



The Roundtable

on Religion and Social Welfare Policy

Holistic Faith-Based Development

Toward a Conceptual Framework

By John M. Wallace, Jr., Ph.D.
University of Pittsburgh

Valerie L. Myers, Ph.D.
University of Michigan

Jim Holley, Ph.D.
The Historic Little Rock
Missionary Baptist Church

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Holistic Faith-Based Development: Toward a Conceptual Framework

By John M. Wallace, Jr., Ph.D.
University of Pittsburgh
School of Social Work

Valerie L. Myers, Ph.D.
University of Michigan
School of Public Health

Jim Holley, Ph.D.
The Historic Little Rock Missionary Baptist Church

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to expand knowledge about the active role that many faith-based organizations can and are taking in their communities. A central goal of the paper is to increase understanding of “holistic” faith-based development—the kinds of work progressive congregations and their affiliated organizations are doing across the country, meeting not only the need for a bag of groceries and a listening ear, but also providing job training for people leaving welfare, educational opportunities for children in under-resourced schools, entrepreneurial opportunities for investors, housing for seniors, the revitalization of old neighborhoods, and the development of new ones.

To date, the literature on holistic faith-based development is limited, largely descriptive and focuses on the work of a few large congregations, typically led by dynamic African American clergy and located in poor inner-city communities. While descriptive research is important and often provides valuable insights into a new field of inquiry, it fails to provide the theoretical foundation upon which to build knowledge or to provide a conceptual map or “blueprint” for taking action. To begin to address the gaps in knowledge about holistic faith-based development, this study briefly reviews the African American church’s historical and contemporary role in this area, discusses the theoretical framework implicit in much of the work, and presents a broad conceptual paradigm that faith-based practitioners can use to guide future efforts. The paper concludes with a case study of a ministry engaged in holistic faith-based development that is working both independently and with other churches, non-profits, for-profits, and local government to transform a neighborhood in the inner city of Detroit, Michigan.

BACKGROUND

As a result of the Charitable Choice provision (i.e., section 104) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (the Welfare Reform Act) and President Bush’s Faith-Based Initiative, policy makers, academics, and clergy have focused considerable attention on the role of faith-based organizations in the delivery of social services. The Charitable Choice provision permits states to use federal dollars to contract with religious organizations to provide social services, while protecting the religious nature of these organizations and permitting them to retain their independence from

government. While some national faith-based organizations (e.g., Catholic Social Services, Lutheran Social Services, the Salvation Army) have long received significant portions of their budgets from the federal government, the current debate focuses on the extent to which individual congregations can receive federal tax dollars to support their social service programs.

Recent research suggests that although the majority (between 60 percent and 90 percent) of American congregations support at least one social service, community development, or neighborhood organizing project, only 3 percent receive federal funds and only 11 percent receive any funds from outside sources (Chaves, 1999). Implicit in the debate around whether or not churches, mosques or synagogues should be allowed to receive federal monies is the assumption that they would seek government dollars if they were available. Research on the willingness of congregations to apply for federal funds indicates that there are significant differences, with the racial composition of the congregation being the strongest predictor (Chaves, 1999). More specifically, 64 percent of African American clergy expressed a willingness to apply for federal funds to support their social service efforts compared to only 28 percent of white clergy (Chaves, 1999).

The greater willingness of African American clergy to apply for federal funds is not surprising given that African American congregations are significantly more likely than white congregations to be located in poor communities and more likely to provide services that meet the needs of the poor, including education, mentoring, substance abuse, job training or assistance, meals, community development, and promoting civil rights and social justice issues (Chaves and Higgins, 1992; Chaves and Tsitsos, 2001). Many African American pastors and congregations have, of necessity, sought to address needs not of the nameless “poor,” but of their members, and their members’ family and friends. In fact, even among churches located in urban areas, African American congregations offer more programs than their white counterparts despite having less educated clergy, fewer staff, and smaller memberships (Boddie and Cnaan, 2001). When taken in total, research suggests that African American churches have a greater demonstrated commitment and perhaps necessity than their white counterparts to meet the pressing needs of disadvantaged urban populations.

While necessity has driven many African American congregations to attempt to provide social services, the need for programs and services that ameliorate the conditions of the poor will continue to far outstrip the resources of the church and what government can or will provide. Additionally, social services alone are insufficient to change the conditions that create the need for them—more holistic strategies are required to change conditions that plague our nation’s inner cities. In light of this reality, innovative and entrepreneurial African American and other urban pastors and congregations are developing strategies to minister holistically to the human, economic, and community development needs of individuals and families both within and outside their congregations.

HOLISTIC FAITH-BASED DEVELOPMENT AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH

Although the recent debates about Charitable Choice and President Bush's Faith-Based Initiative have brought national attention to the work of a few prominent African American pastors such as Floyd Flake in New York, Kirbyjon Caldwell in Houston, Eugene Rivers in Boston, and Charles Blake in Los Angeles, the holistic development mission of the African American church is not new. Historically, as a result of the persistent racial discrimination that denied African Americans access to the religious, social, business, governmental, educational and recreational resources of the larger society, the church emerged as the central community entity, created and controlled by African Americans to meet their spiritual as well as secular needs and desires (Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990).

In discussing the historical social service role of the African American church, W.E.B. Dubois (1898) noted that:

It is natural that today the bulk of organized efforts of Negroes in any direction should center in the Church. The Negro Church is the only social institution of the Negroes which started in the African forest and survived slavery; under the leadership of the priest and medicine man, afterward the Christian pastor, the Church preserved in itself the remnants of African tribal life and became after emancipation the center of Negro social life. So that today the Negro population of the United States is virtually divided into Church congregations, which are the real units of the race life. It is natural therefore that charitable and rescue work among Negroes should first be found in the churches and reach there its greatest development (pp. 4-5).

Echoing and expanding Dubois' point, nearly a century later, Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) note:

The Black Church has no challenger as the cultural womb of the black community. Not only did it give birth to new institutions such as schools, banks, insurance companies, and low income housing, it also provided an academy and an arena for political activities, and it nurtured young talent for musical, dramatic, and artistic development...in addition to the traditional concerns of worship, moral nurture, education and social control" (p. 8).

