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EMPOWERING COMPASSION: The Strategic Role of Intermediary Organizations in Building Capacity Among and Enhancing the Impact of Community Transformers

A report on the Hudson Institute Faith in Communities' Intermediaries Study



Amy L. Sherman

The commercial ran some years ago, so this description may be a bit fuzzy, though the gist is clear. It showed people of various ages and stages using familiar products–a washing machine, a stereo, tires. The voice-over would then remark, "At BASF, we don't make the stereo you listen to. We make the stereo you listen to sound better. We don't make the washing machine you use. We make the washing machine you use clean better." This formula was repeated about the other products, until the end of the commercial. Then the punchline: "At BASF, we don't make a lot of the products you use. We make a lot of the products you use, better."

The unofficial name of Hudson Institute's Intermediaries Study was "the BASF project." This is because the organizations we studied so perfectly fit the tagline of that commercial, since essentially, intermediaries help frontline service providers do what they do better. Given their strategic role, our project sought to illuminate and explain the work of intermediaries, in order to increase policymakers' and philanthropists' understanding. Specifically, we sought—through surveys, roundtable discussions, and on-site case studies—to examine more closely just what intermediaries do and how they do it, as well as to provide some concrete documentation of their contributions. This executive summary highlights the study's key findings. We uncovered significant evidence suggesting that, because of intermediaries' help, frontline faith-based organizations across the nation are serving more people, more effectively.

Background

Hudson's "Faith in Communities" initiative has been investigating the role of faith-based organizations (FBOs) in the provision of social services from several angles over the last few years. Three conclusions have emerged. First, to strengthen and expand their contributions, many FBOs need technical assistance and other capacity-building aids; second, for fruitful government-faith collaboration to flourish, grassroots ministries often need administrative help from trusted organizations

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that can mediate their interface with the public sector; and third, not nearly enough is currently known, by policymakers, the faith community, and philanthropists, about intermediary organizations that can fulfill these vital functions.

Thus, the Faith in Communities initiative launched a year-long study to identify representative intermediaries in the faith community and learn more of what they do, why it matters, and how it could be improved. Much of our task was to document—with specificity and "thick description"—the "value-added" intermediaries bring to the arena of faith-based social action. Ours was a modest investigation, shaped by the funder's desire for a focus on a small but representative number of Christian intermediaries. We examined twenty-two primarily local intermediaries that collectively serve an impressive 8706 ministries around the country.

Intermediaries in Current Public Policy

During the course of our project, we were gratified to see intermediaries become a hot topic of discussion among Washington, D.C. policymakers. On April 17, 2002, for example, the Department of Labor announced a "Solicitation for Grant Applications" from states, intermediary organizations, and small faithbased and community-based nonprofits that could help the Department to achieve its objective of increasing collaboration between One Stop Centers and the faith community. The Department will be awarding \$5 million dollars to intermediary organizations "with connections to grassroots faith-based and community organizations with the ability to connect those organizations to the nation's workforce development system." In addition, the 2002 "Charity Aid, Recovery, and Empowerment Act" (CARE), cosponsored by Senators Lieberman and Santorum, includes a section specifically permitting government contracting via "intermediate grantors" who would then be authorized to award contracts or subgrants with nongovernmental agencies to provide social services. This

legislation is currently pending. On June 7, 2002, one of President Bush's original desires for the faith-based initiative found expression in the *Federal Register*. A \$30 million dollar "Compassion Capital Fund" was outlined, to be supervised by the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Nearly \$25 million will be earmarked for "intermediary organizations to provide technical assistance and make sub-awards to help the faith-based and community-based organizations that they assist to replicate or expand best practices and model programs in targeted areas."

Clearly, federal policymakers active in the social service arena are giving serious attention to the unique and important role of intermediary organizations-particularly faith-based intermediaries. Nonetheless, they currently possess an incomplete understanding regarding the specific nature of such groups, and our hope is that this study will begin to expand public comprehension and appreciation of intermediaries. As government officials and taxpayers consider the reauthorization of the federal welfare reforms of 1996 and the great challenges of helping lowincome families to climb out of poverty and distressed neighborhoods to achieve new levels of health, many will be looking to FBOs and congregations to do even more community-serving work. Thus, this examination of how intermediaries build capacity among these grassroots healers is particularly timely.

