex and more potent in terms of value. The control of wealth and of electoral politics by a few is a challenge to faith-based work...

Faith-based groups are in tension with the values of wealth and political control. This is why faith-based groups are so important.

Other lead organizers balanced this optimism with a tone that, in reading the interviews, comes across as frank realism:

We organize effectively at the local level when we have the personnel.

[FBCO is] still primitive, emerging but primitive. We're doing some good things, but do not have the kind of sophisticated organizers across the board that we need.

[I'd say it's gotten] boring, too narrow. We need more engagement with non-faith based communities... We have worn out the workshops.

There are very few quality efforts in faith-based community organizing....very few organizations are developing real leadership.

In our judgment, the truth lies less in a compromise between the contrasting optimism and pessimism of these two viewpoints, and more in their combination. A great deal of important and exciting work is being done across the field of FBCO, some with significant democratic impact. However, all organizations face similar obstacles and limitations. Most importantly, the lead organizers who are thinking most strategically recognize that, for all the excellent work being done, their organizations cannot begin to touch the flows of financial capital and political power that primarily determine the quality of life for working folks around the U.S.; at least, they cannot do so in isolation from parallel efforts.

Internal challenges:

Respondents identified a number of key factors that must be strengthened if FBCO is to realize its full democratic potential including strategic vision, building organizational capacity, organizing on a broader scale, contact with other networks, and other factors. We address these briefly in turn.

1. Strategic vision:

The question of vision might be stated as such: Do organizers, leaders, and funders have a vision of faith-based organizing that corresponds to the democratic challenges of our time? One respondent reflected:

Faith based organizing has come of age in [this region] with the recent growth of new organizations and growing discussions of regional cooperation on organizing campaigns. We are building the potential to have real impact on our region, which is exciting. While the techniques of organizing are pretty well established, questions about strategy and long-term growth seem fairly undeveloped. Projects seem to grow and retrench in cycles, going through crises that force older projects to

reorganize themselves every few years. Also, issue work is often short-lived, so that campaigns come and go without developing sustained influence in any issue area. This is by design, in order to be responsive to member interests, but it limits the role of our organizations in making changes that [require] long-term commitments to issues. Aside from the general ideas of building leadership and organizational power, I don't see faith-based organizations developing deeper visions of social transformation that would alter systemic injustices. I believe that a limit of this approach to organizing is that we have a limited capacity to build toward larger social change as we focus on narrow, attainable goals. Longer term thinking about sustaining our organizations and building toward larger agendas is needed.

Such reflective self-criticism should be heard as a call to *create* the opportunities, habits, and institutional capacities for building strategic, long-term, collaborative thinking into organizers' work at all levels. The broad field of faith-based organizing already has a strong *potential* capacity for this in its organizers, but this capacity can be activated in more powerful and dynamic ways by combining this organizing talent with sufficient resources to foster creative thinking at all levels. It can also be fostered by helping organizers move beyond the narrow confines in which many now move, to build into their work more opportunities for dialogue with other organizers, reflective funders, insightful political observers, policy analysts, and scholars. Some sectors of FBCO are already doing this, but these opportunities should be multiplied throughout the field.

2. Building organizational capacity: Staffing and funding

A second factor necessary for FBCO to flourish is an adequate flow of talent and money to the field. The factor most consistently cited by respondents as limiting the growth of their work is the recruitment of talented organizers:

Quality staff is THE limiting factor, not money...It's a tough job that requires a lot of skills. We cannot find good staff even offering \$30,000 a year.

[We need] much more organizers, and better strategies for training and recruiting them. And getting resources for doing this [recruitment of organizers]. Also, having time and capacity for us to really do recruitment - time and money.

Really strong organizing work by grassroots organizers, and even more so by lead organizers of local organizations, requires a broad array of capacities: relational orientation, understanding of the dynamics of power, respect for and appreciation of religious traditions, strategic planning, analytic thinking, skillful use of diverse organizing techniques, reflexive pedagogy, the ability to cross cultural boundaries, language skills, etc. Given these necessary talents and the demands of this work, recruitment of organizers will be a continuing challenge. The field has partially met this challenge by improving salaries, diversifying the pools from which it recruits organizing

talent, and offering work many organizers find exciting and meaningful, but the long-term challenge remains.

Funding for continuing increase of salaries will no doubt be part of the solution to this shortage of organizers, but directly funding innovative recruitment strategies may be even more important. Such strategies might focus on universities, churches, and the new constituencies identified earlier in this report. Likewise, heightened funding for continuing development of organizers might sharpen the skills and capacities of established personnel, and offer them new opportunities for strategic analysis and relationship building beyond their current circles. The urgent need for the latter kind of development opportunities was expressed by two lead organizers when asked their assessments of the field and of the role of funders:

Ripe. The work is uneven throughout the networks... people are not really prepared, they are thrown into positions when it takes about 5 years with a mix of experiences to groom and mentor them. A lead organizer has lots of responsibilities and needs lots of [training].

We need to facilitate the personal growth and development of the organizer. We need to secure funding to recruit and train additional staff.

More broadly, adequate funding for core organizing work represents another factor identified by respondents as crucial, second only to adequate staffing in its potential impact on the field. Not surprisingly, many respondents mentioned this in various ways:

The field is too narrow, too small and way under-resourced. Where we have the resources, great strides are being made.

Money! Our invitations far surpass our capacity. [We also need] staff, talented organizers.

3. Broader-scale organizing:

Respondents noted that building FBCO efforts up to a scale adequate to address more ambitious issues represents a crucial challenge. That is, if FBCO aspires to address higher-level issues than it has so far, it has to build power beyond the local political arena:

Other issues to address include regional economic issues like health care, housing, employment, commercial development and public education. The biggest challenge here is to cross both state and county lines in this metro area. Future organizing will have to do this.

[Other challenges include] expanding work to the state and federal levels, organizing at the higher levels for impact at the local level.

Need to develop the ability to act regionally and on a statewide level in order to address metropolitan-wide issues and to impact policy and legislation that can only be changed on the statewide level. Need to figure out how to impact national policy making.

One of the big challenges is developing a regional approach, building the capacity to bring people together across political boundaries, racial boundaries, all boundaries. It is in the interest of the politicians to keep people divided.

We endorse the view expressed by many respondents that strengthening the capacity to act in regional and statewide political arenas represents an urgent need in FBCO. The networks play a crucial role in this regard, as do the collaborative ties some independent organizing efforts maintain with other organizations. Longer-term, more stable funding may also help organizers and leaders move their organizations toward the long-term strategies needed to act in these larger political arenas.

