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FRAMING THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE: BLACK CHURCH ELITES AND THE
BLACK POLICY AGENDA

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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my grandparents who paved the civil rights road for me—Granny (Eletta Bacy), PaPa (Irvy Bacy, Sr.), Lawrence Wesley Hawkins, Grandmother (Evelyn Hawkins), and Aaron Williams; and also dedicated to my nephew, Elijah Hawkins, who will blaze the paths of the future.

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ABSTRACT

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative represents a puzzle for black politics. In an academic realm where black faces in Congress are widely hailed as integral to black representation (e.g. Tate 2003), it behooves scholars to explore instances where black faces fail to represent black interests. There is little congruence—substantive or symbolic—between the Faith-Based visions of the black masses and black political elites in the Congressional Black Caucus. But one set of black political elites, black pastors, seem to be more receptive to the Faith-Based Initiative epiphany. While some black pastors are solidly opposed to the Initiative, most plan to apply for Faith-Based funds (Joint Center 2006).

Few current policy issues highlight the role of religious elites in public policy debates in such sharp relief. Even fewer issues allow an examination of the added dimension of race and religion in the context of public policy. The research questions for this project are:

1. What are the policy images of black pastors of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative?
2. What do pastoral images of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative teach us about the contours and the content of the black consensus agenda and black agenda politics?

The policy images of black pastors have relevance for black politics, specifically, the notion of a black policy agenda. Black pastors framing and implementation of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative bespeaks much about black agenda politics. Answering

the research questions should enable the construction of an indigenous typology of black pastors as policy implementers and indicate how implementation affects agenda setting.

Chapter One **We are Family. We Shall Overcome.**

Introduction

A bevy of television shows of the recent past illustrate the sense of communalism that pervades black culture. The 1970s sitcom, *Good Times*, depicts the travails of a black family, the Evans, struggling to make ends meet in the infamous public housing of Chicago. In one episode, Wanda, a fellow tenant of “the projects”, teeters on the edge of eviction and secretly prepares to move from her apartment rather than ask for help. Upon learning of Wanda’s plight, the Evans family enlists the help of other tenants by organizing a talent show to benefit Wanda. In the final scene, the Evans donate the proceeds of the ticket sales to their *more* indigent and unsuspecting neighbor Wanda. While the Evans are poor themselves, they view their interests as intimately linked to those of their neighbor. While Wanda is not a relative or even a close friend (one neighbor enters the Evans’ apartment without knocking in every episode), she is part of the extended black family. Group interdependence and concern for the common good are unwritten rules in the black community where an old spiritual says “we shall overcome” and a 1970s hit affirms the black sense that “we are family”.

Lest one be tempted to dismiss the sort of black communalism expressed by the Evans family as an axiom of lower class life, consider the illustrious Huxtable family of the 1980s sitcom, *The Cosby Show*. While the Huxtable’s high class existence in New York City represents a foil for the Evans’ lowly position on the economic ladder, the family emphasizes black history with grandfather Huxtable keeping the oral tradition alive with stories of African American life in generations past; endorses black artists by highlighting the likes of Lena Horne; and extols the virtues of separate black institutions,

like historically black colleges and universities. Denise Huxtable's decision to attend a (fictional) historically black university was the occasion for a spin-off. *Different World* dramatized the uniqueness of black culture and the centrality of black communalism primarily by emphasizing the absurdity and selfishness of Whitley Gilbert, a wealthy black co-ed and friend of Denise. In early seasons of the show, Whitley expressed little concern or interest for her college community or the black community broadly. While the show does not go so far as to question her blackness, Whitney seems out of place precisely because her capitalist, individualist orientation clashes with the egalitarian and communal nature of the African American experience in the United States.

Even in the political realm, most African Americans need not ask the existential question, "Who Are You", as posed by the rock group The Who. The Evans family on *Good Times* faces a dilemma when they campaign on behalf of a young activist black candidate for alderman who seeks to unseat the corrupt black incumbent, Alderman Davis. Upon learning of the Evans' defection, the surly Alderman Davis dangles the threat of eviction before the Evans family by reminding them that it was he who secured their spot in a substandard housing project on Chicago's South Side. While the Alderman exhibits a warped sense of black communalism, Alderman Davis nevertheless appeals to the ethic in the midst of his bribe, averring "I always take care of my people"—read: black people. While the Evans' despise their corrupt Alderman, they also evince a belief that some black representation is better than none at all. Even crooked, Alderman Davis has black interests in mind.

These brief vignettes from black television past reflect a culture of black communalism retained from African ancestors. A West African axiom illustrates the

deep sense of interdependence found in African American culture today: “I am because we are and since we are therefore I am.” In the black milieu, communalism transcends group interactions and extends into political behavior. Individual black identity is difficult to disentangle from group identity. A recent book on Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas entitled, *Supreme Discomfort: The Divided Soul of Clarence Thomas* (2007), portrays Thomas at war within—a black man who has lost a sense of his black self. Beyond cultural maxims that dictate group loyalty, the American Apartheid has guaranteed that African Americans cannot forget who they are in the context of the political system. Thus, whether African Americans define themselves *within* the traditional parameters of black communalism or *outside* the proverbial black box like Clarence Thomas,¹ race remains a central feature of politics for African Americans. Common interests arising out of black communalism are the name of the game in black politics.

Black communalism means that African Americans largely define their political interactions in terms of group concerns. There exists a perception that Justice Thomas cares little for black interests because he articulated Supreme Court rulings that hinder a collective goal—the creation of majority minority districts for the purpose of enhancing the likelihood of electing black representatives to Congress.² But what are black interests and where are they articulated? This “we are family” mentality means that African Americans evince unremarkable unity on many political issues (Dawson 1994; Tate

¹ I am not asserting here that Thomas necessarily defines himself against his racial group or does not consider himself African American.

² Most famously, Thomas sided with the majority of the Supreme Court in *Shaw v. Reno* (1993), a landmark case that declared that a race-based redistricting remedy in North Carolina need meet strict scrutiny to pass constitutional muster per the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Thomas ruled similarly in *Miller v. Johnson* (1995), striking down three majority-minority districts in the state of Georgia. Subsequent decisions have modified the precedent to some degree, but Thomas’ role in overturning these districts has been equated to selling-out his race.

1994). Common institutions, like the black Christian church, provide a ready base and ready rhetoric for black politics (Morris 1984). The black church is an important venue for the articulation of black interests (Harris 1999; Harris-Lacewell 2004).

The collective black family has overcome egregious obstacles in the American past and remains largely committed to jointly overcoming the obstacles of the present and future. In recent years, the collective black family has united around a policy that does not represent one of the “usual suspects” on the black policy agenda. When African Americans demonstrate support for social welfare policies or for a living wage, students of politics scarcely miss a beat, as these are predictable planks of the so-called black agenda. But when 81 percent of African Americans, and 83 percent of black Protestants (Pew Survey, 2008), evince overwhelming support for a policy like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative—a policy that most members of the Congressional Black Caucus disavow—there should be considerable scholarly head-scratching.

Theoretical Framework

In the U.S. religion is intermingled with all national habits and all the sentiments to which a native country gives birth.

Alexis deTocqueville in Democracy in America

Alexis deTocqueville’s observation about religion and the American polity is epitomized by the African American experience. Booker T. Washington famously asserted that black Americans represent “a nation within a nation” (Washington 1899) with latent political power. Consonant with that latent power, the slave master’s religion was transformed by black slaves into a weapon of resistance (Scott 1985). Today, that religion remains wrapped up in the politics of the nation within a nation.

Black Politics

This project is situated in the context of the black political literature which emphasizes 1) a group consciousness which begets a collective orientation toward politics (Dawson 2001); 2) policy objectives grounded in the collective (Dawson 1994); 3) representation primarily rooted in the Democratic party (Frymer 1999); and 4) a decisive shift in the post-civil rights era from protest to politics (Tate 1994). The study of black politics is well-summarized by the Congressional Black Caucus' (CBC) motto: *"Black people have no permanent friends; no permanent enemies; just permanent interests"*

For example, in the National Black Politics Survey (1993), 75 percent of African Americans agreed, "...what happens generally to black people in (the United States) will have something to do with what happens in (my) life". Indeed, the black power movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, made communal solidarity race-specific with the injunction to "close ranks" by supporting black self-determination, black organizations and black goals generally. In the survey cited previously, fully 26 percent of African Americans agreed, "blacks should always vote for black candidates when they run". Michael Dawson's (1994) groundbreaking work isolated a black utility heuristic whereby African Americans gauge their own political interests by those of the entire group. This black utility heuristic means that on any given issue, African Americans will tend to vote in accordance with the interests of the black collective. Dawson (2001) clarified the heuristic in a later work that indicates that African Americans espouse a cornucopia of political ideologies (Dawson 2001), including black conservatism and black feminism. Whatever the ideological base, however, black politics is largely

homogenous in terms of policy content. Where heterogeneity does exist, it exists in the margins of black politics (Dawson 2001; Cohen 1999).

The civil rights era is the line of demarcation for the study of black politics. Scholars of black politics contend that since 1972, black politics has moved from a protest mode, in the vein of movement politics of the civil rights era, to a political mode, in the fashion of routine politics—who gets what, when, and how (Rustin 1965; Smith 1981; Tate 1994). In this post-civil rights era, the impetus for utilizing movement tactics as a route to securing black political gains has been eradicated since 14th amendment goals of racial equality have been achieved via the civil rights movement and subsequent legislation (Marable 1987). In the civil rights era of protest politics, the black church was an important base of political support and an important source of protest rhetoric (Morris 1984; McAdam 1982). The recent axiom that post-civil rights era black politics has moved beyond the protest mode (Rustin 1965; Smith 1981; Tate 1994) contributes to the position of some scholars that the contemporary black church is of marginal and even precipitously declining relevance to black politics (Cruse 1987; Reed 1986). Other research does not disregard the church, but is grounded in theories and models which seek to explain black political behavior with insufficient attention to religious actors and variables (Dawson 1994; Tate 2003).

For example, in her treatise on black descriptive representation in the United States Congress, Katherine Tate (2003) asserts that black ministers have been displaced by black politicians as a natural source of leadership. Nevertheless, she admits that congressional statistics indicate that clergy remains an overrepresented occupation for black members of Congress, but not for members of Congress generally (Tate 2003, 37-

40). Which is it—are black pastors insignificant or important for black politics in the post-civil rights era? Tate (1994) admits that the black church remains an important source of political mobilization and efficacy, but perhaps not as a source of pastoral leadership in the framing and shaping of public policy.

The reticence of some scholars like Tate (1994, 2003) to admit the influence of black pastors—even though myriad studies display the relevance of the black church as a source of oppositional civic culture (Harris 1999) and as an incubator of civic skills (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995), emanates from an old critique of the black church as other-worldly and pie-in-the sky oriented (Frazier 1964). The other-worldly orientation of the black church focuses on a future heaven as the locale where present ills will be soothed and, per its critics, leads to the neglect of this-worldly affairs, like racial discrimination and social injustice. In other words, European Christianity placated enslaved and disenfranchised black Americans to the extent that they failed to fight for their own freedom.

The other-worldly critique has taken on new wineskins in the past 20 years. The recent version of the critique says that black churches and their prophetic mouthpieces, black pastors, are irrelevant for black politics in the post-civil rights era because black politicians are the new agents for the black community. The black church can only beget ambiguous politics (Reed 1986; 1999) because those with their heads in the clouds do not have their feet firmly planted on the ground where problems persist. According to this critique, even in the post-civil rights era, black pastors' religious vision prevents them from seeing opportunities for political uplift.

While terming the politics of the black church ambiguous, some purveyors of this viewpoint undermine their own arguments (Reed 1986; Marable 1983). For example, Adolph Reed (1986) admits that black pastors, whom he terms organic leadership, articulate the black agenda more effectively than black elected officials in Congress. The black church is the favorite scapegoat of Reed, perhaps because Jesse Jackson's tactics are much derided by Reed as detrimental to black politics writ large. While Reed blames the black church for ambiguous politics, his ultimate and actual critique is of black elites of all ilks for securing black middle- and upper-class concerns to the exclusion of black mass concerns which are predominantly issues of the poor and working class. Black politicians fail to pursue black interests, according to Reed, but black pastors should stick to spiritual, not political matters.

In the post-civil rights era, Reed (1986; 1999) contends, black pastors are irrelevant to the black agenda since black politicians are embedded in mainstream political institutions. At best, Reed conflates the black church and black pastors and misses the utility of policy images emanating from black pastors that articulate the totality of black interests. At worst, Reed builds a strawman argument by caricaturing all black pastors in the visage of Jesse Jackson—who is a minister and the President of the Rainbow Coalition, but not the pastor of a black congregation. While eschewing a role for black pastors in black politics, Reed actually affirms that they play an integral role by admitting that black pastors are better articulators of black interests than black politicians. The black agenda is built on the rhetoric of black pastors, but it is scarcely analyzed in the literatures of black politics and public policy.