While there is evidence suggesting the "all encompassing" nature of the church has diminished as opportunities for African Americans to participate in the larger society have increased, the church remains the central—and in many inner cities, the only—institution seeking to enhance the well-being of poor African Americans and to revitalize their communities. Additionally, the church

continues to be the place where African Americans, poor and affluent, commit over a third of their volunteer time and 75 percent of their charitable giving (Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990). Even where other organizations and agencies like the Urban League, the NAACP, fraternal organizations, and social service providers appear to have assumed the church's historic role, its influence remains because leaders of these organizations—African American politicians, businesspeople, teachers, lawyers, doctors and social workers—are pastors, deacons, trustees, Sunday school teachers, ushers, or at least active members of local congregations.

The church also plays a key role in African American communities as a mediating structure between individuals and the larger society. Mediating structures act as liaisons between individuals in their private lives and the larger “megastructures” of public life, such as the social service system, big business, and government (Berger and Neuhaus, 1996). Research suggests African American churches are particularly important in poor communities where citizens often lack the resources to manage or influence megastructures (Wood, 2002). The mediating function that the pastors in Boston's Ten Point Coalition served to reduce conflict between the city's police and its young African American males is an important example of this role (Berrien and Winship, 1999). In short, through its mediating function, the African American church has been, and continues to be, an important vehicle through which to address the social, political, cultural, physical, and economic conditions of poor African American communities.

A variety of other characteristics of African American churches make them ideally, and in many ways uniquely, suited as mediating structures (Wallace and Myers, 1998). These include:

- Empowering African Americans to counter racial, economic, and social oppression is fundamental to their historical and contemporary mission;
- Churches, physically located in African American neighborhoods, share knowledge and experience of the challenges residents face;
- Churches are economically independent and thus able to advocate for the community without being beholden to outside interests;
- Churches have ready access to a wealth of human capital through the skills and talents of their members;
- Churches are able to create and sustain initiatives through their own resources and thus do not have to end successful programs when external funds dry up;
- Unlike government, the health care industry, and traditional social service agencies, churches do not categorize people by their “needs” and treat them as “clients.” Rather, they view people holistically (i.e., mind, body and spirit) and welcome them as brothers and sisters who

can both give and receive in the context of an extended church family;
and

- Churches have expertise in empowering people to plan, organize and mobilize around the achievement of individual and shared goals.

EMPOWERMENT AND THE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT MISSION OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH

Research has consistently recognized the role of religious participation as a significant catalyst for African Americans' engagement in political activities, volunteerism, community involvement, environmental activism, organizational membership and other behaviors through which people seek to control their lives and exert power (Alex-Assensoh and Assensoh, 2001; Mattis, Jagers, Hatcher, Lawhon, Murphy and Murray, 2000; Musick, Wilson, Bynum, 2000). Yet, despite the relationship between African Americans' religious involvement and their efforts to exercise power and mastery over their lives, research has yet to explicitly connect the work and mission of African American churches to the growing theoretical literature on empowerment (see Zimmerman, 2000). The limited body of research that does investigate the empowerment function of religion for African Americans has focused largely on political activity and participation (see Arp and Boecklman, 1997; Harris, 1994) and thus has not considered its role in areas like economic and community development.

In her seminal work, Black Empowerment, Barbara Solomon notes that “powerlessness of black individuals, groups and communities arises through a process whereby valued identities and roles on the one hand and valuable resources on the other are denied—all of which are prerequisite to the exercise of interpersonal influence and effective social functioning” (p12). Many efforts to address the conditions of African American individuals, organizations and communities have relied on deficit-oriented social services models that denied them power and viewed increases in services as the solution to their problems. These deficit-based models, though different in focus and degree, have often sustained, if not promoted, powerlessness among poor African Americans. Specifically, traditional strategies to address the needs of poor African Americans and to revitalize urban communities have often resulted in distorted, disconnected, disjointed and disempowering development. Below we describe briefly some of the failed strategies of the past and then discuss the central role of empowerment in the holistic approach that guides the work of effective faith-based organizations around the country.

FAILED SOCIAL SERVICE EFFORTS OF THE PAST

Increases in many urban problems over the past two decades are attributable, in large part, to economic factors (e.g., loss of well paying industrial jobs). Nevertheless, economic development is often neglected as an important component in programs intended to meet the needs of poor inner-city residents and their communities (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1995; Midgley, 1995). When social service programs do not help recipients find jobs, recipients can become dependent upon the services for their livelihood. Because many social service programs are funded through taxes on employment wages, programs and services for the poor are greater in number and better funded when the economy is thriving. When the economy is failing, however, demand for services increases as funding decreases. Thus when people are not connected to the economy through paid employment, their situation is bad when economic times are good and worse when times are bad. This is distorted development.

A related problem, disconnected development, occurs when the concerns and needs of community residents are compartmentalized and “treated” without regard to other aspects of their lives, and when services delivered do not increase awareness, access, or use of resources or institutions within or outside the local community. An example of disconnected development is a job training program for mothers on welfare that prepares recipients for jobs that aren’t available, does not provide child care, or fails to address the mother’s needs for health care and transportation.

When development initiatives occur in a piecemeal fashion without a clear plan, without a long-term guiding mission, and without regard to the desires of the community, the result is disjointed development. When there is disjointed development, programs and policies are established according to what is being funded, current trends, or goals of agencies or special interest groups, rather than by the real or felt needs of the intended program recipients. When there is funding for a particular population or problem, programs that target that population or problem abound. When the funding shifts, or disappears, the programs do the same. In the absence of a bottom-up community-driven strategy for development, relatively little lasting progress is made toward solving problems or even reducing the impact of their effects.

Although most development initiatives are designed, at least ostensibly, to help the poor, often programs inadvertently remove people’s initiative to do for themselves. In time, community residents come to feel powerless—or disempowered—over their circumstances. Disempowering development occurs when people are taught:

“[T]he nature and extent of their problems, and the value of services as the answer to their problems. As a result, many lower income urban neighborhoods are now environments of service where behaviors are

affected because residents come to believe that their well-being depends upon being a client. They begin to see themselves as people with special needs that can only be met by outsiders (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1995, p.2).