Study Methodology

We employed a three-part strategy in our investigation of faith-based intermediaries. First, we convened leaders of the intermediary organizations for two, day-long roundtable discussions (one at the outset of the study and one near the end). Second, we conducted an in-depth mail survey of twenty-two intermediary organizations chosen on the basis of their geographic diversity and organizational variety. Supplementary to the survey, we conducted brief telephone interviews with national secular and faith-related nonprofits to discover how much, if any, intermediary work they were already performing. The answer was: not much, though some are considering doing more in the future. Third, we examined on-site the wide-ranging work of five of the intermediaries: Houston's Center for Renewal, Fort Worth's Cornerstone Assistance Network, the Los Angeles United Methodist Urban Foundation, the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation, and One by One Leadership in Fresno. For four of these cities, we also conducted a cursory investigation of the work of secular intermediaries. Our goal was to better understand the options frontline organizations in those localities have for technical assistance and training, and what makes the services provided by faith-based intermediaries unique.

Descriptive Information

Over the period November 2001-April 2002, we conducted an in-depth mail survey of the intermediary organizations in our sample; the response rate for returned surveys was 82 percent. The small sample size (18 organizations) obviously limits the extent to which we can generalize from the findings. Nonetheless, the extensive questionnaire probed deeply into the work of these faith-based intermediaries. The information gathered provides what is probably the most comprehensive examination currently available of what these groups do, how they do it, under what philosophy they operate, with whom they work, and what their contributions have been among faith-based poverty fighters. Together, the intermediaries in our sample serve an estimated 8706 constituent organizations, primarily ministries and individual faith-based leaders.

The intermediaries we examined are diverse. Some were "pure" intermediaries; that is, they are exclusively a "minister to ministries" and provide no direct services among the poor themselves. Others are "blended" intermediaries, performing a mix of intermediary services and direct social services (see Figure A). Among the latter, direct services range from mentoring and life skills programs to advocacy, community development initiatives, child-care services, and affordable housing programs.

FIGURE A

INTERMEDIARY TYPE: PURE OR BLENDED?

"Some intermediaries, in addition to serving as "ministers to ministries" (i.e., providing technical assistance to frontline ministries), also provide direct services themselves to familes and individuals in need. Others do not. Which of the following statements best describes your organization's scope of work?"

Exclusively a minister to ministries	28 %
Primarily provide assistance to ministries	28 %
50% - 50% in each role	28 %
Primarily direct services	1 6 %

Source: Hudson Institute Strategic Intermediaries Survey, 2002

We were also interested to learn whether these groups were engaged exclusively in capacity building or were also involved in serving as financial intermediaries, re-granting resources to frontline groups. As seen in Figure B, 61 percent of the study participants are currently, or have recently, served as financial intermediaries.

FIGURE B INTERMEDIARY TYPE: FINANCIAL OR NON-FINANCIAL?

"Are you a financial intermediary, i.e., do you receive funding that you pass through to your constituents for services they provide?"

Yes	61%
No	39%

Source: Hudson Institute Strategic Intermediaries Survey, 2002

The studied groups were diverse, too, in terms of size and age. Forty-four percent have been in the intermediary business for a long time, 15 years or more. But 16 percent are relative

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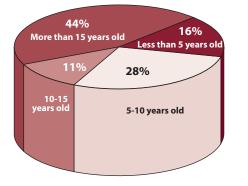
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newcomers, having launched their intermediary services within the past five years (see Figure C).

FIGURE C AGE OF INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATION

Less than 5 years old	16%
5-10 years old	28%
10-15 years old	11%
More than 15 years old	44%

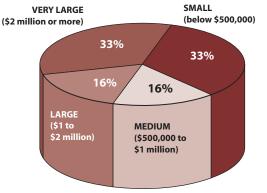


Source: Hudson Institute Strategic Intermediaries Survey, 2002

About one third of the intermediaries possess significant budgets, topping \$2 million dollars annually. Yet another third do their work from a modest resource base of under \$500,000 per year (see Figure D).

