

**THE “PURPOSE DRIVEN” POLICY?  
EXPLAINING STATE-LEVEL VARIATION IN  
THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE**

by  
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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Graduate College

The University of Arizona

2006

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
GRADUATE COLLEGE

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the following for their generous funding of this project: The Louisville Institute, the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, the Association for the Sociology of Religion, The Horowitz Foundation, and the National Science Foundation. I would also like to thank Mark Chaves, Sarah Soule, Joe Galaskiewicz, and Brint Milward for their continued assistance. This project would not have been possible without their time and support. Finally, I want to thank Keith Bentele and Liz Rank for providing much needed advice and help.

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## ABSTRACT

Enacted as part of the 1996 Welfare Reform bill, the faith-based initiative was intended to ensure that small religious groups were not discriminated against in the awarding of government funding. While there has been a great deal of attention paid to changes at the federal level, little attention has been paid to how and why states are implementing the faith-based initiative. Currently, states are not required to implement any part of the initiative, other than guaranteeing that faith-based organizations (FBOs) will not be discriminated against in funding decisions. Nevertheless, states have been acting on the initiative in a variety of ways in the hope of increasing the number of faith-based organizations performing social services.

Although religious groups have been receiving government funds to provide social services for much of American history, the faith-based initiative represents a new effort from both state and federal governments to encourage even greater participation. To understand the state-level faith-based implementation I focus on two research questions: Why are states creating faith-based policies and practices? What are these new policies and practices? Data collected from multiple sources reveal three key aspects of faith-based policy implementation: appointment of state actors known as Faith-Based Liaisons (FBLs), legislation, and presentation of state Faith-Based Policy conferences.

While supporters argue that the faith-based initiative is about solving problems of poverty and an over-burdened welfare system, I find that these policies and practices do not respond to problems of poverty or welfare, and do not offer the substantial new help to the poor and needy that was promised by supporters. Instead, I find that state faith-

based practices are more likely to be implemented in states with a strong evangelical movement presence. My data also shows that these practices are actually a series of symbolic policies that further the goals of the evangelical movement in two ways. First, state faith-based policies and practices enable the evangelical movement's greater goal of chipping away at church/state separation. Second, because these policies and practices reframe and reshape the church/state relationship in ways that appeal to deeply held ideological views by many in the United States, they have the potential to create new political allies for the evangelical movement.

## CHAPTER 1

### AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE

I believe it is in the national interest that government stand side-by-side with people of faith ... I understand in the past, some in government have said government cannot stand side-by-side with people of faith. I viewed this as not only bad social policy – I viewed it as discrimination.

George W. Bush  
June 1, 2004

Mass publics respond to currently conspicuous political symbols: not to facts ... to the gestures and the speeches that make up the drama of the state

Murray Edelman  
172:1971

### **Introduction**

In the summer of 2004 I attended my first conference on the faith-based initiative in Washington, D.C.<sup>1</sup> The room was filled to capacity, and there was a palpable air of excitement and anticipation about the promises ahead. The conference began with a prayer by Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church and author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, a very popular account of how to turn conservative Christian identity into social service activism. He told the audience that it was time to start a revolution in the name of faith. The audience came to their feet, standing in applause at his proclamations.

Several hours – and several speeches about the evils of “secular extremists” and

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<sup>1</sup> This was also the first official federal conference sponsored by the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Other conferences had been sponsored by the federal government at the state-level, but they had been presented as non-partisan roundtables on the faith-based initiative (Kuo 2006).

prayers about the power of faith to heal – later, President George W. Bush arrived. As when he was governor of Texas, the President started his speech with a story, in this case a story about addiction and the promise of faith to save one from addiction. He spoke of how his own belief in the Bible and Jesus saved him from alcoholism. But this was not the only story he told; he also told stories about welfare moms saved by their neighborhood churches, about prisoners “brought to the light” by Chuck Colson’s Prison Ministries, and about children saved from the evils of drugs by Teen Challenge. He told the audience that he could not think of a better place for a prisoner to go than to church. He said that change only really happened when loving people told those in need that they loved them, and that God loved them; he emphatically argued that it was only through stories such as his, and those that they had heard earlier about the importance of spiritual change, that a real cultural and spiritual rejuvenation could happen. Along with these stories about the importance of faith to helping the addicted, poor, and needy, he made promises about how the faith-based initiative could offer help to the helpless and hope to the hopeless by bringing in new money and new organizations to provide social services. He was speaking in the language of the evangelical faith, and almost no one in the room was not moved by the idea that if faith-based groups were just given money, the problems we have suffered from in the past would vanish.

However, since then little in the way of *new* money to fight poverty and addiction has materialized. Instead, the faith-based initiative has become a series of policies, practices, and promises that I have found are really about changing culture and politics by altering the relationship between religion and government. Instead of bringing real help

to the poor, these practices have amounted to a series of actions aimed at bringing religion into the public square in a new and fundamentally different way.

In his examination of the role of social policy in politics and social life, Murray Edelman (1964, 1971) argued that it is not the actual material consequences of policy that are important, but rather what they represent. “Every symbol stands for something other than itself,” evoking responses that are not necessarily based on facts and evidence, but on beliefs that are central to that person’s idea of the world (Edelman 6:1964). He argued that public policies amount to a series of symbols that appeal to certain groups, reassuring them and representing ideas and values they hold deeply (Edelman 1964, 1971). These symbols then appeal to other groups and change the culture in which they are embedded.

I found this to be the case with faith-based policy implementation at the state level: the policies, as they are currently implemented, are not about changing the material conditions of the poor and marginalized, as the leaders who support the faith-based initiative argued, but are about increasing the importance of religion in the public sphere. Proponents of the faith-based initiative have reframed the debate about church/state separation to suggest that separation creates discrimination against religious groups; to remedy this government must reach out to religion in a spirit of cooperation rather than separation. My data show that state faith-based practices are in response to efforts by the evangelical movement, and are actually a series of symbolic policies and practices that work to further the goals of the evangelical movement in two ways. First, state faith-based policies and practices are part of the evangelical movement’s greater goal of chipping away at church/state separation. Second, because these policies and practices

reframe and reshape the church/state relationship, they have the potential to create new political allies for the evangelical movement.

### **A Brief History of the Faith-Based Initiative**

Although religious groups have been receiving government funds to provide social services for most of American history, the faith-based initiative represents a new effort by both state and federal governments to encourage even greater participation. This drive to get faith-based organizations (FBOs) to take on more responsibility in the social service sector has created a growing debate, not only about the role that religion should play in social service delivery, but also about deeper normative questions regarding the relationship between church and state. Supporters argue that the main goal of the faith-based initiative is to help churches and other faith-based organizations get funding from the government, with advocates arguing that churches and other faith-based organizations offer better and more caring help to those in need of social services than do traditional non-profit and government agencies (Ashcroft 1999, Olasky 1997).

As conceptualized in evangelical intellectual circles, the philosophy behind the faith-based initiative was twofold. First, by “removing unnecessary barriers” to participation, small faith-based groups would compete in large numbers for federal and state funds without having to give up their inherently religious character (Chaves 1999; Formicola et al. 2003; Wineburg 2001). Evangelical activists have argued that the current view of church/state relations in the United States has led to an unreasonable burden on religious organizations and discrimination against them by government agencies. For example, in *Renewing American Compassion*, Marvin Olasky argued that

“The federal government’s gradual entrenchment in America’s public service sector has created an increasingly inhospitable environment for charity’s religious elements” (Olasky 1996:162). According to this view, it is only by fundamentally altering how church and state are seen that these groups will be treated fairly and given the opportunity to compete with secular organizations for government funding.

Second, it was argued that religious groups would offer holistic services, different from, and better than, traditional non-profit and government social services (Colson and Percy 1999; Green and Sherman 2002; Loconte 2002, 2004; Olasky 1997; Sherman 1999). The hope was that after this legislation was implemented, “the armies of compassion” (Olasky 1997) would be unleashed, and small religious groups would take the place of government social services in helping the addicted, the poor, and the needy.

However, the veracity of these claims is still up for debate (Kennedy and Biefeld 2003; Sager and Stephens 2005; Wineburg 2001). Currently, there is no evidence that religious groups were ever discriminated against, nor any evidence that faith-based organizations are uniformly better at providing social services (Kennedy and Biefeld 2003; Sager and Stephens 2005; Wineburg 2001). Regardless of whether religious groups offer better or different services, the overall impact of the faith-based initiative is perhaps even more important: through symbolic policies and practices it potentially reshapes political alliances and is part of a larger process of changing the relationship between church and state in the United States.

While these changes began in the federal government, the initiative has since spread to the state level. Enacted as part of the 1996 Welfare Reform bill, the faith-based

initiative (then known as “Charitable Choice”), was intended to ensure that small religious groups were not discriminated against in government funding decisions. While there has been a great deal of attention paid to changes at the federal level (Farris, Nathan, and Wright 2004; Formicola, et al. 2003; Seuss-Kennedy and Biefeld 2003), little attention has been paid to how and why states are implementing the faith-based initiative (but see Ragan, Monteil, and Wright 2003 for an exception).

This is especially interesting considering that states are not required to implement any part of the initiative, other than guaranteeing that faith-based organizations will not be discriminated against in funding decisions. Nevertheless, states have been acting on the initiative in a variety of ways, including appointing advisory boards to oversee faith-based policy implementation, creating new laws and executive orders to specifically include faith-based organizations in competitions for government contracts, and appointing faith-based liaisons to connect government with religious groups. This new activity exists despite the fact that all states already contract with religious organizations to provide social services. In effect, the faith-based initiative is a policy in search of a problem, creating new changes where none appear to be necessary. Thus, one might expect that since contracting with religious organizations is really nothing new, states would not have any impetus to add new and potentially costly policies to their agendas. However, while some states have done very little or nothing, most states have enacted some type of faith-based practice that goes above and beyond federal requirements, creating new laws and new administrative measures that intertwine religion and state government.

To understand state-level faith-based implementation I focused on two questions: Why have states created policies and practices in response to the faith-based initiative? What are these new policies and practices? Using both qualitative and quantitative data I have attempted to answer these two questions and understand the influences behind the implementation of the faith-based initiative. I found that there have been three key aspects of faith-based policy implementation: appointment of state actors known as Faith-Based Liaisons (FBLs) and creation of state Offices of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCIs), passage of legislation, and presentation of state-sponsored policy conferences. While supporters argue that the faith-based initiative is about solving problems of poverty and an over-burdened welfare system, I found that these policies and practices do not respond to problems of poverty or welfare, and do not offer the substantial new help to the poor and needy that was promised by supporters. Instead, I found that state faith-based practices are more likely to be implemented in states with a strong evangelical movement presence.

### **State Implementation of the Faith-Based Initiative**

#### *Previous Research*

Since the original implementation of the faith-based initiative at the federal level in 1996, supporters have argued in favor of the initiative on the grounds that religious groups offer services that are different from, and superior to, those offered by traditional non-profits and secular social service agencies. While this notion has been promulgated by President Bush and the media, the claim that these groups are somehow superior providers of services remains unproven. Nonetheless, states have been increasing

implementation of faith-based practices since 1996, apparently relying on that assumption. Little is known, however, about these state actions or their potential impact. Instead, recent research on the faith-based initiative has focused on three main issues: the implementation of the initiative at the federal level (Formicola et.al. 2003; Biefeld and Kennedy 2003, 2005); whether secular or religious groups are better providers of social services (Sager and Stephens 2005; Wuthnow, Hackett, and Hsu. 2004; Biefeld and Kennedy 2005); and questions about the relationship between church and state (Lupu and Tuttle 2003). While this research focuses on important questions regarding the faith-based initiative, it leaves a main facet of faith-based policy unexplored: namely, the role of state governments in creating faith-based policies and practices.

The limited research on state faith-based policy implementation that has thus far been conducted has focused on descriptive accounts of actions at the state level nationwide (Ragan et al. 2003; Ragan and Wright 2005), or within a single state (Bartkowski and Regis 2003; Wineburg 2001). While these studies have begun to show the types of activities in which states are engaged, they have not accounted for many aspects of the initiative. Among the areas left to be explored are a detailed account of Faith-Based Liaisons and their role in the implementation of the initiative, an account of legislative activity over time, and descriptions of various actual state practices. Given that research on what states are really doing is crucial to fully understanding the initiative, the paucity of research on how state governments are implementing the initiative is surprising. No research has gathered comprehensive data for all states in an attempt to quantify the reasons underlying adoption of faith-based policies by states or to

describe the on-the-ground reality of its implementation. There has been no theoretical assessment of why states engage in these activities, nor even of the actual policies, practices and actors responsible for these practices.

*The Role of the Evangelical Movement and the Shifting Tide of Church/State Separation*

While the stated goal of the faith-based initiative may be to incorporate new faith-based organizations into the social service sector to better help the poor and needy, there is another side to the initiative. I argue that faith-based implementation meets the instrumental political goals of the resurgent evangelical movement in at least two ways. First, it creates a new role for religion in government, using the symbols evoked by the faith-based initiative to change political culture in a way that brings religion into government through collaboration and cooperation. I argue that regardless of whether the actors have any real power or whether there are funds involved, the creation of new legislation and administrative positions signals support to the evangelical movement base and legitimizes a new role for religion within politics. Second, because of these symbols, the initiative also has the potential to generate new supporters in the black religious community. Working with the knowledge that religious African-Americans have similar feelings regarding the role of religion in government, supporters of faith-based policies and practices have focused on black religious members in two ways: appointing black clergy members as state FBLs, and creating state-sponsored faith-based conferences specifically aimed at the black religious community that use tools found in black churches to promote social action based on the faith-based initiative.

Over the last fifty years, resurgent evangelicals have moved away from the traditional understanding of the relationship between conservative religious groups and politics. Instead of taking an entirely “other-worldly” perspective, resurgent evangelicals have focused on bringing religion into this world through politics and government (Smith et al. 1998). Believing that there is a collapse of traditional values and mores in society, the resurgent evangelical movement has attempted to confront this by changing politics and government (Olasky 1996, Monsma 2004); threats from “secular extremists” were at hand, and the only way to stave off the inevitable downfall was to bring religion back to the forefront in American life by reshaping church/state relations the United States. Further, they believe that the secularization of the public sphere (for example, by means of court cases that made prayer in school illegal and abortion legal) must be stopped; the absence of religion – in this case conservative Christian religion – from all aspects of life, is creating a great social downfall. By this view, it is only with the introduction of religion into policies, government, and law that a remedy can be found. As evangelical movement leader Randall Terry<sup>2</sup> said, “Our goal is a Christian nation. We have a Biblical duty and we are called by God to conquer this country. We don’t want equal time. We don’t want pluralism.” The faith-based initiative is just one policy in a symbolic crusade to win over hearts and minds to the evangelical movement’s goal of changing the norm of church/state separation.

One part of this strategy has been to increase the role of religion in all aspects of state government, including social services. And one of the ways to do this has been to

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in The News-Sentinel, August 16, 1993 downloaded from

create a new metaphor about church/state separation and how that impacts social services and government. As Edelman (1971:7) argues, “Political actions chiefly arouse or satisfy people not by granting or withholding their stable substantive demands, but rather by changing the demands and expectations.” Instead of separation, the movement’s argument went, government should seek collaboration and cooperation between faith-based groups and government funded social services. This new relationship would bring in new and better help to the poor and needy. However, since then there has been no one to ensure that the new policies were anything but political tools and symbolic efforts to satisfy both the political and normative goals of the evangelical movement.

Therefore, it is not surprising that I found that while the rhetoric surrounding the initiative is about solving problems of poverty, the data told another story. Instead of making real progress towards eliminating poverty, these policies appear to be aimed at furthering a different goal – the de-secularization of the government. I found that faith-based policies were more likely to be found in states with a strong evangelical movement presence, rather than in states with the greatest problems of poverty or welfare burden. Additionally, once in place, rather than being real attempts to help fund new programs to do social services, these policies create new government-sponsored social actions and actors that reaffirm this new norm, and potentially create new political alliances. Instead of making real progress towards eliminating poverty, faith-based practices create a new link between state governments and religious organizations.

### **Theoretical Contribution**

While research on the faith-based initiative offers its own important substantive contribution, it also contributes to and draws from several areas in social science research. First, it helps to enlarge our understanding of the role of social movements in creating policy. Second, when looking at what happens once the policy is created, it informs our understanding of the nature of policy-making, and why even symbolic policies are critical tools of political power. Additionally, it builds our knowledge about the first steps in the policy process. Finally, my work bridges the gap between movements and policy by looking at how movements, through insider political access, change policy that is intended to gain new political allies and meet substantive goals by reframing public debates. I found that faith-based policy is a case of symbolic politics at its finest. Instead of creating real change that helps the poor and needy, faith-based policies are a response to evangelical movement strength within state politics that has at its roots in deeply held beliefs about the importance of religion – in this case a certain brand of religion—within society. Because the resources necessary to create these policies and practices are few, while the political and normative gains are great, individual states where these movement actors are embedded could create faith-based policies and practices that would satisfy ideological concerns, without having to sacrifice new material resources.

#### *Symbolic Politics: Creating a New Norm of Church/State Separation*

In the literature on public policy and social movements, changing the political landscape by creating new symbols and frames of understanding is considered a crucial

way for movements to gain political power (Brysk 1995; Benford and Snow 2000; Edelman 1965, 1971; McVeigh, Myers, and Sikkink 2004; Miceli 2005; Pedriana 2006; Wysong, Aniskeiwize, and Wright 1994). In his seminal work on symbolic politics, Edelman (1971) argued that symbolic politics are important, not because of the concrete policies that they achieve, but because of the changes that they represent and the new political alliances they create: policies are just not about their instrumental function and allocation of resources, but about reassuring anxious groups. “Political activity and formally proclaimed policy therefore amount to authoritative signals and assurances, in ambiguous and anxiety producing situations, that particular groups’ interests will be taken into account” (Edelman 10:1971). Currently, evangelicals are particularly anxious about the future. Their overall feeling is that the world needs religion in politics and public life, and that this has been systematically taken away from them. I found the faith-based initiative is one way in which a public role for religion is being reclaimed.

The faith-based initiative is a perfect example of how social movements create new policies and political actors that represent movement action and goals. Stories, words, and anecdotes that social movement actors create get transformed into real policies that legitimize the goal of the social movement. As theorists in political science argue, the importance of symbolic politics is the change in narratives and norms (Brysk 1996). Again, what these policies *do* is not important; that they exist in a framework that appeals to the values of their constituencies (and, it is hoped, new allies) is important. With the faith-based initiative, there was the social construction of a social service crisis to which the only answer was religion. The faith-based initiative, when looked at through

the lens of symbolic politics, is both catering to the ideological concerns of the evangelical movement, and acting as a political tool to reach out to new groups who view the world similarly.

Social movement theorists have argued that by gaining access within the political system, social movements can begin to implement their goals through policy changes (Zald 2000). Through inside access to state politics, evangelical movement actors are able to gain legitimacy within state government, and are thus better able to pursue their various goals. In their study of evangelical movement access to government, Green, Guth, and Wilcox (1998) argued that the movement can gain much from its influence in state Republican parties: legitimacy, access to organizational resources, and a key role in nomination and platform politics. I have found that faith-based policies and practices were created in states where this presence was greater. Therefore, in the case of the faith-based movement, this inside access has led to new policies and potentially to new political allies. While these policies may be in the symbolic realm, what the increased legitimacy in both politics and policy ultimately brings the movement remains to be seen.

The evangelical movement is not the first movement to have its policy access start in the symbolic realm. Other movements have gained slow but steady access to government by taking small steps that eventually lead to stronger and more concrete legislation. One of the best examples of this is the Civil Rights Movement. The original policy implementation of the Civil Rights Movement began with offices similar to faith-based offices. Without support staff or any real funds or organizational structure, Civil Rights Directors, who were usually located in governors' offices, were the first type of

policy implementation to meet the goals of the Civil Rights Movement (Bullock and Lamb 1984; Lockard 1968). From those symbolic displays of agreement with the movement's efforts, real policy changes at the state level, such as the creation of Equal Employment Opportunity Councils and Affirmative Action programs, were not far behind. Such policy measures were able to succeed because of the groundwork laid by their predecessors, the state Civil Rights Directors.

This increase over time in the strength of favorable social policy and legitimization of the Civil Rights Movement within state politics is important to consider in conjunction with the evangelical movement and the current implementation of symbolic policies that begin to meet its goals. While faith-based policy is currently a symbolic attempt at dismantling church and state separation and reaching out to new political allies, future policies may be more concrete. Faith-based liaisons, much like Civil Rights Directors, could be only the first step in the policy process; a process that increases in seriousness and substance over-time. In addition, while there is now no new money, there may eventually be a re-distribution of funds, which could benefit certain religious groups. While these material consequences may certainly be important, I argue that without the original foundation of symbolic policy laid by the faith-based initiative, these changes could not occur.

However, the future direct material results of these policies are not necessarily only important facet of these practices. Instead, it is the simple fact that these policies, positions, and practices exist that is important. Claiming that faith-based groups are ideal for providing social services and have been discriminated against, the new evangelical

movement has framed an argument against the current standard of church/state separation, and has begun an ideological and political battle that has as its goal reshaping the political landscape in the United States.

*New Understandings, New Allies: The Creation of a Faith-Based Movement Political Platform*

Research in public policy has found that policy creates politics (Lowi 1964, 1969; 1992; Mooney and Lee 1995; Stone 2005), with new social policies altering the political landscape (Lowi 1969). Policies based on beliefs and ideas shared with other groups can also create new allegiances and political allies. While Green and colleagues (2003) found that the evangelical movement's access to state Republican parties was important for several reasons, they also argued that to move beyond their base and gain influence in other states the movement would have to access the black church.

In this research I found two ways in which the faith-based initiative was a policy creating new politics. First, faith-based liaisons operating as policy brokers brought a new understanding of church/state separation and the new language of the faith-based initiative to religious groups and to state government. Second, two faith-based practices appeared specifically aimed at creating new allegiances with the black community – the recruitment of members of the black church as FBLs, and the creation of faith-based conferences relying heavily on symbolic cues from black churches to create new social movement action (Lowi 1969).

*Faith-based liaisons as social movement actors.* While state Faith-Based Liaisons are government employees, their work is often more similar to that of movement

actors than government bureaucrats. I argue that understanding FBLs is important to our understanding of this policy's implementation and the affected political institutions. Research on state policy implementation has found that when a policy is particularly amorphous, or is aimed at administrative changes, the local actors in charge of carrying out the policy have a more important impact upon it than is otherwise the case (Juntti and Potter 2002; Kahn 2001; Keiser 2001; Ridzi 2004; Skretny 1998). In general, policy actors are more able to rely on their knowledge and pre-existing values when they are operating under few rules and guidelines. For example, Kahn (2001) found that workers in charge of implementing federal Welfare to Work policies in Michigan often improvised because of the lack of administrative regulation. "The implementation of social policy is strongly conditioned by the needs, desires and agendas of those who carry them out." (Kaler and Watkins 2001:254)

Thus, state implementation of federal faith-based policy has created a system in which faith-based liaisons have the freedom to carry out a mainly-administrative policy with few regulations to guide them in their task. Current faith-based policy has made liaisons into policy brokers, and, in some cases, into unintentional movement activists. Recent research on social movements has found that internal political actors can act as social movement activists (Santoro and McGuire 1997; Stearns and Almeida 2004; Wald and Corey 2002) who, while acting as government bureaucrats, rely on their experience, networks, and beliefs to carry out whatever actions they deem are appropriate to meet the goals of the policy (Fineman 1998; Kaler and Watkins 2001; Lipsky 1971; Maupin 1993; Prottas 1978; Weatherley and Lipsky 1977; Weissert 1994). While many faith-based

liaisons lack their own offices or bureaucratic structure, they are integrated into other state bureaucracies (such as Governor's Offices and state Departments of Children and Families) that rely on the liaisons to guide their interactions with faith-based organizations.