The effects of disempowerment include self-blame, self-perceptions of failure, and the belief that there is nothing they can do to improve their circumstances (Lerner, 1986)

EMPOWERMENT THEORY

In stark contrast to the disjointed, disconnected and disempowering strategies that have failed in the past, research suggests that successful efforts to revitalize urban communities build upon the skills and talents of local residents, their network of voluntary associations, the strengths of local institutions, available physical property and the local economy (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1995). The process by which people use these individual, organizational, and neighborhood building blocks to gain mastery over their lives is called empowerment (Rappaport, 1987).

Empowerment is multidimensional, describing both a value orientation for action and a theoretical framework for organizing and developing knowledge (Zimmerman, 2000). As a value orientation, a faith-based empowerment perspective focuses on developing the assets of individuals, faith-based organizations and neighborhoods to solve problems and achieve desired outcomes rather than emphasizing their needs and deficiencies. An empowerment value orientation is congruent with what Kretzmann and McKnight (1995) have termed “asset-based community development.” From a faith-based perspective, asset-based community development concentrates on the agenda setting and problem solving capacities of congregation members and community residents, building on their relationships with each other, the faith-based organization and other key entities in the community (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1995).

Empowerment theory, adapted to fit a faith-based perspective, examines the *processes* by which people of faith, their organizations and their neighborhoods gain control over their lives and the *outcomes* of empowering processes. Empowering processes are the mechanisms by which people, faith-based organizations, and neighborhoods become empowered. Empowered people, faith-based organizations, and neighborhoods have the ability to cause positive change in their circumstances. Individual level empowerment refers to beliefs about one’s competence, efforts to exert control, the capability to understand one’s socio-political environment, and the ability to identify and use faith and other resources to achieve goals (Zimmerman, 2000). A central purpose of religious faith and faith-based organizations is to connect people with God and with each other. The processes for establishing these relationships include spiritual activities such as individual and group prayer, meditation, study of scriptures and

fellowship, as well as involvement in the less overtly spiritual activities of the church (see Table 1). Given the lack of power that many African Americans experience in their day-to-day lives (e.g., work) as a function of their race and social class, churches are potentially key empowering settings in which people have opportunities to share leadership, develop group identity, learn skills and participate in key organizational tasks (Zimmerman, 1995; Maton and Salem, 1995; Speer and Hughey, 1995).

Table 1 presents examples of the relationship between faith-based empowering processes and the empowered outcomes that result from these processes at the individual, organizational and neighborhood levels.

Table 1. Faith-Based Empowerment Processes and Outcomes Across Levels of Analysis

LEVEL OF ANALYSIS	EMPOWERING FAITH-BASED PROCESS (How faith empowers individuals and families, organizations, neighborhoods and beyond)	EMPOWERED FAITH-BASED OUTCOMES (The results of empowering faith-based processes)
INDIVIDUAL (& FAMILY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship building • Opportunities to learn and practice service/ministry skills • Social support • Growth through spiritual disciplines (e.g., study, prayer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong interpersonal relationships • Sense of mastery and control • Church attendance and participation • Influence on church operations and policy • Spiritual maturity
FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping members discover spiritual gifts, natural talents, passions, and purpose • Develops members' leadership skills • Provides members social support • Program (i.e., ministry) development • Develop organizational capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively involved members • Shared organizational leadership • Increased organizational capacity • Ability to acquire and effectively manage resources, influence public policy and deliver formal services
NEIGHBORHOOD (& BEYOND)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with other faith-based organizations • Community organizing around social issues • Developing linkages across sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration across sectors • Transformed communities • Political power • Coalitions of organizations

Adapted from Zimmerman (2000)

For example, faith-based individual level empowering processes attempt to connect people with God and with others, to provide them opportunities to grow intellectually and spiritually, and to help them identify and use their gifts and skills. The outcomes of these processes are people with strong relationships who are mature and confident in their abilities. Empowering faith-based organizational processes help members to identify and nurture their skills and talents, and provide them opportunities to use them to strengthen and influence the organization. The outcomes of these processes are empowered faith-based organizations that are strong, growing and able to manage and expand their

resources, provide services, collaborate with other organizations (faith-based and others) and impact their social environment.

Faith-based neighborhood empowerment processes often link empowered individuals and organizations to work together to influence their social environment and improve the quality of their collective lives (Zimmerman, 1995). At the neighborhood level, empowerment processes include developing relationships between churches and other sectors of the community (e.g., law enforcement, schools, business), developing formal linkages across sectors, and collaborating to address issues of common concern (Speer and Hughey, 1995). The key outcomes of these empowering processes are strong, interconnected communities that are able to shape community life and provide opportunities for active citizen involvement (Speer and Hughey, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000).

Although faith-based individual, organizational, and neighborhood empowerment are theoretically distinct, in practice they are mutually interdependent—both cause and consequence of each other (Zimmerman, 2000). For example, empowered people create empowering processes that build empowered faith based organizations and neighborhoods. Empowered faith-based organizations implement empowering processes that empower individuals and help to build empowered neighborhoods. Empowered neighborhoods engage in empowering processes that impact individuals and organizations. In short, empowering processes create empowered outcomes for individuals, faith-based organizations, and neighborhoods resulting in a self-perpetuating individual, organizational and neighborhood empowerment cycle.