FIGURE D BUDGET SIZE OF INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATION

Very Large (\$2 million or more)	33%
Large (\$1 to \$2 million)	16%
Medium (\$500,000 to \$1 million)	16%
Small (below \$500,000)	33%



Source: Hudson Institute Strategic Intermediaries Survey, 2002

The questionnaire also probed the issue of the religiosity of the intermediaries. A plurality (44 percent) ranked themselves as "moderately" religious, while 28 percent reported their religiosity as "high" and 22 percent as "low" (see Figure E).

FIGURE E RELIGIOSITY OF INTERMEDIARY

"Describe the centrality of religious practices to your organization."

HIGH (incorporate worship, scriptural teaching, and/or evangelism to programs)	28 %
MODERATE (some programs incorporate religious instruction, others do not)	44%
LOW (we are a faith-friendly organization but our programs incorporate no religious instruction)	22%

Source: Hudson Institute Strategic Intermediaries Survey, 2002

We were also curious to learn more about the constituent ministries served by the intermediaries. Were these groups mainly focused on evangelism, discipleship, and individual training/empowerment programs or on more "structural" approaches to fighting poverty, such as advocacy or housing development? We discovered that the constituent ministries' approach to community work is holistic; they employ multiple strategies for fighting poverty, as indicated in Figure F.

FIGURE F STRATEGIES OF CONSTITUENT MINISTRIES IN FIGHTING POVERTY

"How would you characterize the philosophy or method of fighting poverty employed by the organizations you serve?

PHILOSOPHY	%
TRAINING, EDUCATION (they provide necessary skills, knowledge, and prac- tices to help individuals with employment and access to opportunity)	78 %
CHARACTER, SPIRITUAL GROWTH, PERSON- AL EMPOWERMENT (they empower/disciple individuals to overcome personal barriers, harmful habits)	78 %
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (they engage in economic development such as affordable housing, business incubation and devel- opment, neighborhood revitalization, and so on)	61%
SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (they provide services such as child care, health care, transportation, utilities assistance)	61%
ADVOCACY (they organize, lobby, and effect change through elected officials and the design of public initiatives)	33%
ACCESSING PUBLIC, PRIVATE SERVICES (they connect people to services for which they are eligible)	28%

Source: Hudson Institute Strategic Intermediaries Survey, 2002

Houston's Advocate: The Center for Renewal

Founded just five years ago, the Center for Renewal (CFR) has already helped to train and equip 165 frontline ministries in Houston. Many of these are unsung heroes, tiny grassroots agencies "under the radar screen" of the media, policymakers, and the philanthropic world. But because CFR has been telling their stories and connecting them to the "well-resourced" of the city, these points of light are no longer invisible. Remarkably, with its modest budget of just \$150,000 annually, CFR has helped these grassroots community healers to garner over \$1 million in new grants. That's a 600 percent rate of return! An Hispanic drug rehabilitation ministry, a unique suburban-urban congregation, and an African-American urban youth ministry are just three organizations CFR has championed, connected to new volunteers and increased resources, equipped with new tools, and assisted with board development. The agencies' enhanced capacity has translated into better programs and a broader reach; in short, to improved outreach and services to greater numbers of vulnerable citizens.

Some Snapshots of Faith-Based Intermediaries

New York City's Teacher: JUDAH International

Founded in 1996, JUDAH International, Inc. is building capacity among approximately 22 congregations and faith-based nonprofits in Brooklyn to strengthen families and communities. JUDAH provides both technical assistance and fiscal oversight and management. A "blended" intermediary, JUDAH provides direct services among the poor itself while also garnering public dollars on behalf of its frontline ministry partners. In keeping with its central mission-to foster the stability of communities through local neighborhood economic development, outreach, and support—JUDAH serves as a lead intermediary in an innovative consortium of FBOs, government, and private industry in New York City's "charitable choice demonstration

project." JUDAH assists churches and FBOs in operating job readiness and training/placement programs for welfare recipients within designated communities. Through the demonstration project, JUDAH and its constituent ministries reach out especially to individuals who have been sanctioned under the welfare reform rules, helping them to address the problems that led to the sanction. JUDAH's own model of effective, holistic ministry among struggling families and its work teaching other frontline congregations how to do such work has earned the ministry kudos from HUD-it received the "Building a Better Tomorrow" Best Practice Award in 1999. Together, JUDAH and its partners have brought hope and transformation among 1587 families.