Acting as the main conduit between churches and state agencies, FBLs make creative use of their limited resources to inform FBOs about opportunities and encourage them to become involved in the government's social services activities. However, instead of being able to offer real resources to these groups, liaisons become in essence policy promoters, bringing news and information about how the faith-based initiative is necessary to end discrimination, and encouraging the groups to apply for government funds on the grounds they are the best ones to do the job. I found that these faith-based liaisons were most likely to belong to two religious groups: conservative Christian churches and black religious organizations. In both cases the liaisons were reaching out to groups that potentially ally with faith-based political supporters. While I found that these liaison often saw their activities as truly helpful and believed in what they were doing, the that fact little concrete support was behind them leads to the conclusion that they are, in fact, political symbols and activists, either intentionally or unintentionally creating a support network for the political activists who support the initiative.

These liaisons become important tools with which faith-based movement supporters reach out to the black church to gain new supporters and allies for faith-based policies. This potential support for the faith-based initiative from black churches has two sources. First, African-American churches have been found to be more likely than others

to have previously partnered with government (Chaves 1999). Second, they are close to white evangelicals in their belief that religion should play a greater role in politics and public life (Pew 2001), with 59 percent of African-Americans believing that religion needs to play a greater role in American politics (Pew 2000). Essentially, most black Americans believe that religion and government should not be separated, but rather should have a close relationship. Together these findings indicate a potential for an early base of support for faith-based practices from the black church; knowing this, political leaders and policy-makers could use the faith-based initiative as an instrumental political tool to attempt to change the dynamics between religion and politics in the black church (Harris 1999, Smith and Harris 2005, Harris 2001).

*Faith-based conferences as political rallying grounds.* In addition to reaching out to the black church through faith-based liaisons, state implementation of faith-based practices also reaches out to black religious groups through state faith-based conferences. The black church has long been the main cultural, political, and social institution in the black community. It is within this setting that the Civil Rights movement began, and social movement action continues. In her work on black church culture and politics, Patricia Pattillo-McCoy (1998) argues that language and symbols used in these settings create the necessary tools for social action. I have found that a key aspect of faith-based policy implementation has been the sponsorship of faith-based conferences aimed specifically at the black community, and that these conferences actively employ and rely on these same cues to social action. However, instead of social action around issues of social justice or poverty, these conferences are aimed at generating public support for the

faith-based initiative and its main proponents, the Republican Party, and the evangelical movement.

How do these informational conferences turn into events that look more like church services than policy conferences? I found that there are two ways that these conferences act to generate religion: religious exhortations are used by the leaders of the conference to engage the audience and inspire religious responses, and religious expression in the small groups at the conferences is encouraged. Through these two types of activities, these conferences become more like a religious or political event held at an African-American church than a state policy conference. I found that the symbols and activities present at state-faith based conferences are the same as those found in black churches. Leaders at the conference use the same style of rhetoric and social movement action that are encountered at black church events. These conferences are another facet of faith-based policy and practice that make calls to action through symbolic politics that have a dual goal – changing the nature of political power within the United States by chipping away at certain segments of the vote, especially the black religious vote, and creating new norms for the relationship between religion and state government.

### **Dissertation Outline**

Chapter 2 explores the background of faith-based policy implementation at both the federal and state level, and how this has led to three main types of implementation. The history of the faith-based initiative at both the federal and state level has generally been tied to the activities of a few dedicated individuals who believe in the role of religion in social services.

In Chapter 3 there is a full description of the data collection, variables, and methods of analysis used in this study: I have relied on a triangulated method of data collection and analysis to explore multiple levels of faith-based policy implementation. First, I collected quantitative data on all types of administrative and legislative implementation at the state level, using two types of regression analysis to help understand the reasons why the various practices occurred at the state level. Second, I collected two different types of qualitative data to help explore these policies and practices and what their implementation actually looks like on the ground. Using multiple levels of data collection and analysis allowed me to explore various levels of faith-based policy implementation, and to use these data to help inform social science research at large.

Chapter 4 qualitatively explores what the implementation of these liaison positions, offices, and laws look like “on the ground.” I find that as faith-based policy promoters, faith-based liaisons rely on personal networks to link religious groups and state agencies; through these networks, faith-based liaisons bridge the gap between state governments and faith-based organizations to increase these organizations’ involvement in providing social services. Understanding state-level implementation of the initiative thus requires answering two questions: What actions do faith-based liaisons take to implement the initiative? Who are these liaisons? The unstructured nature of faith-based liaison positions, and the liaisons’ backgrounds, identities, and commitments combine to have an important impact on the initiative’s effect. The main function of these liaisons is to work to increase the scope of social services with which religious groups are involved.

Similarly, the main impact of legislative implementation has also been to encourage, but not mandate, greater participation by religious groups in government funded social services. While neither of these activities requires participation by religious groups, it does create an environment in which this is strongly encouraged. In this chapter I also attempt to understand the potential impacts of these practices in the future.

In Chapter 5, I examine why states may be more likely to create these practices. Using state level social movement, political, socio-economic, and demographic data, I examine the underlying causes in the variation of implementation of the faith-based initiative at the state level. In the literature on social movements, most researchers argue that social movements use disruptive acts or lobbying to persuade elites to meet their demands. However, unlike other movements, the resurgent evangelical movement has gained power by being influential within state politics, promoting policies like the faith-based initiative. I found that changes surrounding the faith-based initiative were more likely to occur in states with a strong evangelical movement presence and with conservative welfare policies, rather than in states that show greater need for improved social services or a greater welfare burden. So, while the rhetoric surrounding the faith-based initiative focuses on ameliorating poverty, the real function appears to be otherwise – namely, creating a permanent role for religion within government.

While Chapter 5 focuses on the relationship between the evangelical movement and implementation of various faith-based policies, Chapter 6 takes this a step further and examines the relationships among race, religion, and politics. I examine two specific aspects of the faith-based initiative at the state level and how state implementation

appears to be at least partially designed to fulfill the instrumental political goal of shifting the black vote away from Democrats and to the Republican Party. First, I found that while African-Americans make up only 12 percent of the overall population in the United States, of the 34 liaisons almost half were African-American. Second, faith-based conferences sponsored by federal and state governments actually operate more like state sponsored religious events akin in cultural tone and style to events held at black churches. Thus, through conferences specifically aimed at the black religious community and by creating liaison position tied to the community, supporters of the faith-based initiative are creating a social policy that has potential to alter the make-up of state political power.

Finally, in Chapter 7 I focus on what can be taken from this study and suggest some avenues for further work. While some see the faith-based initiative as a merely ephemeral phenomenon, there is reason to believe it will impact policy in the future by reshaping how the United States views the norm of church/state separation. Specifically, the permanent placement of faith-based liaisons as government officials that connect government to religious groups, may affect the delicate balance between church and state for many years to come.

## **Conclusion**

As a matter of policy, the faith-based initiative has the ability to alter the social service arena, conceptions of church and state, and the distribution of political power. By linking government funding with religion, the faith-based initiative creates a situation in which one religion may be chosen over another, with the religion preferred by those in power likely to have an advantage; thus, the faith-based initiative may link religion with

political power, and with its cousin, government funding. The desire to change the face of church/state separation is the result of perceived threat to the evangelical movement and what it believes to be the ideal society. Faith-based policies legitimize religious actors as political actors and legitimize the blurring of the line between church and state. It is not hard to imagine an outcome in which the idea of a line separating church and state is replaced with the idea that church was meant to be part of state.

In short, I demonstrate here that the faith-based initiative is not about helping the poor, but is used as a rhetorical strategy to reframe the debate regarding the relationship between church and state. My research on state-level responses to the faith-based initiative will help illuminate the possible connections between social movements, political power, and policy processes. By chipping away at federal law, by legitimizing religious actors as political actors, and by creating policies that specifically include religion, the faith-based initiative chips away at the line separating church and state, and potentially creates new political alliances and shifts in the balance of political power. Simply stated, since we live in a society based on religious pluralism, expanding the possible arenas in which religious differences may have an impact could have far-reaching and unknowable consequences.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN SOCIAL SERVICES AND TYPES OF THE FAITH-BASED PRACTICES

Since 1996, both federal and state governments have enacted a variety of measures related to the faith-based initiative. The majority of these measures have focused on shifting the burden in the social service sector away from secular non-profits and government organizations to religious social services. While most of these practices have not been attempts to fund these organizations directly, they do represent an important political and social change: namely, that religion – generally one brand of Christian religion – should have a permanent place in government and politics. In this chapter I examine the historical role of religious groups in the provision of social services, and how the faith-based initiative is working to re-define this role. Within this context I examine how state and federal faith-based practices are part of the overall evangelical movement strategy of chipping away at the norm of separation of church and state, and I explore how faith-based policy has been framed as a way to remedy “discrimination” against religious groups. Specifically, I focus on three types of state faith-based practices, through which state governments have been ensuring a new role for religious groups in the government-funded social service sector.

#### **Federal Policy and the Historical Background of the Faith-Based Initiative**

##### *The Role of Religion in Social Services*

Churches and religious groups have long played an integral role in the provision of human services to the disadvantaged (Cosgrove 2001; Monsma 1996; O’Neill 1989).

O'Neill (1989:20) refers to religious groups as the "Godmother of the Nonprofit Sector," explaining that religious organizations are the "oldest, largest and most generously supported" segment of the non-profit world, having "given birth to many other non-profit institutions." About 50 percent of private charitable donations in the U.S. are directed to religious congregations and other religiously affiliated groups (Monsma 1996; O'Neill 1989). Additionally, a substantial portion of private schools, day care facilities, and international aid and relief organizations are affiliated with religious groups (Monsma 1996). Finally, 57 percent of U.S. congregations report being involved in at least one social service program (Chaves 1999).

In the context of recent debate over the faith-based initiative, many claims have been made about the desirability of faith-based social services. One advocate of the faith-based initiative described the use of faith-based organizations (FBOs) as service providers as "unleashing the cultural remedy to societal ills," stating "churches have been transforming shattered lives for years by addressing the deeper needs of people – by instilling hope and values which help change behavior and attitudes" (Ashcroft 1999). This claim contains two important assertions regarding faith-based organizations. The first is that one of the goals pursued by faith-based service providers is to transform the lives of their clients. The second is that faith-based groups are successful in attaining this goal. While this study does not attempt to assess whether these assertions are true, it does examine how states have been attempting to engage the faith-based sector, a goal that is based on the premise that these services offer something more desirable than traditional social services. Even though the faith-based social services have always been part of the

social service sector (Wineburg 2001), the faith-based initiative offers something new. It asserts that these groups should not only be a part of the sector, but that they should take over key aspects of social service delivery from the government because they are better suited to the task.

### *Federal Change and a New View of Church/State Separation*

The faith-based initiative is one policy among many that is shaping a new direction in church/state relations (Henriques 2006). Over the last century the legal doctrine of church/state in the United States has held to the Jeffersonian idea of a “wall” separating church and state. Recently, however, many, especially conservative Christians and evangelicals, have pushed for a new relationship, one of cooperation and collaboration. As then-Chief Justice William Rehnquist articulated, “The ‘wall of separation between church and state’ is a metaphor based on bad history, a metaphor which has proved useless as a guide to judging. It should be frankly and explicitly abandoned” (Rehnquist 1985). Instead of separation, the evangelical movement argued that government should seek cooperation and collaboration between church and state, creating laws and policies that give religious groups an expanded role. This view of church/state cooperation is inherent in the faith-based initiative as it is being enacted at both the state and federal level.

The legislation the faith-based initiative was based on (originally known as Charitable Choice), was authored by evangelical movement activist and then-Senator John Ashcroft, and has been implemented through a variety of executive orders by President George W. Bush (Formicola et al. 2003). The President’s Executive Orders on

faith-based initiatives call for eliminating “unnecessary legislative, regulatory and other bureaucratic barriers that impede effective faith-based and other community efforts to solve social problems” (<http://www.hhs.gov/fbci/choice.html>). Existing Charitable Choice law similarly provides that private faith-based groups receiving government contracts “shall retain their independence from [government], including such organization’s control over the definition, development, practice and expression of its religious beliefs” (Stern 2001). The intent behind these changes was the notion that government discriminated against sectarian groups because of the norm of church/state separation, and these laws were going to change this and bring collaboration and cooperation.

Such laws were arguably meant to increase the provision of social services by churches, by allowing religious institutions to apply for federal funds without changing their religious character. While the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill authorizing Charitable Choice was signed into law by President Clinton, he felt the initiative came dangerously close to violating the principle of separation of church and state, and favored a narrow interpretation of the initiative (Formicola et al. 2003). He stated that the guiding interpretation of this legislation would be the establishment clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution, assuring the nation that “[t]his provision will never be implemented in any way that jeopardizes the religious freedom clauses in the Constitution” (Geddy 2004). Therefore, although President Clinton signed the faith-based initiative into law, he could and did choose to exercise his prerogative, and did very little to support the initiative.

The situation changed dramatically once George W. Bush came into office. During his tenure as governor of Texas he incorporated the provisions of Charitable Choice into Texas policy and politics, supporting legislation limiting licensing requirements for religious groups and creating the first state faith-based liaison (FBL) positions. As President, he chose to expand the faith-based initiative at the federal level, turning a single piece of legislation into a series of executive branch departments and orders. He made the faith-based initiative his top-priority domestic policy, a point he has reiterated in his State of the Union addresses. As he stated in a 2005 speech on the faith-based initiative:

I always – “always” – sometimes say, government can hand out money – and I'm going to talk about some of the money we're trying to hand out – but government can't put hope in a person's heart, or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That is done by loving individuals who spread their love. That's what happens. And it seems like to me it makes sense for those of us who are honored to hold office to gather that strength, rally that strength, call upon that strength, and, most importantly, support that strength from the halls of government.

This quote clearly illustrates the President's views on the ideal relationship between church and state – that religion and the government should have a new relationship, one not of “separation . . . [but] characterized by collaboration” (Formicola et al. 2003:7).

President Bush's conception of how church and state should interact is also revealed by his recent Supreme Court nominations, and by his only use of the presidential veto – blocking federal funding of stem cell research, an issue that caters to the

evangelical movement – as well as by numerous other policy issues that appeal to his evangelical base. With several executive orders the Bush administration has expanded significantly on the faith-based initiative. From establishing the White House Office of Faith-Based Community Initiatives (OFBCI), which is responsible for the federal management of the initiative, to creating separate faith-based branches in eleven offices of the federal government, including Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Health and Human Services (HHS)<sup>3</sup>, the Bush administration has actively sought to increase the role religious organizations play in the provision of social services. President Bush has made religion an even more salient issue by attempting to allow religious organizations to discriminate in hiring practices, letting them to hire only others of their own religious beliefs, despite their use of federal funds.

Finally, and perhaps most important, in 2001 President Bush created a special funding stream through Health and Human Services, specifically aimed at funding faith-based organizations – the Compassion Capital Fund (CCF). Since 2001, the CCF has granted over \$200 million in contracts to faith-based groups. It was not until 2005, however, that any of these funds went to non-Christian organizations; even then, only two of the grantees were non-Christian. So, while the rhetoric at the federal level is about including all varieties of religious groups and small community-based organizations in the funding process, it is in fact far from the reality. Instead, the faith-based initiative, as

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<sup>3</sup> The eleven branches are: Agency Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives: Agency for International Development, Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Homeland Security, Dept of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Small Business Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs

it is currently employed at the federal level, appears to have other aims altogether – namely, increasing the presence of a certain brand of Christian religion in the government and public sectors.

*History at the State Level: Faith-Based Liaisons, Offices, and Laws*

While the Bush administration's use of executive orders explains federal enactment of the faith-based initiative, it does not explain why states are implementing a variety of faith-based initiative practices. This often ignored and unnoticed world of faith-based initiative enactment is the focus of my dissertation.

Without specific federal guidelines,<sup>4</sup> states were left to choose whatever action seemed appropriate. As a result, some states made no policy changes, while others actively embraced the initiative. Most states chose a middle ground and relied on administrative changes to encourage faith-based groups to apply for and receive government funds. Regardless of the type of implementation occurring at the state level, the same pattern emerges: there is a continued and growing effort at the state level to increase the presence of religious groups in the social service sector, by specifically encouraging the participation of religious groups and by encouraging government employees to work toward the inclusion of religious groups in government-funded programs.

States have been implementing faith-based policies in a variety of ways, ranging from the administrative appointment of FBLs to passage of legislation that exempts faith-

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<sup>4</sup> While states were specifically encouraged to create new OFBCIs by way of letters from the federal OFBCI to governors in 2002, 2004, and 2006, they were not given any guidelines on how to implement the offices nor on how to fund them.

based groups from licensing requirements. In this study I focus on understanding why states have undertaken three means of implementing the faith-based initiative, and what those practices look like on the ground. I found that nearly all state-level implementation is not about actual new funding practices to help the poor through funding faith-based organizations. Instead, it is about creating laws, policies, and practices that symbolize and create a new relationship between church and state.

*Faith-based liaisons.* The first, and now most common, way for states to implement new faith-based policies has to been to appoint a Faith-Based Liaison. The first group of these liaisons was appointed in Texas in 1996, under then-Governor George W. Bush, the main political supporter of the faith-based initiative. These liaisons were charged with making administrative changes in state bureaucracies that interacted with faith-based groups, changes that would ensure that there were no barriers to these groups receiving government grants<sup>5</sup>. The Texas FBLs became the first administrators of a public policy that had little prior background, direction, or network of support. This was unlike previous major policy changes. For example, in areas such as mental health or welfare reform, policy changes have generally originated from professionals working in the field and then networking to create specific rules and guidelines; because of its different history, the FBLs who began implementing faith-based policy had little of this infrastructure to support or guide them. Instead, FBLs were given a policy goal – creating a state social service system where faith-based organizations would be more involved because they were thought to offer particularly holistic and caring services to the poor

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<sup>5</sup> Personal interview, March 2005.

and needy – and were put in charge of figuring out some way to carry it out (Loconte 2002, 2004; Sherman 1999).

*Offices of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.* After Texas, both New Jersey and Oklahoma created Faith-Based Liaison positions. However, there were several important differences between the liaisons in New Jersey and Oklahoma, and the original liaisons appointed in Texas. First, while Texas only created part-time administrative positions in other state agencies, New Jersey and Oklahoma appointed full-time liaisons. Second, unlike Oklahoma and Texas, in New Jersey the liaison position was created under a separate Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. This office was designed to create a positive and cooperative environment between religious groups and government officials, and have the main responsibility of integrating small faith-based organizations into the social service fold. Established under the Lieutenant Governor's Office, the New Jersey OFBCI could act as a single authority to oversee faith-based initiatives at all levels and branches within state government. In contrast, Oklahoma had only one liaison position, and while it was full-time it was only within only one administrative branch of the state government, the Department of Children and Families, limiting its ability to communicate with and impact other state agencies' relationships with faith-based organizations.

The fact that the initiative spread from Texas to these two states is perhaps not surprising. In New Jersey, the state Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives was begun under then-Governor, Christie Todd Whitman, a close friend of George W. Bush who would later be his Director of the Environmental Protection Agency. Employing

faith-based policies in New Jersey was politically savvy for other reasons as well. With a large, active black religious population, creating an Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives could be seen as reaching out to the mainly Democratic African-American constituency from a Republican Governor. In Oklahoma, the story was similar. The governor at the time was also close to then-Governor George W. Bush, and his advisors were very close to evangelical movement activists within the state. Therefore, when they came to him with the idea of creating an OFBCI in Oklahoma, the idea quickly found a supportive audience.

Florida was the next state to embrace the faith-based initiative. As governor, George W. Bush's brother, Jeb Bush, made the faith-based initiative a high priority, calling for increased legislation, new faith-based prison wings, and a new office for the initiative. Additionally, unlike other states, he took his power of executive order to state government branches, assigning someone at each office to be the point person for the faith-based initiative. These state employees were then responsible for overseeing the faith-based initiative and ensuring that new religious groups were brought into the social service fold.

These three designs of liaison and OFBCI implementation were the precursors to faith-based liaisons and offices across the country. Liaison positions in the 34 states that now have them closely resemble the administrative make-up and characteristics of these offices. Since the creation of the New Jersey OFBCI a total of 16 other states have created a separate Offices of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives within state government (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed description of these offices). This extra

step to formalize state faith-based practices has several causes; one is certainly the official and unofficial encouragement from the White House OFBCI. Since 1996, letters from the White House OFBCI have been sent to every state governor, as well as other administrative officials, encouraging states to implement the faith-based initiative through creating state OFBCIs.<sup>6</sup> The White House suggested that this formal type of implementation closely resemble its own OFBCI, and appointed a contact person at the White House to work with states on creating these offices and making them the main link between religious groups and the government. However, while the creation of an Office was encouraged, and a person was assigned to work with states, no funds were offered to states for OFBCI creation and no specific instructions were given as to how these offices and liaisons were supposed to change the social service sector.

Instead of offering real help in the form of structural support or funds, the White House encouraged the creation of a new bureaucracy, leaving the bureaucracy to figure out its job and its funding. In addition, federal Congressional support was non-existent; the many interested parties were unable to agree how to implement the initiative at the federal level, let alone decide what to do with the states. However, when looking at the initiative through the lens of symbolic politics, this emphasis on new bureaucracies and new appointees is not surprising. Instead of having to offer funding for new services, symbolic policies create an environment in which religion has greater acceptance in public life; the material changes inherent in the policies themselves are of far less importance.

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<sup>6</sup> Personal interviews, December 2003 and December 2005.

This emphasis on the faith-based liaison and OFBCI as the connection between government and the faith-community has continued. Charged with providing information to FBOs, as well as with changing attitudes within the bureaucracy at the state level, the job of the FBL has evolved to embrace a wide range of changes in the social service sector. Since few FBLs have budgets that allow them to directly fund faith-based organizations to provide social services, they focus on bringing FBOs information about funds available elsewhere and/or on helping them assess their capacity to receive such government grants. They also work to improve the chances of FBOs receiving government grants by offering special grant-writing workshops and conferences geared to FBOs and by working with state government officials to encourage them to reach out to FBOs. Together these efforts create an environment in which religious groups are potentially favored entities in the granting process, and where they get an extra hand in preparing these grants applications.

*Legislative changes.* The history of faith-based legislation is also one of an increasing emphasis on enacting changes that do not offer new monies to do social services. Instead these legislative changes create an underlying administrative system that makes religion and religious groups a greater part of public policy. While this is the current state of legislative change, in the beginning several states did try to implement new policies that would specifically direct funds to religious groups. In 1998, California was the first to pass this type of legislation; however, it was soon struck down by the courts as unconstitutional, since it favored religious groups. At the same time, Texas was creating new legislation that, while not directly funding religious groups, would make it

easier for them to compete for funding and easier for them once they got funding. These legislative changes regarding licensing requirements and hiring requirements were similar to federal laws that allowed certain exceptions for religious groups to the rules and standards that secular groups must meet. While these changes do not directly involve helping the poor and needy, they do actively privilege religious groups over secular groups, in ways that are similar to how liaisons and offices privilege religious groups, by offering them special help and connections to which secular groups do not have access. Since 1996, the vast majority of legislation at the state level has had goals similar to those of the FBLs and OFBCIs: to encourage, and thereby increase the number of faith-based groups providing social services.

#### *Faith-Based Conferences as Movement and Political Tool*

As with legislative changes and the appointment of FBLs, state faith-based conferences use symbols to create political action around the faith-based initiative. The conference I described in the beginning of Chapter 1 is similar to those that have been conducted by the federal and state governments across the country. These conferences are in effect state-sponsored religious events that are used as political tools. Conferences on the initiative have been held in several states including New Jersey and Texas; however, regardless of where a conference was held, the form and results have been similar. Religious leaders praise the faith-based initiative and its supporters at the state level (generally a Republican candidate or governor), and various religious symbols are used to indicate the state's support for the integration of religion into state activities.