Given the black utility heuristic, the concentration of most African Americans in

the Democratic party (Frymer 1999), and black representation via the Congressional Black Caucus (Clay 1993; Singh 1998), a black policy agenda is often assumed by the media, scholars, politicians, elites, and masses³. Nevertheless, there are few scholarly treatments of the black agenda. Most scholars of black politics have ignored questions relating to a black agenda. In the compendium of black political literature examined here, only Kerry Haynie (2001) attempts to define the black agenda. Haynie calibrates the black agenda primarily by utilizing public opinion polls to gauge policies deemed important by African Americans, such as:

...support for legislation and policies favoring social welfare, economic redistribution, and civil rights issues. Specifically, laws that prohibit discrimination in housing, education, and unemployment, and laws that support unemployment compensation, jobs programs, food stamps, and educational interests are considered to be black interests (24).

According to Haynie, broad social programs in the vein of the Great Society typify black interests and comprise the content of the black agenda. A black constituency and congressional delegation consistently demands broad-scale social policies and programs on its agenda. While Haynie illustrates the broad outline of the consensus black agenda, there exists no research that examines the black agenda in American Political Development. Furthermore, there is a dearth of research that examines the obvious tension inherent in the concept of the black agenda. Indeed, Haynie's analysis fails to account for agenda denial--issues that fail to make the black agenda or that the CBC and NAACP actively oppose even though African Americans evince near consensus opinions. The support of many black churches in California for Proposition 8 which banned homosexual marriage in the state is the most recent example of how black interests do not necessarily translate to the black consensus agenda.

³ Chapter Three is replete with examples of the black agenda in practice.

Black pastors represent an indigenous resource in black communities. They are de facto political elites whose policy images of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative can enlighten scholarly understanding of the black policy agenda and the venue of the black church as an arm of policy implementation. Ironically, black politicians and scholars of black politics (Reed 1986, 1999; Tate 2003) still treat the black church as a fundamental venue for amassing votes, but discount black pastors as a significant source of discourse about public policy. This is puzzling given that black politics is defined collectively in culturally relevant institutions and venues (Harris 1999; Harris-Lacewell 2005).

A fundamental assumption of the current research is that even in the post-civil rights era where duly elected black officials reign, the black church via black pastors still contributes to black agenda politics. *Theoretically*, the linkage between the policy images of black pastors and policy venues, including the Congressional Black Caucus, is fundamental to an understanding of the notion of a black agenda. *Practically*, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative enables a glimpse into how the policy images of street-level implementers affect agenda setting. Black pastoral images and stories about the Initiative are of relevance here given that the Bush administration identified the black church as a key vehicle of policy implementation. While President Bush set the agenda for the Faith Based and Community Initiative by issuing an executive order to introduce this landmark policy, this dissertation illustrates how black pastoral images of the Initiative have implications both for our understanding of the notion of a black agenda and for policy implementation generally.

This dissertation simultaneously affirms the notion of a *consensus black agenda* comprised of policy concerns core to the black community⁴ and asserts that *black agenda politics* are broader and more nuanced than the “permanent interests” of the CBC motto. While it is certainly the case that the black utility heuristic is an important starting point for understanding black political behavior, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative represents an anomalous case where the interests of most African Americans are not reflected on the agenda of the CBC or on the agenda of the NAACP, the premier civil rights organization in the country. This is puzzling given that the thrust of public opinion literature in the past two decades indicates that elites lead mass opinion by framing issues for the public (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Zaller 1992). Black politicians in the main *oppose* school vouchers which a majority of African Americans support and oppose the Faith-Based and Community Initiative which 81 percent of African Americans support. Contrary to mass opinion, most black politicians *support* civil unions which 63 percent of African Americans oppose (Pew 2008). Since black politicians’ policy images of issues like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative do not seem to shape black mass opinion about the appropriateness of the Initiative, this dissertation looks to black pastors as a source of understanding of the dynamics of black agenda politics and policy implementation on these “missing issues” or issues that are susceptible to agenda denial by black politicians.

An acceptance of the current assumptions that under gird black political studies would obfuscate attempts to understand breaches in what is often assumed to be a unified body politic and a consensus black agenda. While Adolph Reed decries a role for black

⁴ For example, healthcare, affirmative action, and welfare are issues that African Americans support overwhelmingly and that tend to be reflected on the agendas of black caucuses at the state and national level, as well as on the agendas of black civil societal groups like the NAACP and the Urban League.

pastors in black politics, he nevertheless affirms the notion of black interests and the need for a black agenda that articulates those subaltern interests in the broader political realm. Yet, this is where most scholars end. If impermeable ties bond African Americans around common political interests, most scholars have neglected the mysterious omission of some of these interests from the black consensus agenda, including black mass support for school vouchers; opposition to homosexual marriage; and support for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Most of these issues are missing from the formal agenda of the Congressional Black Caucus, but receive unbridled support from blacks generally.

The Black Church and Black Pastors

The CBC's motto concerning the communal nature of black politics is reified in scholarship on black politics, but black communalism is not rooted primarily in politics. If a sense of communalism emanates from black Americans' common African heritage, other tenets of African culture retain salience among African Americans: spirituality, the oral tradition, and rhythmic expression (Boykin, Jagers, Ellison, and Albury 1997). The black church combines all of these cultural elements (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). As an institution, the black church has served as an outlet for political protest; a training ground for civic leaders; and an aggregator of black collective interests. Black spirituality and black churches comprise a central part of black communal identity. 80 percent of African Americans claim to be Christian (Fowler et al. 2004). Given the salience of the black church in black culture, it influences black politics in the post-civil rights era (Harris 1999).

Whatever the level of black church mobilization in the civil rights movement (McAdam 1982), the black church retains relevance as an institution with the capacity to

affect politics on multiple levels. African Americans are the most religious demographic in the United States. Almost 90 percent of African Americans claim that religion is extremely important in their lives; a majority attend church weekly; and over half consider themselves to be born-again Christians⁵. Even allowing for overzealous reporting of church attendance and the possibility that faith is only skin-deep in the black community, the black church represents a semi-involuntary institution (Ellison and Sherkat 1995b). Thus, even among nonreligious African Americans, and in urban areas of the country where secular alternatives to the church abound; the black church retains a functional and symbolic place in the black community. Beyond shaping black culture and identity, the black church represents a political venue in the black community given its past role in the civil rights movement and the present role that black churches play in community uplift.

Of course, the historical and storied symbiosis between the black church and black politics must continually be probed in scholarly treatments of black politics. Specifically, there must be internal dynamics of the black church that have relevance for the external dynamics of black politics. For example, black Christianity imbues congregants with civic skills. This process does not occur by osmosis. Black pastors provide civic messages (e.g. Reese and Brown 1995) beyond the mere public space of the church. The purpose of this project is to understand black pastors as policy actors vis-a-vis the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Black politics writ large is fundamentally influenced by the activities of black pastors.

While black pastors are indigenous resources within black communities, these

⁵ See the Pew Research Center, 2003, *Evenly Divided and Increasingly Polarized: 2004 Political Landscape* and the *National Election Studies*, 2002.

black prophets often clash with the political power structure in their efforts to pursue social justice. The quintessential social movement, the civil rights revolution, was anchored in the black church (Morris 1984; Branch 1988; Lincoln and Mamiya 1990) and propelled in part by black church prophets. The black church represents a central institution of the local movement centers that energized the civil rights movement (Morris 1984). No institution is more indigenous to the black community than the black church, which Jesse Jackson terms “the most stable influence in the black communities” (Frady 1996, 293). The charisma that is part and parcel of the black church and that marks black prophets were among the factors that made civil rights move (Chappell 2004).

Black pastors retain avenues of political influence in the post-civil rights era—in their service in national level political bodies like Congress (Tate 2003) and primarily in the politics of their local communities (Smith and Harris 2005). This project explores one underexplored mechanism of influence, *religious messages*. Black pastors’ policy images about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and public policy more generally have import for black politics and policy agendas, not to mention for black voter participation. At the helm of the seminal black institution, black pastors’ discourse about public policy influences black agenda politics.

Despite their place atop the black religious heap, the sermons and other messages of black pastors are scarcely the subject of scholarly inquiry about black politics.⁶ Two premier sociologists of religion (Ellison and Sherkat 1995a, 1265) have noted that in order to advance the study of the “integrative” role of religion in society, including

⁶ This is not to state that the black church is not a subject of inquiry. Scholars like Harris-Lacewell (2005) and Harris (1999) acknowledge the integral importance of black pastors, but neither embarks upon an analysis of sermons or political messages as the central focus of research.

politics, scholars need to examine church artifacts and ideas, including the role of theological ideas and the place of in-house publications and materials. Some of the few political scientists studying the effect of religious messages concluded that there exists a need to consider “religious messages separate from religiosity” (Reese and Brown 1995, 41). That is, beyond whether or not *religiosity* inspires civicness and/or voting (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), *pastoral messages* about politics are a phenomenon worthy of study. If the black church reinforces racial identity and provides a bulwark for the oppositional civic culture of African Americans (Harris 1999), the messages presented in individual religious settings need to be unpacked. The public policy literature provides a framework by which to unpack policy images.

Public Policy

In addition to the insights of scholars of black politics and the black church, this dissertation gains analytical traction through the utilization of public policy literature. Baumgartner and Jones’ (1993) punctuated equilibrium approach deems the linkage between policy image and political institutions as fundamental to an understanding of issue definition and agenda setting. This is especially significant in this research given the framing of the Initiative and the interaction with various policy venues from the White House to some black churches where the Initiative is being implemented.

In *Agendas and Instability in American Politics* (1993), Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones assert that *all* political processes can be understood with reference to issue definition and agenda setting. This is a lofty postulation, but this dissertation utilizes Baumgartner and Jones (1993) claim as a springboard from which to understand the nuances of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative relative to the black counterpublic.

From media coverage to public and political debate to policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation, issue definition lies at the heart of black agenda politics, just as it affects all political processes.

The political process accommodates both incremental policy change and rapid policy change. Policy monopolies of various ilks may dominate the short run political game by controlling how policy problems are defined in the public square and thus, how citizens perceive and understand problems. This represents the pluralist's nightmare (Dahl 1961). The relative stability achieved by policy monopolies, however, is most often short-lived given the ever-present potential for politically unmobilized individuals and groups to affect disturbances in the political system. The elitists are foiled (Schattschneider 1960). Problems are redefined. Existing institutions morph. New institutions emerge. While none of these are sufficient for upsetting policy monopolies, each may transform *policy images* (how the public understands policy problems). Further, institutional changes may signify important changes in *policy venues* (those arenas with authority or jurisdiction over policy issues).

The inherent difficulty of penetrating policy subsystems means that policy punctuations (instability in the agenda setting process) are most often derived from other sources. That is, policy monopolies which are stable in the short run are subject to relative volatility and instability in the long run given the potential for policy entrepreneurs and/or previously apathetic audiences to transform predominant understandings of policy questions. This is possible via the manipulation of dominant policy images.

The interaction between policy image and policy venue indicates the fundamental

importance of institutions to the policy process. Thus, Baumgartner and Jones (1993) reaffirm the notion that the expansion or retraction of the scope of conflict is fundamental to politics (Schattschneider 1960) and has implications for issue definition. Institutions make possible periods of relative policy stasis, or policy monopolies, given the mobilization of bias (Schattschneider 1960). However, different institutional venues mean that policy entrepreneurs can shop for the location where their policy image carries the most currency. When a policy image loses currency within an existing venue, a new venue may be sought out.

Policy image and policy venue are two sides of the same coin, representing the *symbiotic relationship between issue definition and agenda setting processes*. This theory of punctuated equilibrium accounts for both macro stability and micro instability in the political realm. Neither a pluralist purgatory nor an elitist heaven reigns supreme. Instead, the manipulation of policy images by political entrepreneurs represents the ultimate political power. Most any policy actor can transform policy agendas by defining issues to comport with new ideas about policy problems and policy solutions. Some may succeed at dominating policy images for a long period of time.

Similarly, Deborah Stone's (1989, 1997) causal stories contribute to an understanding of the black agenda politics of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative where the Congressional Black Caucus' story of discrimination stands at odds with scores of African Americans who frame the Initiative as a boon to black communities.

Creative and illustrative storytelling imbues mundane problems with dramatic meaning and signal importance. Deborah Stone's theory of *causal stories* (Stone 1989, 1997) permits the invocation of symbols, numbers, and stories as a means of depicting

the causes of policy problems as well as solutions to those problems. An important complement to Baumgartner and Jones (1993), Stone maintains that causal stories in the political realm are crucial to transformations in problem definition and policy image.⁷ Not unlike politics, these narratives contain both empirical and normative elements. Both theorists emphasize narrative as key to agenda politics.