THE HOLISTIC FAITH-BASED EMPOWERMENT MODEL¹

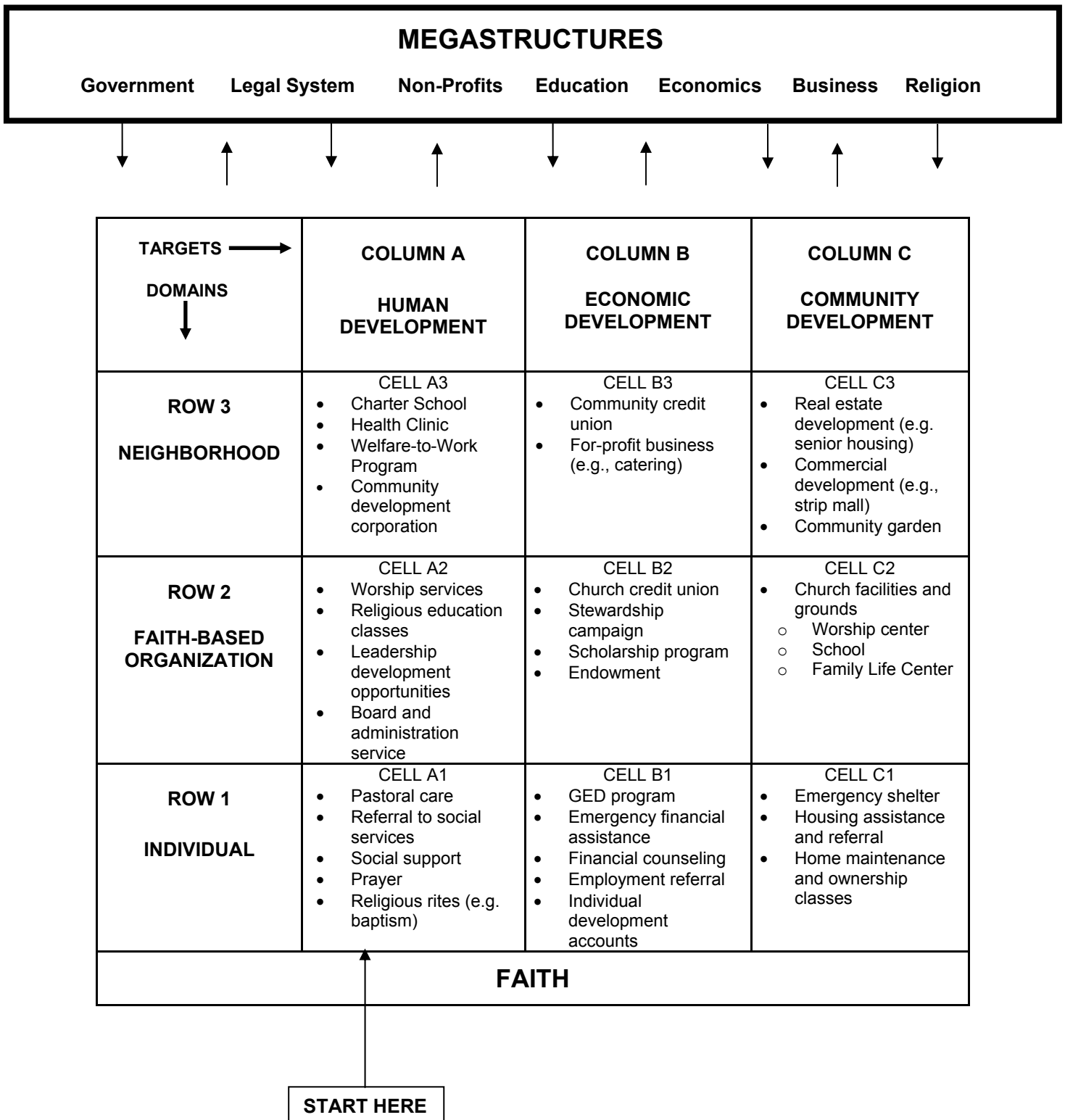
Lincoln and Mamiya (1990:4) note that “the inherent genius of the Black Church is its holistic ministry that seeks to encompass all of life because human beings are not only spiritual, but also physical and social creatures.” The distinguishing characteristic of holistic faith-based development versus other forms of development is the belief that “changing a life or changing a community is ultimately a spiritual issue.” (Perkins, 1993, p. 80). From a faith-based perspective, humans’ spiritual needs are inextricably linked to their mental, physical, material, and other non-spiritual needs. Accordingly, a holistic faith-based perspective on development recognizes that “spiritual redemption begins with a full stomach, a warm place to sleep, and a hope for something better than perpetual handouts” (Reed, p. 15). Meeting basic needs of individuals and families for food, jobs, and homes is the foundation of holistic faith-based development. According to John Perkins, founder of the Christian Community Development Association, those persons who are not indigenous members of a community who desire to create sustainable faith-based community revitalization

¹ Portions of this section are adapted from Wallace and Myers, 1998.

must make a long-term commitment to meeting the felt needs of neighborhood residents through what he has called the “three Rs”: relocation—physically moving into the target neighborhood; reconciliation—restoring the relationship between people and God, and people and each other; and redistribution—voluntarily giving of one’s self to empower the disadvantaged to do for themselves (Perkins, 1996). Perkins’ three Rs are inherent in the strategy of many African American churches. In fact, in cities all over the country African American churches have made the conscious decision to remain, and to invest their time, talents and treasures in efforts to bring life and hope to communities that others have abandoned.

The Holistic Faith-Based Empowerment Model (Figure 1) is a multipurpose analytic tool that can be used to study empowerment processes and outcomes, to categorize holistic development strategies, and as a conceptual map or “blueprint” that faith-based practitioners can use to develop, refine, and realize the visions that they have for their communities.

Figure 1. The Holistic Faith-Based Empowerment Model



The targets of holistic faith-based development are individuals (and families), faith-based organizations themselves, and physical neighborhoods. The three broad domains in which faith-based interventions seek to bring about development are human, economic and community. As shown in Figure 1, the intersection of these three targets and three domains can be graphically represented in a three by three matrix. For heuristic purposes, the figure presents the intersection of the targets and domains as nine distinct categories; in reality, however, there is considerable overlap between cells, and the distinctions between the different levels and domains are often blurred. Although the distinction is often not made by people of faith, some of the activities within the cells might be considered “sacred” while others could, particularly for the purposes of external funding, be considered “secular.” The figure presents examples of both “sacred” and “secular” programs and activities that take place in each of the nine cells.

Faith serves as the foundation upon which the Model is built. For people of faith, the concept means seeing people, situations, and conditions “through the eyes of God”—not as they currently are, but believing in what they can become and acting to realize that vision. The Model represents faith-based organizations’ mediating structure function by placing them between individuals and the societal “megastructures” (e.g., government, legal system) at the top of the figure. The figure suggests that these megastructures influence, and are influenced by, the actions of individuals, faith-based organizations and neighborhoods. Consistent with the bottom-up approach characteristic of asset-based community development, the application of the Model begins with human development at the individual and family level (cell A1) as the initial empowerment target.

Within the context of the Holistic Faith-Based Empowerment Model presented in Figure 1, meeting individuals’ and families’ basic human needs for things like a full stomach (cell A1), economic need for something better than perpetual handouts (i.e., a job, cell B1) and community need for shelter (cell C1) are foundational. Often, when their basic needs are met, those helped join the faith-based organization that helped them, as members or volunteers. As they experience the empowering processes (i.e., ministries) of the church, they voluntarily commit their talents and resources to empower its human, economic and community development efforts (cells A2, B2, C2), and it can, in turn, better meet the human, economic and community development needs of individuals beyond the walls of the church (i.e., the neighborhood and beyond—cells A3, B3, C3). Below is a hypothetical example of how the holistic development “cycle” just described might take place and some potential pitfalls along the way.