However, we also note how important it is that organizations not neglect their local roots when they set their sights on higher-level influence. The experience of organizations in many cities in all the networks suggests that sustaining strong organizing over the long term requires continual efforts to re-energize dynamic leadership development in local organizing efforts. We also note that, if FBCO aspires to leash the new economy to the interests of working families, truly national organizing efforts are likely to be necessary, since the global economy responds to capital flows well beyond the control of state and local governments.

4. Cross-network contact:

Among the less expected findings to emerge from the interviews were calls for greater contact with organizers from other networks, independent organizing efforts, and geographic regions. Asked "What issues do you hope congregation-based community organizing will be able to address over the next decade that it has been unable to address up to now? What internal challenges must community organizing deal with in order to be in a position to address these issues?" about 10% of organizers interviewed suggested greater inter-network contact, in terms such as:

Employment, disparity between rich and poor, education reform, healthcare... [to address these] we must have good staff. We are not real deep in trained organizers. We have an opportunity to grow rapidly, but it's a question of funding dollars. How do we get past this "allergic reaction" that the networks have to each other, in order to work on the larger issues?

Worker Rights and Immigrants Rights. Internal challenge is for the networks to develop relationship and communication to find their common interest and develop trust. Need a venue for debates over what are the national issues.

I hope that if community organizing is to be a significant force in community transformation, there will be more collaboration both among different networks of faith-based organizing and with other kinds of community organizing.

That such sentiments were expressed by a variety of organizers reflects the isolation from the broader context of community organizing that many of them appear to feel. Some see this isolation as actively undermining the democratic potential of the field:

The Cold War between the [networks] inhibits the development of faith-based organizing. It seems to be based on the personalities of those running the networks. Faith-based organizing should belong to the people in the congregations. What stops us from moving forward is the animosity and team-playing within the field. There once apparently was a policy that organizations wouldn't compete in the same territory. When competing networks work in one community, there is a sense of disunity. The example of [particular city] should prove illustrative. The existing organization had to cut its staff when [another network] came in. Some congregations are opting out of the movement altogether because they feel they can't choose. The tensions and distractions that occur between the networks are a [problem].

However, it is important to note that there was some very blunt talk from respondents opposed to any role of funders in promoting inter-network collaboration:

I assume Interfaith Funders' representatives sit at the table with deep respect for each other's diversity, differing [religious] traditions, different takes on the world, and different pieces of the truth. And with recognition of conflict, some of it deep and insurmountable. Unless the denominations and faiths you represent want to show the world how it's done and merge into one big faith, you would probably do well to do less worrying about the different, competing networks out here, stop trying to force collaboration, and maybe even trust the organizers and organizations they work for to figure out, on their own and in due time, how to put all this together.

This reaction was more biting than most, and perhaps misinterprets encouragement of broader contact among different sectors of the field as an effort to force networks to 'merge.' Given this kind of response, which was not unique, promoting full collaboration between networks is likely to be a losing proposition. Simply providing opportunities for shared conversation not only across networks and regions but also across stakeholder sectors such as organizers, funders, scholars, and religious leaders may be a more promising route. Without pretense of addressing long-standing divisions when the political will for doing so does not exist, fostering broader contacts may lay the groundwork for more strategic cooperation in the future, while preserving the distinctive character and autonomy of various sectors.

5. Other internal challenges:

Other internal challenges mentioned include: administrative support and training to heighten professionalism; better ability to collaborate with clergy, unions, and schools; more systematic attention to the reflection component of action/reflection models of social change; better integration of prayer and religious social statements with the work; better outreach to evangelicals, Pentecostals, and the unchurched; and better models for how FBCO can confront racism and crime issues.

The Role of Funders:

When asked how Interfaith Funders could help advance the field, some respondents broadened the question to include all funders. Both kinds of answers suggested a number of roles for funders, which divided roughly into two main groups with a third and fourth group of less common responses:

(1) Provide funding; and (2) Strategize with FBCO organizers; (3) Foster research on and about the field and (4) Other initiatives, including helping to recruit organizers into the field. The following quote is more frank than some, but captures the flavor of those recommending the first approach:

Don't think so lowly of yourselves that the central thing you do, which you ought to do and which you do well - which is sending us money and trying to find some more to send - is somehow not enough or inadequate. It's pretty damn good.

Organizers in this group often called on those currently funding faith-based organizing to educate other foundations and agencies about the field, in order to meet the need for greater resources. A few called on religious funders of the field to be "organizing their denominations," which one person defined as "building deeper relationships with key decision-makers in central denominational offices."

Second, some organizers called for funders to adopt a more strategic role vis-à-vis faith-based organizing, in closer dialogue with organizers, in order to help steer the field in constructive directions:

Interfaith Funders is in a position to make foundations and funders clear about not funding two organizations in the same place, without a clear assessment that the first organization is failing.

Stay in dialogue with us and promote faith-based organizing increase financial resources and continue to spread the word. Help understand and promote the different styles of organization. Rise above the competition between the groups and support many instead of the larger and more well-known winners.

I guess you should set the standards a lot higher. Don't give money to losers, i.e. don't invest in anything that doesn't create a critical mass of power in a city. Make

sure you are spending resources to address wage equity; this one takes real power to bring change to. Invest in revolutionary things, not doo-dads.

Put money into developing organizers. Put more into metropolitan strategies, paying for big impact grants for a whole metropolitan area. Chicago is an example of what is possible by making big grants focused on a whole city, but it's an aberration now... We see it as a good precedent. We want to see more of this. [Funders] see community organizing as neighborhood organizing, do not see it as building big, broad-based organizations focused on transforming a whole city.

Even these brief quotes make clear that those who want funders to adopt a more strategic role vis-à-vis FBCO disagree deeply regarding the details. Thus, funders wanting to play this role will have to make their own decisions about strategic priorities, rather than waiting until they get a consistent message from the field. Ideally, those decisions will be made in dialogue with insightful partners inside FBCO, other funders, and scholars with knowledge about the field.

Third, organizers suggested that funders foster research relevant to FBCO:

Help FBCO's know what's working for other people. What trade-offs are helpful (e.g. does it pay to allocate funds for a full-time development staff person?) What do we know about recruiting minority staff? About recruiting the right talent for staff? How to balance conducting large campaigns with nurturing local congregations? Encourage the growth of FBCO, so it benefits a broader group of people.

Interfaith Funders can help in three ways: (a) Continue to raise money, but more importantly raise the concept of faith-based organizing with other, non-religious funders. (b) Continue to research the idea of faith-based organizing. Organizers are for the most part taken up with day-to-day operations. Interfaith Funders can facilitate some thinking about the state of the situation and the state of the art. (c) Be a source of agitation by asking where faith-based organizing should be going.