While Stone asserts that political reasoning prevails in the policy process, she criticizes the tendency to view the policy process in discrete stages. Such typologies tend to depict policy formulation as the stage where a policy issue is defined. Instead, she illustrates how policy content and meaning are *continuously* created via the continuous manipulation of ideas and information. Since goals are rarely fixed in the political community, Stone asserts that policy ideas continuously compete for public attention and for a place on the governmental agenda. Thus, “problem definition is never simply a matter of defining goals and measuring our distance from them. It is rather the *strategic representation* of situations” (Stone 1997, 133). Causal stories, then, represent a primary mode of communication throughout the policy process and represents a crucial “means of influence and control” (Stone 1997, 137). The manner in which policy issues are defined matters. This is why a key task of this research is to understand the causal stories that black pastors tell about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

If policy images and causal stories are important, what form do they take? Causal stories invoke symbols including stories of decline and stories of control, synecdoche,

⁷ In terms of public understandings of policy problems, Deborah Stone (1989, 1997) speaks of causal stories while Baumgartner and Jones (1993) refer to policy image. Here, I use the terms interchangeably, as Baumgartner and Jones refer to Stone’s causal stories as a building block of what they term the empirical (numbers) and evaluative (symbolic) components of policy problems.

metaphor, and ambiguity. Importantly, these symbols allow “individuals to read (themselves) into social programs and collective actions” (Stone 1997, 162). As such, stories facilitate understanding of public problems and allow for groups to coalesce around shared notions of a problem’s causes and perhaps also around similar ideas about a problem’s solutions.

Numbers are important for depicting policy problems. Beyond the obvious use as a means of problem measurement, numbers reveal the complexity of policy problems via the *prima facie* choice of what to measure. Such deliberate decisions about the boundaries of policy problems are necessary albeit controversial. Numbers require both experts and novices alike to make judgments about the efficacy of current and proposed policies. As such, numbers make “normative leaps” (Stone 1997, 167), implying a need to move from description to prescription.

Ultimately, numbers and symbols are important because they depict the causes of problems. Policy entrepreneurs⁸ weave causal stories not only to assign blame for policy problems, but also to present themselves as capable of fixing policy problems. For those invested in the policy fray, finding the actual cause of a problem is often secondary to affixing blame and moral responsibility for problems. Locating the cause of a problem may even be secondary to considerations of costs associated with fixing the problem, especially given the importance of determining who or what is to blame for the problem

⁸ While defined slightly variably in the policy literature, policy entrepreneurs are generally defined as those who are invested in particular policies or entire policy areas (e.g. welfare policy). As such, these entrepreneurs are interested in peddling particular ideas regarding, and solutions to, policy problems. They might also attempt to change the dominant understanding of a policy problem. While politicians, lobbyists, bureaucrats, and policy wonks certainly comprise this category; individual citizens, leaders or representatives of grassroots movements, and others also represent policy entrepreneurs. See for example, Kingdon 1984; Baumgartner and Jones 1993.

(Stone 1997, 206). Thus, causal stories may serve as “devices for building alliances between groups who have problems and groups who have solutions” (Stone 207).

In short, numbers and symbols tell stories. Causal stories, not unlike the policy image, utilize empirical facts and numbers, emotional pleas, and salient symbols to depict the culprits, causes, and solutions of public policy problems. For example, consider the following statement as a causal story containing policy images about politics: “There are 10 million stories in the naked city.” As a policy problem, this might depict an environmental problem wrought by urbanization. The ten million stories depict how paradise was paved to make way for urban sprawl, congestion, and ozone alerts. Alternatively, the 10 million stories could represent individual narratives, each depicting unique lives impacted by politics. Given the varied nature of these narratives, this may be a story about the unity of political community despite diversity. But why is the city naked? Is it exposed? Do the 10 million stories represent a cacophony of people drowned out by the drudgery of everyday existence?

Alternative causal stories like this one are rarely bereft of political implications. Who deserves praise for the tapestry of stories? Who is to blame for the isolation of the voiceless? Whose responsibility is it to clothe the naked city? The number and variety of stories, while significant, is perhaps less important here than gleaning the lesson that stories in politics are most often intended to affix blame for policy problems. Some stories also point to possible remedies for policy problems. Other stories leave us baffled, perhaps because some policy problems are deemed intractable to public resolution. How issues are constructed affect agenda politics and whether an issue is placed on active governmental agendas. Issue definition and agenda setting drive

politics.

This dissertation delves into the causal stories that frame the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as it relates to the black church. The stories that black pastors tell about this policy are crucial to increasing our understanding of the black consensus agenda and black agenda politics, particularly as both are influenced by the black church. Furthermore, their implementation of the Initiative plays back into the agenda dynamics of the Initiative.

The back story of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is illuminated by John Kingdon's (1984) policy windows which provide a ready framework for understanding black agenda politics according to occurrences in three streams: the problem stream, the policy stream, and the political stream.

The problem stream consists of indicators of a policy problem like focusing events, as well as a policy feedback loop that presumes a communicative connection between political elites and citizens. The mere communication of a policy problem does not ensure agenda action, however. Indeed, constructive policy alternatives must exist or arise to address a policy problem.

The policy stream, interestingly, does not consist merely of *new* policy ideas. Old ideas and past policy approaches and alternatives are always alive, even if in the background. For example, consider think tanks whose goal is to presage policy problems, dream up solutions, and wait for problems to arise so as to proffer the prefab solution. Similarly, in the policy realm, there is little new under the sun. Old policy ideas marinate in the policy primeval soup. New policy ideas are dumped in for spice, sometimes reflecting old ideas, and sometimes combining with old policy ideas to

produce new aromas and convections. Which policies are operative at a given time are often contingent not merely on whether the enactment of the policy is technically feasible, but additionally upon the political winds.

The political stream equates with the political context and the historical times. For example, the national policy mood (liberal or conservative), public opinion on particular issues, the state of the economy, and events such as elections or wars or other upheavals all determine whether or not a political issue can garner a place on the governmental agenda. While politics are important for agenda setting, it is individuals who exploit the times for the purposes of problem solving.

Policy entrepreneurs are actors or institutions who set agendas. While policy solutions lie in waiting to solve policy problems, they are often wedded by rational actors with an interest in and investment in coupling solutions to problems. These entrepreneurs capitalize upon the fortuitous political times when the three streams coalesce and policy agendas are set. The opening of policy windows of opportunity requires a shrewd policy entrepreneur who reads the political tea leaves and couple policy problems and policy solutions.

Kingdon's garbage can approach is illuminated by Baumgartner and Jones (1993) and Stone's (1989, 1997) insights. Indeed, it is the rhetoric of the policy entrepreneur, her skill and facility with crafting causal stories and policy images, that makes a policy floating in the universe of ideas palatable in 2001 and unthinkable in 1991.

While the governmental agenda setting of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and the black agenda politics regarding the Initiative represent a significant portion of the dissertation, a consideration of the policy implementation literature is a

necessary outgrowth of the policy images and causal stories that black pastors tell. Indeed, there is little indication in Baumgartner and Jones (1993) analysis that that the *implementation of policy affects policy image*. While Baumgartner and Jones do account for continual policy image construction consonant with differential policy venues, they provide little sense that where this transformation occurs actually matters. Some of the earliest implementation scholars note that “if imperfect policy ideas can be compatible with good implementation, it must be possible for implementation to alter policy” (Pressman and Wildavsky 1984, 178). If this is so, each policy entrepreneur is not merely a rational policy actor isolated from other variables, but is affected by her embeddedness in organizational cultures with implementation power.

If scholars have long noted that implementation alters policy, what is overlooked in policy literature—especially in an age of reinventing government—is that the *culture* of the organizations implementing policies and their *cultural ambassadors* alter policy images. To the extent that policy implementation is increasingly deinstitutionalized away from the governmental sphere and toward the market and civil society, the black church culture qua black pastoral implementers will alter the policy images of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. We must pay attention to these culturally embedded street-level bureaucrats.

Thus, the current research is less interested in formal mechanisms of service delivery and more interested in the metalevel of implementation which considers the mix of institutions and values that drive implementation (see Parsons 1995, 461). Indeed, Nakamura and Smallwood’s (1980) environments model of policy indicates that three environments—policy formation, policy evaluation, and policy implementation are less

separate stages and more part of a continual feedback mechanism. Linkages account for the feedback, including classic technocrats on the governmental end of the implementation spectrum to discretionary experimenters and bureaucratic entrepreneurs on the non-governmental end of the implementation spectrum. This dissertation assumes that these implementation linkages have relevance for black agenda politics regarding the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Thus, whether or not the Initiative made (or ever makes) the formal agenda of the Congressional Black Caucus, it is nevertheless on a broader black public agenda where everyday black talk (Harris-Lacewell 2005) implies that the direction of black agenda politics is influenced by bottom-up as well as top-down actors. A wellspring of black support for the Initiative, including evidence that over half of black pastors are interested in applying for funds and that 11% have received them (Joint Center 2006) indicates that *black church implementation of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is itself a form of agenda setting*.

Given the assumption of a dynamic relationship between implementation of the Initiative and the black agenda politics, this dissertation does not focus upon two key areas of implementation research: 1) implementation success or failure and 2) policy change in terms of the ten-year window of the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993). The former would require the selection of only black churches that are formally implementing the Initiative which would negate the assemblage of the breadth and depth of policy images amassed herein. The latter approach to implementation, the ACF, is untenable here for technical reasons as the ten-year mark of the Initiative has not been reached. President Obama's continuation of the Initiative in a slightly modified form means that the advocacy coalition approach might

be applied in two years in order to determine the long-term ramifications of competing advocacy coalitions. What the approach lacks, however, is an emphasis upon short-term evaluation of the dynamics of an emerging policy subsystem or advocacy coalition. Furthermore, the advocacy coalition approach gives short shrift to those actors outside of formal coalitions or policy subsystems who nonetheless carry great weight in indigenous forums. Thus, the current research focuses upon the convergence of policy images about the Initiative with the black church in the short-term with implications for black agenda setting and for policy implementation

This research reflects both the bottom-up school of policy implementation as well as the top-down school of policy implementation. This dissertation affirms the bottom-up role of indigenous policy actors like black pastors and the top-down role of political and policy elites, namely President Bush and policy wonks like Marvin Olasky, who crafted and framed the policy that set the stage for the subaltern level of black agenda politics on the Initiative. This dissertation also goes beyond the thrust of the policy implementation literature to merge two unique, yet related aspects of public policy: agenda setting and policy implementation.

This research refines the claims of bottom-up implementation scholars like Michael Lipsky (1983) who claim that street-level bureaucrats are necessarily alienated by their work and less connected with clients than their advocacy role might imply. Rather, the research herein assumes that rather than being detached from their clients (e.g. congregants and community members), the pastor as street-level bureaucrat is heavily invested in his clientele, not simply as potential congregants but out of a sense of spiritual mission. While pastors retain a sense of professionalism in their dealings given

top-down requirements that services rendered with Faith-Based money include no religious strings like required church attendance, they do not, as government street-levelers do, view clients merely as “bundles of bureaucratically-relevant attributes” (Lipsky 1983, 76), but rather view them as whole individuals in need of holistic assistance. This spiritual advocacy comes from the orientation of black pastors to view individuals of whatever religious stripe as created in the image of God and thus, worthy of assistance with the cares of this world—not merely in need of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Just as Steven Kelman (1981) advocates an infusion of public spirit into bureaucracy, black pastors are street-level bureaucrats with a mission. While a pragmatic need to feed the hungry definitely may motivate a black pastor’s decision to apply for funds, her desire to feed the hungry is motivated by her devotion to the teaching of Christ who announced as his earthly mission to minister to the poor (Luke 4). This runs contrary to Lipsky’s (1983) claim that clients do not enter street-level bureaucrats’ decision-making nexus. The primary motivation for black pastors to add bureaucrat to their resume is a sense of advocacy on behalf of clients—community members and congregants in need. Contrary to claims that black pastors produce only ambiguous politics, this dissertation includes instances of sophisticated policy images of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and the relationship between religious implementers and the secular state. Black pastors as local street-level implementers of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative influence black agenda politics as well as the national and local agendas.

Case Study: The Faith-Based and Community Initiative

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative was formally established by executive order on January 29, 2001, as one of the first domestic acts of the Bush presidency. The Initiative is an offspring of the Charitable Choice Law, Section 104 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Charitable choice permits religious organizations to pursue government funds to underwrite a whole range of social service activities (Bartkowski and Regis, 2003). The underlying rationale is that faith-based providers possess resources, both tangible and intangible, that delineate a niche for their unique expertise in the social service arena. Given its genesis in the newly devolved welfare system, charitable choice was to occur at the level of state service delivery. Thus, faith-based organizations found themselves at the mercy of state-level administrations and bureaucracies, many of whom ignored the Charitable Choice law altogether (Center for Public Justice undated).

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative goes beyond the Charitable Choice provision to permit government funding of non-welfare related services on a competitive basis. While the welfare reform law of 1996 represented welfare retrenchment to many African Americans (the NAACP and other organizations decried the five-year time limit among other provisions), the Charitable Choice provision of the legislation allowing for religious-based providers of welfare-related social services to compete for federal funds was well-received by African-Americans generally (Bartkowski and Regis 2003). A Pew Poll conducted in March 2001 soon after the Initiative was unveiled indicated that an overwhelming 81 percent of African-Americans favored government funding of faith-based service efforts and a Pew Poll conducted in August 2008 evidences the same level

of support by blacks generally and 83 percent favorable opinions by black Protestants.⁹

It represents a significant policy change in terms of social service delivery given that it defines religious organizations as an arm of policy implementation. This is especially pertinent in light of emotive appeals to the black religious community by President Bush have been met by empirical retorts by some detractors as well as by emotive embraces by some supporters. Pressing for black support of the issue, Bush supported the House-Senate Majority Faith-Based Summit, an exclusive affair for select black pastors in April 2001; visited a black congregation in Wisconsin in July 2002 to promulgate his Faith-Based plan (Milbank 2002); and invited pastors and heads of religious organizations to the White House in March 2005 for a conference on the issue (Bumiller 2005).