## **Conclusion**

The history of the faith-based initiative is one of symbolic politics being used to usher in a greater presence for religion within state government. A number of scholars argue that symbolic politics are crucial in shaping government activity and society because they activate new support for various political groups, and they ease the way for more concrete measures in the future (Edelman 1964, 1972; Wysong, Aniskiewicz, and Wright 1994; Brysk 1995). The faith-based initiative functions perfectly in both of these capacities. Creating new offices and bureaucratic appointments creates the space for real efforts at redistribution and new church/state relations in the future.

In the following chapters I explore how and why the faith-based initiative has become a part of the political landscape in most states, and document what this implementation looks like. Though the argument can be made that the initiative is potentially an epiphenomenon that will pass once President Bush is out of office, I argue here that, once in place, these actors and offices will become part of the political landscape and be taken for granted, changing the face of church/state relations for years to come.

## CHAPTER 3

### DATA AND METHODS

#### Introduction

Since 1996, the majority of states have engaged in a variety of faith-based practices. These practices range from doing nothing, to simply appointing a new person to an administrative position of faith-based liaison (FBL), to creating an Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI), funded in the millions of dollars, dedicated to increasing the presence of religious groups doing social services. Because of this variety in the types of practices and emphases on the faith-based initiative, collecting and analyzing just one type of data would not capture the full picture. Instead, understanding the faith-based initiative requires both a detailed analysis of the written policies, as well as an in-depth examination of the more informal implementation strategies, necessitating a multi-method strategy of data collection and analysis. Without using multiple methods, including various types of qualitative research, the often-hidden worlds of social policy actors and actions would not be visible (Klandermans, Staggenborg, and Tarrow 2002: 316).

Driven by two main research questions – Why did states implement these practices? What did these practices look like? – I compiled data by three means. First, I collected data on all the legislative changes and executive orders passed at the state level for the years 1996 to 2004. Then I completed interviews with state faith-based liaisons, the main actors responsible for carrying out the faith-based initiative at the state level. These data outline both a complete historical record of the policy changes made at the

state level, as well as the more hidden on-the-ground efforts and actors who are in charge of carrying out these policies. Finally, I collected data through field research. These field observations yield a greater understanding of what some of the states' implementation efforts looked like on the ground, and what their potential impact may be.

This strategy of using triangulated methods of data gathering is important for several reasons. First, using different types of data collection methods contributes different types of evidence (Klandermans and Staggenborg 2002). By using a variety of data I was able to gain a broader understanding of the faith-based practices of interest, and I could begin to uncover the more hidden worlds of social policy actors and implementation. Second, these data are able to inform various areas in social science research. My research bridges our understanding of social movements and public policy by looking at how social movements impact policy implementation, and how these policies meet two goals of the evangelical movement – gaining new political allies, and chipping away at the norm of church/state separation.

In this chapter I outline the data collection methods, variables, and data analysis techniques used in this work. While there are certain aspects of the faith-based initiative these methods could not cover,<sup>7</sup> the data collected and analyzed have allowed me to examine how the faith-based initiative represents a fundamental shift in how many would

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<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the most important variable I could not measure was the impact of these efforts on the numbers of faith-based organizations receiving funding at the state level. There are several reasons for this. First, there was no baseline measurement in any state on the numbers of FBOs funded with state funds. Second, almost all states still do not collect this data, and gathering information on state funding streams was simply beyond my research time or capacity. In the future I hope to conduct analysis on this variable.

like the relationship between church and state to look. Using data collected over the last four years, I illustrate how states have begun to embrace faith-based practices that indicate a shift away from church/state separation and toward church/state cooperation and collaboration. These new practices create policies and politics that create new actors, new laws, and new state-sponsored actions that actively embrace religion and make it an integral part of the state social policy landscape.

### **Data Collection: Triangulated Research Methods**

#### *Early Field Research*

Before I began research on state implementation of the faith-based initiative I completed two months of field research at People's Group,<sup>8</sup> an organization dedicated to pursuing the separation of church and state. I completed my field work in Washington D.C. during the summer of 2003. People's Group has long been opposed to the faith-based initiative, seeing it as a stepping-stone to the creation of a permanent place for religion within government, a role that potentially favors religious organizations over other types of organizations. Additionally, they fear that some religious groups will be favored over others in government funding decisions. While I was working at People's Group, their goal was to find a case that would bring the entire faith-based initiative into question, and eventually find that it violated the First Amendment. My research there included an examination of the other side of the movement regarding church/state separation as well. In many ways, People's Group embodies the threat felt by the

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<sup>8</sup> "People's Group" is a pseudonym.

resurgent evangelical movement, since its leaders are the ones working to ensure church/state separation.

I worked as a legal researcher, and this work taught me much about the legal strategies used in church/state separation cases, and developed my understanding of the faith-based initiative and its potential consequences. I had almost daily contact with the main branches of People's Group, including religious outreach, legal, state and federal legislation, youth outreach, and field office coordination. I was able to converse with many actors within the organization, discovering what types of activities each branch was involved in. I also attended all staff meetings, meetings with the board members, and received all communication about People's Group recent activities. It is from these activities that I made field notes, and the research I completed there allowed me to explore the potential impact of the faith-based initiative and begin to understand the nuances of issues of church/state separation.

After completing my field work at People's Group, I spent the next two years studying the faith-based initiative and examining multiple aspects of various faith-based practices. The experience and first-hand look at the faith-based initiative I gained while at People's Group afforded me the kind of insider access into church/state politics that is not often available. By continuing this type of data collection from the "other side," I have been able to put together a thorough examination of the faith-based policy, what it has achieved or not achieved and why these achievements matter now and in the future.

*Quantitative Data Collection: Legislative Changes, Executive Orders, and Faith-Based Liaisons*

Grounded by my work at People's Group, I embarked on the current study. Using various types of data and methods, this research contributes not only to our factual understanding of the faith-based initiative, but more broadly to the topics of social movements, public policy, and the relationship between church and state.

*Legislative changes and executive orders.* The first part of my data collection used Westlaw to gather data on all legislative changes and executive orders related to the faith-based initiative made at the state level between 1996 and 2004. Westlaw is an online legal database that searches legislative changes at the state level. It is the standard tool used in legal research and contains data on all laws created by legislation or executive order in all states. Westlaw data includes the date the law was passed, the author of the legislation, and the content of each law passed. Using specific search terms that were related to the faith-based initiative (such as "faith-based" or "charitable choice"), I was able to compile a reasonably complete record of legislative implementation related to the faith-based initiative. I found that 162 laws were passed in 26 states between 1996 and 2004. The majority of legislative changes involved encouraging state agencies to contract with faith-based groups for specific purposes or adding a faith-based representative to a state government advisory board. A detailed account of the types of legislation passed and the reasons underlying these changes is found in Chapters 4 and 5.

### *Faith-Based Liaisons*

Data about faith-based liaisons were collected in three ways. First, as noted above, Westlaw provided information on all liaison positions implemented either by law or executive order by a governor. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 of the 34 faith-based liaisons that were appointed between 1996 and 2005. Finally, supplemental interviews were completed with various other state actors, including former liaisons and federal officials who worked with faith-based liaisons.

*Westlaw data on FBLs.* While investigating legislative changes was an important first step in understanding overall faith-based policy implementation, the most common way for states to implement the faith-based initiative was to create the administrative position of faith-based liaison. Information on the official position descriptions and responsibilities was collected using Westlaw. The database contained specific policy information on liaison positions in fifteen states, including four states in which the positions were created by law, and another eleven states in which positions were created by executive order.<sup>9</sup> Westlaw data included the date of appointment, how each FBL was appointed (law or executive order), and an official description of the position for each state. However, the majority of FBL positions (19 of 34) were created by administrative fiat, either through the governor's office or a state agency; Westlaw does not include data about the positions created by administrative acts.

To determine which states had administratively-appointed liaisons, I contacted the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, as well as the Roundtable

for Research on Religion and Social Welfare Policy and the Center for Public Justice. These organizations had been studying the initiative and working with liaisons for some time and had lists of state liaisons, and of states without liaisons. From these lists and the Westlaw data I compiled a list of all liaisons, and categorized each state's appointment of a liaison as being by legislation, by the governor, or by a state agency head. The list of state liaisons used for this research was in congruence with those of the White House and The Roundtable in late 2005.

*In-depth interviews with FBLs.* In-depth interviews were then conducted with liaisons in 30 of the 34 states that had a FBL;<sup>10</sup> efforts to reach the remaining four states' liaisons by telephone and e-mail were unsuccessful. In their analysis of the use of interviews in studying social movements, Blee and Taylor (2002) argue that there are several distinct advantages to this methodology not available using other types of data collection. Interviews are important because they offer data that are not available in more traditional sources. Unlike surveys or collecting written data on legislation, interviews offer first-hand accounts of social movement actions and policy implementation. Only through interviews would I be able to answer questions about the motivations and perspectives of the state faith-based liaisons (Blee and Taylor 2002:93). Interview data are crucial to understanding why liaisons took this position and how their own religious beliefs and ideas may impact their work. Interviews also yield information about the contexts of action and the identities of participants (Blee and Taylor 2002:95). Through

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<sup>9</sup> States with FBL position created by law: KY, ND, OH, VA. States with FBL position created by executive order: AK, AL, FL, IN, MA, MD, MI, MN, NJ, NM, TX.

these interviews I was able to understand why these policies and positions were being created, along with what the liaisons themselves thought about the faith-based initiative. Finally, it was only through interview data that an analysis of the actual power and agency that faith-based liaisons were able to exercise was possible.

For almost half of the interviews conducted, I was able to meet with the liaisons in person and spend time with them during their day-to-day activities. This insider access to faith-based liaisons helped me gain an understanding of the people behind the initiative that I would never have had without being able to converse with them in their own setting. The data I collected from these personal visits illustrated that for the vast majority of FBLs, being the liaison was not just another administrative aspect of their job. Instead, most liaisons I spoke with sought out this position and wanted it to succeed because of their own feelings about religion and its role in society. When I was not able to meet with liaisons in person, interviews were conducted by telephone.

During both the personal visits and telephone interviews, the formal interviews lasted between twenty minutes and two hours, and were designed to elicit information on actual practices of the liaisons, which would not show up in the Westlaw data collected on laws and executive orders. The interviews were made-up of two parts. Open-ended questions regarding such things as their reasons for becoming an FBL, what relationship they had with the religious community, their personal religious background,<sup>11</sup> and various aspects of their duties were especially important in informing my work on state

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<sup>10</sup> “States” in this case includes the District of Columbia. A former liaison from Utah was also interviewed. Data collection was completed in March 2005. Several additional states have created Faith-Based Liaison positions and/or Offices of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives since then.

<sup>11</sup> When multiple workers at a state OFBCIs were interviewed, data used here are from the primary FBL.

liaisons on social movements and public policy (See Appendix A). There were also closed-ended survey questions about specific state-level activities; these included items such as whether the state had a web-site or e-mail listserv and whether the state offered conferences aimed at faith based organizations. These survey questions were designed to elicit easily comparable data on exactly what state liaisons and state Offices of Faith-Based Community Initiatives were doing to incorporate faith-based practices into state policy.

The interviews were taped and then transcribed into Word documents for coding. These qualitative questions were useful for gathering information about faith-based liaisons that did not come up in quantitative data collection. Essentially, I asked the liaisons what they saw as their responsibilities as FBLs, and what they were doing to carry out those duties. This allowed me to gain a wide variety of information about the vast differences between states and their liaisons.

The interviews were also helpful in understanding the liaisons' own motivations and religious backgrounds. Why did they take this job? Was it just assigned to them, or did they seek it for personal or spiritual reasons? I also wanted to know about their experiences as liaisons. Had they found any resistance to their work? If so, from whom, and why?

*Supplemental interviews.* In addition to speaking with current liaisons, interviews with eight additional state actors were conducted. These interviews used the same general format as the liaison interviews; however, they also included questions about previous state activity involving the faith-based initiative. For example, in Texas I spoke

with the first state faith-based liaison, who had worked for then-Governor George W. Bush, and then followed him to Washington for his first term as President. Under President Bush, he had helped create the White House Office for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and worked with John Dilulio, the first head of the White House OFBCI. He discussed with me not only what originally occurred in Texas regarding the faith-based initiative, but what happened once George W. Bush became President. In several other states there was no one currently occupying the position of faith-based liaison; therefore, I spoke with the person who had previously filled the position. Other interviews were conducted with past liaisons and with actors who worked closely with state liaisons, such as faith-based directors in other state agencies.

In addition to these state actors, I met with two federal officials. Both were the coordinators of state activities for the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. During these interviews I gathered data on the role of the White House in the implementation of faith-based practices by states. The first interview was conducted in 2004, and the second, with an interim director, in 2005. The goal was to understand what connections, if any, there were between the federal Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and state OFBCIs and FBLs.

#### *Faith-Based Conferences*

Finally, I was a participant-observer at four conferences on the faith-based initiative. This field research was important for several reasons. First, as Deutscher (1996) has noted, there is frequently a disjuncture between words and actions, so meaningful analysis is very difficult without first-hand observation of, and participation

in, a situation. Additionally, by adopting participant-analysis in my research strategy I was able to gain access to a previously-unknown setting and begin to understand the actions of policy implementation and what these look like once in place. Finally, it is only through field work that we can begin to understand group processes while watching movement action “on the ground” (Lichterman 2002). Through participation in these conferences I discovered that they were very different in both tone and content from other state-sponsored conferences on public policy.

These day-long conferences were all aimed at religious leaders, but varied not only in location, but, importantly, in the racial composition of participants, in sponsors, and in the level of religious activity present. The data from the field notes from these conferences are discussed in Chapter 6.

### **Variables and Data Analysis**

Using data collected on the faith-based initiative at the state level, as well as outside sources, I created a set of dependent and independent variables that allowed me to examine how and why states have implemented various practices. In this section I outline the variables considered, as well as the sources of data and the methods of analysis used.

#### *Quantitative Data*

The quantitative data collected allowed me to examine three variations of the dependent variable – implementation of the faith-based initiative – and several key independent variables of theoretical interest.

*Dependent variable: three measures of implementation.* Implementation of the faith-based initiative can be measured in a number of ways. The first measure I used was whether a state had a faith-based liaison. This is a dichotomous dependent variable representing whether a state had appointed a liaison in a given year, and is important for several reasons. First, the appointment of liaisons was the most common type of implementation of the initiative at the state level. Second, by measuring this variable over time, I was able to assess how other time-varying co-variates (such as Gross State Product and poverty rates) had impacted state creation of the liaison position. I also created a dummy variable measuring whether a state had created an Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in a given year. This variable is important in addition to the state faith-based liaison implementation because it is one step-up in formalization of implementation. Therefore, liaisons are the most common type of implementation, but OFBCIs illustrate a greater emphasis on the initiative at the state-level. These are the first two dependent variables used in the analysis in Chapter 5.

The third dependent variable in this analysis is the number of laws regarding the faith-based initiative passed at the state level. This variable is important because it reflects a different avenue to implementation: while faith-based liaisons have been almost always administratively appointed, the number of laws reflects state legislative activity. This gives a better understanding of the impact of the initiative on the state policy environment. If both legislative implementation and faith-based liaisons and OFBCIs are occurring for the same underlying reasons, there is reason to believe that certain states are

more likely than others to be altering their state policy environment in response to the evangelical movement.

In addition to examining the overall legislative impact at the state level, I also wanted to gain a deeper understanding of what these changes looked like. What were these laws? Were they concrete transfers of funds and power, or, like liaisons, mainly symbolic policies that were used to create an atmosphere of church/state cooperation? Data from Westlaw included the entire text of all legislation, along with date and author of each bill; coding of all relevant legislation into eight categories was based on this text. A discussion of this is found in Chapter 4.

#### *Independent Variables of Theoretical Interest*

Theory on state and social policy and social movements suggest that the socio-demographic, political, and economic characteristics of each state must be taken into account (Burstein 1998; Burstein and Linton 2002; Evans 1996; Grogan 1994; Haider-Markel 1998; Lin 2000; Nice 1994; Raeburn 2004; Soule 1997, 2004; Soule and Earl 2001; Soule and Olzak 2004; Soule and Zylan 1997; Strang and Soule 1998). In the following section variables of both theoretical interest, as well as control variables, are presented and described. Specifically, the measures that follow (see Table 1) were used to test whether implementation of the faith-based initiative, as expressed by states' creation of faith-based liaison positions and degree of legislative change, has been the result of efforts to fight poverty – as its supporters claim – or the result of other factors.

*Social movement strength.* Social movements have been thought of as vehicles for social action for the poor or otherwise marginalized (Gamson 1975; Giugini, McAdam,

and Tilly 1999; Jenkins and Eckert 1986; Jenkins and Perrow 1977; McAdam 1982; McCammon et al. 2001; Piven and Cloward 1977; Tarrow 1998). The literature on outcomes of social movements has focused extensively on whether movements<sup>12</sup> (e.g. the Civil Rights and Women's Movements) are able to effect change (Andrews 2001; Gamson 1975; McAdam and Su 2002; Soule and Olzak 2004). Research on social movement outcomes has focused on two distinct ways movements achieve success: outcomes are achieved either through disruptive action (the action/reaction model), or by gaining access to political institutions through organizations (access/influence model) (Andrews 2001). I offer two specific hypotheses in this regard that expand on research previously conducted. Through these two measures, I tap into both types of social movement action by examining the underlying role of movements within the political structure and the underlying grass-roots type support that may have previously impacted support for other religiously based legislation.

*Strength of evangelical movement in politics.* The movement literature suggests that the greater the influence of a social movement in state politics, the more likely a state will be to appoint policies in its favor (Burstein 1998; Burstein and Linton 2002; Haider-Markel 1998; Nice 1994; Soule 2004; Soule and Earl 2001; Soule and Zylan 1997; Soule and Olzak 2004). The first variable I used to measure the strength of the evangelical movement in a state, and therefore identify its impact on faith-based policy implementation, was an index of the influence of the evangelical movement in state

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<sup>12</sup> While there has been considerable research on what are termed "new social movements," this research still focuses on participants as marginalized actors hoping to influence elites.

**TABLE 1. Factors Potentially Affecting State Implementation of Faith-Based Initiatives**

	<b>Measures</b>	<b>Sources</b>
<b>Intra-State</b>		
<i>Political Characteristics</i>		
Social Movement Activity	Evangelical presence in Republican Party	Conger and Green (2002); Green et al. (1998)
Previous Policy Environment	Strong anti-gay-marriage / family laws	National Gay and Lesbian Rights Task Force (2006)
Political Environment	Republican vote percent in last presidential election Conservative vs. liberal make-up of both voters and state government # Democrats, Republicans in state legislature; political affiliation of governor	U.S. Census Bureau William Berry et al. (1998, 2005) U.S. Census Bureau U.S. Census Bureau
Indicators of Social Welfare Need	Poverty rate TANF coverage	U.S. Census Bureau
Social Welfare “Problem”	Generosity of state welfare program	U.S. Census Bureau
<i>Demographic Characteristics</i>		
Religion Variables	Congregational affiliation measures	Glenmarry (1990, 2000)
Immigration	% population legal immigrants	U.S. Census Bureau
Other Demographics	% population over 65; % population African-American	U.S. Census Bureau
<i>Socioeconomic Characteristics</i>		
General economic indicators	Unemployment rate; Gross State Product per capita	U.S. Census Bureau
<b>Inter-State / Diffusion</b>		
Mechanisms of Diffusion	Region	U.S. Census Bureau
Time	Effect over time	

politics developed by Green and his colleagues (Conger and Green 2002; Green, Guth, and Wilcox 1998). This measure identifies the strength of the movement within state Republican Parties. Green, Guth, and Wilcox identify the evangelical movement as a social movement that “has found one of the major political parties a valuable target, engaging in ... partisan mobilization” (1998: 21). Ranging from 1 (least influential) to 5 (most influential),<sup>13</sup> the scale incorporates several measures from the interviews and data collected on the evangelical strength in the states Republican Party. Specifically, in each case over 300 informants were asked to rate the strength of the evangelical movement within their state. This measure included such items as the number of Republican committee members who were part of evangelical movement organizations.<sup>14</sup> Data were collected in 1994, and again in 2000; the last available year score for each year was the score used in my analysis.

The 1994 data were collected from Campaigns and Elections Magazine using two types of informants, state-level political insiders of all types, and evangelical movement activists. This study was repeated in a similar fashion in 2000. From this data they coded the strength of the evangelical movement into categories based on the strength within the Republican Party. While these data are not perfect, as Green and his colleagues acknowledge, they provide an important measure of evangelical movement strength.

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<sup>13</sup> In 2000 Green recoded the variable to a three-point scale, but showed, for each state, whether there had been any change from the original coding conducted in 1994. When there had been a change I coded that as a 1-point change on the original five-point scale.

<sup>14</sup> I have been unable to reach either Campaigns and Elections or John Green to get more details about the specific items asked. I have read the associated publications and they do not include any more information than I have listed above.

From this scale I created two dummy variables, in order to test both high and medium levels of evangelical movement influence. In the first case, states with a high evangelical influence, or a score of 5 on the Green scale, were coded as 1, and all other states were coded as 0. This is important because it identifies where the evangelical movement is the *most* influential. I also created a second dummy variable looking at mid-levels of evangelical movement influence; it is coded as 1 where states received either a 3 or 4 on the Green scale of implementation, while all other states were coded as 0. In his own assessment of the measure, Green concluded that the key differences lay not in the difference between a 3 and a 4 but between having great deal of influence, some influence, and no influence. Therefore, this re-coding of the variable into two binary variables is analogous with Green's own assessment about the importance of the evangelical movement within a state. I argue that the Green variable is important because it examines the already legitimized political actors of the evangelical movement within a state.

A measure of white evangelical presence from the Glenmarry (1990, 2000) research data on state denominational membership was also tested; however, it was highly correlated with a strong conservative political environment, and was not a significant predictor, and so it was not included in the final models. This indicates that it is not just the presence of *possible* religious supporters, but the activities of movement activists that is key to faith-based policy implementation.

*Previous success of movement.* The second variable I used to test the success of the conservative evangelical movement in influencing public policy is the presence of

laws prohibiting gay marriage. The faith-based initiative is but one of several U.S. policy initiatives with religious connections. Another well-defined set of social policies strongly influenced by the resurgent evangelical movement concerns family life in general, and gay marriage in particular. While many states have enacted Defense of Marriage Acts, several states have gone much further, creating extremely strict policies regarding gay marriage and related family matters. The presence of these laws and policies can be taken as a measure of a state's vulnerability to the conservative evangelical influence on public policy. Using the data from four categories created by the National Gay and Lesbian Rights Taskforce (2006), states were coded on a scale of 0 to 4. A score of zero indicated that there were no such policies on the books at the state level, a score of four indicated especially restrictive and strong anti-gay marriage and family policies.

*Problem-driven policy.* In addition to the measures testing social movement strength, two measures were used to test whether implementation of the faith-based initiative was driven by a need to solve the problem of poverty: state poverty rates, and the fiscal burden of welfare programs upon a state. State and social policy literature argues that policy is often implemented due to problems faced by states and their constituents (Evans 1996; Grogan 1994; Haider-Markel 1998; Lin 2000; Nice 1994; Raeburn 2004). Poverty rates for states, measured as percentage of population living below the federal poverty level, were taken from the U.S. Census Bureau (1996-2005).