Do research on the best practices across all the different networks, and promote that.

Note that organizers suggest funders support both policy-relevant research useful *for* FBCO and research *on* FBCO itself. The former is to help the field become more effective externally; the latter to help the field better understand itself, and thus be more effective internally.

Finally, respondents suggested a number of specific initiatives for Interfaith Funders or funders more generally. These included promoting organizing as a career; organizer training and development; ending favoritism toward some networks and refusing to fund two organizations in the same city unless the first one is failing; promoting learning/reflection models within FBCO, in its development of both organizers and leaders; facilitating FBCO's relationship to

evangelical/Pentecostal churches; developing seminary curricula for FBCO as urban ministry; and convincing funders to provide longer-term grants and to require reports less frequently.

Overall strategic assessment:

The overall assessment of the field of FBCO by its practitioners depicts a field "coming into its own," as one organizer put it, but still facing significant limitations. Part of the strategic challenge may lie in continuing education of potential allies about the field:

Faith-based organizing is still not well understood by church hierarchies and foundations, but there is beginning to be a realization of this movement. Just beginning to be accepted in city after city. The regionalism work and its proponents recognize and respect the role of faith-based organizing in developing a regional analysis. People are beginning to see the role that churches can play in a community.

Another aspect of the strategic challenge lies in the mismatch between the field's current capacity and the broader societal trends. One lead organizer diagnosed this mismatch as follows:

In most places, FBCO is not operating on the proper scale. We're too often a flea on the elephant. Our work makes us feel good and the churches feel more relevant, but how does it stack up against a tidal wave of change? We've not made any impact on the disparity-of-income question... Clinton ran on an agenda that said he'd do something for the inner city, and abandoned it in 100 days. We had no ability to change that strategy. There's been a radical disinvestment around the country: privatization of airports, fire departments, public schools. We've been unable to stop that... All this increases the balkanization of the public square; when it diminishes or disintegrates, you end up with small enclaves that want to protect their turf against any onslaught. It's the balkanization of politics.

When the interviewer then asked whether FBCO has the right tools to counteract this, and just needs time, or whether it needs new tools and ideas, this organizer continued:

If I knew that I'd be a genius. The two institutions responsible for protecting the public square are the churches and the unions, the instruments of civil society that allow different values to play in the decisions that get made. Well, if you look at those two institutions, they have internalized the values of the market culture. So those very institutions are extremely weak. We organize pastors; we should be organizing bishops. But the bishop [here] has internalized the market, thinks of himself as running a major corporation. [The bishops] mirror corporate society and think like CEOs, instead of offering an alternative and being clear themselves about

that alternative. We may have the right tools, but we're applying those tools to the wrong people.

That is, FBCO faces the same dual crisis confronting the wider society - powerful market forces polarizing families into haves and have-nots, and the very cultural institutions that ought to criticize this trend are themselves weakened by market forces. Such a diagnosis, while not diminishing the very real, ongoing accomplishments of FBCO efforts around the country, should counter any feeling of complacency in the field.

Summary: Strategic self-assessment

When asked about future issues on which they hoped to work, lead organizers most commonly mentioned public education, healthcare, "regionalism," and living wages. Organizers are especially concerned that their organizations find ways to address the challenges presented by globalization of the economy, including income polarization and the way crucial decisions are made far from the local communities at the heart of FBCO.

Lead organizers thus expressed satisfaction with the quality of work their organizations are doing, but this satisfaction was shadowed by serious concerns about the question of scale. Will FBCO be able to generate sufficient power in the right arenas to address the kinds of issues that, in the "new economy," most impact their constituencies? In order to be able to do so, they highlighted the need for FBCO to address challenges of strategic vision, organizational capacity (both personnel and money), and the need for broader scale organizing around more complex issues, and offered insight into the nature of each of these challenges. They also asked that those funding FBCO strive to strengthen the flow of resources to the field; take a stronger strategic role with other funders and, more controversially, with the networks; promote research useful to the field; foster research about FBCO itself; and help strengthen the recruitment, training, and development of professional, faith-based organizers.

XIV. CONCLUSION: TOWARD A CONTINUING DEMOCRATIC CONVERSATION

As documented in this report, faith-based community organizing represents one of the largest and most dynamic efforts to build democratic power, promote social justice, and strengthen public life in the United States today. FBCO has grown rapidly in the recent period and is now a truly national phenomenon with a broad reach into American congregations and communities. FBCO is one of the few forms of organizing in America that actively engages people in civic and political participation, training thousands of people in the skills of public leadership. It also offers one of the few venues in which Americans work together across racial lines, and does significant work with new immigrants. FBCO groups address an impressively broad range of issues important to the health and vitality of families and communities, doing so with modest financial resources.

While recognizing the important accomplishments of FBCO, we must also note the significant challenges it faces if it is to continue to grow in size and impact. In particular, FBCO groups

need to broaden their base of organizing, and they need to achieve the capacity to leverage power beyond the local level, eventually to the national level. FBCO groups have begun serious efforts to achieve these goals. They have endeavored to expand beyond their traditional base to work with a variety of non-congregational institutions like unions and schools, and to reach out to new religious and social constituencies. Many groups collaborate now at state and regional levels so that they can achieve more ambitious policy goals. Both of these processes need to continue and expand for FBCO to develop the power to confront large-scale economic and political institutions. Meanwhile, FBCO groups continue to struggle to acquire adequate funding for their work and a sufficient number of qualified organizers. FBCO will need to deepen staff training and continue to build strategic relationships with other institutional forces like unions. Recent experimentation in all of these areas offers promising directions for action.

In striving to achieve these goals, faith-based organizing faces a series of strategic choices that will be crucial to the future of the field. In our view, the field can benefit from a broad and continuing dialogue both within faith-based organizing and with leaders from other institutional sectors (see appendix for a series of questions that might shape such a dialogue). If the field can successfully address its challenges, FBCO promises to become one of the cornerstones of a more democratic future for all Americans.

This report represents an effort to advance discussions about the significance of faith-based community organizing by offering an initial analysis of the current state of the field. In so doing, we hope we have not lost sight of the struggles, dedication, and accomplishments of the leaders, professional organizers, and clergy who are the primary protagonists in the story of faith-based organizing. As one organizer put it:

What must come through in all these numbers and figures and answers is that this is all about poor and minority people, and the organization's mission of empowering them. It's about the true stories of the people.