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative, the political and constitutional controversy surrounding the policy notwithstanding, represents an attempt by the Bush administration to capitalize upon the untapped capacity of the country's 353,000 congregations of every religious, theological, and denominational stripe (Independent Sector, 2002). These entities account for one quarter of all non-profits in the United States and represent an intriguing paradox of practice. The contradiction between rhetoric and reality lies in the fact that these religious nonprofits (and nonprofits generally) rely upon the government for substantial financial support, to the tune of millions of dollars annually for some behemoth agencies such as Catholic Charities and

⁹ The question asks whether the respondent favors, opposes or does not know with regard to "Allowing churches and other houses of worship to apply, along with other organizations, for government funding to provide social services such as job training or drug treatment counseling to people who need them". "Faith-Based Funding Backed, but Church-State Doubts Abound." Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, April 10, 2001.

Lutheran Social Services (Monsma 1996).

Accordingly, President Bush created five offices of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives with the Departments of Labor; Justice; Housing and Urban Development; Health and Human Services; and Agriculture via Executive Order in December 2001. These offices were charged with remedying bureaucratic barriers to fruitful collaboration, promoting implementation of the Faith-Based Initiative, and monitoring implementation of the Faith-Based Initiative (Rallying the Armies of Compassion, 2000).

Given such bureaucratic obstacles along the path toward religious and government collaboration via Charitable Choice, President Bush launched a new effort to facilitate the process. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative, the central plank of Bush's domestic agenda, nationalized this plan for active partnering between government and civil society. The administration labored via the executive office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to gauge the propensity of federal agencies to facilitate or hinder collaborations between faith-based organizations and government ("Unlevel Playing Field" 2001). More importantly, and perhaps controversially, the administration sought to broaden and diversify the portfolio of governmental grants, grantees, and largesse up for grabs by the religious service providers under the rubric of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

A 2002 survey of black pastors of black congregations revealed mixed support for such efforts with 46 percent of respondents agreeing with such support (8 percent strongly agreeing) and 52 percent of respondents disagreeing with such support (33 percent strongly disagreeing).¹⁰ But, a 2006 poll indicates that a full 53 percent of black

¹⁰ The question asks whether the respondent strongly agrees, agrees, doesn't know, disagrees, or strongly disagrees with "government funding of social services provided by churches". "The Public Influences of

pastors would like to apply for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative (Joint Center, 2006). What is most remarkable is a considerable gap between the attitudes of the black masses and members of the Congressional Black Caucus, most of whom oppose the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative flies in the face of the CBC's motto that black people have permanent interests.

Statement of the Research Question

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative represents a puzzle for black politics. In an academic realm where black faces in Congress are widely hailed as integral to black representation (e.g. Tate 2003), it behooves scholars to explore instances where black faces fail to represent black interests. There is little congruence—substantive or symbolic—between the Faith-Based visions of the black masses and black political elites in the Congressional Black Caucus. But one set of black political elites, black pastors, seem to be more receptive to the Faith-Based Initiative epiphany. While some black pastors are solidly opposed to the Initiative, most plan to apply for Faith-Based funds (Joint Center 2006).

Few current policy issues highlight the role of religious elites in public policy debates in such sharp relief. Even fewer issues allow an examination of the added dimension of race and religion in the context of public policy. The research questions for this project are:

African-American Churches: Contexts and Capacities.” A Report Submitted to the Pew Charitable Trusts by The Public Influences of African-American Churches Project The Leadership Center at Morehouse College, 2002.

3. What are the policy images of black pastors of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative?
4. What do pastoral images of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative teach us about the contours and the content of the black consensus agenda and black agenda politics?

The policy images of black pastors have relevance for black politics, specifically, the notion of a black policy agenda. Black pastors framing and implementation of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative bespeaks much about black agenda politics. Answering the research questions should enable the construction of an indigenous typology of black pastors as policy implementers and indicate how implementation affects agenda setting.

Methodology

The current research utilizes mixed methods to discover the themes relevant to the agenda dynamics of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative in the black political realm.

The religious culture that frames the black agenda politics is a major subject of this research. The religious culture of African Americans is a preexisting resource for mobilization that is autonomous from, yet complementary to, psychological and organizational resources for mobilization (Harris 1999, 134).

Black pastors are a natural focus of research about the stories that comprise the black agenda with regard to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The various methodologies approach utilized here uncovers topics and questions ripe for future research while it sheds new and interesting insight into how black elites (both church and civic) shape black agenda politics. Those sources and data collection techniques most appropriate to deriving valid inferences were utilized to ascertain and analyze the views of black pastors on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative including: elite interviews;

participant observation; and basic coding and counting of themes relevant to the Initiative. Herein, the researcher soaks and pokes in the vein of Richard Fenno (1978; 2003) by observing worship services and interviewing black church elites and relevant policy elites. On the quantitative side, black agendas are coded and summarized for thematic content. The efforts of the Bush administration to sell the Faith-Based and Community Initiative to black pastors and black congregants are documented through an exploration of media accounts.¹¹ At the core of this research, the policy images of black pastors about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative are summarized according to how they comport with frames relevant to the religion and black politics. This triangulation of data advances the state of inquiry about public policy, the black consensus agenda, the implementation of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, and the state of black politics generally.

Site Selection

Black pastors were interviewed in six cities, Dallas, TX, Houston, TX, Oklahoma City, OK, Milwaukee, WI, Charlottesville, VA, and Los Angeles, CA. One pastor from Jamaica Queens, New York was interviewed in Chicago, IL. Just as denominational variety is important, regional variety and interviewer accessibility dictated the choice of these cities.

- ❖ *Charlottesville and Richmond VA.* Charlottesville is the home of the University of Virginia, which was founded by Thomas Jefferson and built by slaves. Jefferson's famous line about the wall of separation between church and state remains fodder for discussion in this hotbed of education, but also of continuing struggle over racial and religious issues. Richmond is the capital of the Confederacy as well as the capital of the state and home to a historically black college with a black seminary. These are the only Southern cities in the sample.

¹¹ Table 4.1 in Chapter Four summarizes many of these articles.

- ❖ *Dallas*. This metropolis is home to several prominent black megachurches. At the time the interviews were being solicited, one megachurch had received a visit from President Bush as well as Faith-Based largesse.
- ❖ *Houston*. A black pastor with links to President Bush and supportive of Bush's Initiative is based in Houston. Given this pastor's prominence, the Initiative is a relatively well-known issue.
- ❖ *Oklahoma City*. Oklahoma City is the home of several pastors with prominent positions in various denominations. Furthermore, Oklahoma City represents an area of the country, the Southwest, which has been relatively understudied in scholarly evaluations of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.
- ❖ *Milwaukee*. Milwaukee is home of the conservative Bradley Foundation which has funded efforts to promote the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Furthermore, the Bush administration made two trips to Milwaukee in 2002 alone in an attempt to drum up black church support for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The city has a number of black detractors as well as one prominent pastor who switched his allegiance to Bush in the 2004 election campaign, partially in response to his support of Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative and its propensity to aid the black church's efforts.
- ❖ *Los Angeles*. Los Angeles (and the West coast generally) represents a major city which has been largely overlooked in terms of the propensity for the black church to adopt Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. A prominent pastor of a church in Los Angeles is among a relatively new alliance of conservative black pastors. A large megachurch in the city is the recipient of a Faith-Based grant so most black pastors in the city were expected to know about the Initiative.

While the selection of large cities for this research project may exclude rural voices, it is certainly the case that a plethora of small black churches exist within central cities—and at least five small churches of less than 200 members were included in this study. The coverage of major swaths of the United States, including the South, the Southwest, the Midwest, and the West, gives the interviewer confidence in the findings, but does not necessarily assure generalizability of the findings.

Case Selection: Denominations and Pastors

Individual black churches are idiosyncratic in terms of membership, despite a shared culture rooted in slavery, emancipation, and civil rights. Yet, the possibility of relative unanimity (e.g. political, social or otherwise) within discrete African-American denominations renders denominational variety of utmost importance for this research.

Since a focus on one black denomination would limit the potential findings of the current research, control has been infused into the current study via intentional selection of pastors from three denominations deemed representative of the black church, “improv(ing) the likelihood of obtaining valid inferences” (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 206).

Accordingly, pastors were selected from three of the eight historically black denominations: the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Church of God in Christ, and the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. and other black Baptists. These denominations vary in their theological emphases, but are similar in the respect that they are representative of a racialized realm—black civil society. The denominations range in their organizational structure from hierarchical—in the case of the African Methodist Episcopal church to flat—in the case of Baptist denominations of every ilk (e.g. Full Gospel Baptist to Missionary Baptist). The African Methodist Episcopal Church is deemed representative of three other black denominations—the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Zion church. A variety of Baptist denominational affiliations persist in the black milieu—including some black Baptist congregations that are affiliated with the largely white Southern Baptist congregation. While there exists separate Baptist polities, they largely differ on stylistic points in terms of worship, but scarcely differ in terms of their adherence to the tenets of basic Christian creed and doctrine. Thus, there is no reason to believe that the findings would be different if all eight denominations were included herein. The three denominations included in this study account for the variation across the black church milieu.

Twenty-eight pastors across six sites from the three select denominations were interviewed from April 2006 to April 2007. Church memberships ranged from very small to the size of a small city—20,000. An account of pastoral characteristics is included in more detail in Chapter Five, as well as an explanation of denominational characteristics.

Table 1.1 Pastors by Denomination and Location

Location	AME	Baptist	COGIC	Total
Charlottesville and Richmond, VA	1	6	1	8
Dallas, TX	0	1	0	1
Houston, TX	0	1	0	1
Los Angeles, CA	3	1	2	6
Milwaukee, WI	0	1	1	2
Oklahoma City, OK	3	5	1	9
Queens, NY	1	0	0	1
Total	8	15	5	28

About 75 percent of the pastors in the dataset were selected based upon media accounts, local black newspapers, religious television, word of mouth recommendations, and in some instances, a priori interviewer knowledge.¹² In addition to the intentional selection of informants, the interviewer relied upon snowball sampling (Warren and Karner 2005). That is, the recommendations of intentionally selected interview subjects were utilized for future interview subjects. This method increased the sample pool while simultaneously increasing interviewer access, especially where informants allowed the interviewer to use their name as a credential or where informants sent letters or made

¹²One of the most obvious lessons of my research has been that black pastors are a difficult population to pin-down. Interviews are difficult to schedule without a personal reference. Furthermore, given that black pastors wear many hats, even scheduled interviews are sometimes cancelled given church emergencies and other exigencies.

phone calls on the interviewer's behalf. In rare instances, selection of pastors was random, via the telephone book or internet search.

Participant Observation

The researcher attended church services and/or church meetings at four of the churches associated with the interviews. The purpose was to observe and experience differences between church dynamics across the African Methodist Episcopal, Baptist, and Church of God in Christ denominations so as to increase rapport with pastoral informants and so as to more properly analyze policy images from their indigenous locales. The researcher also attended a White House conference on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative in Charlotte, North Carolina to observe the Faith-Based politics of the Bush administration as well as black pastors' participation in this political event.

Elite Interviews

Elite interviews with black pastors elicited the policy images of black pastors that frame the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. These images were expected to reveal important information about black policy agenda politics to the extent that religion is intertwined in the black political sphere. These images also reveal how pastors receive and interpret the actions and policy images of political elites, such as members of the Congressional Black Caucus and the President. In addition to pastors' own impressions of the Initiative, the images reveal how they interpret denominational dictates about the Initiative and how they gauge official pronouncements from the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

An examination of the realm in which policy formulation occurs--the world of political and policy elites, is also in order. Five policy elites connected to the Faith-

Faith-Based and Community Initiative were interviewed to reveal the substance of the policy issue and represent an important unit of analysis. Interviews were utilized to gauge policy makers' and politicians' viewpoints concerning the implementation of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative relative to the black church.

In their capacity as interview informants, black pastors represent important contributors to the compendium of knowledge about black agenda politics and the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. While interviews provided lush accounts of matters of religion and politics, there are disadvantages associated with this type of social science research. For example, the researcher must maintain perspective about the context and the form of interview data. Knowledge generated from interviews is “the outcome of a situated encounter” (Warren and Karner 2005, 157) and as such, the benefits of controlled experiments and random selection are forfeited. Knowledge generated from interviews is in the form of narratives and thus, the elucidation of scientific inferences is complicated by the tasks of codification of data (following countless hours of transcribing data); conceptualization of variables (following countless hours of coding data) and categorization (following eons of conceptualizing data).

Face validity for interviews of both pastors and policy and political elites is quite high given that the interviewer can largely assume that the interviews teased out the policy images that pastors and political elites themselves utilize to portray the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Interviews allow informants to “...indicate the meanings they give to those aspects of their life-world relevant” to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative (Warren and Karner 2005, 157).