The burden of a state's welfare program was defined as the proportion of children eligible (per federal standards) that actually received funds from the state's Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) fund. Since passage of the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill,

states have been able to make their own policies regarding welfare coverage within the context of federal guidelines; this measure was therefore a good way to tap into the overall fiscal burden created by greater welfare spending. Data for this variable also came from the U.S. Census Bureau (1996-2005).<sup>15</sup>

*Politics-driven policy.* Finally, the policy literature suggests that politics can be an important factor in determining state policy adoption, with conservative states being more likely to favor policies that enhance “free-market” activity and religion. Therefore, in this case more conservative states would be more likely to appoint FBLs since the faith-based initiative supposedly does both (Burstein 1998; Soule 2004; Soule and Olzak 2004). Political conservatism at the state level can be roughly measured by the percentage of the population that voted for the Republican presidential candidate in the previous election; data for the 1996, 2000, and 2004 presidential elections were compiled from the U.S. Census Bureau (1996-2005).<sup>16</sup>

*Race and religion.* One measure was used to test whether the implementation of a variety of faith-based initiatives was due to the religious composition of a state. Using Glenmary’s (1990, 2000) data on denominational membership at the state level, the percentage of the total state population that belonged to a traditionally black denomination was determined.<sup>17</sup> The original data were given in terms of denomination, which I then coded into traditionally conservative black churches, on the one hand, or traditionally liberal or mainline ones on the other hand. This variable was expressed as

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<sup>15</sup> Data on the number of children eligible versus those actually covered was only available for 1993, 1996, and 2002. Therefore, for intervening years I used the last available year’s figures in my data set.

<sup>16</sup> For non-election years, data from the most recent election were used.

<sup>17</sup> This is the best data available regarding African-American religious participation at the state level.

the percentage of the population belonging to either conservative or liberal black church denominations. I also examined total black religious membership at the state level.

*Control Variables*

In addition to these theoretically-relevant variables, the policy literature suggests that the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of each state must be taken into account (Burstein 1998; Burstein and Linton 2002; Evans 1996; Grogan 1994; Haider-Markel 1998; Lin 2000; Nice 1994; Raeburn 2004; Soule 1997; Soule and Earl 2001; Soule and Olzak 2004; Soule and Zylan 1997; Strang and Soule 1998).

*Socio-demographic variables.* The literature suggests that race may be an important factor in determining policy implementation (Nice 1994; Soule and Zylan 1997). Therefore, the percentage of the population that is African-American was used in the models; yearly data for this variable were collected from U.S. Census Bureau (1996-2005). Another socio-demographic variable originally considered for this analysis was the percentage of the population that is white evangelical; however, this variable was not used in the final models because it was not significant in any the models, and was highly correlated with other variables (such as welfare state and evangelical movement ratings) that were significant, as well as being more theoretically important.

*Economic variables.* The literature further suggests that states with fewer economic resources would be less likely to appoint faith-based liaisons, since such innovations would be seen as too costly (Nice 1994). This factor was included as a

control in the models, in the form of the Gross State Product per capita (U.S. Census Bureau 1996-2005).<sup>18</sup>

Finally, I also examined change over time by including a dummy variable to test the effect of the 2004 presidential election on the appointment of liaisons; appointment of a liaison before 2005 was assigned a value of zero, and appointment in 2005 was assigned a value of one. While many policies may progress linearly over time, for the faith-based initiative there is reason to believe that a significant effect of time occurred after the 2004 Presidential election. President Bush's 2004 re-election apparently reduced the risks of policy adoption: while 24 states had appointed liaisons in the eight years ending in 2004, another 10 states appointed FBLs in 2005 – nearly a 50 percent increase in annual rate in just one year.

#### *Methods of Quantitative Data Analysis*

I used two different types of analysis on these data: event-history analysis and negative binomial regression. Using these two approaches, I was able to begin to understand the underlying reasons for a variety of faith-based practices, including the creation of FBL positions and overall implementation of the faith-based initiative.

*Event-history analysis.* To analyze the creation of faith-based liaison positions and OFBCIs, I used discrete time event-history analysis (Allison 1995).<sup>19</sup> Event-history

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<sup>18</sup> While this hypothesis is the most theoretically sound assumption, it may also be true that states in fiscal crisis may see the Faith-Based Initiative and relying upon churches to provide social services as a cost-efficient alternative when limited resources are available. Therefore, they may be more likely to appoint liaisons.

<sup>19</sup> Data were also analyzed using logistic regression. The same variables that were significant in the event-history analysis were significant in the logistic regression analysis; however, it was not possible to control for time or the interaction effect of time and TANF recipients. Therefore, only the event-history results are presented.

analysis was used to analyze longitudinal data on the dichotomous dependent variable representing whether a state had appointed a liaison in a given year. Using event-history analysis allowed the assessment of the rate at which each state had appointed a liaison. It also allowed modeling of the time-varying covariates on the hazard rate of ratification by a given state in a given year.<sup>20</sup> The data were arranged by state and year; once a state had created a liaison position all subsequent years were removed from the analysis, as the state was no longer at risk of appointing a liaison.

Event-history analysis was used to study the rate of policy implementation for several reasons. First, the implementation of a liaison could only occur at discrete periods in time (years). Second, the state-level co-variants were also measured in discrete (yearly) increments.<sup>21</sup> Finally, there were a number of “ties” in the data since many states created liaisons in the same year (e.g. 10 states in 2005), which rendered the logit model for discrete time event-history analysis appropriate (Allison 1995). The models presented here were analyzed using the STATA 8 statistical software package.

*Negative binomial regression.* I used negative binomial regression to analyze the number of laws passed at the state level. Unlike event-history analysis, this does not look at the year a state implemented such policies, but rather at the total number of laws passed during the period 1996 to 2004. Negative binomial regression is a variation of the

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<sup>20</sup> Scale of implementation was also examined, using a scale based on the number of faith-based policies in each state.

<sup>21</sup> The majority of independent variables were measured in yearly increments. However, some of the data were not available on a yearly basis, including the measure of evangelical movement strength and TANF coverage scores. For the TANF coverage, data was interpolated between reported years. However, this was not possible for the evangelical movement strength variable, which was only available for two years (Green, Guth, Wilcox 1998, Conger and Green 2002) 1994 figures were used for 1996-1999, and 2000 figures for all later years.

Poisson distribution that is used to estimate count models when the Poisson estimation is inappropriate due to overdispersion (Ender 2005). In a Poisson distribution the mean and variance are equal; when the variance is greater than the mean the distribution displays overdispersion. This occurs most of the time, and is what occurred in state faith-based legislative implementation. I tested whether the negative binomial distribution was a significant improvement over the Poisson regression by performing a likelihood ratio test; a small p-value would imply the negative binomial model is a significantly better than the Poisson model. The fit of the negative binomial model was significantly better than the Poisson model. Again, data were analyzed using STATA 8 statistical software.

#### *Qualitative Data: Variables and Analysis*

*Data from liaison interviews.* In my interviews with faith-based liaisons, data were collected on specific state practices. For example, each was asked whether their state had conducted conferences regarding the faith-based initiative, when those conferences were conducted, and at whom they were aimed. Other questions were asked about whether any funding was offered through their office, and whether they had an email listserv or a website. In addition, questions regarding the specific duties of liaisons were discussed. Where was the faith-based liaison located within state government? Was it a full-time or part-time position? Did they have any other employees in the OFBCI? What was their budget? I also asked questions about how they got the job, who they reported to, and how often they had to report on their progress. These questions gave me a fairly complete qualitative picture on state efforts regarding FBLs and OFBCIs.

Network data were also collected on liaisons' relationships with one another and

with the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in order to understand what their connections were with the White House and with other liaisons. How many other liaisons did they know? Were they connected to the White House? How much contact had they had with the White House? These network data were designed to yield a picture of how inter-connected (or not) FBLs were with one another and with the White House.<sup>22</sup>

Interview data were transcribed into Word format and coded for several of the key questions, including why state faith-based liaisons had taken their jobs, and their previous experience with religious groups or organizations.

*Data from field research at faith-based conferences.* From the data collected at faith-based conferences I found two ways religion was used in conferences. First, leaders' instigated religion at the conferences, and second groups in the audience responded to those religious cues to social action. These two variables are used in Chapter 6, which deals with race and religion, to help understand how the faith-based initiative is reaching out to the black religious community through the use of specific religious cues to social movement participation that are traditionally seen in black churches.

*Qualitative data analysis.* After the qualitative data were collected and coded, I counted patterns that emerged from the coding using grounded theory. For example, I examined how many FBLs had worked with religious groups, and how many saw their job as part of their personal religious mission. These qualitative data were then used both

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<sup>22</sup> I would like to repeat this portion of the project in the future because recent conversations with liaisons and others have led me to believe that the picture has changed since 2004, when the FBLs had their first meeting on state faith-based practices. They have since had additional meetings, but I have not been allowed to attend.

on their own to describe in detail what is happening with the faith-based initiative (Chapters 4 and 6), as well as to bolster the conclusions made from the quantitative data (Chapters 4 and 6). As discussed previously, various types of data offer various types of evidence. By using multiple methods in each section of this work, I was able to understand not just the quantitative reasons behind state faith-based policy implementation, but was able to begin to examine the broader picture of state faith-based practices.

### **Conclusion**

Using the various data collected, the following chapters examine state faith-based implementation. By using not only multiple strategies of data collection, but also multiple methods of analysis, I have been able to illustrate what states have been doing to implement the faith-based initiative – and why. An overall picture of faith-based implementation emerges, one that shows that the faith-based initiative is not really about solving problems of poverty, or even getting a variety of religious groups more involved in the social service sector. Rather it is about the evangelical movement creating a new avenue for religion, while potentially increasing its own political power and making way for more concrete changes in the future.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDING THE FAITH IN THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE

#### Introduction

As Edelman (1964, 1971) stated in his look at symbolic politics, the concrete and material changes a policy creates can be less important than the normative changes it represents. I have found that the policies and practices employed by states regarding the faith-based initiative are less about bringing new funding to help the poor and needy, than about creating symbolic policies and practices that reframe the relationship between church and state. These changes can become institutionalized, and then legitimize further laws and policies that will have a more concrete impact. While the possibility exists that this is an entirely ephemeral phenomenon, the fact that Democrats have been jumping on the bandwagon and more and more states are creating these new laws and positions suggests that it is more likely that the implementation of the initiative will continue unabated. In this chapter I outline the main ways states have been implementing faith-based policy, including a detailed description of the activities of faith-based liaisons (FBLs) and who the liaisons are.

At the time of this study, 33 states and the District of Columbia had appointed FBLs, and 26 states had passed 162 laws regarding the faith-based initiative. In this chapter I outline the specific practices in which these liaisons engage, and the types of laws that states have implemented. When implementation of the faith-based initiative first began in 1996, liaisons became the administrators of a public policy that had little prior history, direction, or network of support. Unlike most major policy changes, which

typically result from professionals working in the field identifying a social need, and then networking to create specific rules and guidelines, there was little infrastructure in place at the state level to support the implementation of the faith-based initiative. Instead, states and liaisons were given a policy goal – linking faith-based organizations (FBOs) to the public social service sector – and instructed to figure out some way to carry it out (Loconte 2002, 2004; Sherman 1999). Once liaisons were in place, the main focus of state faith-based policy implementation has been on providing FBOs with information about funds available elsewhere, helping those FBOs to assess their capacity to receive government grants, and working to change attitudes about partnering with FBOs within state bureaucracies. These laws and policies appear to be a solution in search of a problem, creating new practices that enhance the access of religion to government funding (since religious groups were already being funded). My findings suggest that unlike the reasons supporters give for faith-based policy, that new money and new help are being offered to the poor, faith-based policies and practices are almost entirely symbolic. Instead of creating new social services, these practices use faith-based administrative appointees and legislation to encourage the dismantling of church/state separation.

### **Qualitative Findings on Faith-Based Liaisons, Offices, and Legislation**

Data on faith-based liaisons and legislative changes were gathered from the Westlaw database and through in-depth interviews with FBLs. See Chapter 3 for a full description of data and methods.

I found that states were implementing a variety of practices related to the faith-

based initiative, including directly funding faith-based organizations (FBOs), creating listservs and websites to help faith-based organizations receive information about the government funding process, and passing laws that encourage greater participation by faith-based organizations in the government by adding religious representation to administrative boards. In this chapter I describe the ways that state liaisons, offices, and legislative changes are creating faith-based practices at the state level.

### **Faith-Based Liaisons as Faith-Based Brokers**

While the duties and powers of FBLs vary by state, in all cases they have the primary responsibility for putting the faith-based initiative into practice in their respective states. They are the main point of contact between religious groups and government agencies, attempting to bridge the perceived gap between state governments and FBOs that have not traditionally been involved in providing social services. Additionally, they represent a new symbol and legitimization of religion within state government. Because of this critical role they play and what they represent, closer investigation of both the nature of the FBL position and the characteristics of those that fill it is warranted. My research strongly suggests that the nature of the liaison position significantly shape the implementation of the faith-based initiative at the state level, as do the backgrounds, identities, and commitments of individuals who become FBLs.

There are few formal policies guiding the actions of liaisons; and when there are formal policies, there is generally little oversight to confirm that tasks have been carried out in accordance with those policies. In general, policy actors are more able to rely on their knowledge and pre-existing values when they are operating under few rules and

guidelines. For example, Kahn (2001) finds that workers in charge of implementing federal welfare-to-work policies in Michigan often improvise because of the lack of administrative regulation. As Kaler and Watkins (2001:254) observe, “the implementation of social policy is strongly conditioned by the needs, desires and agendas of those who carry them out.” These findings about the importance of policy actors that carry out social policy without much guidance and regulation makes understanding the activities of FBLs crucial to understanding what is really happening with state faith-based policies.

This freedom that the liaisons have is at least partially because state implementation of the initiative has also been relatively haphazard, enacted almost entirely through administrative fiat rather than legislation. Acting as the main conduit between FBOs and state agencies, FBLs make creative use of their limited resources to inform FBOs about opportunities and encourage them to become involved in the government’s social service activities (for example, see Prottas 1978). Therefore, while the authority of FBLs is often limited to engaging FBOs through networking and conferences, how liaisons approach this varies widely. Thus, to understand the impact of FBLs on the expression of the faith-based initiative at the state level, it becomes clear that in addition to investigating *what* FBLs are doing, it is essential to know who they are, and what motivates them in their work.

### **What Do Faith-Based Liaisons Do?**

Of the 30 FBLs with whom I spoke, only a minority of the positions (12) were full-time. Some of the states without a full-time FBL were in the process of increasing

their emphasis on the initiative or had just created the position; therefore, at the time of this research 18 states had only a part-time person working as the FBL during the period covered by my research, meaning that many FBLs also had to attend to other responsibilities; these included roles such as the governor's chief of staff, or work in other state agencies such as Children and Family Services. Therefore, while some states had made concrete attempts to engage directly with small religious groups – such as the direct contracting done in Ohio and New Jersey – most states did not have the staff or resources to conduct such efforts. Instead, my research showed that most FBLs had two primary ways of connecting with FBOs: conferences aimed at faith-based leaders and personal networking (See Table 2).

The ability of FBLs to fund FBOs or conduct conferences was often directly tied to whether there was a formal Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) in the state. During my study there were OFBCIs in 16 of the 34 states that had FBLs (see Table 3). OFBCIs are more formal in structure than FBLs: they tend to have budgets, more than one person working on the initiative, and a clearer picture of how to implement the initiative at the state level. Also, they are more likely to have the power necessary to get the attention of other state officials because they usually have the support of their governors, the key ally at the state level. However, whether this extra effort and structure will lead to significant changes in how the faith-community interacts with government and the social service sector remains to be seen.

*Direct Contracting with Religious Groups*

I found that the most concrete way an OFBCI could engage new FBOs was to directly fund them to provide social services. As one liaison<sup>23</sup> whose office provides funding told me, “What we want is to do is to get organizations off their knees and onto their feet and the only way we can do that is by providing the operational expenses that these organizations need.” However, only New Jersey, Ohio, and Washington D.C. have taken this step. Of these, only New Jersey has given the office a reasonable budget (over \$4 million), to fund FBOs directly to provide social services; the Washington D.C. office has given out a series of small (\$1000) capacity-building grants.

Unlike New Jersey and Washington D.C., the Ohio office distributes funds that do not come from state money to FBOs. Instead, the Ohio’s OFBCI received a Compassion Capital Fund grant from the federal department of Health and Human Services for direct funding to faith-based organizations. So while Ohio is giving funds directly, it is federal, not state, money.

Interestingly, while it would seem that most state FBLs would want be able to fund FBOs directly through their offices, some actually expressed reservations at taking this step. One liaison<sup>24</sup> told me, “I mean, if what we’re about is really leveling the playing field and bringing them [FBOs] to get work done in the state, then it doesn’t seem to me that there should be the certain pot of money and then all of a sudden that’s what you go for.” Another liaison<sup>25</sup> expressed a similar sentiment about being hesitant to give funds from their office, but was more concerned about the legal repercussions that

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<sup>23</sup> Personal interview I2.

<sup>24</sup> Personal interview I17.

<sup>25</sup> Personal interview I23.

they could face if one of the groups that got money violated regulations regarding church/state separation, stating, “No one wants to be sued.” So while some states have taken the road to direct funding, it seems unlikely that all states will pursue this type of activity.

### *Intermediary Contracting*

One of the more intriguing and innovative ways states have attempted to engage FBO's has been through an intermediary funding model. Created in Oklahoma under Brad Yarbrough, the intermediary model relies on using a non-governmental organization that is government funded, which then reaches out to individual churches to engage them in providing social services without receiving direct government funding. For example, in Oklahoma three specific programs were created: adopt-a-social worker, county initiatives, and a resource directory. The intermediary funding model was thus designed to bring these small religious groups into a working relationship with the government in small steps. The liaison in Oklahoma designed the intermediary model to reach out to small religious groups and help them begin to do activities on a scale that they were capable of performing. As he put it, “We believe there are considerable opportunities for collaboration where there is not taxpayer money exchanged, where both groups work together, on the government side because they have policy mandate and on the faith side because they have a divine mandate, and we just identify specific ways they can work together.” He stated that as his work with faith-based groups continued he found that most of them did not have the time or resources for sustained activity; his goal was thus to seek out “the low-hanging fruit” that these organizations could offer. He noted that he

thought many groups wanted to help, but did not know how to get involved. Therefore, he funded a group of intermediary organizations to organize these efforts by smaller groups, so instead of the churches being out there on their own, they had an organization to help them with their service activities.

His realization that small churches and religious groups needed help to even begin to perform social services conforms to what recent research has also found. It has been determined (e.g. Chaves 2004) that most churches and small religious organizations do not have the capacity to receive government grants to carry out social services. While this has been reported in the social sciences literature for many years, most state liaisons did not have this knowledge when they took on the job; therefore, they met with significant frustration when trying to get new religious groups into the social service fold.

#### *Conferences for Faith-Based Organizations*

While intermediary and direct contracting are rare at the state level, a more common method utilized by OFBCIs and liaisons to bring new groups into the social service sector is by conducting state-funded conferences that focus specifically on the faith-based community. Currently, 20 states<sup>26</sup> have sponsored these conferences, which are aimed at bringing information and awareness about the faith-based initiative to their communities, and at clarifying the government granting process. Conferences usually consist of a main informational session followed by break-out sessions that focus on various topics, such as the grant writing process, what sort of capacity groups need to

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<sup>26</sup> Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Utah, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

obtain a federal or state grant, and where groups can obtain resources to increase this capacity. While most conferences are open to the public, publicity may be limited. When invitations or e-mail notices are sent, they tend to go to FBOs with which the liaisons have had previous contact, or those that have previously contacted the state about the faith-based initiative. Therefore, this information may not reach all the religious groups in a community. In fact, who gets invited to these conferences is often a direct reflection of the religious affiliations of the liaison in that state.

FBLs report that, while these conferences are a good beginning and means of reaching out to the community, much work remains to be done. Most of the liaisons I spoke with reported that the main misconception among groups that attended the conferences was that, in the words of one FBL,<sup>27</sup> “there was some pot of faith-based money out there.” In fact, not only do most FBLs not have access to such funds, but there are no state funding streams set aside for FBOs. This general lack of understanding about the initiative appears consistently in the FBLs attempts to work with the community. However, it is consistent with the publicity about the initiative that is sponsored by federal and state governments who advertise the initiative as new money for faith-based groups.

Conferences also give the liaisons a greater understanding of the capacities of the FBOs in attendance. Even though many of the FBOs felt ready to receive government funds, the liaisons often learned that most small FBOs were completely unprepared to receive government grants. For example, in one southern state, the liaison reported that a

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<sup>27</sup> Personal interview I15.

survey of the participants at their first conference revealed not only that most of the groups did not have computers, but that most of them did not even know about e-mail. This reflects a technological capacity far short of that needed to manage a government account. In another state, the 21 conference participants who attended a series of trainings were eligible to receive a mini-grant; however, much to the surprise of the liaison in charge,<sup>28</sup> only 14 of the 21 participating FBOs even applied. “I was like, this was money really given away. . . and it [the application] was no more than two pages . . . [so] it was really a test to see if they would do it by a due date. They couldn’t even do that.” So while political supporters argue that these groups are the ones who should take over for government to do social services, the reality the liaisons face is often very different.

*Personal Networking with Faith-Based Organizations and Government Agencies*

While conferences aimed at FBOs have occurred in some of the states with FBLs, all FBLs have engaged in some form of networking with the two main groups they aim to connect: FBOs that hope to receive government grants, and the state bureaucracies that distribute the funds. In fact, bridging the gap between state government and FBOs is the focus of all the FBLs. As one director<sup>29</sup> stated “We are always trying to get the message out . . . that there is an opportunity to appropriately work with one another.” Because most FBLs have little or no budget, and often work only part-time in the role of liaison, this is the main – or sometimes only – component of their job. However, while all state liaisons network in some fashion, the amount of time FBLs are able to dedicate to creating these networks, and the degree to which the building of these networks is systematic, varies by

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<sup>28</sup> Personal interview, Washington D.C.

state. Because they are often limited to networking, and networking with groups that they know about, these liaisons then become policy promoters for mainly certain types of religious groups. They create excitement and enthusiasm around a public policy and its political supporters, when the reality of their ability to get money to these groups does not match the rhetoric. Therefore, what they symbolize and what they say becomes more important than any concrete actions they are able to take.

*Networking with faith-based organizations.* To network with FBOs in person, FBLs engage in a variety of activities, including personal meetings, breakfasts with congregations, and talks with community leaders. Like formal conferences, these informal networking opportunities are usually a way of spreading information about the initiative. As one liaison<sup>30</sup> told me, the best way to get information out there was to go “[t]hrough the churches. That’s really and truly the main communication arm and it has always has been.” An important aspect of this is that many of the FBLs have strong ties to their own religious community, and rely on these networks to spread the word about grants, conferences, and other information regarding the possible role of small FBOs in providing government-funded social services.

During the interviews several liaisons described to me how excited they were to connect with religious groups, and how important their connections with people of faith were to them. For example, during one interview, I met with a liaison and his pastor. They discussed how other churches could become involved in providing social services and contracting with the government. During our time together they discussed how they

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<sup>29</sup> Personal interview I16.

were planning a meeting of churches – all Christian – to discuss the faith-based initiative. They also discussed the changing role of evangelicals in America; they told me that they believed that the previous views of many evangelicals that the focus should be only on internal salvation was erroneous and working with government to change the material well-being of others was crucial to being a Christian.

In addition to making direct personal contact with specific groups, several states also had e-mail listservs. Most of the listservs were made up of both groups that the state had contracted with before and other religious organizations in the state. However, most listservs were not comprehensive, and only contained religious organizations that were known to the FBLs either through personal contact or through their previous work with government. In short, while a variety of attempts were being made to bring in new religious groups, the efforts tended not to be inclusive or systematic; this appeared to be mainly because of time or budgetary constraints, rather than intentional discrimination. Therefore, examining who is in charge of implementing the initiative at the state level is crucial, as it can shed light on differences between faith-based organizations in access to information in applications for state and federal funds.