This is not the place to tell those stories, but anyone in contact with the field of faith-based organizing has heard them - powerful stories of personal transformation, of people collaborating across economic and racial lines that previously divided them, of significant victories for the quality of life of working families in American communities. Those stories are told in Spanish and English, Portuguese and Creole, Hmong and Tagalog; by African-Americans, Latinos, Anglos, and a variety of other ethnic groups. They are told by liberal Protestants, evangelical and Pentecostal Christians, Roman Catholics, Jews, Unitarian Universalists, and members of other strands of American religious life. Often, they are stories told in terms of a God who envisions a more just and decent society for all. Mostly, they are stories told by members of the working poor, lower middle class, and middle class, whether recently immigrated or resident here for many generations. They are American stories, told in the idiom of the democratic struggle to build a decent life for one's family and to make real the American promise of equality. As a strategic assessment of the field, this report cannot hope to capture the power of these stories.

Rather, we have strived to depict the present reality and future promise of the "power organizations" that make these stories possible, by drawing on data from those organizations and interviews with many of the lead organizers who have built them. It is the fervent wish of the authors and sponsors of this research project that the broad community of stakeholders in the field of faith-based community organizing will successfully meet the challenges ahead and forge a long-lasting and far-reaching contribution to a more democratic America for all.

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ABOUT INTERFAITH FUNDERS

Interfaith Funders is a national network of faith-based funders committed to advancing social change and economic justice through support for grassroots community organizing and community economic development. Current members include: Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Claretian Social Development Fund, Domestic Hunger Program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Jewish Fund for Justice, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, One Great Hour of Sharing Fund of the Presbyterian Church USA, Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock,

Marianist Sharing Fund and The Needmor Fund.

Interfaith Funders provides a forum for its members to:

- Promote strategic approaches to combating the root causes of poverty through its grantmaking;
- Implement collaborative grantmaking and evaluate its impact;
- Identify effective approaches to educating and involving denominations and congregations in
- social action at the local level, particularly in partnerships that cut across class, race, and religion; and
- Act as a collective voice for faith-based funders.

To fulfill its mission, IF carries out: collaborative research to advance the field of faith-based community organizing, of which this report is the result; education and outreach to other grantmakers, religious communities, community organizers, and academics; and collaborative grantmaking to support faith-based community organizing (the Initiative). Over the last three years, IF has awarded \$1.37 million in grants to faith-based community organizations. In addition to supporting the Initiative, each IF member supports a broad range of community organizing groups in low- and moderate-income communities around the country, including both faith-based groups and those using other organizing models.

NOTE: If you would like to order more free copies of the report, please call the Interfaith Funders office at 516-364-8922.

APPENDIX A

Questions for Further Research and Dialogue

1. Congregational Development

To what extent does faith-based organizing increase the organizational capacity and foster leadership development within its member congregations and institutions? How might it increase its effectiveness in this area?

2. Recruiting New Religious and Social Constituencies

What are the benefits of reaching out to religious groups and social constituencies not typically represented in the field, and what are the best ways of accomplishing this?

3. Recruitment of Organizers

What are the best current practices and institutional sources for recruiting and training the talented and dedicated individuals required for successfully organizing within this model?

4. Diversity of Organizers

Is it important for FBCO staffs to fully reflect gender equality and the ethnic make-up of the urban communities in which they work? If so, then what are the best current practices and future strategies for achieving this diversity?

5. Collaboration

What are the best models for bridging the cultural and organizational differences between faith-based organizing and other forms of democratic engagement in American life, and between congregational and non-congregational members of FBCOs?

6. Political Reform

To what extent has faith-based organizing succeeded in developing a model for substantially reforming public policy and holding political and economic institutions accountable to the needs of families and communities? What strategies offer promise for advancing these goals beyond the local level to build a force for broader social change?

APPENDIX B

Notes On Methodology

Following the collection of demographic and organizational information, each director was asked a series of open-ended questions (see next page) regarding the organization's experience in a number of areas. Like the demographic/organizational questions, interviewees had received these questions several days earlier, to allow them time to prepare. Summaries of their answers were written down by the interviewer at the time of the interview.

For this analysis, we grouped organizers' responses into four areas:

- Section X: Collaborative Work Beyond the Local Organization (Question 17)
- Section XI: FBCO's Experience with New Religious Groupings and Social Constituencies (Questions 18-19)
- Section XII: Areas of Engagement by FBCO's (Questions 20-22)
- Section XIII: Strategic Self-assessment (Questions 23-25)

Answers to questions 17 - 25 are open to a number of potential biases separate from those that affect the overall survey:

- Interviewers for the study varied from trained professional academic interviewers to highly skilled and experienced non-academic interviewers to directors or staff people of local and national offices of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. The

resulting variation in interviewing approaches, styles, skills, and professional relationship to the interviewees means the data are not truly comparable across interviewees;

- Most interviewers did not record answers word for word; rather, they summarized what they considered the most important information and comments;
- The respondents varied in the amount of time they were willing to dedicate to the survey, with some spending an hour or more reflecting on the open-ended questions, others giving cursory answers, and others answering only those they found most interesting;
- Some of the respondents were answering to interviewers who had funded their projects in the past and/or might fund them in the future. We believe that this substantially increased respondents' willingness to participate in the project, but may also have led some to frame their answers in ways they thought strategically desirable; and
- Some questions were presumably asked with differing wordings, were abbreviated, or were skipped altogether.

As a result of these factors, the open-ended data should be interpreted cautiously. We cite numbers only where we have confidence in them, but even there, some interviewees may not have been asked to elaborate as fully as others, so numbers cited are minimum reports.

Notwithstanding, this data represents far and away the best available information regarding the broad field of FBCO, how its leading proponents see their work, and how they interpret their experiences working with various constituencies. Indeed, it is the only study to attempt a systematic assessment of the entire field across all four major networks and all independent FBCO efforts.

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ORGANIZERS OF FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Respondent _____

Date of Interview _____

Organization Name _____

City _____

Interviewer _____ **Phone** _____

Fax _____

This is not a questionnaire to return by mail, but a guide to preparing for the telephone interview. Please go over it in advance. For the factual questions, you can use it as a worksheet. If possible, please fax to the interviewer in advance: an annotated list of your congregations and other institutional members, as directed in Question 5; an annotated list of your board members (Question 6); and the demographic information that accompanied your last CCHD proposal (Question 12). All responses will be confidential. Only the persons analyzing the responses for Interfaith Funders will know which respondent or organization a particular answer comes from. No comparisons among networks will be made using the data.