Theme Analysis

The current research examines the policy images that frame the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a way of understanding black agenda politics. Thus, the researcher summarized the responses to the interview questions according to themes derived from the literature. Additionally, the interviewer coded and counted the policy pronouncements and legislative agendas of the NAACP and the Congressional Black Caucus for content at the height of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative's unveiling to learn about black agenda dynamics. The Congressional Black Caucus was selected for agenda analysis because it claims to represent the interests of all African Americans in politics. The NAACP was chosen because its claim to represent the civil rights of African Americans. Importantly, the selection of these prominent black institutions allowed an exploration of the conventional wisdom of black politics—collective interests and its rather unexplored corollary—a black consensus agenda. Content validity in these instances of the black agenda appears high given that the analysis focused upon public and official pronouncements proffered by these groups as representative of their legislative priorities.

The researcher ascertained relevant frames with which to analyze policy images based upon a careful review of relevant literature from the disciplines of political science, history, and sociology. The literature review is an exhaustive argument of why the variables included herein are deemed most relevant to the current research. Thus, even where scholars disagree with the current research design, face validity remains high.

Key Concepts

Black political participation has been the primary focus of most studies that

document the impact of the black church on black politics (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Harris 1999). But these latent evidences of civic skills (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995) tell us little about the narratives that energize black agenda politics. These studies say even less about the nature of the black agenda.

In the main, the black politics literature does not speak the language of the public policy literature. The current research rectifies this gap in that it applies the policy literature to black political dynamics. For example, the policy literature refers to the list of issues up for active consideration before relevant and authoritative governing bodies as formal or governmental agendas (Cobb and Elder 1972; Kingdon 1984). In the current study, the term *consensus black agenda* will be applied to the formal or governmental agenda of the Congressional Black Caucus and the NAACP given that these bodies are presumed to represent the collective interests of African Americans. The CBC and NAACP codify the consensus agenda in the form of legislative priorities. As explained in the literature review, the *consensus black agenda* includes issues that African Americans overwhelmingly support, including healthcare, welfare, and affirmative action (Haynie 2001). In the main, there is little contestation concerning these issues, except in the details of policy formulation and implementation. It is certainly the case that members of the CBC and the group itself pursue other policy issues of concern to black and non-black constituencies, nevertheless, the black consensus agenda remains consistent.

If, as Baumgartner and Jones (1993) maintain, issue definition and agenda setting drive politics, my research reveals that contestation occurs outside the confines of the consensus black agenda. Agenda battles occur in the realm of what I call *black agenda*

politics. Again, we can take cues from the policy literature to define this contested terrain. Public agendas are not formal agendas in the sense of the Congressional Black Caucus' Legislative Priorities, but they nevertheless embody public sentiment and garner high levels of public attention. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative can be said to be on the black public agenda but not on the black consensus agenda. The CBC is involved in *black agenda politics*, but they are not necessarily the central players. Instead, this is the terrain where the black masses and even some elites sort out their politics:

Everyday black talk is the mechanism black masses use for discerning the authenticity of elite narratives (Harris-Lacewell 2005, 206).

The overwhelming support of African Americans for the Initiative and the position of black pastors as policy implementers potentially alters the national agenda and poses a challenge for the black consensus agenda of the CBC.

Dissertation Chapter Overview

Chapter Two explores the links between the black church and black politics. Black politics is inexplicable without a consideration of black oppression via the institution of slavery, the emergence of the black church as a cornerstone of black communities, the role of prophecy in the black church, and the emergence of black politics and black politicians.

Chapter Three examines the consensus black agenda via a historical analysis of black agendas past and the coding of policy pronouncements of two of the premier black political and civil groups: the Congressional Black Caucus and the NAACP. While most African Americans support the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, neither the CBC nor the NAACP agendas include the Initiative.

Chapter Four traces the contours of compassionate conservatism and its crowning achievement, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The story of the Initiative has been a political one, with significant implications for black politics and the black church.

Chapter Five includes an examination of the policy images of twenty-eight black pastors in three denominations on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Black pastors' framing of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is crucial to understanding black agenda politics.

Chapter Six summarizes the major findings and discusses their significance. It depicts an indigenous view of black pastors as policy implementers. Black pastors refine our understanding of street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky 1983). The chapter considers the recent election of Barack Obama to the presidency and what this historic shift on many levels signifies about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and black agenda politics.

Chapter Two Of Prophets, Protest and Political Theodicy

Black History: Common Oppression

The trajectory of the African-American experience follows a non-conventional arc. While history is appropriately viewed through the lenses of time, a steadfastly nonlinear pattern emerges with regard to black historical time. This is not to state that path-dependency never prevails in the black historical milieu. Indeed, process tracing and other historical devices remain important indicators of cultural milestones and signifiers of group success. Yet the black experience is most remarkable for an interactive cultural narrative that transcends neat scholarly categories and generational boundaries.

Black historical time is marked by a dialogue that extends back and forth among generations. This dialectic represents various combinations, recombinations, and fluctuations within black culture over time. The black past interprets the black present because individual history is group history in the African-American experience. Likewise, black institutions and black politics reflect this sense of black communalism.

The black church has been a primary channel through which the stories of the black experience have been communicated. As the seminal institution of black life, the black church represents an essential incubator of civic skills as well as of political activism (Verba, Scholozman, and Brady 1995; Harris 1999). This trek through historical time reveals how a marginalized group's search for earthly and spiritual significance culminates in *a political theodicy unique to the black political domain*.

Theodicies are “religious explanations that provide meaning” in the face of crises caused by gaps between belief systems and reality. In the African American experience,

the gap between the American Dream and reality looms large (Hochschild 1996). Given the United States' dismal record vis-à-vis African Americans, it could be posited that the United States has fallen short of the ideals of polyarchy for most of its history (Dahl 1971). The seven ideals of polyarchy are elected officials, free and fair elections, inclusive suffrage, right to run for office, freedom of expression, alternative information, and associational autonomy. To the extent that African Americans were legally and functionally excluded from the polity until the mid-twentieth century, there has existed a severe problem of how to persist in the face of persecution and suffering.

If one traces the American experiment, there has not been a positive linear relationship over time between liberal ideals and the rights accorded to African Americans. Indeed, the record has been punctuated with promises unfulfilled as the government that has purportedly epitomized egalitarianism since its founding (Myrdal 1944) has been a beacon of disenfranchisement as long, or longer, than it has upheld enfranchisement for all citizens. The Civil War Amendments were promises unfulfilled for African Americans until the twentieth century.¹³ Corporations were considered “persons” by the courts, with rights akin to those of citizens, such as lobbying the government or refusing to incriminate oneself, before African Americans received similar legal recognition. “In short, if we accept that ideologies and institutions of ascriptive hierarchy have shaped America in interaction with its liberal and democratic features, we can make more sense of a wide range of inegalitarian policies newly contrived after 1870 and perpetuated through much of the twentieth century (Smith 1993, 562).”

Black churches sought to fill the void caused by the contradictory American

¹³ See for example the *Slaughterhouse* cases of 1872 and *Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad* (1886).

traditions. Churches sought to create not merely spiritual meaning out of suffering, but also political meaning. Critiques of the church as other-worldly and nonpolitical miss the fact that sacred symbols are often mixed with secular/political ones in the black milieu (Harris 1999). As the cornerstone of black societies, black churches contribute to the creation of political theodicy in the black milieu.

Scholars of black politics and history broadly agree that the black church provides a significant locus of black political mobilization (Reed 1986; Harris 1999; Smith 2000) and a burgeoning literature asserts the importance of black religion in black political ideology (Dawson 2001; Harris-Lacewell 2004). The black church is certainly a subtext for black political discourse. Yet, beyond a mere contextual element in a dynamic field, what is the relevance of black pastors in the political domain?

The image of the black pastor as a prophet speaking truth to power is a prominent one. Yet, a competing image depicts the black pastor as a relatively weak and anachronistic figure at the helm of an ambiguous institution vis-à-vis the political landscape. This chapter explores the historical role of the black church in black politics as well as the black pastor as prophet. Ultimately, this chapter provides the bedrock for an understanding of the place of black pastors in black politics.

The Black Church: The Chief Cornerstone

The black church serves as a sacred canopy over all of black life. Despite diverse denominational dynamics in the black church milieu, a common church culture pervades and informs black consciousness. Yet, there is irony in the fact that the black church is the chief cornerstone of black society. The Christian religion was imposed upon the slaves as a means of social control. Some Christian denominations created separate slave catechisms to remind them of their inferior place in God's creation (Levine 1977). Ultimately, however, Christianity became a tool of liberation, freeing the slaves from institutional irrelevance. The invisible church of the slaves merged with the black church of the freedmen to create a 'nation within a nation' (Frazier 1964). Indeed, "an organized religious life became the chief means by which...organized social life came into existence among the Negro masses" (Frazier 36). What emerged instead was an indigenous institution that would enable leaders, galvanize the weapons of the weak, and foment societal unrest and political protest. In the words of the gospel canon: the stone that was rejected became the chief cornerstone. This bedrock institution begs an examination of the centrality of the black church to political protest, both in historical and contemporary perspective.

Far from primitive, demure, and dismissive, the black slave "tricked" the white Christian by transposing religion from a form of social control to the basis of a social platform. Beyond Frazier's cursory treatment of plantation life, Levine describes how the antebellum slave "converted God to himself" (33). A doctrine predicated on Calvinistic predestination was less conducive to black life than a doctrine forged of Arminian free will. Calvin's theology required obeisance to a sovereign God who ordained all things,

including the slavery of His black children. Unable to reconcile the benevolent God who delivered the Hebrew children via the prophet Moses and the sacrificial Jesus of the gospel with the austere God of legal slavery, the black slaves settled upon a doctrine that emphasized freedom of choice. Given their forced resettlement in the land of opportunity, this theological choice was apropos. The white master could compel outward religious conformity, but the black slave chose to adapt Christianity to his/her station.

The choice of salvation belonged to the slave him/herself. Whereas slavery emphasized servitude, salvation meant the release of chains, figuratively and literally [in some cases, slaves who converted to Christianity were freed] (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). Whereas slavery emphasized conformity, salvation meant personal conversion arising out of choice. For the black slave, salvation meant “(a) sense of change, transcendence, ultimate justice, and personal worth” (Levine 39). Salvation meant a victorious Jesus cast in the vein of the Old Testament prophets who led the Israelite slaves to physical as well as spiritual freedom. This dual emphasis on *liberation*, both physical and spiritual, forms the basis of black religious consciousness to the present day. Black Christianity emphasizes justice in the present world as well as in the world to come. Liberation is spiritual as well as physical. As God delivered the Hebrew children from Pharaoh’s grip, He delivered the African-American slave from the grip of the slave master. The imposition of Christianity, a form of social control, became the basis for a shared vision of black society.

From the beginning, black Christianity was improvisational and communal, reflecting the African slaves and early black Americans need to adapt continually to a

tenuous social condition. Accordingly, African Americans learned that they could ‘lean on the everlasting arms’ of the black church. The black church blurs the lines between sacred and secular (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990), providing a common context for all of black life. The black church both buttresses (Levine 1977) and constrains consciousness (Frazier 1964; Reed 1986). The black church catalyzes protest (Morris 1984; Findlay 1993). The black church provides context for black life. Indeed, it is impossible to unpack the elements of black protest movements (Branch 1988; Findlay 1993), black politics (Branch 1988), and black politicians (Frady 1996; Reed 1986) without considering the black church (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990).

Acclaimed sociologist E. Franklin Frazier (1964) argues that slavery deprived Africans of their indigenous cultural heritage. The dissolution of the clan, per his argument, stripped the African transplants of their societal norms and religious rubric and the ability to order and to imbue the “new world” with any meaning. The religion of the slave master would fill that void.

While conceding the import of the black church as an institution, Frazier criticizes the emotional nature of the black church experience, equating black spirituality with a preoccupation with the otherworldly. In terms of the pursuit of political and human rights, Frazier (1964) asserts that such myopic spiritual vision rendered the black church “the most important institutional *barrier to integration* and the assimilation of Negroes” (emphasis added, 75). What could move African-Americans from a state of *spiritual bliss* that endured unequal political and social status to a state of *critical awareness* that demanded equal political and social justice? The secularization of the black church in the wake of urbanization resulted in a this-worldly focus upon the economic, social, and

political problems that blacks suffered in the here and now rather than an other-worldly emphasis upon salvation in the distant future (Frazier 1964).

In contrast to this view of the black church as a political liability, Lawrence Levine (1977) asserts that slave songs, Negro spirituals, and black secular songs represent folk expressions of black resistance. These cultural creations mocked rulers; recited injustices; and provided satirical resolutions to the problems of the black slave. The slave's worldview, assumptive of oneness between God, nature, and man, rendered all aspects of life inseparable from a "sacred whole" (Levine 32). Transcending the other-worldly/this-worldly dichotomy, the black slave never drew firm lines betwixt sacred and secular, as such thinking is more reflective of enlightenment modernity than tribal philosophy.

Frazier's argument implies that the African slaves arrived on American soil *tabula rasa*, bereft of any knowledge of their previous circumstance. While it is certainly the case that the African slaves were most often forbidden from practicing any form of tribal religion, not to mention the fact that they were indeed dispossessed of their tribal core (as Frazier correctly asserts), it need not follow that the slaves were stripped of all vestiges of their culture. Indeed, the slaves' view of the white God emanated directly from their animistic views that fused nature and God (Levine 1977).