*Networking with state agencies.* While direct networking with religious groups is important, reaching out to the faith community is only one means that FBLs use to change the interaction between FBOs and the government. Recognizing that changing the attitudes and abilities of FBOs is only part of the process, many FBLs have begun a process of attempting to change how government officials think about FBOs. To do this,

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<sup>30</sup> Personal interview I2.

liaisons have begun networking with various state agencies, with the goal of altering the entire government social service culture to encourage contracting with FBOs.

Most FBLs have instituted a process of regularly contacting state agencies – sometimes even on a weekly basis – by telephone or in person. Generally there is one person at each agency who is appointed to work with the FBL and FBOs. This point person is then responsible for making the agency's contracting system more easily manageable for these small religious organizations. For example, in one state the FBL created a system in which weekly conference calls were made between the FBL's office and five to seven state agencies, with the FBL asking for specific details on groups contacted and what types of services those groups were prepared to offer.

These efforts have met with mixed results. The FBLs I spoke with reported that some state agency officials were very cooperative and liked the idea of bringing change to social services; however, other officials, while not directly refusing to cooperate, reportedly did not see any benefit in cooperating. In one state, even getting state agencies to answer a survey about how they engaged FBOs was difficult, with only 11% of agencies responding. In other states, FBLs told me that state officials were occasionally suspicious of their activities and felt that the liaisons were potentially violating church-state separation.

Thus, the FBLs may not have had the success they wished for in changing the attitudes among other government bureaucrats. However, whether or not the bureaucrats like this new emphasis may not matter. Instead, what may matter is that in creating these positions and offices, a new government culture in which funding faith-based groups over

secular groups, is being created. However, to measure success one needs to measure over-time funding of state sponsored social services, something I have not been able to do in this study. As with some of the problems experienced in networking with FBOs, the kinds of problems liaisons encounter when working with government officials may be directly related to whom the liaisons are and to whom they are connected.

### **Who are the Faith-Based Liaisons?**

Understanding what FBLs do to promote the faith-based initiative is only part of the story. Because many of them *are* the initiative in their state, not considering the personal backgrounds of FBLs leaves out a key component of understanding the implementation of the initiative. As Kaler and Watkins (2001) observed, state employees bring their own beliefs and prejudices to the job. This study found two significant commonalities among the FBLs: their self-selection into the positions, and their pre-existing ties to particular religious communities.

#### *Self-Selection*

One of the more interesting findings about the FBLs is how committed they are to the initiative's success. In general, these are not individuals assigned to the job through the usual bureaucratic measures associated with government jobs. Instead, almost all requested taking on the position, often adding the responsibility of FBL to other duties. Of the 30 liaisons interviewed, 18 were already working for or involved with state government and sought out the position keeping many of the duties and responsibilities they already had. While an additional eight had heard that the governor was seeking to take action and had actively petitioned for the job. When asked why they took the job, all

but 4 of the 30 FBLs I interviewed pointed to their personal commitment to and interest in working with the faith-based community. Most claimed a deep and abiding faith as the reason for this action. For example, one liaison<sup>31</sup> said, “We didn’t get this faith-component by default ... it came to this office because I wanted it.” Others<sup>32</sup> said, “I felt the call. I really did ... I felt like this was the opportunity to make a difference,” and, “I was at a place in my personal journey of faith where I realized that community was important, not just to me, but to God ... [and] I felt that it was, you know, indeed a calling to get involved.” Others simply stated that they had always worked with the faith community, believed in the initiative, and wanted to make sure the faith community was part of government. For example, one liaison<sup>33</sup> pointed to a passion for working with both the underprivileged and the faith-community, declaring, “I feel blessed to be in this role.”

These statements reflect a general sentiment that serving as an FBL is not just another job, but a way to change the social service sector in what they consider to be a positive and innovative manner. In fact, the majority report that, while the official time allowed for the job was sometimes only a few hours a week, they worked a great deal more than that. They believed that without the extra time they spend on their role as FBL the necessary information would not get to the faith community.

### *Ties to Religious Community*

Given the process by which FBLs are chosen, it is not surprising that they are a

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<sup>31</sup> Personal interview I7.

<sup>32</sup> Personal interviews I16, 17, respectively.

<sup>33</sup> Personal interview I26.

very dedicated and religious group. In fact, many of them have extensive formal and informal ties to their religious communities. Nine of the FBLs (a quarter of those interviewed) were or had been pastors. Four had held a formal position at their local church, and five reported that they had worked extensively within their religious groups in an informal capacity. Additionally, 24 told me that they had experience working with FBOs in a variety of capacities prior to becoming FBLs.

This level of connection with religious groups is noteworthy when one considers that most of the contact between the faith community and the FBLs is through personal networking. Groups outside the preexisting religious networks of the FBLs may not have the same level of access to relevant information as those within the networks. This lack of connection to some religious groups may not be intentional; indeed, many of FBLs interviewed seemed honestly interested in trying to get an array of faiths represented in the government granting process, often attempting to accomplish this difficult task with extremely limited resources. But regardless of the reasons – limited resources or the personal nature of the networks brought to the job – it is likely that some groups simply will not be included in this information loop, and therefore will not be as exposed to funding opportunities as other groups.

Since the main way FBLs connect to the religious community is through personal networking, determining to whom they are connected becomes important. Therefore, liaisons were asked about their current religious affiliation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the almost half of all FBLs (13) stated a conservative Christian background. Five reported that they were practicing Catholics, and four practiced another mainline or liberal

Christian religion. Of the 30 asked, only two claimed a non-Christian background. Four declined to answer the question; of these, none stated that they were not religious – instead they said that they did not think that their religious background was important to their job. Since the job of the FBL is to connect religious groups with government, the notion that their own religious background is unimportant seems dubious. On the contrary, it seems most likely that liaisons build up their networks to FBOs through the ties they already have, thus providing information to particular FBOs rather than others.

**TABLE 2: Levels of Faith-Based Activity, and States in Which They Occur**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>States</b>
Funds to Contract with FBO's	Budget to contract with FBO's at discretion of FBL	DC, NJ, OH
Intermediary Contracting	Contract with intermediary organization to bring small religious groups into the fold by engaging them in non-government funded services	OK, WY
Personal Networking	Network with both state agency heads and FBO's to bring both onboard with the initiative	All states with FBLs
Conferences aimed at FBOs	State conferences aimed at FBOs to help them with capacity building, grant writing, and general information	AL, AK, AR, AZ, CO, CT, DC, FL, IN, MA, MD, MI, MT, NE, NJ, NY, OH, OK, UT, VA

*Brilliant Neglect? Problems with State Faith-Base Policy Implementation*

I found that the efforts by states to engage new FBOs in the provision of social services were marred by a series of potential problems. Most state liaisons were left on their own, with little money or resources to do much besides become movement spokespeople, reaching out to religious groups already in their networks. This stems from a lack of several things, including guidance or regulation; infrastructure, both formal and informal; personnel; and monetary resources. Combined, these difficulties reduced the

ability of liaisons and offices to actually help the poor and needy; they were often limited to informational assistance, often directed to some groups rather than others. Therefore, what these liaisons represent may be the most important function of their positions.

*Varying levels of institutionalization.* Currently, only four states (Kentucky, North Dakota, Ohio, and Virginia) have implemented OFBCIs by law, and only North Dakota has created a liaison position through legislation. This means that the vast majority are – much like the White House OFBCI – susceptible to closure when a change in administration occurs. Without a law in place that mandates a Faith-Based Liaison or OFBCI, each time a new governor or agency head is appointed, the position is vulnerable to either being eliminated or having its power effectively extinguished.

This has already happened in two states where the initiative got off to an early start with support from the governor – the key ally in faith-based policy; when there was a change of power in the state administration, the initiative effectively disappeared for an extended period of time. As one former liaison<sup>34</sup> told me, “We got started ahead of a lot of people. But when the new governor came in they told us that they supported what we were doing, but that it was no longer a priority. Now the position exists in name only.” While the position has since been re-established, there were several years when there was effectively no one engaging the faith-community. However, there was someone reinstated and even since I ended this study six new states have created liaisons.

*Lack of guidance and regulation.* One of the characteristics common to all state policies connected to the faith-based initiative is a lack of systematic regulation or

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<sup>34</sup> Personal interview I26.

guidance directing the actions of the OFBCIs. There are no federal rules or regulations to guide states on what the objectives of these offices should be or to guide them on how the objectives should be carried out. This lack of guidance has had intriguing consequences. For example, there is almost no consistency in something as fundamental as the location of these offices within state governments (see Table3). There is clearly a great deal of variation in the location of these offices: some have been established in outside foundations and are funded mainly through private funds; others have been established directly in the governor's office; and one state even established its office under the first lady of the state. In this aspect, as well as others, the lack of concrete guidance forces each state to reinvent the wheel when it wishes to create an OFBCI or an FBL.

While most liaisons saw the initiative as a bright spot on the horizon, and felt many benefits to more religion within government some were concerned by this lack of oversight into the initiative. In fact several of the liaisons I spoke with were troubled by this lack of regulation and an overall lack of understanding by other liaisons about issues of church/state separation, including what it entails and whether it should even be enforced. For example, one of the only non-religious liaisons had concerns about the religious motivations of other liaisons, and about their lack of belief in the doctrine of church/state separation. On returning from a meeting on the initiative that was attended by liaisons from across the country this liaison<sup>35</sup> told me. "I was very scared by what I heard ... " However, this concern was only shared explicitly by four other liaisons.

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<sup>35</sup> Personal interview I28.

**TABLE 3: Organizational Location of Faith-Based Liaison Positions in State Government**

Location	No position of faith-based liaison has ever been created, or the position existed for a period of time but a change in leadership has left the position vacant or unfunded	Faith-based liaison position in established in the office of the governor or a state agency	State Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives is directly under the governor, but is established in a variety of ways including under Lt. Governor, Office of Volunteerism, First Lady's Office, etc.	State Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives is established under a specific state agency	State Office of Faith- Based and Community Initiatives is funded mostly through private money, but the office itself is administratively connected to the governor
# of States	17	15	15	2	2
States	DE, IA, ME, MO, MS, NH, NV, OR, RI, SD, TN, VT, WA, WV, WI Defunct: CA, UT	AZ, CO, GA, HI, ID, IL, KS, KY <sup>a</sup> , MT <sup>b</sup> , NC, ND <sup>a</sup> , NE <sup>b</sup> , NY, PA, SC	AK, AL, AR, CT, DC, IN, LA, MA, MD, MI, MN <sup>a</sup> , NM, NJ, OH, VA	WY, OK	TX, FL

<sup>a</sup> Faith-based liaison position or Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives was created after data collection was finished in March 2005.

<sup>b</sup> Nebraska and Montana created positions after they received federal Compassion Capital Fund grants.

<sup>c</sup> California and Utah had FBLs, but do not currently have anyone formally assigned as an FBL.

*Incomplete but increasing infrastructure.* In addition to the general lack of regulation guiding these offices, there is little infrastructure in place that connects state OFBCIs to each other or to the federal government. While there was a growing network of state offices, when this project started none of the liaisons with whom I spoke knew all the other liaisons; further, none of them knew what was really happening in other states. This lack of institutionalization meant that the Faith-Based Liaisons often operated as dedicated “lone wolves.” At the start of this study, most of the liaisons interviewed had

rarely or never discussed their job with other state liaisons. Each state was effectively re-inventing the wheel, with very little shared knowledge about what they were supposed to be doing as Faith-Based Liaisons, or what exactly their jobs should entail. In fact, I unintentionally became part of my own research, becoming the conduit between many offices, passing along information to OFBCIs and liaisons on what was happening in other states, including basic information such as which states had offices.

Since completing my interviews this lack of infrastructure appears to be the first aspect of faith-based policy implementation that is changing systematically. After I spoke with the White House OFBCI person in charge of state liaison communication, a systematic network through which offices communicate with each other or with the federal government was created, and there is now a system of monthly conference calls between the White House OFBCI and the state liaisons and OFBCIs. This means that while the actual funding or material consequences may not be changing, the infrastructure surrounding and permanence of these liaisons appears to be increasing.

### **The Law**

Although FBLs and OFBCIs are the two most common types of faith-based implementation at the state level, states have also passed a variety of laws to implement the initiative. The focus on changing administrative measures and creating new bureaucracies, rather than passing legislation, was the original intent of the first faith-based initiative supporters. They thought that religious groups' problems with getting access to funds would best be remedied by changing the administrative culture of state

governments.<sup>36</sup> However, some states have passed legislation specifically in response to the faith-based initiative; one reason for this is that while administrative measures can be changed with new governors or agency heads, legislation is relatively permanent. This step towards formalization has been increasing somewhat over time (see Table 4).

Additionally, while these laws may be permanent they are also congruent with the overall emphasis on changing culture, rather than on bringing in new funds to do social services.

**TABLE 4: State Legislation by Year**

Year	States (and Number of Laws Passed)	Annual Total
1996	0	0
1997	CA (1) FL (2) TX (12)	15 laws in 3 states
1998	AZ (2) CA (1) FL (3)	6 laws in 3 states
1999	FL (3) LA (1) TX (4)	8 laws in 3 states
2000	AZ (3) CA (1) CO (3) FL (8) KY (1)	16 laws in 5 states
2001	AK (1) AZ (2) CA (2) DC (1) FL (18) ID (2) KY (1) LA (1) MN (1) MT (1) NV (1) OR (2) TX (3) VA (2)	38 laws in 14 states
2002	AZ (1) CA (1) DC (1) FL (8) NJ (2) OK (2) OR (2) PA (1) TX (1) VA (5)	26 laws in 5 states
2003	AZ (4) CA (1) FL (5) IN (4) IA (1) KS (1) LA (1) MS (3) NM (3) OH (2) OK (1) OR (1) TX (3)	34 laws in 13 states
2004	AZ (4) FL (6) IN (1) MD (1) MI (1) MN (1) MS (1) OK (2)	17 laws in 8 states

<sup>36</sup> Personal interview, May 2005.

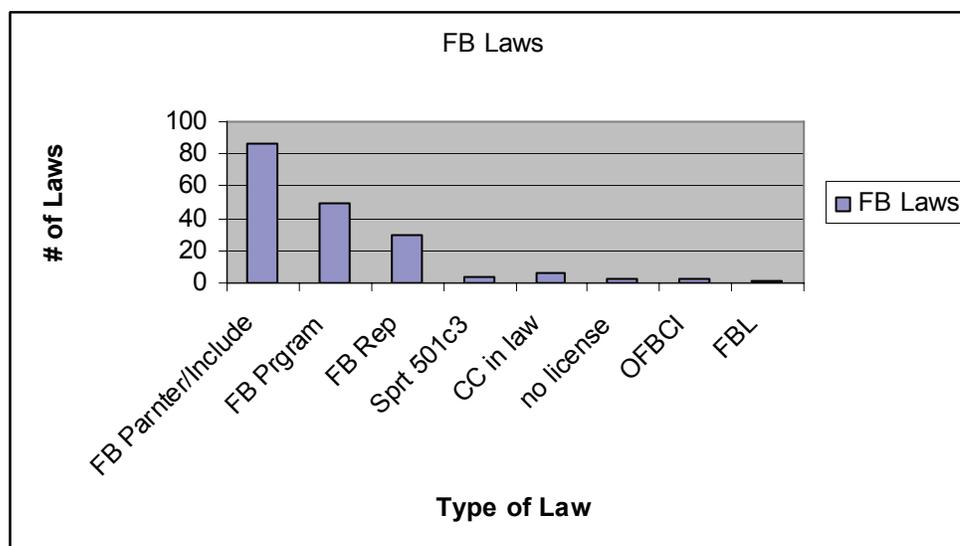
### *Types of Legislation*

States have passed numerous pieces of legislation since 1996 (see Figure 1); these have eight general goals:

1. include language in executive orders or legislation that encourages partnering with faith-based organizations;
2. encourage government agencies to use a faith-based organizations for specific government programs, such as drug rehabilitation or prisons;
3. include members of the faith community on advisory boards of state agencies;
4. require faith-based organizations to create their own 501(c)3 charitable organizations;
5. incorporate “faith-based initiative” language into state laws;
6. exempt faith-based organizations from standard regulations or licensing requirements;
7. create an Office of Faith Based Initiatives;
8. create a faith-based liaison position;

Figure 1 shows the relative distribution of these laws. In the following section the most common types of legislation are described.

*Encouragement of contracting with faith-based organizations.* Seeking to remedy what they feel is an inherent bias against faith-based organizations, some states have passed laws either allowing or encouraging contracting with FBOs. Like FBL and OFBCIs, these changes are mainly symbolic and do not call for any specific organization to be contracted with or make contracting mandatory. Instead, these legislative changes

**FIGURE 1: Number of Faith-Based Laws, by Type**

generally state that faith-based groups should be sought out as partners or collaborators in the state-funded contracting process, thus contributing to an overall policy environment that seeks to alter the norm of church/state separation. At the time of this writing, 86 laws encouraging contracting with FBO's had been passed, making it by far the most common type of legislation.

Other state legislative changes mandate contracting with FBOs for particular social services. Perhaps the most common and most controversial legislation of this type has been the creation of "faith-based" prison wings. One of the first examples of this was under George W. Bush; governor, he pressed for contracting with several organizations, including Chuck Colson's Prison Ministry, which was installed in Texas prisons. Other states – including Iowa, whose faith-based prison wings were found to violate the Establishment Clause – have introduced faith-based prison wings that give special

privileges to inmates who select this option. Additional faith-based programs related to drug use, alcohol treatment, and childcare, have also been established at the state level. Currently there are 50 state laws on the books that either itemize specific services to be run by FBO's, suggest that these services be run by FBO's, or regulate these services.

*Inclusion of representatives from faith-based organizations on state advisory boards.* Another way states have attempted to “level the playing field” for religious organizations is by creating positions on advisory boards (i.e. prison or foster care advisory boards) for members of the faith community. The inclusion of FBOs in this process was intended to increase the presence and influence of religious organizations in the overall government structure. As one liaison<sup>37</sup> told me, “one of the things we discovered is that as we were going thorough the grants process, if we say that the faith-based community is critically important and not only do we want them to apply, why don't we have them involved in a review panels for grants. And that's something we have not done in the past.” While this move could be construed as partially symbolic, there is risk that certain types of faith-based advisors will be selected over others, thus favoring one brand of religion over others. Thirty state laws have been passed that require including members of the faith-based community on advisory boards. Additionally, there is no mechanism in place to control which groups get invited to join advisory boards.

*Other legislative changes.* There were also several other types of legislation implemented during this time period. For example, three states altered licensing requirements for FBO's, making it easier for them to participate in social service activity.

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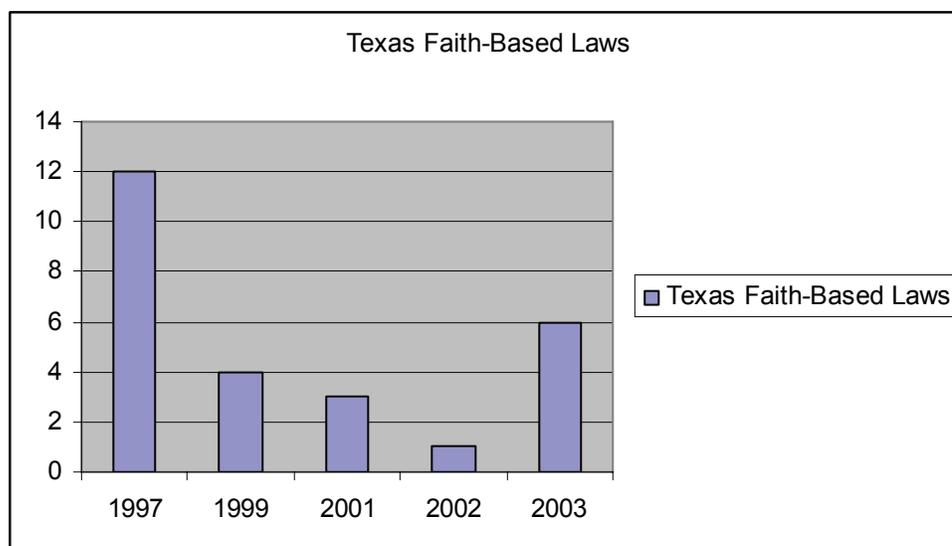
<sup>37</sup> Personal interview I4.

This change meant that FBOs now have an advantage over their secular counterparts, since they are not held to the same standards, potentially making it easier for FBOs to participate in social services. Finally, six states have added specific Charitable Choice provisions into legislation.

### *Patterns in Legislation*

*Location.* Interestingly, two states are responsible for generating over half the legislation that implements aspects of the faith-based initiative. Combined, Texas and Florida have passed 77 laws – 24 in Texas and 53 in Florida. This makes Florida responsible for over a third of all the legislation considered in this study. This preponderance of legislation in Texas and Florida suggests that if the governor of a state is friendly towards the faith-based movement, then it is not only more likely those administrative measures will be implemented by that state through the governor's office, but it is also more likely that there will be some sort of legislative impact in the state. This is especially interesting considering that the majority of legislation in Texas was passed while George W. Bush was the governor there, with legislation slowing down considerably since then (see Figure 2). In Florida, it will be interesting to see what happens once Jeb Bush is no longer governor, since he and his brother have been the most vocal and active governmental supporters of the initiative.

*Time.* Most states adopted faith-based practices after the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. At those times it became more politically feasible to do so because it was clear that the faith-based initiative was going to remain on the national landscape. For example, before the 2000 election there were only two states with Offices of Faith-

**FIGURE 2: Texas' Faith-Based Laws**

Based and Community initiatives; today there are sixteen. This mirrors the legislative impact of the initiative, which has also exhibited a general increase over time. Clearly, states have become increasingly active in creating a variety of ways to incorporate more faith-based groups into the social service sector (see Table 4).

### **Conclusion**

The literature in state and social policy implementation suggests that social policies are not necessarily created to bring about a change in material resources or conditions (Edelman 1964, 1971, Brysk 1995). Rather, implementation of new state policies and practices may be more important because of what it represents. I found that the ways in which states were creating new faith-based practices are less about changing the social service sector than about creating laws and practices that intertwine religion and government in new ways. Thus, faith-based initiatives, as they are employed at the

state level, represent a new story about what the relationship between church and state should look like. In the last century, the church was kept separate from state. Faith-based policies are just one way in which church is becoming part of state. Clearly, states have increased their implementation of a variety of faith-based practices over time. From creating new legislation to appointing liaisons and OFBCIs, states have focused on faith-based policy implementation that aims to bring new religious groups into the social service sector. By closely examining these legislative changes, as well as who these liaisons are and what problems they face, a full picture of state faith-based policy implementation is beginning to emerge.

The literature on social policy also suggests that when policies are mainly administrative and offer few guidelines for implementation, state policy brokers become the key actors in carrying them out. These are the circumstances in which FBLs find themselves. They *are* the faith-based initiative in most states, defining how states implement the initiative in several ways. They are often solely responsible for which organizations are contacted about faith-based funding opportunities. They define the content of this information, as well as of the faith-based conferences. And they control with whom in state government these organizations become connected. Therefore, understanding the initiative at the state level means understanding the role of FBLs and their on-the-ground activities.

FBLs must deal with many challenges in implementing the initiative, including a paucity of resources, misunderstandings about the initiative from faith-based groups, the misgivings of government officials, and the continuous threat of extinction. In the

face of these challenges, the passionate religious commitment that many FBLs share helps them survive and persevere. Their personal faith brings the inspiration they need to work more than they are paid for, and sometimes to continue their task even after the official position is gone.