Fort Worth's Enhancer: Cornerstone Assistance Network

As a "blended" intermediary, Cornerstone Assistance Network (CAN) provides both direct services among the poor and intermediary services that assist frontline FBOs. CAN enhances the social safety net of Fort Worth by providing services and resources to the poor that small churches and ministries cannot. But it is also teaching such groups, by example, how to take on increased community ministry and accomplish real transformation among struggling families. Cornerstone is building capacity—especially in the area of homeless services—in a variety of faith-based and secular, community-based organizations. It does so through informal training, intentional networking and professional development, modeling of innovative practices, and re-granting of private foundation dollars. And CAN has not only served Fort Worth: it has helped visionaries in Oklahoma City and Tulsa to launch their own Cornerstone ministries, reaching hundreds more at-risk families.

Los Angeles' Coach: The United Methodist Urban Foundation

This agency, and the sister intermediary it largely finances, the Urban Leadership Institute (ULI), is training congregations and FBOs for effective urban ministry in L.A.'s incredibly multi-ethnic context. The Foundation has successfully garnered \$1.4 million dollars in private funding, 95 percent of which it has re-granted to a variety of small, frontline churches and FBOs. Elderly Koreans and at-risk Hispanic boys are just two populations better off because of such investments. The Foundation has funded and mentored leaders at the Koreatown Senior Center and the Pico Union Shalom Zone, enabling these small FBOs to launch new services in their neighborhoods. The ULI is coaching churches for multi-ethnic ministry and collaboration. Its "conflict transformation skills" are now known by some 1000 faith leaders throughout the city, who are putting them to work in neighborhoods like Hollywood-Wilshire. This community is perhaps the most ethnically and culturally diverse two square miles in all of America.

Fresno's Catalyst: One by One Leadership

This "equipping connector," staffed by a talented inter-racial team, has been in the forefront of dramatic positive changes in urban Fresno over the past two decades. It has built capacity in twentyfive FBOs throughout the city; trained 4100 volunteers from 62 congregations for active outreach ministry; and most importantly, regularly "crosspollinated" hundreds of civic, government, and faith leaders. That bridge building has led to numerous multi-sector initiatives that are solving problems no one institution, acting alone, could. Here's just one example: Care Fresno. This program has joined police, churches, and property managers together to fight crime. Churches "adopt" low-income apartment complexes where owners give them a free unit. The churches develop a variety of on-site services for residents (tutoring for kids and job training for adults, for example). Police step up protection in the target communities. Today, 25 complexes housing 10,000 people in Fresno are serviced by this partnership, which has helped to reduce crime by a remarkable 65 to 70 percent in these communities.

Some Snapshots of Faith-Based Intermediaries

Pittsburgh's Investor: The Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation

Over the past quarter century, Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation (PLF) has raised and disbursed over \$100 million in creating and seedfunding new initiatives to address educational, health care, and economic development challenges in the city of steel. PLF has incubated numerous new nonprofits, which are now active in everything from free health care for the indigent to community development in blighted neighborhoods to campaigns to protect women and children from the exploitation of pornography. PLF's passion is for citywide collaboration and change. Through its Pittsburgh Youth Network, PLF sponsors training, retreats, citywide gatherings, and networking meetings, directly impacting the scope and scale of outreach in more than 400 churches and youth-serving organizations.

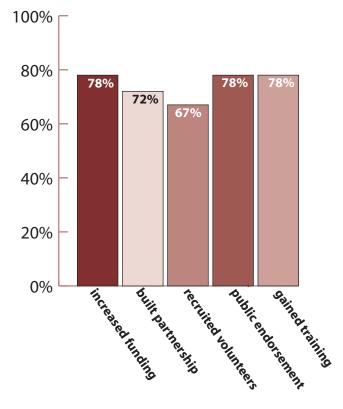
Through City as Parish, PLF has helped thousands of church-goers to discern their unique talents and catch a vision for putting those to work to bless the city. Staff estimate that approximately 60 ministries and projects (not all faith-based) have been directly impacted by the influx of equipped lay people from churches participating in City as Parish. Additionally, PLF's "Community Storehouse" is leveraging over \$12 million of real property goods that are used in the frontline ministries of the 170 members of the Storehouse. This intermediary is also active in advocacy, having helped to form CLEAR, a coalition of faith-based, government, and secular agencies working together to address the challenge of drug addiction through both treatment innovation and public policy reforms.