Imagine that a faith-based organization’s goal is to create a revitalized neighborhood with a particular focus on the development of businesses and affordable housing. The Holistic Faith-Based Empowerment Model is based upon the belief that holistically healthy individuals and families are the backbone of holistically healthy faith-based organizations and holistically healthy neighborhoods and broader communities. Accordingly, the first priority is to

address fundamental human needs at the individual and family level (cell A1). In fact, experience suggests that successful development within any of the remaining eight cells of the model is contingent upon success in this area. Accordingly, the faith-based development strategy begins in the bottom left hand corner of the matrix (i.e., human development at the individual and family level, cell A1) and proceeds systematically from there to address the economic and community development needs of individuals and families, faith-based organizations, and the neighborhoods that they serve. Experience also suggests that efforts to revitalize communities that do not attend to the pressing human development needs of individuals and families (cell A1) will experience little long-term success.

For example, the creation of low-cost housing is often seen as a first step in neighborhood revitalization. As a result, millions of dollars are often spent to build low-income housing (community development at the neighborhood level, cell C3) that targets the poor. While the creation of low-income housing in poor communities is important and necessary, it alone often has relatively little impact on the long-term revitalization of a neighborhood. When people do not have jobs that enable them to pay rent, no matter how low the cost, they cannot take advantage of the housing. Similarly, in environments where residents have no stake in, or hope for, property ownership, they often have little concern with maintenance of the new housing. As a result, the initial positive impact of the new housing is short-lived as the properties become unkempt and often damaged by vandalism and neglect.

Like the short-term “quick-fix” approach just described, a long-term, holistic, faith-based approach might begin its mission with the goal to build low-cost housing. But while preparations are made for construction, a holistic approach might consider addressing the human and economic development needs of individuals that would enable them to obtain jobs, pay rent, get mortgages, and care for property that they will own. So, rather than immediately starting to build homes (cell C3) or trying to start large businesses (cell B3), a long-term, holistic, faith-based approach to achieving the goal would begin its work by addressing pressing spiritual and material needs at the individual and family level (cell A1) through programs like a food pantry, substance abuse counseling, a literacy program, parenting classes, and pastoral care.

As people’s needs are met and as they are empowered by these programs, some will join the church, while others may volunteer to “give back” to others what was given to them. With the skills and talents of the people helped, along with those of existing members and the expertise of professionals outside the congregation, the faith-based organization is empowered to improve its organizational infrastructure (cell A2). This improvement might come in the form of training in program design, implementation, and evaluation, or on how to manage and leverage its existing resources to acquire more dollars for human, economic, and community development efforts. As a result of success in this empowering process, the faith-based organization might choose to create a separate 501 (c) (3)

community development corporation (CDC) to expand and institutionalize its human development programs that target the neighborhood and beyond (cell A3).

Depending upon the extent of assets in the community and congregation, and an assessment of the needs expressed by neighborhood residents, the CDC might create, alone or together with churches or other organizations, new empowering processes like a welfare-to-work job training program, a preschool, a health clinic, or an adult day care center. While growing in its capacity to deliver secular human development programs, the church can also expand neighborhood-level spiritual development efforts, bolstered by the strengths, resources and talents of new participants and the spiritual growth of existing members. Spiritual programs that reach beyond the walls of the church might include starting a religious school, sponsoring a foreign mission project, and conducting evangelistic outreach to the neighborhood.

Returning to the individual and family level (Level 1), initial human development programs (column A) might be followed by, or offered simultaneously with, emergency financial assistance and economic development programs like personal money management, job training and referral, and entrepreneurship education, coupled with instruction in scriptural principles like stewardship and economic justice (cell B1). As the financial well-being of its members improves as a result of these programs, the financial resources of the faith-based organization improve as well, through the increased giving of those helped and the decreased need to provide emergency assistance.

The increased economic capacity of members empowers the organization to increase its own economic development capacity (cell B2). This could occur by creating an endowment, adding an accountant to the church staff, providing venture capital to help members start new businesses or increasing its knowledge about how to create and operate its own businesses (e.g., a Christian bookstore or a gospel music recording company) (cell B2). A key benefit of church-owned for-profit entities is that they can provide revenue to support the church's human development work, both sacred and secular (cells, A1, A2, A3), and thus reduce dependency on external funds from government, foundations or other sources. Using revenue generated from member contributions, investments and its own business involvement, the faith-based organization might then seek to broaden the economic well-being of its community through collaboration with other churches and community members to establish a credit union or community reinvestment corporation, or by co-developing larger scale business endeavors, to provide jobs and other financial resources (cell B3).

Increased individual and organizational economic development translate into the potential for increased community involvement (column C). At the individual level (cell C1), employed people able to manage their resources can buy homes and other property. As a result they also become more concerned with their immediate surroundings and more attentive to ways their tax dollars and other

resources can be used to improve conditions. To meet the needs of these people, faith-based organizations might organize neighborhood watch groups, use the expertise of members to network with other organizations (e.g., banks, businesses, non-profits) to facilitate training in tenants' rights, homeownership and maintenance, encourage voter registration, and to provide biblical training in civic responsibility (cell C1).

As the faith-based organization grows economically, it may buy or rehabilitate property for its own use, pay off its mortgage, improve the physical appearance of its facility, purchase vacant buildings and land around the church to lease to local businesses, become informed about local, state, and federal policy and resources for community development, and discover how to collaborate with the relevant government entities to accomplish its desired community development goals (cell C2).

Finally, the faith-based organization (or its subsidiary for-profit and non-profit organizations) may use its experience, reputation within the community, relationships, and the power of its members and those it has helped to advocate on behalf of the poor and disadvantaged around important community issues (e.g., crime, housing, provision of city services). Or it might conduct larger scale community development of strip malls, senior citizens' centers, and low- to moderate-income housing owned by community residents who will take pride in their homes and have vested interests in the stability, cleanliness, and well-being of the community (cell C3). As a result of this long-term, systematic, sustainable development strategy, along with an entrepreneurial perspective on its work, the faith-based organization arrives at its goal as an empowering and empowered organization able to shape its own future and benefit those it serves. An additional result is that as the local tax base expands, property values increase, revenue is generated to provide for improved community infrastructure, and the community becomes attractive for homeowners, new business and community life—key ingredients necessary for sustainable community development.