1. In what year did your organization first have a full-time organizer? 19 _____

2. Has your organization had a founding convention?

no

yes → In what year was it held? 19 _____

3. Is your organization affiliated with a network?

no → Do you have a consultant? no yes → Who?

yes → Name of network _____

When did your organization affiliate with this network? 19 _____

What do you pay the network annually for its services? \$,000.00

4. Has your organization ever been affiliated with a different network (with any network, if not affiliated now)?

no

yes → Which one? _____

Why did you change?

5. This question is about the characteristics of your member congregations and institutions. If you have a list of members, please annotate it and fax it to your interviewer. The list will be used only for this survey, and only to produce a statistical portrait of your member institutions. It will be destroyed once data collection is complete. If you do not have a list or prefer not to send it, the interviewer will collect information on the characteristics of your member institutions over the phone. The annotations needed are:

- a. Add any congregations/institutions that have joined since the list was prepared.
- b. Cross out any that have left.
- c. If the denomination is not indicated by the name, please write it in.
(Congregations only)
- d. If the type of institution (union, block club, school, etc.) is not clear, write it in.
(Other institutions only)
- e. For each member institution, indicate the dominant ethnicity, using the codes shown at the top of the next page. If most of the people with that ethnicity are *immigrants*, place an asterisk after the code. For example, if Asians are the dominant ethnicity at St. Mark Church, and most of the Asians there are immigrants, you would write A*. (By dominant ethnicity, we mean one characterizing at least half of the individuals belonging to the congregation or institution.)

Race/Ethnicity Codes for Congregations and Institutions (add * if mostly immigrant)

A = Asian Record the country or region (e.g., Laos, Korea) that is the most important origin (birthplace for immigrants, national background for U.S.-born) for the Asians in the congregation.

B = Black (but *not* Hispanic)

BC = Black Caribbean (but *not* Hispanic)

H = Hispanic Record the country or region (e.g., Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Central America) that is the most important origin (birthplace or national background) for the Hispanics in the congregation.

N = Native American / American Indian	P = Pacific Islander	W = White Anglo
--	-----------------------------	------------------------

I = Integrated/interracial/interethnic congregation or institution (no single race/ethnicity characterizes more than half of the individuals in this congregation or institution)

6. This question is about the characteristics of your governing board. If you have a list of board members, please annotate it and fax it to your interviewer in advance. As with the congregation list, this will be used only to compile statistics and will be destroyed once data collection is complete. If you do not have this list or prefer not to send it, the interviewer will collect information over the phone. The annotations should indicate for each board member:

- a. gender (M or F)
- b. race/ethnicity, using the same codes as in Question 5. Mark immigrants with an asterisk (*), and note the national or regional background of Hispanics and Asians. For this question, the "I" code can be used for persons whose racial/ethnic identity is as an interracial or mixed-race person.
- c. age (this will be summarized in 10-year groups: 10-19, 20-29, etc., so you can indicate approximate ages, such as 20+, 30+)
- d. occupation (former or usual occupation, if retired, disabled, or unemployed). *Please be specific, giving a sense of the person's position or work; e.g., instead of "businessperson" enter "owner of dry cleaning company," "manufacturing shift supervisor," "sales representative," or the like.*

7. How is your board selected, and by whom?

8. What is the term of office for board members? _____ years

9. What was the total size of your *actual* budget for 1998 or the last completed fiscal year?

- a. Income: \$ _____,000.00
- b. Expenses: \$ _____,000.00

10. What percentage of this income came from each of the following sources? (*Please specify particular sources, as relevant, in the blanks at the right.*)

- a. _____ % CCHD (national and local combined)

(a) other congregation-based organizations. Are they ones in your network (if you are affiliated), and/or ones that are not?

(b) labor organizations. Has your experience with labor changed since its reconfiguration over the past few years? If so, how?

(c) other outside organizations or institutions, **of any kind** (for instance, universities, environmental groups, welfare rights organizations, or community organizations that are not congregation-based)

18. *Recruiting from religious groupings.* Is your organization trying to recruit any of the following? If so, which? What challenges and opportunities have you encountered? Does it look like any new congregations of these kinds will join?

(a) evangelical, fundamentalist, or Pentecostal congregations

(b) Jewish congregations

(c) other non-Christian congregations

19. *Organizing in new constituencies.* Are you organizing among any of the constituencies listed below? If so, why? What are your goals in doing this? Is it among people who belong to your member institutions, and/or among people who are not affiliated with your members?

(a) immigrants (b) parents (c) workers (d) youth

20. Has your organization initiated any economic development or social service projects, either that the organization carried out directly or that have been "spun off" into a separate organization? If so, of what kind? When did they start? How have these affected (positively or negatively) your core organizing work?

21. What has your organization done in the arena of electoral politics (e.g., voter registration, education efforts, voter guides, supporting or opposing ballot propositions)? What have been the benefits and problems of this work?

22. What issues has your group addressed over the past two years?

23. What issues do you hope faith-based community organizing will be able to address over the next decade that it has been unable to address up to now? What internal challenges must community organizing deal with in order to be in a position to address these issues?

24. How would you characterize the current state of the field of faith-based community organizing?

25. How can Interfaith Funders help advance the field of faith-based community organizing?

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Figure 1



TABLES

Table 1: Characteristics of FBCO organizations according to founding date (all figures are percentages except where noted)

Founding date

Characteristic	1972-1994	1995-1999
Region		
Midwest		
Mountain	18.5	36.3
Northeast	8.1	5.3
Pacific	20.1	21.6
South	22.7	12.5
Southwest Central	10.1	14.6
	20.5	9.7
Number of member institutions (mean)	28.14	33.03
Number of member congregations (mean)	24.13	29.57
Number of member NCIs (mean)	6.45	7.31
Size of board of directors (mean)	19.29	21.24
Number of core leaders (2 months, mean)	158.69	208.43
Service area		
City section		
City	7.10	11.60
Metropolitan area ^a	18.00	13.20
County	34.50	26.40
Multi-county	16.70	20.30
	21.60	25.90
Income (median) ^b	\$172,210.31	\$120,000.00
Expenses (median) ^b	\$168,000.00	\$129,000.00
Percentage of income from: ^b		
CCHD	15.67	23.71
Other religious givers	8.69	18.39
Foundations/corporations	34.81	23.34
Dues from members	21.75	20.47
Local fundraising	15.86	6.49
Other sources	3.18	7.54