As the main arbiters of faith-based policy in most states, faith-based liaisons have an important new distinction. Through networking and sharing of information, the work of these FBLs becomes intimately linked to who they are and who they know. By bringing their religious commitments to the faith-based initiative, state liaisons bring not only determination and dedication, but religious connections to bear on their work. These connections create not only opportunities, but challenges as well. Whether their faith in the faith-based initiative will be enough to meet these challenges remains to be seen.

On the other hand, the personal faith of the FBL's may impact who gets brought into the information circle of the social service fold. For example, while their connections to the faith-community may bring them credibility in the religious community and a strong network of pre-existing ties, it may also lead them to focus on certain groups while leaving out other organizations. And while they rarely hold the purse-strings, FBLs are the main brokers of information to faith-based organizations and the main conduit for information and resources between FBOs and government agencies. Therefore, faith-based groups that are interested in receiving information about government grants or social services may not be getting the outreach they need if they are not in the FBLs network.

Further, the suspicions and problems FBLs have encountered when attempting to change the prevailing views and attitudes of other government bureaucrats may be because of their strong religious motivations and ties. Government officials may see them as essentially outsiders – as religious representatives rather than government officials – and may also be suspicious of their motivations. While this study did not directly address this issue, it is pertinent that one liaison<sup>38</sup> stated a fear that most of the other liaisons, while passionate and dedicated, were not experienced enough in the government sector to really understand how the faith-based initiative should or could work. In addition, without any real infrastructure in place that ensures the continuation of the position, many liaisons may be chronic “lame ducks” without the power to influence other state bureaucrats, since officials in other state agencies may be hesitant to change their operations if they know that the FBL may be gone in a few years. Regardless, these liaisons and legislative changes represent in and of themselves a greater acceptance of religion within the public sphere, an acceptance that may grow over-time.

While the rhetoric around the initiative may be about real material help and change, it seems that by not having new funds involved the goals of the evangelical movement maybe be more likely achieved through the initiative. Instead of having to worry about funding new offices or new liaisons, the offices and liaisons can operate doing what they were intended to do – bringing in new political allies to the evangelical movement efforts through informing religious groups about the benefits of the faith-based initiative. Instead of actually providing the money – and therefore attention and

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<sup>38</sup> Personal interview I22.

problems – these liaisons could become social movement actors that eventually become part and parcel of government action. Their activities and presence would effectively reframe the church/state debate by telling others about the discrimination these groups had faced and how faith-based groups would alter all of this. Therefore, the benefits of the faith-based initiative as a symbolic policy that represents a new church/state relationship of cooperation and collaboration would be fulfilled, without having to make significant material investments. While this chapter examines *what* has been happening at the state level, the next chapter examines *why* these actions have taken place in certain states rather than in others.

## CHAPTER 5

### SOCIAL MOVEMENT OR POVERTY POLITICS?

We've got pockets of persistent poverty in our society, which I refuse to declare defeat . . . And so one of things that we're trying to do is to encourage a faith-based initiative to spread its wings all across America, to be able to capture this great compassionate spirit.

President George W. Bush  
March 18, 2002

#### **Introduction**

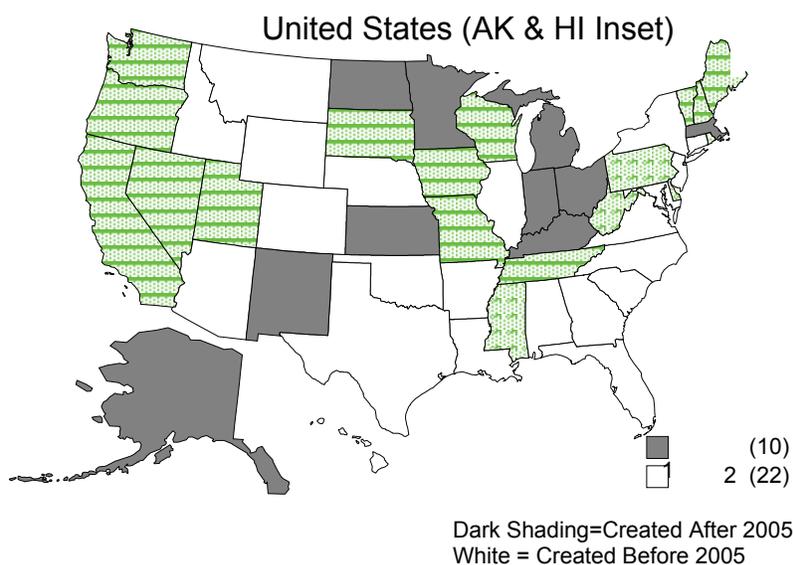
As discussed in the previous chapter, states have embraced the faith-based initiative in a variety of ways. In this chapter I examine the causal reasons underlying three types of state implementation: creation of the administrative of faith-based liaison (FBL) positions, establishment Offices of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCIs), and legislative changes. Each of these activities encourages greater participation by religious groups in the social service sector. To date, the most common of these measures has been the creation of the position of faith-based liaison. As of 2005, 34 states<sup>39</sup> had created such positions (see Figure 3) and 16 states had created Offices of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. In addition, 26 states passed a total of 162 laws between 1996 and 2004. I argue that the most important aspect of each type of practice is not the actual change to social service delivery or poverty that each creates, but that it

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<sup>39</sup> This includes Washington D.C., which is referred to as a state for convenience. Data for Washington D.C. are included in the qualitative, but not the quantitative, analysis. After they received Compassion Capital Fund grants, Nebraska and Montana created positions that function as the de facto liaisons for those states. California and Utah had FBLs, but do not currently have anyone assigned as an FBL.

alters the current normative relationship between religion and politics, creating an environment that is more friendly to religion and integrated into government and potential new political alliances for the evangelical movement.

**FIGURE 3: States with Faith-Based Liaisons, by Time of Creation of Position**



In this chapter I examine which state level social movement, political, demographic, and socio-economic factors increase the likelihood of implementation for these three faith-based practices. I find that the most important fact in determining whether or not a state pursues any of these activities is the strength of the evangelical movement within a state. The influence of the evangelical movement is seen easily at all levels of government, with movement actors enthusiastically pursuing the inclusion of religion as an integral part of public policy and political life (Bartkowski and Regis 2003). In particular the evangelical movement has grown in power and prominence, by increasing its influence within the Republican Party, and by pressing a variety of public

policy issues that further its goal of making a permanent place for religion within government (Conger and Green 2002; Green, Guth, and Wilcox 1998; Green, Rozell, and Wilcox 2003; Kniss and Burns 2004). I argue that the primary importance of the faith-based initiative is that it helps the movement in achieving this goal (Formicola et al. 2003). Therefore, while the rhetoric surrounding the initiative is about solving problems of poverty, the function is, in fact, otherwise. Once in place, these liaisons and policies create something new in state government: a political infrastructure for religion.

### **Theoretical Background and Hypotheses**

This chapter focuses on three types of state implementation of the faith-based initiative: creation of faith-based liaison positions, state creation of OFBCIS, and the number of legislative changes made at the state level. I focused on these divergent policy activities for two reasons. First, while both activities emanate from within state government, they represent activity in different branches of government. Liaisons and OFBCIs are generally administrative appointments made by the governor or other state officials, while legislative activity, of course, comes from state legislative bodies. In addition, these policy innovations offer a ripe area for research that allows theoretical advancement in the areas of social movements and public policy implementation. I draw on literature in each of these areas to develop hypotheses about the social causes of variation in this arena. Research on the faith-based initiative can thus help bridge the gap between these literatures, and will improve our understanding of how social movements and government actions coincide to shape important policy decisions.

*Social Movement Theory*

In the last chapter I found that current state-level implementation of the faith-based initiative is essentially a series of symbolic policies and practices aimed at changing the public discourse and government culture regarding religion and politics. Why would states be creating these changes? One reason may be that the social movement from which they sprang is powerful or intertwined with politics and policy already, and therefore, able to shape new policy and practices. In fact, social movement theory has argued that social movements are able to effect change in social policy through gaining access to political institutions, organizations, and re-framing and shaping perceptions (Andrews 2001; Gamson 1975; Giugini, McAdam, and Tilly 1999; Jenkins and Eckert 1986; McCammon et al. 2001; McAdam and Su 2002; Piven and Cloward 1977; Soule 2004; Soule and Olzak 2004; Tarrow 1998). I find that in conjunction with this, social movements also pursue their goals through symbolic politics, using social policy as a way to achieve new norms in culture, as well as gain new political allies.

In this chapter I examine two ways in which the evangelical movement may be impacting the implementation of faith-based policy and practices. The movement's influence in state politics, through the Republican Party, may lead to increased support for these policies and practices, or previous policy success by the movement may lead to a friendlier policy environment that shows politicians that there is support for more of these types of practices. These possibilities are formalized into several hypotheses in the sections that follow.

*Strength of evangelical movement as a predictor of policy implementation.* In many states, the resurgent evangelical movement has been able to gain insider status, becoming strongly identified with the Republican Party, and gaining an institutional hold on some state governments (Conger and Green 2002; Green et al. 1998; Green et al. 2003). Through a complex array of alliances, Protestant religious conservatives have achieved increasing success and acceptance in the Republican Party, pushing their social agenda of bringing a certain brand of Christianity to bear in public life<sup>40</sup> (Green et al. 1998; Green et al. 2003). The status of this religious constituency as an influential political movement within a state's political structure may have an important impact on whether or not a state creates a liaison position, OFBCI, or legislation – all acts that create an institutionalized link between religious organizations and state government. My first hypothesis is therefore that *the more influential the evangelical movement is in state politics, the more likely a state will be to appoint a faith-based liaison and create legislative changes.*

*Previous success of a movement as a predictor of policy implementation.*

Although many, including Weber (1922), had thought that religion was of declining social significance, recent experiences in the United States, the Middle East, and former Eastern Bloc countries have taught us otherwise (Casanova 1994; Chaves 1994; Parsa 1989; Riesbrodt 1993). Successes by religious social movements in each of these

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<sup>40</sup> While Catholics have become an important part of this alliance, the original group that created and implemented “Charitable Choice” and then the “Faith-Based Initiative” consisted of conservative evangelicals.

countries have led researchers to reconsider religion as a vital source of social change and an important influence in social and political decision-making (Chaves 1994).

The faith-based initiative is but one of several U.S. policy initiatives with religious connections. Another well-defined set of social policies strongly influenced by the resurgent evangelical movement concerns family life in general, and gay marriage in particular. Many states have enacted “defense of marriage” acts, and several states gone much further, creating extremely strict policies regarding gay marriage and related family matters. The presence of these laws and policies can be taken as a measure of the strength of conservative evangelical influence on a state’s public policy.

Based on the idea that a state’s experience in one policy area will influence its action on a related policy initiative in a related area (Soule and Zylan 1997; Zylan and Soule 2000), I hypothesized that states that have implemented other religiously-based social policies will be more likely to implement the faith-based initiative. Specifically, I hypothesize that *states with laws and policies restricting gay marriage and related family matters are more likely to create faith-based liaison positions and offices, and enact legislation.*

This also taps into something that the measure of movement access to the Republican Party does not. Instead of focusing on *access* to the Republican Party, which can be affected by a state’s party structure, looking at previous success taps into the movement’s ability to actually *influence* politics, via either the legislature or the ballot box. Thus, two aspects of resurgent evangelical movement strength are considered with these two measures.

*Policy Implementation Theory*

While research on social movements suggests one set of explanations for why a state would choose to create these faith-based practices, researchers in state and social policy offer another set of theoretical arguments.

*Problem-driven policy implementation.* Policy implementation theory suggests that a state will be more likely to innovate if it feels greater pressure from a problem (Grogan 1994; Nice 1994; Zylan and Soule 2000). Since the faith-based initiative is touted as a way to solve problems of poverty, it would follow that these policies should be adopted where the problem of poverty is greater<sup>41</sup>, or where the financial burden of welfare policies is greater; for example, states that provide more generous coverage through Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) funds could be construed as facing a greater fiscal problem. Therefore hypothesis 3 is that *states with higher poverty rates, and those that provide TANF benefits to a higher proportion of eligible children, are more likely to create a faith-based liaison position or enact faith-based policies.*

*Politics-driven policy implementation.* Along with problem-driven explanations, the social policy literature looks to politics for reasons that states may implement policies (Burstein and Linton 2002; Evans 1996; Grogan 1994; Lin 2000; Nice 1994; Zylan and Soule 2000). Previous research on social policy has shown that policies that favor religion and free-market outcomes are more likely to be favored by states with a majority of Republican voters (Nice 1994; Zylan and Soule 2000). The faith-based initiative can be construed as meeting both of these criteria, and so its implementation may be affected

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<sup>41</sup> While I include poverty rates as a theoretically relevant variable, it is also important as a control variable.

by the strength of Republican presence in a state. Hypothesis 4 is that *states in which the majority of votes cast for President are Republican will be more likely to appoint a faith-based liaison*. It is important to view this variable in conjunction with the social movement variables to parse out whether the implementation of faith-based practices is due simply to politics within the state, or whether there is something else occurring related to the evangelical movement strength within a state; these relationships are examined below.

#### *New Issues*

Finally, previous research on social policy does not address some of the issues raised by the faith-based initiative. Unlike most policy initiatives, the faith-based initiative was enacted without clear goals, regulatory environment, or implementation practices. The faith-based initiative is also essentially a religious policy, something that has yet to be studied in the policy literature. Finally, previous research on policy implementation often fails to examine the *overall* influence of politics, social movements, and state policy. These issues are explored here.

### **Data and Methods**

#### *Variables of Theoretical Interest*

To test the foregoing hypotheses, measures of indicators for each were created. As previously stated, state implementation of the faith-based initiative can be expected to be affected by a number of factors (see Table 5). Two variables measuring evangelical movement strength at the state level were used. First, the movement literature suggests that the greater the influence of the evangelical movement in state politics, the more

likely a state will be to appoint a FBL; this was quantified using measures developed by Green and others (1998, 2003). Second, the previous policy environment is said to effect the implementation of future policies. Additionally the problem of the effects of poverty was tested with two measures: state poverty rates, and the fiscal burden of welfare programs. Finally, the policy literature suggests that politics can be an important factor in determining state policy adoption, with more conservative states being more likely to appoint FBLs; the proportion of votes for the Republican candidate in the previous presidential election was used to measure this. In addition, three control variables were included: the percentage of the population that is African-American, a dummy variable controlling for post-2004 election implementation, and gross-state product per capita. A detailed account of these variables is found in Chapter 3.

#### *Methods of Analysis*

Two types of analysis were used on these data. First, faith-based liaison position creation was analyzed using discrete time event-history analysis (Allison 1995). Event-history analysis was used to analyze longitudinal data on the dichotomous dependent variable representing whether a state had appointed a liaison in a given year. Next, negative binomial regression was used to analyze the number of laws passed at the state level. Unlike event-history analysis, this does not look at the year a state implemented such policies, but rather the total number of laws passed during the period. Again, more detail on the analysis is found in Chapter 3.

The results that follow assess whether implementation of the faith-based initiative, as expressed by states' creation of faith-based liaison positions and degree of

legislative change, has been the result of efforts to fight poverty – as its supporters claim – or the result of evangelical movement action that may further other aims.

### **Quantitative Results**

Table 5 presents the results of a set of models designed to test the above hypotheses. Models 1 to 6 examine state implementation of faith-based liaisons, while Model 7 examines state implementation of an Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

#### *Effects on Probability of Appointment of Faith-Based Liaisons*

*Strength of evangelical movement.* Model 1 examines the effect of the strength of the evangelical movement in a state on the state's likelihood of creating a faith-based liaison position. According to previous research on social movements (Soule and Olzak 2004; Soule 2004), states with greater social movement strength in state politics should be more likely to implement policies that favor that movement. Therefore, as stated in Hypothesis 1, evangelical movement strength should have an impact on the implementation of a faith-based liaison position. Model 1 bears this out: states with a stronger evangelical movement presence in politics were more likely to appoint faith-based liaisons. Both the variables (testing moderate and strong evangelical movement presence) were significant, confirming that states in which the evangelical movement had made the largest in-roads into state politics were the most likely to create Faith-Based Liaison positions. In fact the log odds of creating a liaison position more than double if there is a strong evangelical movement presence in the state Republican Party.

**TABLE 5: Event History Regression for Probability of State Creating a Faith-Based Liaison Position and/or Office of Faith-Based Community Initiatives (Model 7)**

MODEL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Constant</b>	-3.10*** (.67)	-3.14*** (.60)	.43 (.66)	-7.30*** (1.45)	-3.00*** (.59)	-.07 (2.48)	1.88 (6.33)
<b>Evangelical Social Movement Presence</b>							
Strong Evangelical Movement Presence	1.33* (.65)					1.35* (.66)	2.40** (.96)
Mid-Level Evangelical Movement Presence	.69* (.35)					.36 (.47)	.12 (.80)
<b>Previous Policy Success</b>							
Gay Rights Measures		.54* (.23)				.39+ (.24)	.13 (.33)
<b>Model of Welfare State</b>							
Generosity of Welfare State			-.64*** (.11)			-.60*** (.15)	-.70* (3.26)
<b>Political Variables</b>							
Republican Voting Rates				.09*** (.02)		.02 (.03)	-.05 (.05)
<b>Religion Variables</b>							
% of Population Belonging to black church					1.40** (.51)	.66 (.78)	.96 (1.89)
Model Log Likelihood	.10	.10	.20	.14	.08	.24	.25
<b>Pseudo R<sup>2</sup></b>							
<b>Control Variables</b>							
Gross State Product	.03* (.01)	.03* (.01)	.05* (.02)	.04* (.02)	.03** (.01)	.06*** (.02)	.04 (.07)
Poverty Rate	-.06 (.06)	-.04 (.05)	-.10** (.05)	-.02 (.05)	-.04 (.05)	-.20** (.08)	-.21* (.10)
Time (2005/pre-2005)	2.23*** (.50)	2.11*** (.54)	1.58*** (.54)	1.68*** (.52)	2.12*** (.50)	1.90*** (.60)	2.34** (.63)
%African-American	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	-.02 (.03)	-.04 (.06)

Table 5: Event history regressions for the probability of a state appointing a Faith-Based Liaison for all years (1996-2005), including direct-effects models and a full model. Standard errors are in parentheses. Significance: + p<0.10 \* p<0.05 \*\*p<0.01 \*\*\*p<0.001

*Previous success of movement and influence on ballot box.* Model 2 examines the direct effect of a state policy environment that had already been influenced by the conservative evangelical movement. This variable was significant in the expected direction, consistent with Hypothesis 2: states in which the conservative evangelical movement had previously influenced policy were more likely to appoint a FBL. If a state had extremely conservative anti-gay-marriage policies in place, it increased the log odds of the state appointing a liaison by a factor of two and a half. The nature of both of the policies examined suggests that it is not just any religion that is making inroads; it is a certain brand of evangelical religion that is seeking, and achieving, a role in state policies and politics.

*Problem-driven.* While Models 1 and 2 tested the theories put forth in the social movements literature, Models 3 and 4 tested theories found in the policy literature. First, Model 3 tested whether indicators of a greater problem with poverty – a higher poverty rate or higher TANF coverage – increased the likelihood that a state would appoint a faith-based liaison. Unlike the models that examined the movement literature, this hypothesis did not find support in the model: poverty rates were not found to predict whether a state would create a FBL position. Results for poverty rates were significant in none of the models, except the nested models, when poverty was significant – but in a direction *opposite* to that predicted. Additionally, in Model 4, while the policy literature suggests that states where the welfare burden is greatest the likelihood of appointing liaisons should be greatest, the results suggest the opposite: states with a lower welfare burden were *more* likely to appoint faith-based liaisons. Together, these findings provide

little support for the proposition that creating liaison positions is a response to problems of poverty or the fiscal burden of welfare coverage.

*Politics-driven.* Model 5 examined the effect of political conservatism, measured by whether a majority of voters in the state voted for a Republican candidate in the previous presidential election. In this model, a majority Republican vote had a significant and positive impact: states with a Republican majority in the previous presidential election were significantly more likely to appoint liaisons, consistent with Hypothesis 5. However, this effect was small and dropped out of the two final models when the evangelical movement variables were included. So while there is some support for the argument made in the policy literature that states with more conservative voting populations are more likely to adopt policies that are religious in nature and allow greater “free-market” access, the final models suggest that this variable is not significant when taking specific social movement strength into account.<sup>42</sup>

*Social movements, or politics and poverty?* Finally, Model 6 is the full model, incorporating all the variables tested in the direct models. First, the Green variable representing the strongest evangelical movement influence on the Republican Party was significant. However, the medium-level evangelical movement influence was not significant. This indicates that it is not just evangelical presence in politics, but strong, effective presence, where players are able to enact policies that strongly favor their goals that increases the likelihood of liaisons being appointed.

I also included the three variables from the policy literature theory in this model.

First, Republican voting rates were no longer significant. Again, this indicates that it is not just politics per se, but ability of the evangelical movement to alter the policy environment, that makes creating these positions more likely. From the poverty standpoint, the TANF coverage measure remained significant, though again in the unexpected direction. This further supported the findings of the direct-effects models – namely that a state’s problem of poverty or welfare spending were not significant predictors of faith-based initiative implementation, while having a previous policy climate friendly towards the resurgent evangelical movement was significant.

The results of Model 6 bolster the conclusions made from the direct effects models: states in which the resurgent evangelical movement was the most influential, either creating previous legislative changes reflecting their religious ideals, or becoming part of the state party were the most likely to create liaisons positions. In both the direct-effects and full models, the presence of strong evangelical movement influence on state politics more than doubled the log odds of a liaison being appointed in that state. Thus, it appears that, through the faith-based initiative, the resurgent evangelical movement is beginning to achieve its goal of creating a permanent place for religion within state government, altering the norm of what the church/state relationship looks like, and creating room for new policies and politics that further this process.

*Offices of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.*

Model 7 is the version of the full model that looks at state Offices of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives rather than liaisons. The variables and direct-effects models

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<sup>42</sup> However, while it was not significant over time, liaisons were created by twice as many Republican (22)

used were the same as those described above for FBL appointment; results were positive and significant as for the FBL models. The results for the full model, Model 7, were also the same as those for liaisons. States with a high evangelical movement presence in the Republican Party were the most likely to create state OFBCIs. In addition, states with a strong evangelical movement were even more likely to create OFBCIs than appoint FBLs. That means that the states most likely to have created OFBCIs – which have greater institutional structure, number of employees, and possible longevity than liaison positions – were those in which the evangelical movement had also made the greatest inroads into state party politics. Therefore, increasing institutionalization seems the most likely in states where evangelical political power is already the norm.

#### *Number of Laws at the State Level*

While the event-history analysis of faith-based liaison appointments lends little support to the idea that the initiative is a response to social service needs and problems of poverty, and clearly supports the arguments put forth in the social movements literature, appointment of a faith-based liaison or creation of an OFBCI, are not the only types of implementation of the initiative at the state level. Are the results the same for legislative impact? Is legislative implementation susceptible to the same factors? To examine this, I tested the effect of the same variables on the number of legislative changes made at the state level. Table 6 shows these results, which are remarkably similar to those in Table 5. Especially interesting are the results regarding evangelical strength in a state, measures of state welfare coverage, and the state political environment. Again, it is clear that

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as Democratic (11) governors, thus adding further qualitative evidence to support this hypothesis.

implementation of the faith-based initiative was significantly more likely in states with stronger evangelical movement strength and less of a welfare burden. While the previous policy environment is not a significant predictor of the overall legislative implementation, this may be because the variable developed by Green and others (1998, 2003) accounts for the access movement activists have within state politics. Therefore, it may be able to better predict legislative changes since it measures access to state politics, rather than movement strength, and policy change can result from ballot initiatives – which are more responsive to on-the-ground, bottom-up movement activity – as well as legislation.

Analyzing only one type of implementation does not reveal the full picture. Where the influence is coming from affects the types of changes that are being made. This finding may be important not only for social movement and public policy theory, but also for social movement activists who need to know where to focus their limited resources.