Clearly, the scenario developed above is hypothetical, ideal, and certainly one that only the largest and most sophisticated faith-based organizations can accomplish alone. Nevertheless, it provides a picture of what is possible. We recognize that the real world is much more complex and messy than the step-by-step process just described. Necessity and/or opportunity may suggest starting in different places, skipping cells, and working on multiple pieces simultaneously. While we presented the process in a systematic, "cookbook" fashion, the content is not contrived; rather it is a composite of actual strategies that have been and are being used by progressive inner-city churches and their faith-based partners and subsidiary organizations around the country. Accordingly, the potential to achieve the type of success described in the example above is possible where there is vision, wisdom, knowledge, flexibility, strong organizational infrastructure, assistance from relevant professionals (e.g., attorneys, accountants, architects, developers), willingness to learn, a spirit of collaboration, and faith that motivates action.

Concrete examples abound of the creative ways that faith-based organizations are working to revitalize communities across the nation. Perhaps one of the most comprehensive and innovative holistic faith-based development efforts in the country is being undertaken in Detroit, Michigan under the leadership of Reverend Jim Holley at the Historic Little Rock Missionary Baptist Church. Following, we present a case study of the Holistic Faith-based Empowerment Model in action.

REVEREND JIM HOLLEY AND THE HISTORIC LITTLE ROCK MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, DETROIT MICHIGAN²



The Historic Little Rock Baptist Church

Reverend Robert E. Tate founded Little Rock Missionary Baptist Church in 1936 with six members in the basement of a home on the east side of Detroit, Michigan. Between 1936 and 1972 the church grew and moved four times, and had five pastors. Reverend Jim Holley assumed the pastorate of Little Rock on June 9, 1972. Reverend Holley was born in Philadelphia on December 5, 1943 but was raised by his grandmother in Wolfe, West Virginia. In addition to bachelor's and master's degrees in divinity from Chicago Theological Seminary, Reverend Holley earned degrees in several other subjects: a bachelor's in pre-law and master's in international relations from Tennessee State University, a doctorate in Higher Education from Wayne State University, and a D.Min in Economic Development from Drew University.

When Reverend Holley began to pastor Little Rock, services were being held in the sanctuary of a former Lutheran church on the east side of Detroit that had a seating capacity of 350. By the time that Holley became pastor, the church's membership had dwindled to 43 as a result of a court adjudication that resulted in the dismissal of the church's pastor (Holley, 1999).

Under Reverend Holley's leadership Little Rock grew to approximately 900 by 1978. In 1979 the church moved from the east side of Detroit to its present location, 9000 Woodward Avenue, in what was known as Piety Hill, Detroit's "street of churches" in the city's northern corridor. Prior to the 1950s Piety Hill served as the home of some of Detroit's most prominent white congregations.

² This section is based upon a series of interviews with Reverend Holley and selected church officials, participant observation of church meetings and activities, review of organizational records and census data, as well as information from newspapers, Reverend Holley's books and his doctoral dissertation.

After the early 1950s, however, these congregations began to move to the suburbs and sell their buildings to African Americans. The landmark building purchased by Little Rock formerly housed the Central Woodward Christian Church, built in 1927-1928 at a cost of \$500,000 and valued at \$1.2 million when Little Rock purchased it in 1978 for \$350,000. The 1,560-seat neo-gothic structure has more than twenty meeting rooms, a nursery, daycare facilities, a banquet room, men's and women's lounges, and a gymnasium. In 1982 the building was listed on the National Register of Historic places, prompting the church to change its name 10 years later from the Little Rock Missionary Baptist Church to The Historic Little Rock Missionary Baptist Church.

Between 1979 and 1992 the church continued to grow in membership and establish numerous internally focused human development ministries. As Little Rock grew the community in which it was located continued to experience significant job loss and social decline. By 1990, many buildings were vacant, crime was high and nearly 40 percent of the population lived below the federal poverty level.

Although Reverend Holley had long envisioned that Little Rock would play an integral role in revitalizing its neighborhood, it was not until 1993, at the Annual State of the Church sermon, that he introduced "Vision 2000," an explicit holistic development plan focusing on strategically meeting human, economic, and community development needs of individuals, the congregation, and the neighborhood. According to Holley (1999), the specific components of Vision 2000 were as follows:



Family Life Center, a family friendly community center

- Each child with a parent on welfare would receive a new pair of shoes at Christmas
- A guaranteed college education for all of the church's high school graduates
- College scholarships for children through the CHIP (Children in Progress) Foundation
- Creation of a charter middle and high school
- Building 200 new units of housing in Detroit
- Creation of a family life center
- Supporting a homeless shelter
- Job training, development, creation and placement program

- Developing a strip shopping mall

The holistic vision and mission of the church are reflected in its current purpose statement:

The Historic Little Rock Baptist Church believes in providing spiritual, social and economic nurturing for the total person. The Kingdom of God is advanced through the transforming of lives, by the proclamation of God's word and teaching of the gospel and cultivating Christian values for daily living. The Historic Little Rock Baptist Church believes in the proposition that all men and women are saved by grace but helped by accepting a larger share of responsibilities for our lives. We do not believe that we will produce strong soldiers by complaining about what the enemy has done to us.

Since 1993 the church has continued to grow, reaching nearly 3,700 members and over 2,100 people who regularly participate in church activities. In addition to its numerical growth, the church has also grown toward achieving many of the aspirations of Vision 2000. Below, we use the Holistic Faith-Based Empowerment Model as the framework within which to categorize Little Rock's key ministries and to describe the traditional and non-traditional ways in which the church is engaged in strategies to holistically meet the needs of individuals, the church and its neighborhood, through human, economic, and community development ministries (see Table 2).