Type of NCI (on average for organizations)		
Unions		
Schools	9.29	9.13
Neighborhood associations	41.59	21.58
Other community organizations	11.53	12.50
	37.59	56.79
Racial/ethnic composition of member institutions ^c		
Monoracial	9.10	11.90
Dominant	47.10	34.20
Multiracial	43.80	53.90
Maximum number of cases	76	53
<p>a Includes several groups reporting its service area as part of a metropolitan area.</p> <p>b Limited to cases with valid data on sources of income.</p> <p>c "Monoracial" organizations are those reporting that 100% of their member institutions are predominantly of a given racial/ethnic group. "Dominant" organizations are those reporting that 60-99% of their member institutions are predominantly of a given racial/ethnic group. "Multiracial" organizations are all others, that is, those organizations where institutions predominantly of one particular racial/ethnic group do not dominate.</p>		

Table 2: Characteristics of all FBCO organizations, and according to region (all figures are percentages except where noted)

<u>Region</u>

Characteristic	All	Midwest	Mountain	Northeast	Pacific	South	Southwest Central
Region							
Midwest							
Mountain	26.0						
Northeast	6.7						
Pacific	21.3						
South	17.9						
Southwest Central	12.5						
Year founded - first hired organizer (mean)	1991.3	1992.5	1991.2	1992.5	1989.6	1993.7	1987.9
Number of member institutions (mean)	30.35	36.19	26.50	28.47	25.80	28.83	31.72
Number of member congregations (mean)	26.57	32.65	22.66	24.78	22.57	27.29	25.24
Size of board of directors (mean)	20.22	22.66	23.81	21.16	18.23	15.74	19.64
Number of core leaders (two months; mean)	177.82	233.75	124.25	138.11	237.87	118.22	141.83
Income (median) ^a	\$150,000.00	\$138,134.56	\$162,500.00	\$149,494.74	\$229,073.14	\$107,000.00	\$178,689.66
Expenses (median) ^a	\$149,898.50	\$135,111.74	\$161,500.00	\$150,000.00	\$204,194.46	\$109,000.00	\$160,000.00
Percentage of income from:							
CCHD							
Other religious givers	18.68	19.45	23.41	18.71	11.98	15.93	24.69
Foundation	12.42	14.00	8.89	14.81	7.55	12.71	13.49
s/corporations	29.96	27.56	20.25	31.09	53.49	22.28	17.19
	21.95	23.82	29.57	23.45	13.21	28.75	17.62
	12.02	12.52	15.76	8.92	8.02	18.97	12.41
	4.91	2.60	1.94	3.02	5.68	1.43	14.52

Dues from members							
Local fundraising							
Other sources							
Maximum number of cases	133	35	9	28	24	17	21
a Limited to cases with valid data on sources of income.							

Table 3: Characteristics of FBCO organizations (all figures are percentages)	
Characteristic	Percent of FBCO groups
Year founded - first hired organizer	
1972-1979	
1980-1984	7.7
1985-1989	8.4
1990-1994	12.5
1995-1999	30.4
	41.1
Number of organizers on staff	
1	
2	29.1
3	26.9
4	19.7
5	11.6
6	6.5
7	2.7
8	0.9
	2.5

Number of member institutions	
Less than 10	2.1
10-14	15.4
15-19	19.8
20-29	31.2
30-39	17.1
40-69	11.1
70-99	0.0
100-230	3.3
Member institutions consist of congregations only	43.6
Number of core leaders (participants over 2 months)	
10-19	3.2
20-39	11.7
40-59	15.9
60-99	9.2
100-149	14.1
150-199	10.2
200-249	10.7
250-299	11.8
300-1300	13.2
Percent of member institutions that is predominantly Asian	
None	
1-9%	84.5
10-19%	10.9
20-29%	1.1
30-39%	2.6
40-49%	1.0
50-59%	0.0
60-69%	0.0
70-79%	0.0
80-89%	0.0
90-99%	0.0
100%	0.0

Percent of member institutions that is predominantly Black	
None	19.3
1-9%	10.6
10-19%	11.7
20-29%	11.7
30-39%	3.6
40-49%	14.4
50-59%	12.7
60-69%	8.5
70-79%	2.0
80-89%	3.5
90-99%	0.0
100%	3.5
Percent of member institutions that is predominantly Hispanic	
None	41.1
1-9%	12.6
10-19%	15.8
20-29%	9.8
30-39%	4.6
40-49%	6.2
50-59%	0.0
60-69%	4.1
70-79%	1.5
80-89%	0.0
90-99%	0.0
100%	4.3

Percent of member institutions that is predominantly Native American	
None	96.4
1-9%	3.6
10-19%	0.0
20-29%	0.0
30-39%	0.0
40-49%	0.0
50-59%	0.0
60-69%	0.0
70-79%	0.0
80-89%	0.0
90-99%	0.0
100%	0.0
Percent of member institutions that is predominantly white	
None	10.3
1-9%	3.6
10-19%	8.2
20-29%	11.8
30-39%	17.5
40-49%	11.7
50-59%	10.1
60-69%	7.2
70-79%	12.2
80-89%	3.6
90-99%	0.0
100%	3.8

Percent of member institutions that is predominantly interracial	
None	47.8
1-9%	23.9
10-19%	16.5
20-29%	7.8
30-39%	1.9
40-49%	1.1
50-59%	0.0
60-69%	0.0
70-79%	0.0
80-89%	0.0
90-99%	1.0
100%	0.0
Percent of organizations with:	
No unions as members	87.3
1 union	3.3
2 unions	2.5
3 unions	2.5
4 unions	1.6
5 unions	0.8
10 unions	0.8
15 unions	1.2
Percent of organizations with:	
No schools as members	76.2
1 school	3.7
2 schools	1.2
3 schools	3.7
4 schools	1.2
5 schools	2.1
6 schools	2.1
8 schools	3.4
10 schools	3.7
11 schools	1.2
22 schools	1.2

Table 4: Characteristics of member institutions for all FBCOs combined, and by region
(all figures are percentages except where noted)