While Frazier does recognize the centrality of the black church, he accords it no value for the purpose of civic skills given his assertion that the black church, rooted in the slave experience, begets an otherworldly focus. This critique betrays a Marxist bias whereby religion is deemed a mere mechanism of social control to the benefit of some ruling class. While conceding the reality that a 'nation within a nation' was

surreptitiously built under the nose of the white man and persisted beyond an era where church membership was compulsory or a necessary coping strategy; Frazier ultimately critiques the black church as a peddler of complacency.

Even assuming that one relegated Frazier's otherworldly critique to the era prior to emancipation, his argument holds little currency. Black Christianity, in concert with black culture, transformed slaves from "prepolitical beings in a prepolitical situation" (Levine 54) possessing no institutions, to God's image-bearing children possessing the hallmark of American freedom: the church. The black church remains a cultural center of the black community, even where not all are religious (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). Within the black church, elements of both otherworldly dreams and this-worldly nightmares coexist (Cone 1991), allowing for black survival in the midst of vicious violence and political persecution. Beyond mere survival, however, the black church allowed for black thriving. Black business and civil society emerged out of the black church. Insurance companies, civic groups, and other organizations were enabled by the civic skills that developed within the black church (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). Such organizations thrived during the antebellum period, the era when black civil society united to elect its first political representatives.

Black Congressmen during Reconstruction were numerous and varied. Between 1870 and 1901, twenty-two African Americans served in Congress (Middleton 2002). These statesmen were clearly 'quality political candidates', with the professions of attorney, businessperson, and teacher represented among them. Several of the black Congressmen, including Richard Harvey Cain, were ministers. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) have noted how religious experience translates to civic skills, helpful for

political participation.

The white power structure acted swiftly to strip the new black citizens of their political power, enacting well-known means of legal disenfranchisement and practicing sinister sorts of social intimidation. When blacks were expelled from formal politics, the black church became the central arena of black political activity, the ‘nation within a nation’ (where blacks could “aspire to become leaders of men” (Frazier 1964, 48). Indeed, the signal importance of and high drama of church conventions and elections is portrayed vividly by the 1960 National Baptist Convention which drew 35,000 members and whose presidential vote splintered the black denomination asunder over the issue of whether to christen the Southern Christian Leadership Conference an official organ of the denomination (Branch 1988).

During the era of slavery and Reconstruction, the black church represented a nation within a nation (Frazier 1964). Black religious songs included hidden and latent protest elements. During the era following World War I, the black church allowed for both acculturation and migration. Black spirituals served as a source of racial pride as they were disseminated to white audiences by groups like the Fisk Jubilee Singers (Levine 1977; Branch 1988). During the era following World War II, the black church served as a backdrop for agitation. Gospel songs incorporated themes of protest with faith (Frazier 1964; Levine 1977). Beyond sociological benefits, the black church became both a site for and a means of political opposition. Black theology is illustrative of the way that the black church created political meaning.

Black Theology

The venue of the black church was important for the development of black culture

and black consciousness. A distinct offspring of the black church is black theology. If Christianity was originally imposed as a means of subjugation and social control, it became about liberation and social equality via black theology. Whereas white theology was utilized as a tool of the state to rein in black resistance to political and social structures, black theology was created as a tool of the oppressed to combat white hegemony in political and social structures. Whereas white theology was rooted in academic and intellectual frameworks, black theology was rooted in the African American experience.

According to black theology, just as God bestowed favor upon the Hebrew children—a minority group, so God prefers minorities and the poor. This preferential option for the poor is reflected in Catholic Social Thought and in a version of liberation theology that emanated from South America. Unlike the Catholic version, the Jesus Christ of black theology is Himself black. Like the Catholic version, Jesus is a prominent figure in black theology as a liberator of the oppressed. Christology, per black theology, revolves around Jesus' work as a social reformer. Indeed, Jesus begins His ministry by reading a passage from Isaiah that is interpreted by adherents of black theology as the central thrust of Christ's work:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Luke 4: 18-19 (ESV)*

Thus, the Jesus of black theology has a social justice mission. Jesus qua the social gospel is necessarily a political figure. Likewise, the black church qua black theology is

necessarily intertwined in concerns of the state. Jesus' major mission was the liberation of the oppressed and black theology is committed to the same goal, with black oppressed people, and the black church, being central to the struggle for liberation.

Black theology transformed a white theology once used by the dominant culture to justify slavery to comport with the experiences of the oppressed and minorities. Indeed, black theology is infused with some vestiges of African culture. The notion that the church is uniquely poised to talk about political matters is consonant with the African tradition that emphasizes unity between the secular and spiritual realms. Since kings and tribal leaders were often religious leaders, there was little trepidation about the notion that black pastors should speak to political concerns. Liberation theology represents the working out of a black Christian manifesto. Shorn of rights and liberties, black theology articulates an African American worldview whereby political action is required by the church. Separation between this-worldly concerns and otherworldly pursuits is deemed unnatural by liberation theology. A black theology of liberation and oppression is concerned about politics by definition.

The timing of black theology—it was first articulated in 1966—is consonant with the rise of Black Nationalist and separatist movements. This timing is not merely serendipitous. Black theology clearly requires a strong black identity with the image of a black Jesus and with the contention that Jesus actually favors black people for accomplishing His ends of social justice. Some black theologians have challenged the notion that black theology is either ubiquitous or supreme in the black church milieu. For example, Peter Paris asserts that black churches need focus on the similarity of social teaching across the black churches. The notion that all humans are created in the image

of God, for example, is proffered as a source of unity across black denominations. Indeed, Paris rebuts the claim of the major articulators of black theology that it is non-academic and rooted firmly in the African American experience. Paris claims that black theology did not arise from the church itself, but instead from seminarians. What unites black denominations as diverse as the black Baptists and the African Methodist Episcopal Church is a commitment to social teaching that emphasizes the social equality already inherent in the Christian tradition. Thereby, per Paris, all black Christians are united in their critique of any social teaching that allows racial discrimination to coexist with, and even be justified by, the faith.

Black Church Meets its Critics

Whether or not black theology is central to the black church, some scholars assert that the black church *impedes* black political progress. Per their argument, despite its usefulness in the civil rights era, the black church, and particularly black pastors, lacks currency in a post-civil rights political milieu. Indeed, most critics esteem the institution of the black church as an important venue for political mobilization and few disparage the black minister as useless. Nevertheless, the near-automatic prestige accorded many black pastors in black milieu troubles some critical scholars. Furthermore, even if black theology potentially fuses sacred and secular in this world, the otherworldly orientation of black religion continues unabated.

Manning Marable (1983) articulates the position, according a high place for the black church as the historical bedrock of black politics, but simultaneously positing a declension in the black pastor's influence in the post-civil rights era. Most critics of the black church assert that the growth of the NAACP during the twentieth century and the

attainment of 14th amendment civil rights gains reduced the need for the black church, and especially for black pastors, to assume a role in black politics. Marable posits a decline in the prestige and political influence of black preachers in the post-civil rights era predicated on a decline in the rate of African Americans entering the profession. While black pastors may have once helped salve the political lamentation of the Negro spiritual "We Shall Overcome", in the post-civil rights era Marable maintains they have left African Americans singing the contemporary Janet Jackson tune, "What Have You Done for Me Lately?"

The thrust of Marable's critique is centered on what he views as a divided *raison d'être* of the black church as manifested in the leadership of black pastors. Black pastors are ultimately hamstrung in their efforts to save souls and secure the streets. That is, pastors have failed to reconcile their spiritual and social missions. As such, Marable reflects E. Franklin Frazier's (1964) criticism of the black church as primarily concerned with other worldly spirituality to the detriment of this-worldly issues. As Marable's critique is rooted in a Marxist perspective, his most prescient insights relate to how the black church reflects broader cultural and political dynamics. Indeed, he argues that the black church reflects and reifies the class distinctions inherent in the dominant culture. Marable portends that a future challenge of the black church would be the reconciliation of the collective needs of the black community with the penchant for individualism in broader American culture. Here, Marable foreshadows the contemporary schism in the black church between the liberation gospel, emphasizing black collective approaches to economics and politics, and the prosperity gospel, which emphasizes the individual believer as the center of the quest for blessing--economic, spiritual, and otherwise.

Ultimately, Marable calls for black pastors to invoke the anti-capitalist fervor embodied in the work of Martin Luther King Jr., especially his later organizing of the Poor People's Movement and as epitomized by his death at a sanitation strike. Black pastors evince an ambiguous politic emanating from a misinformed otherworldly theology.

Compounding the otherworldly critique, critics contend that the black church is plagued by collective action problems. While the black preacher is the only figure in the black milieu with a "natural black constituency" (Cruse 1987, 208), denominational divisions render the potential of black church networks precarious and problematic at best. Cruse posits that the black church has failed to emerge as a distinctly black "power base" (Cruse 1987, 242) and has instead embraced "...black versions of the American Dream" (236). Cruse maintains that Martin Luther King Jr. contributed to this failure because he failed to comprehend the irony that the black church as an institution contradicted his own vision of full integration. Rather than full assimilation, Cruse asserts that pluralism would allow black institutions to flourish and thrive in the context of the broader society. While critical of the black church and black pastors, Cruse nevertheless maintains that the black church is central to his vision of a pluralistic society. For Cruse, the black church is the "social fulcrum" (257) for the creation of a black identity of self-help and a crucial reflection of the validity of a pluralism where separate but equal institutions can co-exist.

An even more stringent line of critique asserts that the black church, rather than being foundational to political progress, actually retards black political development. Adolph Reed (1986) concedes that black pastors possess a natural constituency, but challenges the notion that the black church is a source of organic, black political

leadership. Reed reserves his greatest critique for leaders like Jesse Jackson who create the illusion that the black church represents a grassroots political constituency. The black church as an entity maintains institutional primacy in the black community only by default. Both black church leadership and myths about the pervasiveness of the institution, per Reed, fuel a black exceptionalism that presumes "...a peculiarly racial basis of (political) participation and representation" (41). Black pastoral claims of authenticity in the political realm cannot be legitimated by their basis in the black church. "The notion of a clerical or church-based political legitimation constitutes an unnecessary and dubious incursion into regular (political) processes" (Reed 1986, 55). For Reed, the black church is ultimately a redundant entity in the black political milieu—as *organic and indigenous* as black pastors' efforts to engage the political system may be, their efforts merely buttress those of *bona fide and elected* black politicians. Black pastors, and the black church, are ambiguous because they can only respond to activism generated by outside activists. For Reed, the black church has never led the political charge and it never will.

Reed's argument summarizes the chorus of the voices who decry a prominent role for black pastors and the black church in politics. The black church is unnecessary because duly elected black politicians are sufficient to press black issues; and dubious because church-state boundaries appear to be crossed when pastors insert themselves into black politics. Is the black church an irrelevant entity or does it hold the fundamental ties that bind black politics together?

Black Politics: The Ties That Bind

Blessed be the ties that bind
Our hearts in Christian love
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above
A benediction sung in many black churches.

The black church is fundamental to black society. The black church bears the unique marks of slave culture and “imprint(s) upon practically every aspect of Negro life” (Frazier 90). In a modification of the dominant culture, blacks fused church and state, adopting the institution of the church as a base for various civic, social, and political pursuits. Beyond this historical and societal significance, however, a cadre of scholars critique the black church on the grounds that it has lost political relevance in the post-civil rights era. In addition to declining influence, some scholars hasten to add that the black church is an illegitimate player in the political arena. Yet, the recrudescence of religion in the public square necessitates an examination of these critiques. Policies like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative thrust the black church in the political limelight and furthermore, engage the black church in the implementation of public policy.

Indeed, recent scholars of black politics note the salience of black religion in the post-civil rights era. Fredrick Harris (1999) demonstrates how black Christianity goes beyond the provision of civic skills to the provision of an oppositional civic culture in the black milieu. Melissa Harris-Lacewell (2004) illustrates how black ideology is affected by the black church. Drew Smith et al. (2004) examine how the black church affects public policy on issues of import to African Americans. A brief overview of the black political literature provides a necessary primer for the consideration of the role of the

black church in the post-civil rights era.

Black Communalism and Black Collective Interests

In African tribal culture, individual destiny is linked to the destiny of the tribe. A West African saying epitomizes the sense of African communalism: "I am because we are and since we are therefore I am" (in Boykin, Jagers, Ellison, and Albury 1997). The emphasis on communalism is reflected in black theology and black religion more broadly. Importantly, this sense of communalism has transference to black politics as well.

In the National Black Politics Survey (1993), fully 75 percent of African Americans agreed "...what happens generally to black people in (the United States) will have something to do with what happens in (my) life". Indeed, the black power movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, made communal solidarity race-specific with the injunction to "close ranks" by supporting black self-determination, black organizations and black goals generally. In the survey cited previously, fully 26 percent of African Americans agreed, "blacks should always vote for black candidates when they run". Belief in a communal fate generally by African Americans has been confirmed in black political endeavors. Michael Dawson's (1994) groundbreaking work isolated a black utility heuristic whereby African Americans gauge their own political interests by those of the entire group. This black utility heuristic means that on any given issue, African Americans will tend to vote in accordance with the interests of the black collective, even if not all agree that it is necessary to vote for any black candidate.