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Little Rock has a host of ministries designed to meet the spiritual, physical,



Job Placement Center

relational, psychological and other human development needs of individuals and families served by the church (cell A1, human development at the individual and family level). These empowering processes provide nurture, care, and relationship development opportunities for all age groups and for special populations. The programs target groups including men, women, people with

incarcerated family members, those who are sick and unable to attend worship services, and those in

need of spiritual counseling. Little Rock also has a wide range of organizational opportunities, including its board of directors—the group responsible for property acquisition, building concerns and security—as well as the various traditional church groups, including multiple choirs, usher boards, and committees handling worship services and Christian education.

Table 2. The Ministries of The Historic Little Rock Missionary Baptist Church

	Human Development	Economic Development	Community Development
Neighborhood & Beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detroit Academy of Arts and Sciences—K-12 Charter School • CHIP (Children In progress Foundation) • Project GET (Get Employed Today)—job training, development and placement • 143 Bed Convalescent Home • 200 Bed Homeless Shelter • Shoes for Children • Detroit Preventive Institute—leadership development, crime, drug and violence prevention • SWAT (Soul Winning Action Team)—evangelistic outreach • Prison ministry—outreach to incarcerated • Weekly Radio and Television Broadcast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country Preacher Foods • Country Preacher Bakery • Country Preacher Preferred Meals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rock Plaza Strip Mall • Subway • Little Rock Non-profit Housing CDC • Little Rock Village Property • Odell Jones senior citizen’s building
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday Morning Worship • Sunday School • Hour of Power Christian Education • Prayer Meeting • Children’s Church • New Member Orientation and study • Bible Institute • 5 Choirs • 5 Usher boards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tithes, Offerings and Gifts • Wayne County Community College Computer Resource Center • Rock Property Management • Carpenter Shop Bookstore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$30 million of real estate • Property Improvements • Stained Glass
Individual & Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarship Program • Girl & Boy Scout Troops • Family Ministry • PACE (People Aiding Caring and Encouraging) • JAM (Jesus and Me) youth fellowship (ages 6-14 and 15-18) • Singles Ministry • Senior Ministry • Sick and Shut-in visitation • Pastoral Counseling • Homeless and Substance Abuse Referral Center • Prison Ministry—outreach to incarcerated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (SHIP) Self-Help Investment Program • Business and Professional Club • INC Academy youth entrepreneurship program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeownership Instruction • Sermons, lectures, workshops • Voter registration • Civic education

In addition to its traditional internal church activities, Little Rock has a number of important human development ministries designed to empower those in the neighborhood and beyond. The sacred ministries include the SWAT (Soul Winning Action Team) that evangelizes in the community and weekly radio and television broadcasts of the worship services. Key secular ministries include a recently purchased 143-bed convalescent home for seniors, support of a 200-bed homeless shelter, Project GET (Get Employed Today) a 501 (c)(3) welfare-to-work program with a \$500,000 budget funded through the State of Michigan that provides job training and placement for recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF), an annual fundraising program that provides 7,500 pairs of shoes for children of welfare recipients (Shoes for Children), a 501 (c)(3) educational organization that provides tutoring and college scholarships--the CHIP (Children In Progress) Foundation, and a \$30 million K-12 charter school that employs over 200 people and educates more than 2,200 African American children (Detroit Academy of Arts and Sciences).

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



Detroit Academy of Arts & Sciences Jefferson Campus (elementary school)

In light of the loss of jobs in Detroit and federal cutbacks in educational grants and programs for the poor, the need for Little Rock's human development programs has grown over time. Despite the church's numerical growth, its financial growth from tithes and offerings has not been sufficient to meet the increased needs of the congregation and the community. Recognizing the gap between the need and the church's ability to meet it, a central focus of Vision 2000 was to empower individuals and the church to create for-profit entities to address individual and community need for economic empowerment.

Economic development activities at the individual and family level focus on increasing people's financial knowledge, power and resources. The mechanisms for accomplishing this goal include: Reverend Holley's sermons on biblical principles of financial stewardship; his personal example as a business owner (e.g., Cognos, a full service advertising agency); a church member-owned investment club—SHIP (Self-Help Investment Program); the church's business and professional club; INC Academy—Little Rock's youth entrepreneurship program; and the church's involvement in 1000 Churches Connected, a financial education program sponsored by the Rainbow-Push Coalition. The accomplishments of the church's investment club are particularly notable. In addition to providing its members with knowledge about stocks, bonds, real estate, and business opportunities, club owners invested a portion of the \$100,000 they had earned to buy a Subway restaurant in partnership with an existing

franchisee. The Subway provides a healthy alternative to fast food, provides valuable hands-on training in entrepreneurship, is located in the neighborhood and employs local residents.

The primary sources of economic development at the organizational level for churches are the tithes, offerings and pledges of its members. In addition to these, Little Rock has established other sources of income. One is a lease with the local community college, in which the college pays a monthly fee to use the church's third floor for its Computer Resource Center. The church also generates revenue through Rock Property Management, its 501(c)(3) non-profit that manages the two buildings that house the charter school and its co-ownership of a portion of Rock Plaza, the strip mall in which the Subway is located. The church also runs a small Christian bookstore, the Carpenter's Shop, in its basement to distribute books and other religious materials.

The centerpiece of Little Rock's economic development work at the neighborhood level and beyond is the Country Preacher line of businesses: Country Preacher Foods—a distribution company that provides food, and janitorial and paper supplies to Northwest Airlines, several Detroit area hospitals and the Detroit Public Schools; Country Preacher Bakery—which provides



fresh baked goods to area hospitals and the Detroit Lions' stadium; and Country Preacher Preferred Meals—a business that provides more than 30,000 pre-cooked meals to the Detroit Public Schools each day.

According to Holley, in 1994, the church received 87 requests for financial support from students at 42 colleges and universities. One request in particular caught his attention and ultimately sharpened the focus of Little Rock's entrepreneurial ventures. The student wrote, "You are the reason I am in school, your life-sharing experiences and your belief that education is the passport from poverty to prosperity." The church's inability to meet the financial needs of students whom Reverend Holley had motivated to attend college, but whose financial difficulties threatened their ability to complete their education, provided an important impetus for the church to start its for-profit businesses. The explicit purpose of Country Preacher Foods is to support the outreach ministries of the church, with a particular focus on education. In 2001, Country Preacher grossed over \$5 million with all of the profits going to Little Rock's Children in Progress (CHIP) Foundation for college scholarships. In addition to providing scholarships Holley is negotiating with selected colleges around the country to commit spaces and provide financial aid to qualified graduates of the church's charter school.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The goal of community development at the individual level is to encourage and empower residents, members of faith-based organizations, and others to build their community, maximize their use of available resources and participate fully in civic life. Little Rock achieves these goals by providing sermons, lectures, workshops and training in topics like homeownership, political issues, and civic engagement.