<u>Region</u>							
Characteristic	All	Midwest	Mountain	Northeast	Pacific	South	Southwest Central
Percentage of all member institutions that is:							
Congregations	87.5						
Noncongregational institutions (NCIs)	12.5						
Percentage of member congregations that is:							
Jewish	1.95					1.78	
Unitarian	2.09	2.46	4.15	2.23	2.28	2.59	0.00
Universalist	0.62	1.03	5.19	2.33	1.35	1.36	2.76
Other non-Christian	32.92	0.41	2.07	0.19	0.81	14.95	0.23
Catholic	6.54	27.49	38.18	31.43	34.30	8.62	54.73
Episcopalian	7.89	4.46	4.15	12.75	5.74	3.00	2.57
Lutheran	5.71	13.32	10.79	9.82	4.60	11.52	2.96
Presbyterian	3.52	3.04	6.22	5.84	7.43	2.72	3.45
UCC	8.90	2.10	1.04	8.11	4.02	6.97	1.55
United Methodist	0.83	9.18	13.90	7.39	9.65	2.73	9.47
Other Protestant	2.70	0.49	1.76	0.37	0.53	7.36	0.33
AME, CME, AME	1.49	0.99	3.11	2.10	1.93	2.19	2.89
Zion	2.16	1.60	0.00	0.00	1.56	1.77	2.86
Missionary	1.49	3.46	0.00	0.68	4.31	3.52	0.89
Baptist	14.81	2.11	0.00	1.11	1.01	23.86	0.23
COGIC	2.84	21.77	2.49	9.44	7.53	1.91	12.93
Other Black Protestant	3.52	3.41	0.00	3.24	5.11	3.15	1.15
Baptist (non-Missionary)		2.65	6.95	2.97	7.83		0.99

Theologically Conservative Protestant Other Christian							
Percentage of member institutions that is predominantly	1.29		0.00				0.24
	35.03	0.29	3.50				40.04
Asian	20.89	37.03	37.34	0.99	6.89	0.00	40.03
Black	0.22	25.04	2.18	29.55	33.28	50.50	0.24
Hispanic	36.06	0.00	49.20	8.16	20.22	0.25	16.39
Native American	6.49	32.80	7.79	0.18	0.00	0.00	3.05
White/Anglo	10.81	4.85	6.62	48.31	33.59	44.10	20.83
Interracial		11.43		12.82	6.02	5.16	
Immigrant (of various race)				2.98	21.01	0.74	
Percentage of all NCIs that is							
Unions						0.00	
Schools	14.84	22.88	24.15	27.67	13.87	0.00	0.00
Neighborhood associations	42.48	21.00	43.48	14.82	21.28	69.84	97.58
Other community organizations	6.65	5.39	0.00	5.41	5.23	30.16	0.00
	36.03	50.78	32.37	52.10	59.62		2.41

Table 5: Characteristics of boards of directors of all FBCO organizations, and by region (all figures are percentages)							
<u>Region</u>							
Characteristic	All	Midwest	Mountain	Northeast	Pacific	South	Southwest Central

Gender							
male	48.73						
female	51.27	49.76	40.98	51.29	48.04	57.34	43.59
		50.24	59.02	48.71	51.96	42.66	56.41
Age distribution							
10-19							
20-29	0.48	0.00	0.00	1.84	0.00	0.80	0.00
30-39	2.76	1.64	0.61	6.63	1.14	2.39	2.51
40-49	16.34	12.63	26.81	17.29	19.52	13.31	13.32
50-59	33.52	34.10	44.38	33.17	33.76	29.43	28.90
60-69	27.81	28.49	12.46	23.37	35.30	36.97	28.73
70-79	18.70	21.21	14.02	16.36	20.60	12.87	22.90
	2.99	1.93	1.72	3.31	3.50	4.25	3.64
Race/ethnicity							
Asian							
Black	2.31	0.90	0.00	1.93	8.14	0.45	1.10
Hispanic	31.73	32.68	6.14	32.18	25.85	56.78	33.63
Native	21.05	9.99	58.21	10.38	25.20	1.87	42.02
American	0.47	0.00	3.20	0.79	0.00	0.00	0.32
White	43.36	56.09	32.44	49.75	40.81	41.92	22.94
Anglo	1.07	0.34	0.00	4.96	0.00	0.00	0.00
Interracial							
Clergy	27.16	29.93	12.07	28.09	22.35	40.03	26.50
Nonclergy	72.84	70.07	87.93	71.91	77.65	59.97	73.50

Table 6: Characteristics of all organizers, and by gender (figures are percentages except where noted)

Characteristic	All	Men	Women
----------------	-----	-----	-------

Gender			
Male	56.3		
Female	43.7		
Race/ethnicity			
White/Anglo			
Black ^a	50.2	55.7	43.2
Hispanic	28.9	25.6	33.2
Asian	16.3	14.8	18.3
Native American	2.7	3.0	2.3
Mixed	0.9	0.0	2.0
	0.9	0.9	1.0
Age (mean)	40.80	40.93	40.61

Religious denomination ^b			
AME			
AME Zion	0.5	0.0	1.2
Apostolic	0.5	0.0	1.2
Baptist	0.4	0.0	1.0
Bible Church	11.7	12.2	11.0
Buddhist	0.4	0.0	1.0
Catholic	1.3	2.4	0.0
Christian (non-denominational)	36.4	35.4	37.7
Christ Missionary Alliance	0.8	0.8	0.8
Christian	0.4	0.6	0.0
Church of Christ	0.7	0.6	0.7
COGIC	0.4	0.6	0.0
Episcopal	1.2	1.5	0.8
Evangelical	3.8	4.0	3.5
Islamic	0.3	0.6	0.0
Jewish (Conservative)	0.3	0.0	0.8
Jewish (Orthodox)	1.2	2.2	0.0
Jewish	0.3	0.6	0.0
Jewish/Christian mix	4.4	3.9	5.1
Lutheran	0.4	0.6	0.0
Methodist	2.2	2.6	1.8
Methodist Episcopal	3.4	3.3	3.5
Methodist Baptist	0.4	0.6	0.0
Pentecostal	0.5	0.9	0.0
Presbyterian	1.0	0.0	2.3
Protestant	3.9	3.7	4.1
Quaker	2.3	1.8	2.9
UCC	0.3	0.6	0.0
United Methodist	3.2	2.7	3.8
None/not applicable	2.5	4.5	0.0
	14.8	13.3	16.8
Year started with organization (mean)	1996.3	1995.7	1997.0
Year started with network (mean)	1993.7	1992.9	1994.8
Percent time working for local group	87.41	88.77	85.56
In supervisor position	32.8	43.0	19.5

Maximum number of cases	325	183	142
<p>a Includes Haitian, Black Caribbean.</p> <p>b Using categories as reported by respondents</p>			

Table 7: Characteristics of organizers by race/ethnicity (All figures are percentages)			
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
Characteristic	Black	Hispanic	White
Gender			
Male			
Female	49.8	51.0	62.4
Age (mean)	50.2	49.0	37.6
Year started with organization (mean)	41.54	38.25	41.9
Year started with network (mean)	1996.9	1997.3	1995.5
Percent time	1995.1	1994.2	1992.6
In supervisor position	90.15	86.32	86.16
	17.7	16.8	47.0
Maximum number of cases	94	53	163
<p>Note: Asian, Native American, and mixed race organizers are excluded because there are too few for meaningful comparison.</p>			

Table 8: Characteristics of organizers

Characteristic	Percent
Age	
20-29	15.7
30-39	26.8
40-49	38.2
50-59	16.0
60-69	3.3
Year started with network	
1969-1979	2.7
1980-1984	4.4
1985-1989	10.5
1990-1994	25.3
1995-1999	57.0

NOTES

1. Suggested citation: Warren, Mark R. and Richard L. Wood. 2001. *Faith-Based Community Organizing: The State of the Field*. Jericho, NY: Interfaith Funders.