Analysis: Top Ten Findings

1) Intermediary organizations currently make enormous contributions to the scope, scale, and effectiveness of grassroots, faith-based social service agencies, and often do so at low cost. The study uncovered substantial, measurable evidence of the "value-added" provided by intermediaries to these frontline groups (see Figure G). Intermediary organizations have assisted grassroots FBOs in obtaining millions of dollars of funding they most likely otherwise would not have secured. Intermediaries have connected frontline groups to new sources of volunteers and in-kind donations. Intermediaries have provided grassroots leaders with relevant, accessible training and technical assistance they otherwise would not have gained. And intermediaries have increased the public exposure of grassroots groups' work, winning them public recognition, endorsements, and media coverage.

FIGURE G IMPACT OF INTERMEDIARY SERVICES

Benefits to Constituents Arising from Intermediary Organizations' Assistance



Source: Hudson Institute Strategic Intermediaries Survey, 2002

- 2) Much of the most important work being done by intermediaries is intangible, relating to the mentoring and encouragement they provide to grassroots leaders. Frequently, frontline ministry staff reported that the most important help they had received from an intermediary was coaching, advice, or "moral support." Though unable to put a dollar figure on this form of aid, many related anecdotes specifying how an intermediary leader's advice or intervention solved a key problem, led to a "visioning breakthrough," saved the grassroots group from making a critical error, or decisively influenced the design of a program or service.
- 3) Faith-based intermediaries are making a unique contribution to capacity building among grassroots FBOs. Although some of the specific services offered by intermediaries are also provided by secular agencies (such as basic training in how to establish a 501c3 nonprofit or how to design a strategic plan), grassroots leaders reported that they often did not know how to obtain the secular groups' training or that they could not afford the fees charged. Moreover, the leaders emphasized that the intermediaries' workshops were more relevant to them as faith-based agencies. They also reported that they found the faith-based intermediary leaders accessible. They felt comfortable telephoning or "dropping in" on these leaders in a way that they did not with secular training/technical assistance organizations.
- 4) Relatedly, the intermediaries we examined are intensively engaged with their constituent ministries, often working with them on a weekly basis for over a year. The technical assistance many of the intermediaries provide goes far beyond the occasional seminar or workshop. Intermediary leaders meet regularly with constituents, help to design programs and services, often provide financial management, and sometimes serve on the boards of directors of the frontline ministries

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they assist. Some intermediaries not only taught grant-writing skills but composed actual grant applications on behalf of their constituents. Others facilitated board retreats and strategic planning meetings for their constituents and/or participated "hands on" in program evaluations.

FIGURE H INTENSITY OF ENGAGEMENT WITH CONSTITUENTS

"Typically, how long do you work with your constituents (i.e., the ministries you assist?)"	
Long Term (two or more years)	50 %
Both mid term (one to two years) and long term	33%
Short term (less than a year)	16%
"On average, how frequently do you meet with, get together with, provide services to, etc., your constituents?"	
Weekly	44%
Monthly	28%
Weekly with some; monthly with others	11%

Source: Hudson Institute Strategic Intermediaries Survey, 2002

5) The intermediaries we studied are making a highly significant contribution among frontline ministries that are relatively small, young, or administratively immature. They are adding less value to constituent organizations that are larger and more experienced. Much of the training and technical assistance provided by the intermediaries was of the "basic ABCs" type-grant-writing, board development, mission definition. Leaders from fledging grassroots ministries reported that intermediary staff provided them with much "hand-holding" and practical guidance on a wide range of issues and concerns. For leaders of ministries that were more than two years old, the intermediaries' contributions

were more narrow—for example, a particularly helpful workshop or assistance in obtaining a key introduction to a funder that resulted in a successful grant application.