Community development at the organizational level involves the ways the congregation itself contributes to the development of the community. At Little Rock, this includes the political power that the church wields as a large congregation of people who are encouraged to vote and be involved in issues that affect the community. The church also contributes to community development through the maintenance and improvement of its own facility, a highly visible part of the landscape. In this regard, Little Rock has undertaken extensive renovations of its property, with one of the most significant additions being 1,500 square feet



*Detroit Academy of Arts & Sciences Medbury
Campus (middle school)*

of hand-blown stained glass comprising more than 13,000 individual pieces depicting famous African American preachers, stages of the crucifixion, and various symbols representing ministries of the church. The beauty, significance and community development role of Little Rock's facility is evidenced by the church's inclusion in the Detroit Historical Society's Historic Houses of Worship tours.

In addition to being important sources of human and economic development, the various properties that Little Rock and its related organizations have purchased and renovated contribute to the physical appearance of the community at the neighborhood level. In addition the church building itself, the two large buildings that were renovated to house the charter school, the Subway, and the Rock Plaza strip mall greatly increase the desirability of the community as a place to live and invest. To further advance the community development mission of the church, Little Rock has created the 501 (c)(3) Little Rock Non-Profit Housing Community Development Corporation. Important projects that the community development corporation will undertake in the near future include working with the city, developers and other partners to build the Odell Jones senior citizens building (a 69 apartment senior high rise) and Little Rock Village—property on which 75 single family homes will be built.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the Holistic Faith-Based Empowerment Model is a tool for describing the theory of holistic faith-based development and, by identifying and ordering the key pieces of the holistic development process, it also serves as a conceptual map for those who desire to engage in holistic faith-based development. Based upon our research and observation of faith-based organizations engaged in holistic development, successful efforts are founded on sacred aspects of human development that bind people into congregations as places where they are willing to invest themselves and their resources to benefit others. As people experience faith-based empowering processes they further invest themselves in the creation of empowered faith-based organizations. It is through empowered and empowering faith-based organizations that both the pressing felt needs of individuals as well as larger, more systemic needs of organizations and neighborhoods are met.

As congregations decide what they are called to do and whom they are called to reach, the holistic faith-based empowerment model can help them to identify where they are and the steps they should consider to expand their efforts. Recognizing that people build organizations, the model explicitly encourages that people be developed first, both spiritually and socially. It then encourages the development of the economic foundation, particularly that of the organization itself, which will allow flexibility to choose what can and should be done, both in terms of human development and community development, even if government, foundations, or other entities do not choose to support it financially.

The model describes the theory of holistic faith-based development by articulating the nature of the relationship between empowering processes (i.e., how individuals, faith-based organizations, and neighborhoods become empowered by faith) and what empowered individuals, organizations and neighborhoods are able to accomplish—the creation of processes to strengthen the next level of development. The model elucidates that holistic empowerment does not occur only in human development but requires economic and community development as well.



Rock Plaza, a six-store mini-mall is owned by The Historic Little Rock Baptist Church's investment club and operated by community residents

Many churches across America are working independently, interdependently and collectively to bring about the holistic development of people, faith-based

organizations and communities. To date, relatively little research has been done to examine this phenomenon. In the absence of models, tools and examples, many faith-based organizations start from scratch, making predictable mistakes and re-learning the hard lessons discovered by many before them. While it is no panacea, nor a substitute for experience or hard work, the Holistic Faith-Based Empowerment Model can provide a starting point to guide the development of empowerment theory applied to faith-based organizations and as a template for practitioners to follow as they go about the work of revitalizing our nation's inner cities, through faith.

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About the Authors

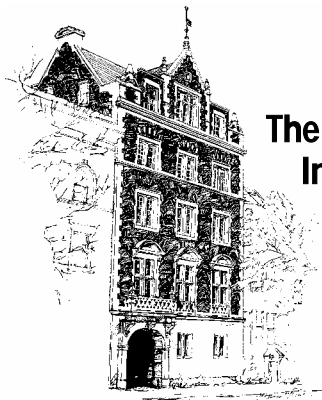
John M. Wallace, Jr. is an Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh. His research examines the impact of religion as a protective factor against adolescent problem behavior; racial and ethnic disparities in substance abuse; and the role of faith-based organizations in the revitalization of urban communities, through the provision of social services, economic empowerment activities and community development. He is the principal investigator on a five year project funded by the Skillman Foundation to evaluate its A Call To Service, ACTS faith-based initiative and is a co-investigator on the University of Michigan's on-going national study of drug use among American young people, Monitoring the Future. Dr. Wallace's research has appeared in numerous professional journals, books and monographs including *Social Work*, the *American Journal of Public Health*, and the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*. He earned his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Michigan.

Valerie L. Myers is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the School of Public Health's Department of Health Management and Policy at the University of Michigan. Her research examines the ways in which spiritual health influences individual, organizational and social life, both in private and non-profit organizations. Dr. Myers also studies spirituality as a strategic advantage in individual and organizational performance and faith-based interventions for organizational and health behaviors. She received an MSW in Social Work Policy and Planning and a Ph.D. in Social Work and Organizational Psychology, both from the University of Michigan.

Reverend Jim Holley has been Pastor of the Historic Little Rock Missionary Baptist Church since 1972. During that time, Little Rock's membership has grown from 43 to nearly 3,700 members. Under Reverend Holley's leadership, Little Rock has established numerous social service programs including job training, a convalescent home, a homeless shelter, and a ministry to prisoners and their family members. Reverend Holley also serves as the founder and board president of a 2,000 student charter school, the Detroit Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the chief executive officer of Country Preacher Foods, a for-profit social entrepreneurship venture that provides food products to airlines, prisons, hospitals and the Detroit public schools. All profits from the Little Rock's business ventures go to its Children in Progress (CHIP) Foundation, to provide college scholarships for students. Reverend Holley earned a Ph.D. in Higher Education from Wayne State University and a D.Min. in Economic Development from Drew University.



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