2. For a history of the life and work of Saul Alinsky, see Sanford D. Horwitt, *Let Them Call Me Rebel* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989).

3. The four major networks provided figures on leadership training, reported below.

4. In general, applying such a weight has the effect of increasing the number of cases with data to equal that in the universe. However, using such a weight requires the assumption that the non-respondents are similar to the respondents because essentially we are giving the non-respondents the same responses as the respondents.

5. Because New York is quite different from other parts of the country, we can assume that the picture we get of FBCO nationally involves a degree of bias, or simply error. The reader should therefore understand that some distortion exists in the results reported here.

6. The Northeast includes Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and the District of

Columbia. The Midwest includes Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. The Pacific includes Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, and Hawaii. The Mountain includes Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada. The South includes Virginia, West Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi. The Southwest Central includes Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas.

7. The numbers of institutions have been rounded off in recognition of the fact that they are estimates taken from survey responses. The precise figures calculated from the survey are: 4,037 total institutions, of which 3534 are congregations and 503 are non-congregational institutions.

8. The percentage figures are drawn using data from the Independent Sector. In 1992, the Independent Sector estimated from telephone company yellow pages that there were 257,648 congregations in the United States. Using lists supplied by the American Church Lists, Inc., Independent Sector gave an alternative number of 355,235 congregations. See *From Belief to Commitment: The Community Service Activities and Finances of Religious Congregations in the United States, 1993 Edition*, Washington, DC: Independent Sector, pp. 115-116.

9. The low end of the estimate assumes that congregations involved in FBCO groups are about the same size as the average American congregation. Most likely, though, they are larger because so many are Catholic parishes that are quite large. The high end of the estimate comes from an estimate of the average size of congregations involved in FBCO given by respondents to a survey conducted by Stephen Hart in 1994.

10. Only 58 associations in American history have ever exceeded the 1% threshold. See Theda Skocpol, Marshall Ganz and Ziad Munson, "A Nation of Organizers: The Institutional Origins of Civic Voluntarism in the United States," *American Political Science Review* 94 (September, 2000): 529.

11. The precise figures from the survey are: 2,689 board members, 459 organizers, and 23,650 core leaders.

12. The precise figure is 101,472. Different people may have attended different meetings for one group, so this figure really is a minimum number. Moreover, since the meaning of attendance at these meetings can vary so much between organizations, this report does not analyze variation across the organizations.

13. We cannot say for certain that the field is founding organizations more rapidly today than in the past because organizations founded in earlier periods may have folded and therefore not be represented in our survey. However, our conclusions about the growth of the field are supported by comparisons to a survey of FBCO conducted by Stephen Hart in 1994. Dr. Hart identified 90 groups in operation at that time, so the number has increased by nearly 50% since then. Note: we calculate founding date by the year in which the organization hired a paid organizer, our best measure of when an organization became stable and active.

14. We do not know this for sure because there may have been organizations in the Northeast and Midwest, for example, in earlier periods that subsequently collapsed and are not represented in this

survey. This survey provides no hard data on the state of the FBCO field in the 1970s and 1980s, only information on the past history of organizations that were in existence in 1999.

15. This conclusion is supported by comparisons to the results of the survey conducted by Stephen Hart mentioned above. In 1994, Dr. Hart found that the average FBCO group had 20 congregational members. By 1999, according to our survey, the average group had almost 27 congregational members.

16. The networks include the IAF, PICO, Gamaliel Foundation and DART. The nature and extent of training varies to some extent between the networks, but we used the most comparable figures.

17. In comparing the characteristics of supervisors to non-supervisors by gender and, below, by race, it should be remembered that the full-time supervisors in the field who are not working for local organizations were not included in the survey and, therefore, not included in these comparisons.

18. The rest of this report relies on organizer answers to open-ended questions at the close of the phone interviews. See Appendix for question wording and for notes regarding limitations in the interview methodology and analysis reported in this section. Irregularities in how interviews were conducted make it misleading to calculate numbers of responses of a given kind. Where appropriate, we provide such numbers; otherwise, our analysis presents the key broad patterns and insights in the interviews. All numbers cited reflect those who *reported* a given activity, and should be considered minimums. Quotations used throughout are illustrative of wider patterns in the interviews or capture particularly cogent insights.

19. Only 98 of the 100 interviewees were asked the questions regarding the ties of their organizations with unions, public schools, and universities. So the percentages in this section use a denominator of 98; thus, 40% here means that 39 of the 98 interviewees claimed to have significant collaborative ties with labor unions. As earlier, it is not clear whether some interviewers probed these areas more than cursorily, so these percentages should be interpreted as minimum reports; not all organizers may have been asked, but some may have had incentive to report rather over-optimistically.

20. This figure comes from summing the percentage of member congregations listed in Table 4 as Jewish, Unitarian Universalist, Other non-Christian, COGIC, Theologically Conservative Protestant, and Other Christian. This probably over-estimates the actual presence of the groups of interest here, as the largest two categories are the last two, which are likely to include Christian congregations that are not fundamentalist or Pentecostal, and only evangelical in a very broad sense.

21. Christians Supporting Community Organizing is a national organization working with all the networks to engage evangelical and Pentecostal congregations in FBCO, and to more fully develop the scriptural basis of this work.

22. This may understate the actual contact with immigrants, since many may be members of religious congregations reached through standard FBCO organizing. Note that respondents were also asked about outreach to parents and youth; the answers largely repeated information covered in the sections on collaboration with labor unions, job training issues, and schools.

23. The discussion here pertains only to "economic development" work in the sense of doing development *projects*, not to efforts to convince political or corporate officials to invest or make decisions

that will foster economic development in a given area; the latter is solidly within the arena of what is usually understood as the core tasks of organizing.

24. Also of note is the fact that most respondents answered only in terms of what issues they hoped their own local organization might address in the future, although the question was clearly intended to elicit their views of challenges facing the entire field of faith-based organizing. This may be related to the isolation many organizers appear to experience, as discussed in the section on collaborative projects below.