Information about what constitutes black interests is disseminated through black institutions like the black church (Dawson 1994; Harris 1999). Such institutions

reinforce black communalism while helping to define what is good for the race. In the black political milieu, "...different heuristics, institutional frameworks, leadership styles and behavioral patterns" (Dawson 1994, 207) confirm the importance of scholarly treatments of black political phenomenon as distinct from other political phenomenon. Indeed, the civil rights era highlighted the importance of studying black political phenomenon.

Post-Civil Rights Era

The civil rights era was a watershed moment in black history. Yet, it has become common to refer to the current era as the post-civil rights era. Black politics in the contemporary era has moved from a protest mode, in the vein of the civil rights movement, to a political mode, in the fashion of routine politics (Rustin 1965; Smith 1981; Tate 1994). Since 14th amendment goals of racial equality have been achieved via the civil rights movement and subsequent legislation, the impetus for utilizing movement tactics as a route to securing black political gains has been eradicated (Marable 1987). Thus, black politicians and black social activists need to utilize mainstream political maneuvers and tactics to press for black political goals.

The new stage of black politics was ushered in as a result of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In that year, Bayard Rustin, a friend of Martin Luther King Jr. and a civil rights activist, penned a seminal work averring that "What began as a protest movement is being challenged to translate itself into a political movement" (Rustin 1965, 65). One of the most prescient insights of the piece is that Rustin predicts the Republican party's Southern strategy. Accordingly, he calls for a unified and strategic black politics bereft of "militant shock tactics" (65), but full of efforts to transform existing institutions from

within the halls of power and by utilizing the tools of politics--coalitions and party politics.

By 1972, a new cadre of black politicians had successfully integrated the halls of power from the state and local level to the Congress to the Supreme Court. The new face of black politics has been the subject of most scholarly inquiries about black politics for the past three decades. Black voter mobilization, black political efficacy, and black representation have been primary foci of scholars of black politics. In contrast to the pre-civil rights era, African American politicians at all levels of government are privy to the power and resources that accompany public office. So how has black representation fared in the post civil rights era? A brief look at the relationship between black masses and black elites is apropos.

Masses and Elites

If black representatives have access to public agendas, a natural line of inquiry revolves around how black interests fare in the public square. Representation is a complex issue that will only be breached here. Much of the debate about representation revolves around the notion of congruence between citizens' demands and politicians' actions. Representation might mean policy congruence (Miller and Stokes 1963). Representation might mean physical and descriptive congruence (Pitkin 1967). Representation might mean responsiveness broadly. Whatever tack one takes on the representation debate, representation implies accountability. In the black political realm, the notion that black interests are collective means that representation takes on an even more subtle shade. How black elites respond to black mass concerns, however, is still debatable.

Black representatives face a dual dilemma: balancing black collective interests with those of the broader constituencies. Beyond mere descriptive representation, black legislators seek substantive legislation via service on committees of concern to black voters and via proposal of legislation of interest to black voters. Yet, some have critiqued such efforts as mere symbolic pandering to the black vote (e.g. Swain 1993), or at best, an example of descriptive representation where black legislators act as race delegates (Whitby 1997). In a recent work on black representation, Katherine Tate (2003) defends descriptive representation, noting that it is both symbolic and substantive. Tate finds that the legislative style of blacks is no different than that of whites except the committees that they serve on. These committees are utilized to press black collective interests via symbolic legislation. These symbolic policies reflect constituent interests and concerns, giving "psychological reassurance to constituents that representatives are working in their interests and are responsive to their needs" (Tate 2003, 100). For example, Tate (2003) contends that the fact that black legislators pass more symbolic legislation--like designating National Black Historical Colleges and Universities Week, than substantive legislation is functional and effective representation. Further, Tate (2003) argues that black members of Congress use their votes on other legislation to bring the policy agenda closer to that of black interests (106). While Tate's work on black representation is enlightening, it fails to consider where and how black interests are worked out and whether they might be more heterogeneous than homogeneous (Reed 1986).

Black Ideology and the Black Counterpublic

Black indigenous institutions arose necessarily during the despicable days of legally enforced and socially sanctioned slavery and segregation. A distinct black culture

and consciousness (Levine 1977) was the result. This *black counterpublic* (Dawson 1994) is a critical space that facilitates black political dialogue. For example, black song, both sacred and secular, emerged as an outlet for both implicit and explicit expressions of black solidarity, black spirit, and black resistance. Given this common history, the souls of black folk remain intimately connected today. A sense of communalism in politics emphasizes black interdependence and reinforces the centrality of the black counterpublic. But do black institutions and social networks constrain the propensity for a dynamically heterogeneous black body politic (Dawson 1994)?

According to scholars of black mass politics, the ‘we are family’ attitude that pervades black culture translates to the political realm in an electorally intelligent fashion (Tate 1994; Dawson 1994). Individual African Americans consider the interests of the broader black public as a proxy for their own interests. Shared institutions (i.e. the black church), shared experiences (i.e. racism and other civil rights battles) and common sources of information (i.e. the black media) engender a sense among African Americans that one’s fate is linked to the fate of the black collective (Dawson 1994). Michael Dawson (1994; 2001) affirms a *sui generis* black consciousness and a distinct black space for discourse, which he terms the black counterpublic. Nevertheless, he also maintains that black institutions are neither wholly distinct from the dominant system (e.g. the black church is part of the broader sphere called civil society) nor insulated from social control by the same (e.g. black discourse may be subject to influence or even control by the dominant discourse). By Dawson's account, this lack of total separation between the black counterpublic and the dominant public need not negate a vibrant political discourse among African Americans and within black institutions. It may however, indicate that

scholarly assertions of a distinctive black politics are wrongheaded (Reed 1986).

In an effort to resurrect a uniquely black space from the scholarly dustbins, Melissa Harris-Lacewell (2005) explores the nature of black discourse in an effort to discern how ‘everyday black talk’ contributes to the development of black ideology. She views the black counterpublic as distinct from the dominant system with black politics “forged through collective racial deliberation” (Harris-Lacewell 2005, 7). With race as a “sufficient condition for togetherness”, members of the black counterpublic--shielded from the formal constraints that accompany debate in the broader public square, work out their ideology by conversing with one another in black spaces like churches and barbershops.

Conversations conducted in the realm of the black counterpublic serve to demystify politics while also imbuing individual black experiences with broader social significance and meaning. While ideology for the African American is worked out in a distinctively black sphere, individual blacks hold varying attitudes, making “politics a contested terrain *within* blackness” (Harris-Lacewell 2005, 23). Accordingly, Harris-Lacewell (2005) asserts that various political ideologies that frame black political thought in the contemporary context. While blacks sing to different ideological tunes, the ideologies developed in the context of everyday talk in the black counterpublic both impinge upon political elites and serve as a tool for the black masses to interpret the authenticity of elite claims (Harris-Lacewell 2005). A unique discourse that affects black politics emanates from actors embedded in the black counterpublic.

Black Capture

Black communalism in things political complicates black political fortunes. In his

treatise concerning the shift from protest to politics, Bayard Rustin (1965) correctly surmised that the Democratic party would eventually seek to distance itself from a close alliance with black interests. The orientation of the entire political domain occurred when the Republican party defined itself in opposition to black interests (Carmines and Stimson 1989). The practical necessity of creating for broad-based electoral coalitions means that African American public policy and programmatic concerns are easily eschewed in the electoral game. Where African American voters are entrenched in one party, neglect of black interests becomes an epidemic.

Electoral capture represents circumstances when the group has no choice but to remain in the party (Frymer 1999). The opposing party does not want the group vote so the group cannot threaten its own party's leaders with defection. African Americans pay obeisance to the party of civil rights and of economic and social liberalism. Such allegiance, however, may stultify black efforts to exact programmatic concessions from the Democratic party. With African American allegiance a foregone conclusion, Democratic party operatives (even black ones) lack an incentive to cater to black voters' concerns. The median voter theory (Downs 1957) rarely works in favor of African American interests. In a political system where incrementalism is the name of the policy game, policy entrepreneurs need to craft powerful policy images to combat inertia regarding black interests. The black church is a crucial source of political theodicy in the black political milieu. Black pastors are central to the framing of black political issues in the black church.

Black Pastors: Black Church Symbols as the Missing Link?

Of what value are black church critics' (Frazier 1964; Reed 1986) claims that the

black church inhibits black protest consciousness? Perhaps Frazier's insights are most prescient as they concern dynamics *within* the black church. The black pastor, donned the black prophet, is a perplexing figure. With his (that is, black pastors have been traditionally male) penchant for opulent, heavenly oratory and in his role as the leader of the black flock, the black pastor possesses a certain power *over* his people. Black preachers, Frazier asserts, are "petty tyrants" (90), dominating and controlling their flock. This hierarchy in the black church realm might comport with immobilization in the broader political realm. But given the blending of things sacred and secular in the black milieu, can the black pastor can serve as a creator of political theodicy?

The image of prophet resonates in the black church milieu. Yet Jesus Christ elucidated the standard in Matthew: *A prophet is without honor in his hometown.* Throughout African-American history, black leaders of variegated ilk have blazed paths of leadership and learned the same lesson. The prototypical Old Testament prophet, Moses, is a symbol of both hope and protest, of religion and politics. Black prophets operate both *within* and *against* the black church context.

Akin to the prophet, the black preacher represents the central figure within the black church. His authenticity emanates from a special religious experience. He does not choose the ministry. He is called, chosen, in the words of Ruth of the Old Testament, for such a time as this. Beyond his calling, the black preacher must possess certain skills as well. While knowledge of scripture is a given, the ability to weave an oratorical web of religious wonder is a prerequisite as well.

The "intragroup lore" that existed in the form of slave tales created intense feelings of group identity. The freedom that followed Reconstruction did not dissolve

black culture. Indeed, slave tales and other vestiges of slave culture and religion persist in the black church via the black preacher and in black society via other black prophets.

For example, black slaves believed that various sources of power were not arrayed in a hierarchy with temporal power at the apex, but rather were classified according to their different types (Levine 73). As such, slaves possessed significant powers that their masters lacked. This motif resonates in black prophetic musings, especially those about politics. Less important than the temporal quantity of power one possessed was the qualitative nature of that power. Joseph's Old Testament injunction, "What man meant for evil, God meant for good", reflects a sense that while power is ultimately otherworldly, justice can be achieved in this world. But justice for individual African-Americans could only occur when justice for the group was achieved.

This tension between the individual and the communal came to a head in the era of World War II when the improvisational nature of the black realm met the staid, professional nature of the modern world. Gospel music began in the church, but became marketable outside the church to the white community. Per Frazier, post-war migration North, as well as urbanization, resulted in the shifting of the worldview of the black American. While still deprived of broad access to the American dream, the black sojourn north signified an accommodation to modernity.

Yet, the black prophet (and the black church) retained much of the charisma and improvisation typical of the communal world of slave religion. Racial realities precluded a wholesale acculturation to the individualized, white world. Even blues, on the surface an individualized effort, mimics the black preacher in the setting of the black church where call and response signify no beginning and no end to the music of the soul (Levine

1977). What focuses a black vision in the face of a countervailing American culture that dramatizes individual dreams? The black prophet.

What are the lessons that emerge from four prophets of black politics: Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Jesse Jackson? Black prophets use rhetoric to knit together the black community by appealing to a group sense of identity and culture. Black prophets utilize these appeals to black consciousness to craft platforms for racial improvement. Black prophets translate platforms into broad-based movements. Black prophets face opposition from within and without the black community.

Marcus Garvey emphasized racial consciousness in the era following World War I. Also known as Black Moses, this early prophet embarked on a program of racial solidarity and self-sufficiency via black separation. Unconvinced that the white majority would ever grant the black minority equal status, Garvey proposed a program of racial redemption via the Universal Negro Improvement Association. This religious sense of redemption is purposeful. Indeed, in a system where visions of a white God were wielded so as to keep blacks in their place, racial redemption meant viewing God as black. The dominant society could dictate that white was right; but blacks could claim their own sense of ultimate justice. Caste systems within the black race and the inevitable psychological implications of the institution of slavery and discrimination, worked against Garvey's manifesto. Black racial pride and consciousness, therefore, was central to the success of Garvey's program (Cronon 1969).

De jure and de facto discrimination inhibited the successes of blacks in the dominant society, but the Universal Negro Improvement Association called for blacks to

improve themselves via their own systems. The Black Star Line, a black-owned and operated cruising and shipping line, epitomizes Garvey's alternative vision for the black economy. Beyond economic self-sufficiency, Garvey sought to "awaken the fires of Negro nationalism" (Cronon 4) by calling for a central nation for the race. His campaign to transplant some blacks to Liberia was reminiscent of Zionism. Primarily, Garvey sought to identify blacks with their homeland so as to enervate consciousness.

Opposition to Garvey's program was not unorganized. Whites viewed him as a subversive. Some individuals formerly associated with the UNIA publicly charged him with mishandling money. Some members of the NAACP lambasted him for hurting the cause of black equality. Garvey was eventually imprisoned on charges that amounted to financial impropriety and exiled to Jamaica.