- 6) The charismatic personalities and zeal of the individual leaders of the intermediary organizations are key factors in the level of impact the intermediaries are making. In sports terminology, some of the intermediaries examined lack a "bench" beyond the founder or current leader. This person was highly successful in building the network of personal relationships and credibility that made the intermediary such a valuable repository of information and connections. In the absence of this individual, it is unclear whether the intermediary as an institution would have "staying power" and continued influence.
- 7) Many of the intermediaries have experience in re-granting to or subcontracting with grassroots FBOs, and very many (89%) are willing to play the role of a publicly funded financial intermediary. Nearly two-thirds of the groups we studied were currently serving as financial intermediaries or had had experience doing so in the past. About a third of these reported facing some challenges in playing this role—stemming sometimes from the original granting foundation and sometimes from the sub-grantee. Most had re-granted private foundation dollars, though a few had served as fiscal agents in publicly funded grants or contracts.

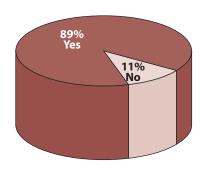
FIGURE J INTERMEDIARY TYPE: FINANCIAL OR NON-FINANCIAL?

"Are you a financial intermediary, i.e., do you receive funding that you pass through to your constituents for services they provide?"

Yes	61%
No	39 %

Source: Hudson Institute Strategic Intermediaries Survey, 2002

FIGURE K WILLINGNESS TO SERVE AS PUBLICLY-FUNDED INTERMEDIARY



Source: Hudson Institute Strategic Intermediaries Survey, 2002

- 8) Intermediaries navigate multiple sectors, connecting groups within the faith community and connecting FBOs to secular nonprofits, government social welfare agencies, and the world of philanthropy. Many of the intermediaries studied are active as bridge builders, convening cross-sector meetings and facilitating cross-sector partnerships. Some of the intermediaries viewed this bridge building as their most important function, seeing it as vital to accomplishing citywide victories for the poor.
- 9) The two sectors the intermediaries desire more interaction with are government and the business community. These two were the ones mentioned most often in response to the question, "Which sectors would you like to partner with but do not?"
- 10) The top challenge intermediaries reported facing was that foundations are biased against them and/or do not recognize the legitimacy of what they do. Sometimes this was rooted in the foundation's wariness of regranting mechanisms. Other times, the issue is a bias against funding a "middleman." General suspicion of faith-based organizations also plays a role, with foundations concerned that if they fund one FBO, they will have to fund as well ones of different religious stripes or risk charges of favoritism/discrimination.

Next Steps for Research

As noted, this study was modest in scope and has only begun to scratch the surface of what needs to be known about intermediaries. Some fruitful next steps for research could include such activities as:

- composing a fuller typology of intermediaries;
- identifying the extent to which private philanthropy is supporting intermediaries and, where they are not, why not;
- examining best practices in the arena of regranting and financial intermediary services;
- investigating how intermediaries help frontline FBOs evaluate their effectiveness/outcomes;
- clarifying the technical assistance/training needs of congregations (as distinct from faithbased nonprofits); and
- identifying the technical assistance needs of intermediaries themselves.

Intermediaries and Public Policy

Based on this study's preliminary findings concerning the significant value-added of intermediary organizations, the heightened interest in intermediaries on the part of Washington policymakers is encouraging. Many public officials are eager to engage FBOs and congregations more extensively in efforts to serve needy families and distressed communities. Mechanisms for publicly funding effective grassroots FBOs at a scale such agencies can manage administratively need to be identified, and utilizing intermediaries as re-granting agents may be a promising practice. Three issues worthy of further consideration by public officials include:

1) Identifying authentic intermediaries. If the goal is to see support flow to effective, front-

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line FBOs, then intermediaries with genuine connections to the grassroots must be identified. Many organizations may have the capacity to serve as intermediaries and to manage federal grants. But which organizations have credibility in the faith community and a track record of engagement with the kinds of FBOs most deserving of support? What criteria do public officials need to establish to help them distinguish between authentic and inauthentic intermediaries? One suggested at our second roundtable was that national intermediaries show a track record of assisting, nurturing, or accrediting local intermediaries, whose own credibility is demonstrated in the solid relationships of trust they have built with their constituents and the measurable difference they have made in enhancing those constituents' effectiveness and sustainability.