Regardless of the type of implementation, I argue that, together, these findings paint a picture of reasons for implementation of the faith-based initiative that are very different from those put forth by supporters – this is not a policy about solving the problem of poverty, but is about institutionalizing religious actors in the public sphere.

### **Conclusion**

I found that, contrary to the rhetoric promulgated by supporters of the faith-based initiative, appointing a faith-based liaison is not about ameliorating poverty by engaging new faith-based organizations in the provision of social services (Olasky 1997; Sherman 1999). Regardless of the type of state implementation, variables measuring poverty and

**TABLE 6: Negative Binomial Regression Laws and Overall Implementation of the Faith-Based Initiative**

	<b>FBLs</b>	<b>Laws</b>
<b><u>Constant</u></b>	-4.46 (3.40)	-2.32 (1.94)
<b><i>Conservative Social Movement Presence</i></b>		
Strong Christian Right Rating in State	1.88* (.77)	1.04* (.45)
Medium Christian Right Rating in State	1.36* (.61)	.53 (.38)
<b><i>Previous Policy Success</i></b>		
Anti-Gay Marriage and Family Policies	.09 (.20)	.07 (.11)
<b><i>Political Variable</i></b>		
Republican Voter Rates	.03 (.04)	.02 (.03)
<b><i>Welfare Burden</i></b>		
% of Population Eligible and Covered by TANF	.06 (.05)	-1.35 (1.22)
<b><i>Race and Religion Variable</i></b>		
% of Population Belonging to Black Church	-3.12 (1.70)	-1.08 (.95)
Model Log Likelihood <b><i>Pseudo R<sup>2</sup></i></b>	.13	.10
<b><i>Control Variables</i></b>		
Gross State Product	-.002 (.05)	.03 (.03)
Poverty Rate	-.11 (.10)	.04 (.06)
% African-American	.07 (.05)	.02 (.03)

Table 6: Negative binomial regression of the log number of laws implemented in a state and overall implementation of the Initiative through FBLs and laws. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

Significance: +=.10 level      \*=.05 level      \*\*=.01 level      \*\*\*=.001

welfare burden are not significant in the predicted direction. Instead, the presence of the evangelical movement within state politics is significantly and positively related to a state's implementation of these policies and practices. Combined with my previous descriptive findings – that these efforts are generally in the symbolic realm, and not about generating new funds or new opportunities for help – these results indicate that implementing these policies is more about politics and creating a greater symbolic role for religion in the public sphere, and less about improving social services and helping the less fortunate. Instead of these policies being created in response to a problem, these findings indicate that these faith-based practices are created in response to an imagined problem of discrimination against faith-based groups and the lack of religious presence within state politics.

The liaison positions and legislative changes did not come about by accident, but were created in states in which the conservative evangelical movement had greater influence. By networking, conferences aimed at faith-based groups, and in rare instances actually funding these groups, faith-based liaisons are becoming part of a movement constituency that has already impacted government and policy in important ways. Once appointed, these liaisons become part of the structure of state politics, essentially institutionalizing a religious actor in state government (Abbott 1988; Bartkowski and Regis 2003:6). As stated in the previous chapter, it is important to note here that the vast majority of liaisons were religious actors themselves; a quarter of the liaisons interviewed were pastors of religious congregations, an additional nine were active either formal or informal capacities at their churches, and two-thirds had some type of experience

working with faith-based organizations. In addition, most of the liaisons I spoke with said they were motivated to become a liaison by their own religious beliefs and feelings.

While the appointment of religious actors to the majority of these positions is not surprising, it is important to realize that as religious actors they come with specific religious connections and beliefs. Specifically, since they are the main conduits of information to the faith community, the fact that they have stronger ties to some religious groups than to others means that the notion that all groups have the same access to the information seems dubious. Their presence as state actors, even in an informational capacity, influences state budget decision-making, and so could have important consequences over time. While the strength of, and strategies taken, by liaisons varies greatly, they almost all work to systematically include greater numbers of religious groups in performing social services with state dollars. In one state the liaison even suggested creating an “affirmative action” type of program that would give faith-based organizations a certain percentage of government contracts. The strong social networks that these liaisons have with certain religious groups means that there is a distinct possibility that the more-connected groups might have better access to available funds, as they already clearly have better access to information about available funds. And funds may become more available; evidence from a recent study showed that at the federal level the share of grants awarded to faith-based groups increased in six federal agencies between 2002 and 2004 (Montiel and Ragan 2006). These liaisons are also (wittingly or unwittingly) helping to create a new influence for the conservative evangelical movement and various religious groups. In conjunction with the numerous legislative measures

passed, these changes represent a novel and dramatic change in the way religion functions in state government. Instead of being a separate entity, it is an incorporated entity.

This blending of religion and state activity is only one part of the strategy of the evangelical movement to increase the role of religion in politics. Recent Supreme Court decisions and appointments suggest a move toward greater openness to religion in public life, and a stronger influence on the Court by conservative religious actors. In addition, the subtle narrative behind the Compassion Capital Fund and proposed religious hiring initiatives is that religious groups were discriminated against because of church/state separation doctrine, and this must now be changed. These legal, legislative, and administrative changes all show a growing trend, at all levels of government, toward creating a permanent role for religion within government, law, and policy.

Symbolic politics argue that the importance of state policy is what it represents (Brysk 1995, Edelman 1964, 1971). By creating policies and practices that present religion as a legitimate and necessary partner with government the faith-based initiative is meeting the goal of the evangelical movement of bringing religion back into the public sphere. That these liaisons and legislative changes were more likely to be created in states where problems associated with poverty and welfare were less pronounced only further supports the idea that, at the state level, this initiative is not primarily a response to persistent problems of poverty. Therefore, perhaps the most important consequences of these new laws and positions is the cultural change they represent, a move towards acknowledging and supporting a greater role for religion in the political sphere.

## CHAPTER 6

### POLITICAL INSTRUMENTS OR INSTRUMENTS OF CHANGE?

#### Introduction

In the introduction I argued that the impetus behind the state implementation of the faith-based initiative was two-fold. First, state faith-based policies and practices are part of the evangelical movement's greater goal of chipping away at church/state separation. Second, because these policies and practices reframe and reshape the church/state relationship, they have the potential to create new political allies for the evangelical movement. In this chapter I focus on two ways that these policies can create new political allies in the black religious community. First, of the 34 states that had created of faith-based liaison positions, 15 had appointed African-Americans to the positions; nine of these liaisons were pastors in their communities. I also found that states offered government-funded faith-based conferences that relied on cultural cues used in black religious ceremonies (Pattillo-McCoy 1998); these had the clear goal of aligning segments of the black religious population with the faith-based initiative.

I find that these liaisons and conferences have begun to build a new political and social movement base for a policy that did not come from within those religious or political circles. I argue that rather than this initiative being about a concentrated new effort to help the poor and needy, it represents a multi-layered attempt to create new political allies for faith-based policies in the black religious community; the ultimate

result of this may well be that religion becomes a central part of government – with religious leaders from the black church becoming movement activists.

This potential support for the faith-based initiative from black churches has two sources. First, African-American churches have been more likely than others to have previously partnered with government (Chaves 1999). Second, they are the closest to white evangelicals in their belief that religion should play a greater role in politics and public life (Pew 2001), with 59 percent of African-Americans believing that religion should play a greater role in American politics (Pew 2000); in fact, most black Americans felt that that religion and government should not be separated, but should be close in their relationship. Together these indicate the potential for an early base of support for faith-based initiatives from the black church, and political leaders and policy-makers could use the faith-based initiative as an instrumental political tool to attempt to change the dynamics between religion and politics in the black church (Harris 1999, 2001; Smith and Harris 2005).

### **Race, Politics, and the Faith-Based Initiative**

The cornerstone of the black community has consistently been the church (Frazier 1964; Harris 1999; Lincoln 1974, 1999; Lincoln and Mamayia 1990; Paris 1991; Walsh 2001). As the center of the Civil Rights Movement (Jenkins and Eckert 1986; McAdam 1982; Morris 1984) and where most black political leaders get their start (Harris 1999; Paris 1991), the church has been not just the spiritual, but also the political, center of the black community, working to create new social policy focused on structural changes such

as ending legal segregation and ensuring voting rights (Calhoun-Brown 1996; McClerking and McDaniel 2005).

Importantly, the faith-based initiative is a different type of social policy than that generally advocated in black church politics (Harris 2001; McRoberts 2006; Walsh 2001). Instead of focusing on social justice and structural concerns, it focuses on individual-level religious salvation to solve social problems (Olasky 1997). While this would mark a change in focus of social policy in the black church, the faith-based initiative does align with what recent opinion polls have shown, that black Americans are very religious and believe that religion should play a greater role in social policy and politics (Pew 2000, 2001, 2003). This shift means that unlike the traditional alliance between religion and politics in the black community, supporters of the faith-based initiative have sought out not just mainstream and liberal denominations, which had previously focused on social service and political activism aimed at social institutions and structures, but also conservative black churches that have focused on “morality politics” (Harris 2001; Smith and Harris 2005), with this focus closely allying them with the white evangelical movement. However, recent opinion polls have shown that it is not just in conservative black congregations that one finds views similar to those of white evangelicals on issues such as gay marriage and the relationship between religion and politics. Instead, African-Americans of all religious backgrounds tend to have conservative views on these issues, thus creating the potential for conservative political and movement leaders to use these policies to create political allies in African-American churches and religious actors (Pew 2000, 2001, 2003). This is what Drew Smith (2005)

calls the “divide and conquer” strategy of the Republican Party: the strategic use of policies such as the faith-based initiative are used to “chip away at certain segments of the black vote” – which has traditionally been Democratic – to gain a majority for the Republican Party. There are sufficient similarities between black religious actors and the white evangelical movement in their views of religion, politics, and morality to lead to an alliance of sorts.<sup>43</sup>

This instrumental political potential of the faith-based initiative was seen early on by researchers, who found that the actions of faith-based initiative advocates indicated that they were using the initiative for political reasons, rather than the stated reasons of helping the poor and needy (Walsh 2001). For example, in 1996, then-Governor George W. Bush of Texas became the most vocal advocate of the faith-based initiative, and made Texas the state with the greatest amount of activity surrounding the initiative. One segment of the population from whom Governor Bush hoped to gain support was the black conservative religious community. In his first faith-based meeting, Bush noticeably excluded most of the black religious leaders in Texas, not inviting those from the two largest traditionally African-American denominations, in favor of a select group of conservative black religious leaders (Smith and Harris 2005:194)

This attempt at aligning certain segments of the black religious vote with the faith-based initiative was met with cries of outrage from the excluded groups, which had traditionally been the most active in providing social service. Learning from this

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<sup>43</sup> In addition, seeing this occur Democrats in state office may also sue the faith-based initiative conferences and liaisons to help secure this voting block.

experience, as president, Bush reached out to a wider segment of black religious groups, including those denominations originally excluded (Smith and Harris 2005:195-196). Since then, state politicians have tried to engage the black church and gain support for the faith-based initiative two ways: first, by creating faith-based conferences that mimic black religious ceremonies and political events, and second, by appointing black pastors as faith-based liaisons.

*Race and the Role of Religion in Public Life*

In several recent opinion polls (Pew 2000, 2001, 2003) African-Americans report seeing religion as crucial to public life. This view of religion as integral to politics and to successful political leadership is very similar to that of white evangelicals; both groups view religion as necessary to successful political leadership and to the well-being of civic society. In addition, the two groups also score closely on variables related to the role that religion should play in social services, seeing faith as a necessary component to solving social ills such as poverty and addiction. However, here the similarities tend to end. While white evangelicals see the road to success, happiness, and well-being through individual salvation, African-Americans tend to believe that there are structural causes of poverty, rather than only individual-level causes (Harris 2001; Regenerus, Sikkink, and Smith 1999; Smith and Harris 2005). In the past this difference has led the vast majority of African-Americans to side with the Democratic Party rather than the Republican Party, citing the Democrats as better able to see that there are structural barriers to full participation in the economy, rather than only individual-level reasons (Harris 2001; Smith and Harris 2005).

*Race and Party Politics*

However, the black religious community is not a single entity and there has been a shift over the last few presidential elections that has given the Republican Party hope that there is room to maneuver to gain a larger segment of the black vote. In the 2000 presidential election the Republican Party received 8 percent of the black vote; in the 2004 election this number had grown to 11 percent. While this shift may seem small, what is more important is the shift in swing states, such as Ohio where Bush got 16 percent of the black vote (Hutchinson 2006). While it is unlikely that all of the shift is the result of religion, there is reason to suspect that the increasing presence of religion in public policy fostered by the Bush administration, along with the Republican Party's appeals to religion and morality, has had a positive impact on the number of black voters now voting for the Republican Party. For example, Kerry received 20 percent less support among black conservative evangelicals than Gore did in 2000 (Hutchinson 2006). This potential to chip away at Democratic support in the black community has led some to suggest that the Republicans are using morality politics to not only firm their base, but also to increase support among blacks, conservative Hispanics and Jews, all groups that see the moral compass of the country as going in the wrong direction. I argue that the faith-based initiative is one type of policy originating from evangelicals within the Republican Party that can be used to appeal to certain segments of the black religious population to make an alliance that may at first seem to be a strange one.

A policy environment that appeals to the morality politics of the black religious community may also be more likely to create other social policies that favor the inter-

mingling of religion and politics. The faith-based initiative is not the only policy created by Republicans and the evangelical movement within that party to try to tap into the conservative black vote. In particular, political analysts have also argued that the Republican Party hoped that policies aimed at gay marriage and family would appeal not only to conservative African-Americans, but to all African-Americans who share with conservative evangelicals similar beliefs about homosexuality (Hutchinson 2004; Pew 2000). The faith-based initiative and gay marriage policies may be part of an overarching political strategy being used to move black religious voters away from the Democratic Party and toward the Republican Party, and to use social problems to focus on individuals and morality politics.

### **Building Alliances with Faith-Based Liaisons and Conferences**

I found two distinct ways that the black church was being engaged at the state level: faith-based conferences were aimed at the black religious community, and African-American religious actors were appointed as faith-based liaisons.

#### *Faith-Based Initiative Conferences as Black Religious Events*

While most people have focused on how religion blurs either legal or institutional boundaries, there has rarely been discussion of how states create religion through cultural means. However, once one enters a conference on faith-based initiatives it is no longer much of a surprise to think of the state as an actor in the cultural formation of religion. I found that states were creating religious events through their sponsorship of information-based conferences aimed at religious leaders, especially those in the African-American community. In this section, I explore this topic by focusing on four such events: two in

Arizona, one in New Jersey and one in Washington D.C.. I found that while the stated intention of these events was to bring information and awareness to faith-based leaders across the country, what actually happened was the generation of religion. These events moved from a strictly informative setting into a religious setting by using specific religious cues to signal to their mainly African-American audiences that, while these were government sponsored events, religion was not only accepted and welcome as part of the event, it *was* the event.

In her work on black churches and political activities, Pattillo-McCoy (1998) found that at political events in the black community, church leaders relied on cultural cues that were identical to those used in black church ceremonies, arguing that “black church culture constitutes a common language that motivates social action” (Pattillo-McCoy 1998:768). How do these informational conferences turn into events that look more like church services than policy conferences? I argue that there are two ways that these conferences act to generate religion: religious exhortations are used by the leaders of the conference to engage the audience and inspire religious responses, and religious expression in the small groups at the conferences is encouraged. Through these two types of activities, these conferences become more like a religious or political event held at an African-American church than a state policy conference.

*Religious exhortations by leaders.* The religious nature of the conferences was not hidden. “I am so proud to be in a room with so many religious fanatics,” said Jim Towey, at the White House Conference on Faith-Based Initiatives in June, 2004. While each conference included a short discussion of the importance of the separation of church

and state, and reminders that religious groups could not use funds for religious purposes, the tone of the meetings soon changed from secular or generically religious, to a religious script readily found at black congregations across America. This was especially apparent at the conferences held in Washington D.C. and New Jersey, and to a somewhat lesser degree at the conference in Phoenix, Arizona.

The majority of this religious fervor was expressed by the leaders of the conferences, with many of them making not only overt references to religion, but overt references to church, Jesus, and being saved. At the conference in New Jersey there were repeated attempts on the part of the conference organizer to create a sense of religious feeling, especially fervor from the crowd. However, it was not until the keynote speaker, an African-American pastor at a local congregation, gave his talk during lunch that the event was transformed. He started his talk by stating, "People of faith can move mountains," and telling them that "if God hasn't called you to do this, then go home." The pastor soon had most of the room standing on its feet proclaiming their feelings. When he was done, the organizer came back up onstage and declared that what was needed at the conference was to "get some churchin' up in here." Once that happened, the tone of the conference changed from one of passivity to one of active engagement and religious proclamations.

*Group involvement and religious generation.* While the leaders of the conferences were integral in setting the tone that was welcoming to religious exhortations, the conference attendees were actively involved in maintaining that tone. Once the leaders began, the audience soon realized that not only was audience

participation acceptable, it was expected. Using religious cues common in black church celebration, such as a call and response, and spontaneous religious proclamations (Pattillo-McCoy 1998), the audience was clearly attuned to this style of religious and political participation.

At the three conferences at which the majority of participants were African-American, the audience members created an atmosphere in which religion was integral to the discussion. For example, while President Bush was speaking at the White House conference, the women at my table began standing up around the table, waving their arms, and proclaiming their support for the President. This began with one woman standing, but soon the other four women at the table joined her; once standing, the women called out phrases such as “Praise Jesus!” or “Amen!” when the President made a statement that resonated with their religious beliefs. Similar scenes were taking place throughout the ballroom. Instead of being passive recipients of the speakers’ messages, the audience members became active participants; cues found in black church ceremonies created an audience-wide activism and fervor over the faith-based initiative. While most audiences at public policy conferences may have a hard time keeping their attention focused on what is being said, these audience members were excited and integral to the conference, transforming the conference from one that informed the public about a social policy, to one that generated religion using state funds.

*Other audiences.* Interestingly, while at three of the four conferences I attended had a majority of African-American participants, this was noticeably not the case at one of the Arizona conferences (Tucson). Instead, most participants were white – and the

conference contained virtually none of the aspects of black religious events that occurred in the other three conferences. This divergence warrants attention: it appears that in aiming their conferences at particular audiences, the conference organizers are well aware of their potential impact on the religious communities with which they are working. Thus, their use of black religious cues was specifically to generate new political actions and actors related to faith-based policy.

*Faith-Based Liaisons and Ties with the Black Religious Community*

Perhaps the clearest example of states using the faith-based initiative to court black voters is the appointment of faith-based liaisons with strong ties to the black religious community. In 15 of the 34 states with FBLs, the liaison was a leader in the black religious community, with 9 being pastors of various denominations. In other words, a quarter of all state liaisons had extensive professional connections to the black religious communities in their states. Of the other six black liaisons, four had other informal church leadership affiliations. Therefore, 13 liaisons – over a third of the total – were strongly connected to a specific religious community: the black church. And, of course, these liaisons brought with them the connections to make the initiative known in their communities.

While many of the faith-based liaisons petitioned for the appointment, a tension exists between their motivations and the motivations of those who appointed them. The FBLs are clearly inspired to do what they can to bring new groups into the fold and create excitement about the faith-based initiative. As one FBL<sup>44</sup> told me when discussing his

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<sup>44</sup> FBL interview I5.

reasons for becoming a liaison, “It was both a personal and professional component,” stating that he had “been working with [The Black Counsel of Clergy] for like the last 4 or 5 years [and] I’ve helped a couple create community development organizations.” Another liaison<sup>45</sup>, who was a pastor in his local community, took it upon himself to drive his own van across the state, reaching out to various religious groups to become involved in faith-based social services. Finally, another<sup>46</sup> said, “When we go out ... we go and we talk to churches ... tell them I need you to provide those 30 hours of service you know ... we do things based on faith, well faith is so you give me that service to make the organization run well.”

However, in conjunction with this activity, a level of frustration was also apparent. In many of the states with an African-American liaison there was little or no institutional or financial support for the initiative. There were very few resources being offered to the liaisons, and little in the way of guidance on how to carry out the task they had been given; most states merely created the position and then left the FBLs to define and carry out their task. As one liaison<sup>47</sup>, who had been a pastor in his community for over 40 years but was new to the job as liaison, told me, “I’m not really sure what I’m supposed to be doing. I’ve been given this job and now I have to find out.” Again, frustration about the lack of commitment to the initiative at all levels of government often ensued. Even though many of the liaisons wanted the position, there is an awareness amongst some that their appointment was not just about their own desire to take the

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<sup>45</sup> FBL interview I30.

<sup>46</sup> FBL interview I1.

<sup>47</sup> FBL interview I28.

position. So while the liaisons themselves try to do the best they can with the little resources they have, this does not mean that their political importance to actors favoring the initiative is diminished. Thus, FBLs in these circumstances become cheerleaders for an initiative with little or no substance, creating waves of excitement in their communities, which they see as being met with disappointment on the part of many religious groups.

This is due in large part to the fact that, while the federal and many state and local governments have created a variety of faith-based practices, few funds have been allocated to give to religious groups to provide social services. Since 1996, 34 states have created faith-based liaison positions, and 16 states have conducted conferences regarding the initiative; however, only three states have allocated any substantial amount of funding to state Offices of Faith-based and Community Initiatives. This lack of financial and institutional support has meant that while there was original support for the initiative from all segments of the black religious community, there has since been frustration among those who see the initiative's potential as being lost to politics, while community members in need are not receiving any new assistance as a result of either state or federal policies. The most common question from liaisons with whom I spoke clearly illustrates this – “Where's the money?”

This has had the unfortunate consequence of creating hope among various congregations regarding the potential to get funds to provide social services, which is then dashed by the stark reality that there are few funds available, and that the competition for these funds is often beyond their means or expertise. So, while the black

religious community at large gets the information that this is a great and potential windfall, and that religion is becoming a larger part of public life, the churches and liaisons themselves are faced with the fact that most of the walk does not match the talk. Therefore, the appointment of these pastors and black religious leaders to liaison positions may best be seen as a political tool to show the black community that the state wants more black churches involved in social services, since in reality little concrete is being done about funding these social services.

### **Conclusion: Race, Religion, and Politics**

Researchers in public policy have long found that policy creates new politics and new political activists (Edelman 1965, 1971; Lowi 1964, 1969). I have found that the faith-based initiative, as it is employed at the state level, is clearly reaching out to the black community to create new politics and new political allies. The integration of religious culture into state-sponsored event finds its perfect fit in the faith-based initiative. The use of religious-cultural cues in the faith-based conferences creates a new type of event that at best blurs the line between church and state, and at worst fails to acknowledge that the line even exists.

The activism of the black church in social issues is well known, so it is not surprising that the faith-based initiative has a great deal of support and appeal in the African-American community. Both the cultural cues used in the conferences, as well as the political appointees made, were intended to bring the African-American community in as new political allies for the initiative and its supporters. The unstated consequence may be either a shift in voting patterns toward the Republican Party. Regardless, the

reasons behind the initiative's implementation clearly do not point to the reasons stated by its supporters, bringing new help to the poor and needed. Instead, it does not appear that inclusion of the black religious community has resulted in real action and funding to help the poor and needy. Rather, these actors and conferences create a series of symbolic practices that are being used to create a support base for the initiative and its political allies.

**CHAPTER 7**  
**RELIGION, POLICY, AND POLITICS: INSTITUTIONALIZING RELIGION**  
**WITHIN STATE GOVERNMENT**

Since the original implementation of the faith-based initiative in 1996, neither the greatest fears of its opponents nor the greatest hopes of its supporters have been realized. The “armies of compassion” have yet to take over for government agencies, and the poor and needy to whom they were supposed to offer help are still seeking services and aid. However, the greatest fears of the opposition – rampant proselytizing and religious mandates – have not taken hold either. The changes that are occurring are more subtle, but they are no less important. Rather than ushering in major new funding for state-run social services, I found that the faith-based initiative has been implemented through an array of symbolic policies geared to recruiting political allies and changing the role of religion within government. A new role for religion in state government has been created, one that has not been seen before, and one that grants religious groups a new place at the political table, chipping away at the traditional separation of church and state.