- 2) Encouraging private funding of intermediaries. If public officials are enthusiastic about the prospects of using government funding of intermediaries to multiply the effectiveness of FBOs, they may be able to persuade private philanthropy to do the same. Already the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives at HUD plans to sponsor some conferences engaging private donors in discussions about the productive role of intermediaries; other Cabinet Centers may want to follow suit or otherwise use their "bully pulpits" to showcase the positive role of faithbased intermediaries.
- 3) Identifying and addressing public policy barriers hindering the work of faith-based intermediaries. At our second roundtable, a group of intermediary representatives and Washington policymakers took up the question of barriers. Two primary ones were highlighted. The first is the challenge of educating both public officials and FBOs about what activities are permissible under government contracts. The charitable choice guidelines help begin to define this, acknowledging the

right of faith-based agencies to maintain their religious character while also prohibiting them from spending public funds for purposes of sectarian worship, instruction, or proselytization (private money, though, can be employed for these purposes). But further guidance is needed. The second concerns how policymakers can balance two potentially competing objectives. On the one hand, public officials are eager to reach out to a diversity of groups in the faith sector, in sync with the religious pluralism of America. Faith-based initiatives, in short, should be inclusive. On the other hand, government desires to invest resources based on impact and effectiveness, seeking to maximize the "return on investment" of taxpayer funds, measured in terms of changed human lives. In any particular context, a set of specific FBOs or houses of worship may be particularly efficacious or strategically positioned to make a significant positive impact. Failing to invest in such groups simply because one faith tradition may dominate appears unwise.

Questions for Intermediary Leaders

Finally, intermediary organizations themselves have some questions to consider in light of potential new opportunities in publicly funded initiatives. These include, among others:

1) The question of representation

Should faith-based intermediaries form a consortium to represent their interests in Washington? There are likely to be multiple funding opportunities from a variety of federal government agencies. As accessing such funding is new to many faith-based intermediaries, there may be a need for an information-gathering and relationship-building entity that can keep intermediaries abreast of specific funding opportunities and build the relationships with agency personnel (e.g., assistant secretaries, contracting officers) that are often necessary to maintain competitiveness.

2) The question of partnership

Already various large, national nonprofits (secular and faith-related) with experience in government contracting have positioned themselves for involvement in the funding of various faith-based initiatives. Intermediary organizations may wish to consider dialoguing with such groups (e.g., Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Points of Light Foundation, Catholic Charities, National Crime Prevention Council, Salvation Army) about possible joint proposals and/or subcontracting opportunities.

3) The question of distinctiveness

In positioning themselves for potential partnership opportunities, faith-based intermediaries will face competition. They will need to define clearly and articulate persuasively in the public square what their unique strengths and capabilities are.

4) The question of replication

One of the tentative conclusions of this research, emerging largely from the case studies, is that intermediaries work best at a city scale. This is a target large enough to engage the broad vision of intermediaries (a community building paradigm rather than exclusive focus on service-building paradigms) yet small enough to facilitate the deep relationships genuine intermediaries build with their constituent ministries. This implies that, in expanding the work of intermediaries around the country, the strategy of growing a cityfocused intermediary into a regional or statefocused organization is not as attractive as a strategy of creating additional city-focused intermediaries.

Conclusion

At the concluding event of our the Intermediaries Study, Bobby Polito, the Director of HHS's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, asserted that intermediaries can become the "engine" of the national faith-based initiative, driving a robust, broadscale investment in grassroots groups that will dramatically increase their scope and effectiveness. President Bush speaks often and compellingly of our neighbors in America who live in the shadows of prosperity. Grassroots FBOs and community-based agencies are bringing light and hope to such citizens, but are limited in their reach and often beset by challenges outweighing their resources. Faith-based intermediary organizations are effectively coming alongside such groups, empowering them to do their good work even better. Significant public and private investment in intermediaries can enable them to equip community healers for "going to scale," expanding the breadth and depth of interventions that lead to changed human lives. That intermediaries are deserving of such increased investments seems clear from this first in-depth examination of their unique and strategic work.

Dr. Sherman is a Senior Fellow of Hudson's Welfare Policy Center and Director of the Faith in Communities initiative.



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The full study report, *Empowering Compassion: The Strategic Role of Intermediary Organizations in Building Capacity Among and Enhancing the Impact of Community Transformers*, will be available soon. Watch for it on-line at:

www.hudsonfaithincommunities.org

Once published, the full report will be available for purchase for \$20 from Hudson Institute's Faith in Communities office (call 434-293-5656).

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