The overall impact of the faith-based initiative may best be measured not in dollars and cents, but in the effects of a new role for religion and a new ally for the evangelical movement. Early social policy theorists were the first to argue that policy creates new politics and new political allies (Edelman 1964, 1971; Lowi 1969). These new allegiances were not necessarily due to the material resources generated by new policies, but by what the policies represent. As Edelman argued, the myths of life that are at least partially generated by political leaders and the social policies they create

“permit men to live in a world in which the causes are simple and neat and the remedies are apparent” (Edelman 1971:83). The myth created by the faith-based initiative was that through just adding a dose of religion the social problems of addiction and poverty could be solved. Whether this was true or not did not matter. The empirical reality on which the policies are based need not be verifiable; the stories on which they are based are what is truly important. Using symbols and stories to create faith-based policies – policies that argue that by adding religion to government we can solve social problems – new political myths were created, and new political realities generated. New faith-based policies generate new political allies and new bureaucracies, altering the political environment and institutions.

I argue that this process of symbolic policy implementation that furthers evangelical movement goals and faith-based politics is occurring on several fronts. First, the initiative has created within state governments a new, and perhaps privileged, role for religious groups. Second, it has generated new political actors within the black church, and used faith-based conferences with religious cues found in the black church as political and social movement launching pads. And finally, the initiative has made one of the most crucial public policy changes to date in church/state relations, by installing religious actors as government officials.

Church/state relations in the United States have never been without controversy. Whether secularists feel the influence of religion is too great, or religious activists believe their voices are ignored, a variety of groups have sought to create a norm and interpretation that best suits their view of an appropriate relationship. Too much religion

– or religion of the wrong kind – is not acceptable, but no religion of any kind is often just as unacceptable. However, in a nation that embraces religious pluralism, any dramatic shift in the fluid mixture of religion, politics, and money in public life creates the potential for new problems, new cries of outrage, and new sources of mistrust among religious groups. Why would a state adopt a policy that has the potential to stir up these problems? What are the underlying causes that drive these new policies, positions and activities?

### **What Is Happening?**

#### *Institutionalization of Religion at the State Level*

State implementation of the faith-based initiative has institutionalized religion in three ways: it has created faith-based liaison (FBL) positions, changed legislation to increase the number of faith-based organizations (FBOs) active in the social service sector, and altered the church/state relationship by conducting state-sponsored conferences that blend religion and state in a cultural way.

*Faith-based liaisons.* The creation of the position of faith-based liaison is not only the most common, but perhaps also the most important, way that states have implemented the faith-based initiative. Government infrastructure has been altered by these positions, which create a new role for religion, with policy and political ramifications. This change potentially alters not only the political climate within government, but other social institutions that come into contact with state politics and government. State liaisons act as conduits between religious groups and government agencies, acting on the underlying – and generally false, or at least unproven –

assumption that religious groups are categorically better than secular groups at performing social services. Whether liaisons see their positions as the result of underlying political motivations or not, they bring with them their own religious beliefs and connections; intentionally or not, they alter the political landscape by controlling who gets information and assistance in gaining access to government funding. Most liaisons do not see this as an unfair advantage, since they believe that their own groups have been discriminated against in the past; however, their actions create the potential for religious groups, particularly those with which they are affiliated, to gain an advantage over secular social service agencies that do not have a religious partner. Finally, regardless of what they are actively *doing* to change the social service climate, what they *represent* is perhaps the most important function of faith-based liaisons. Until the creation of these positions, there were no religious actors within government. The fact that they explicitly represent faith-based groups and work to increase the presence of such groups in government affairs is a new encroachment of religion into politics, regardless of the particular faith of the liaisons. Their existence alone is enough. They are the embodiment of what President Bush sees as the new direction for church/state relations, in which cooperation rather than separation is the norm.

*Legislation.* While appointment of liaisons may be the most common method of implementation of the faith-based initiative, the legislative changes that have taken place at the state level are also a significant departure from the traditional model of church/state separation. A variety of legislative changes encourage new faith-based groups to provide social services, and create an environment that may give these groups a privileged

position by placing their members on advisory boards. These permanent changes to state law create another level of cooperation, rather than separation, between religion and government. They set a new place at the government table for faith-based organizations – one that is unregulated, and not clearly necessary.

*Conferences.* Finally, while liaisons and legislative changes alter the administrative and policy landscapes in the states that have adopted them, many of the conferences held as part of the faith-based initiative also alter church/state relations by using state dollars to fund conferences based on black church culture. These conferences embody state sponsorship of the cultural construction of religion. These political events use the trappings of black church services to create a friendly environment in an attempt to gain new supporters for the initiative within the black religious community, appealing to the belief among most religious African-Americans that religion should have a larger role in state politics. However, since the faith-based initiative focuses on making changes in the individual, rather than in the social structure, it is inherently at odds with the black church's traditional view of political and social service action. It seems clear that conference organizers have been using religious elements found in black churches to create a new constituency for the faith-based initiative – as well as a new constituency for the political party that created the initiative.

Even proponents of these conferences now recognize their use as political tools. In his book on the faith-based initiative, David Kuo (2006:1) stated that the White House OFBCI would “hold roundtable events for threatened incumbents with faith and community leaders ... using the aura of our White House power to get a diverse group of

faith and community leaders to a ‘nonpartisan’ event discussing how best to help poor people in their area,” with the specific purpose of getting votes for Republican candidates. In fact, in 19 of 20 races associated with faith-based conferences, the Republican candidate won.

Combined, the liaisons, legislation, and conferences have created an environment that places the importance of the religiosity of the social service over the quality of the service. While religious groups have historically played a crucial role in the delivery of social services in America, making their religious character a factor in decisions about funding and social service provision is something that is new and generally unwarranted.

*Why? Symbolic Politics and the Evangelical Movement*

I began this project with one central question in mind: Why did states implement practices related to the faith-based initiative? The federal government encouraged, but did not require, states to make these changes. However, state actors *did* make significant changes, leading to an integration of religion into government that had not been seen before. Why did states open themselves up to these policy changes? If, as I have found, there was little in the way of new funding to help those in need of social services, what was the purpose? I argue that the underlying reasons for implementation were not necessarily related to the publicly-stated goal or intent of the initiative. Rather, implementation met the instrumental political goals of evangelicals: ensuring a place for religion within state government, and potentially creating new political allies in the black church.

*Evangelical strength.* As discussed in Chapter 3, the first set of variables I found that impacted the likelihood of a state adopting faith-based policies and practices was the current and previous impact of the evangelical movement. Two variables related to this movement were found to significantly increase a state's willingness to appoint faith-based liaisons, create new laws, and generally emphasize the faith-based initiative at the state level. First, states in which the evangelical movement had greater influence within the Republican Party were more likely to create liaison positions and pass greater numbers of faith-based laws. Similarly, previous success of the evangelical movement in the policy arena was a significant predictor of future success with the faith-based movement. Together these factors suggest a situation in which faith-based policy implementation is intimately linked with the strength and power of the evangelical movement. This is perhaps not surprising, since the faith-based movement got its start from within the evangelical movement's elite.

From the start, supporters of the faith-based initiative have argued that their goal was to offer better help to the poor and needy. This is in sharp contrast to the reality of faith-based policy at the state level, which seems much more concerned with creating a permanent government bureaucracy for religion, rather than creating new ways to help those in poverty. Thus, the reality of faith-based policy implementation leaves many questions about the intent of many of its supporters. For example, the lack of substantial new funding streams to social service organizations makes the claimed goals seem dubious at best. And while little progress has been made toward the stated goal of ameliorating poverty, the evangelical movement's underlying goals are being met –

religion is no longer separate from state government and politics, but is becoming a part of them.

*New allies.* As with those in the evangelical movement, the black religious population generally believes that religion and government should have a closer relationship. Religion and religious actors are thought to be crucial elements in a well-run and responsible government. However, black religious actors differ greatly from evangelicals in their view of how to solve social problems, usually taking a structural view of poverty and voting for the Democratic rather than the Republican Party. So how did state political actors hope to win support from the black community for an initiative that focuses on the individual and came from the Republican Party? I found that two tools were used to align black churches with the faith-based initiative.

First, states sponsored faith-based conferences geared to the black religious community. Using cultural cues that are traditionally part of black church ceremonies, state-sponsored faith-based conferences brought religion into government through cultural means. Like the appointment of faith-based liaisons, these conferences represented a new direction for church/state relations, with states taking on the role of partner and facilitator to religion. From inviting pastors in the local community to give keynote speeches, to the use of a call-and-response style of participation, state faith-based conferences were used to gain support of black religious members by creating policy conferences that were much more like religious events than informative sessions about a new policy.

In addition to offering faith-based conferences to build support for the initiative in the black religious community, states also specifically sought to engage black churches by appointing liaisons who were members of the black religious community. As active members in their religious communities, state liaisons could use their religious positions as bully-pulpits for faith-based policy and practices, creating excitement about the initiative within their communities, and engaging them in support of the initiative.

Political parties routinely use various political strategies to chip away at each other's bases. African-Americans make up one of the strongest and largest segments of the Democratic Party's base, and thus offer a ripe area for Republican efforts. If policies such as gay marriage bans and the faith-based initiative can be used to chip away at even a small segment of the black vote, then the shift in the balance of power between the political parties could be tremendous. Therefore, the faith-based initiative may have been used a way to gain new potential allies for the Republican Party – as well as a way for Democrats to show that they were friendly to religion; seen in this light, neither party was required to back the initiative with much in the way of finances, since its symbolic value alone was great.

These two factors can therefore be seen as two reasons that a state would create faith-based policy. Both lead to the same result – the creation of a permanent place for religion within state government. The finding that these practices were not directly tied to problems of poverty, and indeed were less likely to occur in state with a greater welfare burden, only bolsters this conclusion. Combined, these two underlying factors for implementation create the potential for some interesting political bedfellows. Will new

alliances between the largely white resurgent evangelical movement and actors in the black church successfully create a new movement base that supports the initiative and its end goal of making religion a more important factor in state policy and politics? The potential is there, and the numbers show that it may be occurring. Therefore, as Edelman (1964, 1971) and Lowi (1969) both suggested, this new social policy has created a new political dynamic and a new political constituency, making the initiative's greatest achievement not an alteration of the social service sector, but an alteration of politics and political relationships.

#### *Opposition to the Faith-Based Initiative*

In the beginning, there were many who believed in faith-based policy, not as a symbolic action to alter church/state separation, but as serious social policy to help the poor. However, since this help has not materialized, some of the most vocal supporters of the initiative have become its most vocal critics. Most recently, David Kuo (2006), who originally worked at the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and was a strong supporter, stated that the faith-based initiative was used as a political vote-getting tool intended to bring in new political allies and support from the evangelical movement, and that it was mocking individuals who believed in the power of faith-based groups to help the poor. This insider aggravation with the lack of real funding behind the initiative started with John Dilulio, the first White House OFBCI Director. He stated in his famous memo regarding the initiative, that the faith-based initiative as it stood in Washington D.C. was essentially a political ploy with no real teeth behind it, calling the President and the White House OFBCI "Mayberry Machiavellis" (Suskind 2003). These

are people who, like many liaisons, believed the President's speeches and thought that there would be new funds to help the poor. They did not want the initiative to become what it has – a symbolic policy that is really about creating political allies and support, while simultaneously giving religion a new and unregulated voice in government.

### **Directions for Future Work**

#### *Key Questions*

*What does the future hold?* While this study answers questions about state implementation between 1996 and 2005, there are still many questions left unanswered, including perhaps the most important one: What will happen after George W. Bush leaves office? As governor and president, he has been a key actor in the initiative since its inception; the fate of the initiative once he is no longer president is unclear. Will the next president continue the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives? If so, what will the new office look like? Will funding continue to flow through the Compassion Capital Fund? If not, barring new funding streams, there will be no direct funding for the faith-based initiative.

*What are the impacts on the social service system?* While I have elucidated what has happened at the state level – where positions were created, what laws were passed – I have not been able to document whether or how these activities have made an impact on the state-sponsored social service system. What impact has the faith-based initiative had on the number of faith-based organizations funded? What types of activities are funds supporting? Finally, what is the social impact of these activities? If the true goal of the

faith-based initiative is to help the poor and needy, then this is the question that must be answered.

The question of impact does appear to have a tentative answer. Research on whether FBOs are better than others at providing social services has returned answers that are mixed, at best. For example, in their study of implementation in three states, Biefeld and Seuss-Kennedy (2004) found that while faith-based groups were as effective as others in getting people into jobs, the jobs their clients usually found were worse than others, with lower pay and fewer benefits. In short, an entirely new bureaucracy and political constituency has been created around the initiative – potentially granting special privileges to religious groups, and undoubtedly giving them more influence in government than ever before – when the putative justification for the initiative does not appear to be supported.

#### *Next Steps*

*Detailed state-state comparisons.* To begin to answer questions about the impact of the initiative on the social service system, case studies of several states that have created a variety of faith-based policies should be conducted. The states should be selected to represent a range of approaches to implementation, including the strength of the office, where within government office is located, and funding. Several states are of particular interest, including New Jersey and Oklahoma. These states were the earliest adopters, yet represent two very different approaches to the initiative.

In the case of Oklahoma, the initiative came from within the white evangelical movement. The first liaison was a Nazarene minister who saw the potential for the

initiative. He worked with the governor to create the position and begin funding intermediary groups to help new religious groups become involved in the social service sector. In New Jersey, on the other hand, the primary support initially came from within the black religious community. Also unlike Oklahoma, which used the intermediary model of funding, New Jersey offered significant direct funding; it is still the only state that has done so.

The selection of other states for comparison is less clear. Texas and Florida are of interest since they offer different models of implementation, with their offices being in non-profit organizations, separate from state government. New Mexico provides another interesting case, in which the liaison is one of the few who is not religious, and the office was created by a governor who is a Democrat.

*Multiple path analysis.* While continuing the field research in more depth would be ideal, I would also like to see the data already collected used in several new ways. First, since I believe that there are multiple reasons for state implementation, or multiple paths, Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) could be used to explore these, based on the presence or absence of various factors. For example, one path to implementation may be in states that have a strong evangelical movement within state government; this may be the mechanism in states like Florida and Texas, where the evangelical movement is especially strong within state government. A second path may be seen in New Jersey, where there is little evangelical movement influence, but a very large and active black religious population. Parsing out the different paths to implementation would help in the selection of case studies for future in-depth study.

*Follow-up on qualitative aspects of data.* I would also like to re-examine the qualitative data I have collected and discuss aspects of the interviews not fully covered in this document. Since some time has elapsed since the original interviews, follow-up interviews with state liaisons would be useful, to find out what new directions their offices and positions have taken. Are there new funding streams becoming available? What types of responses have they had from faith-based organizations? These interviews would include the same questions as the first set of questionnaires, to yield comparative data, but I would like to ask additional questions, especially about the types of contacts they have made with religious groups, and go into further detail on some questions regarding race and religion.

Also, during this study I collected network data from the liaisons: who they had contacted, how many times, and what that contact pertained to. I would like to use this data to further examine the types of action liaisons have taken, and what they may undertake in the future.

Each of these steps would create a more complete analysis of the faith-based initiative. Is it an epiphenomenon? What is its lasting impact? How does it change over time? The data I have already collected, combined with the further work I propose, will allow these questions to be answered, and a firm base of knowledge regarding the faith-based initiative to be established.

#### *Importance of the Faith-Based Initiative to Social Policy Theory*

Finally, I would like to explore how my research on the faith-based initiative can help us answer larger questions about how and why social policy happens, and why it

happens in the way it happens. Understanding the faith-based initiative not only increases our empirical knowledge about the faith-based initiative but also our theoretical knowledge regarding the introductory parts of the policy process. Coming from within social movement action, these policies and practices show us how policy begins with symbolic action, creating the potential to move to more substantive changes. In fact, state faith-based policies in some cases are already making this step by institutionalizing state OFBCIs through legislation and creating new executive orders and legislation that further legitimize the role of religion in state government, much like the actions taken by President Bush.

By examining the faith-based initiative, in conjunction with how the Civil Rights Movement also first relied on symbolic policy as an in-road into changing state politics and culture, we can see how symbolic policies are the first stage in creating new substantive social policy, but only *after* a new government culture and new political allies have been created. By comparing the policy process used in these two social movements, we build our understanding of a new model of policy building that begins with social movement action creating symbolic policies.

### **The Future of the Faith-Based Initiative**

#### *The Two Faces of Faith*

My data show that there is a dual reality to the faith-based initiative. First, state faith-based practices add little in substance to help the poor and needy, creating frustration among liaisons and other actors who thought that this was the purpose behind the initiative. Second, those liaisons, whether they mean to or not, meet the instrumental

political goal of resurgent evangelicals, creating a permanent place for religion within government. These dual realities cannot be separated, nor can their potential impact.

Supporters touted the initiative as a new hope – for government, and for the poor and needy. It was argued that a general social malaise had struck secular non-profits and government social service agencies. Religious groups were going to come out of the woodwork, bringing a new brand of social services into the public fight against poverty and addiction. This prediction has not been borne out. New groups may have shown interest in becoming a part of the process, but they were soon told that there was no new money to be had, and navigating the bureaucratic requirements of government was often too arduous and simply outside of their capacity. Often without the capacity to properly audit money if they were to receive it, these groups were simply not going to be able to compete with established programs that had qualified staffs experienced in these practices. And while there is evidence that some new groups have begun to be part of the system, they are not taking over for government, or even taking over where government has left off. In the end, small churches and religious groups are primarily in the business of saving souls – not of running day care centers, drug treatment programs, and prisoner re-entry offices.

None of this was obvious when states began implementing the faith-based initiative. States were apparently not aware that many of the groups they wanted to bring into the social service fold were simply unprepared to deal with the intricacies of government funding. So they sought out the groups, using information campaigns – conferences, new offices, and new positions – and tried to incorporate the FBOs in the

social services network. However, little else came along with the information campaign: little additional funding, little support, and little regulation of groups that did get contracts with state government. So the initiative has not met with success in its plan to have religion take over for secular non-profits and governmental social service agencies.

*How has the faith-based initiative succeeded?* In a recent interview<sup>48</sup> with Jim Towey, the former director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives he stated that the prime achievement of the faith-based initiative is how it has “changed the culture of how religious groups are treated in public square.” If this is the case, then the initiative has succeeded. The policies and practices that make-up the faith-based initiative at the state level do not do what its supporters originally promised; rather, they do what its supporters now argue is its main success. By creating symbolic policies aimed at creating new political alliances and new political relationships, the faith-based initiative has also been part of a move toward a new relationship of church/state cooperation.

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<sup>48</sup> Aired October 17, 2006 on *Fresh Air* (NPR).

**APPENDIX A****FAITH-BASED LIAISON INTERVIEW SCHEDULE****SECTION 1: STATE ADMINISTRATIVE ENACTMENT OF CHARITABLE CHOICE PRACTICES**

First, I'd like you to answer some questions about your job as an FBL and what your state is doing to implement Charitable Choice.

1. Could you tell me specifically what you do as an FBL? How have you tried to get religious or community groups involved in social services?
2. Were you hired in order to be the FBL, or were you already in state government before taking the assignment? (What was your occupation before you became an FBL?)
3. How did you learn about this position?
4. Who hired you for this position?
5. When did you take this assignment?
6. Is this your only job, or is it just one of many?
7. What are your other duties?
8. How much time does the FBL part of your job take?
9. Why did you decide to become an fbl?
10. What office are you located in (i.e. D of Ed, HHS, Governors office etc)?
11. Who do you report to?

12. Do FBI's have their own office?

a. \_\_\_\_\_ yes b. \_\_\_\_\_ No

12a. If so where?

13. Do you have a budget for your duties?

13a. If so, what do you use it for?

14. Now I want to ask you about some specific items that other states have done, and I want to know if any of this is happening in your state. If you could please tell me yes or no and if yes, what the date was that each was implemented.

A. OFBCI \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Date

B. Website about Faith-Based Initiatives \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Date

C. Set-Aside Special Funds for Religious Groups \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Date

D. Created a listserv for FBO's \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Date

E. Give Extra Points in Funding Decisions to FBO's \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Date

F. Run Technical Assistance Seminars aimed at FBO's \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Date

G. Run Grant Writing Programs aimed at religious leaders \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date

H. Waived Licensing Requirements for FBO's \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Date

I. Recruited Specific Organizations to Run Programs (Please List) \_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Date

J. Established an Advisory Board to Focus on Faith-Based Initiatives (If yes: who is on the board?) \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Date

K. Created Start-Up funds for FBO's or CBO's \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Date

L. Changed the State Constitution's language regarding Church/State Separation

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Date

M. Other \_\_\_\_\_

15. Have you experienced any opposition to these programs? If so, from whom and regarding what?

## SECTION 2: FBL TIES TO OTHER STATE FBL'S/ORGANIZATIONS

I'd also like to ask you a few questions about your relationship with the federal OFBCI.

1. Who have you had contact with in the federal government in regards to FBI's?  
(get names and the depts. they are in).
2. What was this contact regarding? (i.e. was it about conferences, technical assistance)
3. How often do you have contact with these individuals?
4. What were the dates of this contact?
5. More specifically, how would you describe your relationship with the federal Office of Faith-Based Community Initiatives?
  - a. Have you been to any conferences they've sponsored? Where? Year?
  - b. What kind of information did you get from them? What was it? Year?
  - c. Have you had other kinds of contact that I haven't asked about explicitly?
6. Have you been to any other conferences not sponsored by the federal office?  
Where? When?

Now I'm going to ask you a few questions about your relationship with FBL's in other states. This is to help me understand what kind of relationship state's have with each other and whether or not this has influenced faith-based initiatives in your state.

7. Please Look at this List (List of State FBL). Could you check which FBL's you know?
8. Of those you know how many times have you had contact with them over the last year?
9. What was the context of this contact?
10. Have you worked with any of these individuals before?
11. Would you consider any of these to be your friends?

## List of Faith Based Liaisons

State	Name	Contact	State	Name	Contact
AK	Whitney Brewster Gwen Hall		OH	Krista Sisterhen	
AL	Terri Hasdorff		OK	Bradley Yarbrough	
AR	Chris Pyle		PA	Gilbert Gomez	
AZ	Byron Garrett		SC	Gene Beckman Harry Prim	
CA	Earl Johnson		TX	Janie Young Beau Egert	
CO	Kevin Richards Cameron Lynch		UT	Bill Crim Steve Klass	
CT	Jim Brennan Brian Matteo Michael Murphy		VA	Jane Brown	
DC	Dorris Howard Pat Henry Susan Newman Deborah Murphy		WY	Andy Aldrich	
FL	Mark Nelson Wendy Spencer Liza McFadden				
HI	Sam Aiona				
ID	Blossom Johnson Tammy Payne, Rico Barrera, Tom Farley, Shane Stenquist, Kathy Russell				
IL	Derrius Colvin Fred Nettles				
IN	Emmerson Allen				
KS	Linda Weaver Jeremy Anderson				
KY	Brian Crall				
LA	Johnny Anderson				
MD	John Heath				
MI	Greg Roberts Wanda Bostic				
MS					
MT	David Young Hank Hudson				
NC	Diana Wilson Sonya Barnes				
NA	Caroline Walles				
NJ	Edward Laporte,				

## SECTION 3: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What is your religion?
2. What is your race?
3. Sex \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ F (Fill-in without asking)
4. Age \_\_\_\_\_

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