Garvey's movement was anchored in bombast. His speaking appearances were punctuated by the manner in which his adherents dressed, in regalia reminiscent of an army. His racial army, he posited, could rehabilitate the race, mending fractures and easing group difficulties in the here and now. But the base of support for the movement was tenuous at best. The UNIA's base of support was the organization and a small sector of the black intellectual community. Mass support was difficult to come by and monetary support was even more unpredictable. While Garvey relied upon the image of a black God to pique racial consciousness, the church was not the base of his movement.

If Garvey made appeals with religious overtones without a church base, Martin Luther King Jr.'s program was explicitly church-based. In sharp contrast to Garvey's calls for black unity via black separateness, King called African-Americans to a unified vision of humanity embodying the ideals of black theology as well as the liberal

Protestant tradition of the social gospel. King's appeals assumed an extant black consciousness. The communal nature of the black church dictated the inclusion of the outsider, the white 'brother'.

Racial redemption was also at the core of King's dream. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which King co-founded, represents an indigenous organization arising out of the resources of the black community (Morris 1984). Its explicit purpose was to "redeem the soul of America" (Cone 143). While integration was the objective, the overarching goal of this racial program was of a religious nature. His rhetorical appeals emphasized justice. His tactics emphasized love. His platform required hope.

Rejecting the notion that God was either black or white, King's program reflects the view that the image of God imbues every person, black and white, with equal dignity and worth. Consequently, racial hierarchies and creation narratives that posit a black God and a superior black people are anathema. King's "Letter from A Birmingham Jail" elucidates his inclusive vision, encouraging as well as critiquing whites and blacks alike. Beyond an inclusive racial program, King's vision for justice extended to other spheres of the American experience. To the chagrin of many inside and outside the civil rights movement, King opposed the Vietnam War. He called for a living wage and fought against poverty in all its vestiges. "He began to speak like a prophet, standing before the day of judgment, proclaiming God's wrath and indignation upon a rich and powerful nation that was blind to injustice at home and indifferent to world peace" (Cone 237).

Martin Luther King Jr.'s movement was predicated on prophecy. His opposition came from within the black church, where fellow members of the National Baptist Convention refused to adopt the fledgling Southern Christian Leadership Conference

(Branch 1988). His opposition also came from black civil society where the legal and bureaucratic strategy of the NAACP stood at odds with SCLC and SNCC's tactics of civil disobedience and direct action (Morris 1984). Ultimately, his prophetic dream and program of racial reconciliation resulted in his death.

While declining membership in the black church, the influence of its imprint remains on Malcolm X. Indeed, his philosophy is almost crafted in direct opposition to the philosophies of the Christian gospel; a gospel that Malcolm charged was suited to the needs of white oppressors. While Malcolm's father was a minister (Cone 1991), Malcolm believed the black church represented the white society's subjugation of African-Americans to the white religion. The Nation of Islam, predicated on notions of black superiority to whites, was Malcolm's religion of choice. Not unlike Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X peddled a message of racial purity and black power. Malcolm X proffered a program predicated on blackness; and particularism via any means necessary.

Malcolm's era coincided with Martin's. Malcolm was appalled by the notion that blacks should endure violent reprisals in the name of love for white humankind. Instead of nonviolence, Malcolm emphasized self-defense. A speech called "The Ballot or the Bullet" (Cone 194) emphasized his militancy. Freedom fighting meant rifle clubs for the purpose of self-defense (Cone 195) rather than peaceful protests where the protesters themselves were maligned. 'Fight the power' for this prophet was a literal, not a figurative, metaphor.

Malcolm's nightmare began with the Christian injunction to love one's enemy. The Nation of Islam's program is what Malcolm peddled. Given the hegemony of the black church in the black community and Malcolm's belief that Christianity was the

primary mode by which the white man had enslaved blacks and engendered legal segregation, Malcolm faced stern opposition in his time. Government officials, black civil society, and individuals alike deemed his program dangerous. His musings equating “the white man’s heaven with a black man’s hell” (Cone 165) did not endear him to the black religious, even those sympathetic to his frustration with heightened racial violence and with incremental racial progress.

Not unlike other racial prophets, Malcolm’s strident appeals planted the seeds of his demise. Despite his reputation for rabbleroising rhetoric, Malcolm primarily sought, as King did, to broaden the civil rights movement: “He only wanted to affirm the ethical principle of self-survival for African-Americans... (but) Malcolm never once advocated aggressive violence against whites (Cone 195).” As Martin’s dream ended violently, Malcolm’s nightmare was shattered by the bullet of an assassin. Must all prophets pass the way of exile and death?

Jesse Jackson, the living prophet, proclaims a program grounded in a moral center and inclusiveness via politics. While a contemporary, and protégé, of Martin Luther King Jr., Jackson inherited (or usurped) a mantle where black group identity was firmly fixed by the travails of past and recent history. Nevertheless, his appeals for a broader-based movement, a Rainbow Coalition, are instructive. He calls African-Americans to remember “I am somebody” (Fradley 1996).

Jackson’s platform and his appeal are largely predicated on his oratorio. His penchant for alliteration is well known. But whereas Martin’s platform was predicated primarily on a moral-religious appeal to the soul of America, Jesse’s platform seems predicated on both morality and politics. Jackson’s moral center causes one to ask which

comes first, “Jesse as politician, or as a prophet that speaks to the political structures” (Frady 317)? Reverend Jackson’s quest for the presidency caused opponents and sympathizers alike to question whether one can eat at pharaoh’s table while calling pharaoh to task.

Where Jackson stands on the appropriate balance between religion and politics is interesting. Certainly, he views his role as an extension of the work that Martin Luther King Jr. began some fifty years ago (Frady 1996; Reed 1986). But unlike King’s modest persona, Jackson takes pleasure in the political spectacle. He basks in the glow of media attention and he lives more like pharaoh than like a preacher. He is the self-proclaimed leader of the black people but lacks formal political office or power.

Opponents, therefore, question whether Jackson’s ostensible leadership of the black people and embodiment of the black agenda is legitimate. As opposed to broad based movements, there exists “no evidentiary base...from which to determine veracity of (Jackson’s) leadership claims; nor is there any way for an amorphous, posited constituency to affirm or reject (Jackson’s) actions” (Reed 34). Jackson’s ‘moral center’ is critiqued as a generic appeal to black sensibilities yet lacking substantive meaning in the current political context. Indeed, perhaps broad scale demands on the scope of the moral center curtail black political vision, mitigating more specific black political demands.

Perhaps black prophets are misunderstood. What all share in common a prescient penchant for the future of politics and social conditions. Rather than conflicting characters these black figures are reconcilable. Each is interested in political theodicy, albeit each pursues this quest differently.

Black Political Theodicy: Beyond Civil Rights

The black prophet clashes with the political power structure by definition. The black church has been the support base for some black prophets. Certainly, the quintessential social movement, the civil rights movement, was anchored in the black church (Morris 1984; Branch 1988; Lincoln and Mamiya 1990).

The black church represents a central institution of the local movement centers that energized the civil rights movement (Morris 1984). No institution is more indigenous to the black community than the black church, which Jesse Jackson terms “the most stable influence in the black communities” (Fradly 293). The charisma that is part and parcel of the black church and that marks black prophets stimulated simultaneous movement activity across the black landscape. The black church is perhaps the only institution that can appeal directly to the black masses, coordinating collective action among a people dispossessed of political power.

Taylor Branch’s (1998) historical traipse through the early civil rights movement confirms Aldon Morris’ (1984) contention that there was no single civil rights movement, but a plethora of movement centers. What Branch does highlight more clearly than Morris, however, is the extent to which these events were connected in black historical time.

Both authors portray the civil rights movement as born of deliberate design rather than of mass, spontaneous mobilization emanating out of a pervasive emotionalism and a cultish worship of movement leaders. Morris’ corrective (1984) of the historical record illuminates the exquisite design of the Baton Rouge bus boycott of 1953 that resulted in a compromise with city officials and served as the model for the Montgomery bus boycott

of 1955. Branch (1988) provides painstaking detail of Project C, the Birmingham boycott of 1963 that resulted in the arrest of Martin Luther King Jr., in the penning of the famous Birmingham jail letter, and in the focusing of a waning civil rights effort. In each case, the resources of indigenous institutions and the skills of indigenous leaders combined to create movement victories.

Morris' (1984) analysis of the civil rights movement provides an important historical corrective by crediting a dominated group with the impressive transformation of indigenous leaders and resources into multiple centers of protest. Yet, in his zeal to credit a marginalized group with overcoming exclusion from the centers of decision-making, Morris gives short shrift to exogenous factors. If resource mobilization theory discounts culture, the indigenous perspective discounts the importance of exogenous factors. As such, James E. Findlay Jr.'s (1993) examination of the role of the National Council of Churches in the fledgling civil rights struggle and Taylor Branch's (1988) historical purview of the United States during the 'King years' provides an important corollary to the indigenous perspective.

Outside elites and outside events may open windows of historical, political, and social opportunity penetrable by the centers of local movement activity. Nevertheless, Morris claims that the larger political environment cannot be the primary factor in the origins of the civil rights movement. This flows from his contention that a plethora of indigenous movements culminated in protest success. Morris' contention amounts to a chicken and egg argument. Which came first, the movement center or the exogenous event? Clearly, exogenous events often precipitated the formation of local movement centers. Indeed, the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights arose out of a legal

protest vacuum imposed by the state's ban of the NAACP.

Furthermore, the movement of some white Protestant churches and denominations on the civil rights issue culminated in the National Council of Church's public embrace of the civil rights effort in advance of congressional action on the matter. Between 1950 and 1958, the Council offered some 24 resolutions connected to racial issues (Findlay 24). Morris' focus on indigenous resources downplays these significant contributions to the civil rights effort from non-indigenous sources.

Branch (1988) illustrates how various historical winds contributed momentum to and deflected attention from the civil rights movement. While asserting that race is a significant shaper of American culture, Branch follows the arc of black historical time utilizing Martin Luther King Jr. as a metaphor for black politics and for American history during the civil rights years. Concurring with Morris, Branch deems the black church and its indigenous resources (preachers, charisma, and the like) fundamental to the civil rights movement. Departing from Morris, Branch depicts how black celebrities contributed to the civil rights movement. Clearly, celebrities could transport themselves to the heart of local movement centers, but they clearly represent outside elites. Morris' argument provides no rubric for how to evaluate such contributions, and in fact, discounts them altogether.

Branch illustrates how exogenous events like the Cuban Missile Crisis precipitated a media vacuum that rendered the ongoing efforts of civil rights pioneers invisible for a time. The indigenous, local perspective fails to account for the inherent difficulty of amassing collective action efforts to combat the legal roadblocks posed by the various layers of American government during the civil rights movement. Branch's

holistic historical view, however, illuminates how local movement centers relied upon the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr. vis-à-vis the government. Such intervention by the symbolic and actual figurehead of the broader civil rights can only be appreciated where the analytical lens utilized allows for recognition of outside constraints and contingencies.

While leaders were certainly pre-existent within local movement centers, the extent of coordination between them is downplayed by Morris and illustrated by Branch. To posit a level of interconnectedness across local movement centers need not detract from the indigenous argument. Indeed, Branch (and even Morris) illustrates how simultaneous local efforts in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia emanated from local resources, but also how these efforts benefited from the lessons of others. Such learning indicates some level of connectedness.

Conclusion

The sense that black political protest requires a sacred element is a vestige of the belief that an early slave rebellion failed because it lacked a spiritual dimension (Levine 1977). While Jesse Jackson maintains that the black church is a stabilizing force in the black community and that black ministers “carry moral authority with (black) people” (Frady 293), there remains a critique emanating out of Frazier (1964) that the church is insufficient as a base for political activity. In the context of exclusion from formal channels of politics, perhaps a church/minister-based political participation was appropriate “on grounds of (the church’s) relative institutional primacy and the elimination of more suitable alternatives” (Reed 55). In the present context, however, barriers to full participation have been removed. The black political prisoner has been set

free.

While the black church certainly forms a backdrop to black culture and black politics, all African-Americans are not pervasively religious. As such, only where the black church acts as one voice among many in the black political arena will its voice be deemed legitimate. The black church cannot position itself as the authoritative and authentic voice of the black community, however influential it might be. Otherwise, the black church is less a “zone of ultimate freedom” (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990), than an exclusive zone of autocracy. The language of the black church and the civil rights protest persist in black politics despite black inroads into formal political channels. The 2004 Senate campaign pitting Barack Obama against Alan Keyes demonstrates how African-Americans on both sides of the political aisle utilize the religious tones of the black experience. Civil rights protest rhetoric remains salient, that is, this religious-themed political talk with explicit reference to group goals or minority goals more generally. The black church creates political theodicy via the political discourse of black pastors. With regard to black politics more broadly, Morris’ contention that all movements, like all politics, is local, raises the question of whether group-based appeals are ill-suited to black political mobilization. The tendency for African-Americans to utilize black interest as a proxy for individual interest is well documented. Less apparent, however, is whether such heuristics can galvanize mass black participation. Perhaps local movement centers a prerequisite for politics and black pastors and black political theodicy are the ties that bind black politics together.

The next chapter will define the black consensus agenda with a view toward exploring the role of the civil rights frame. Does the civil rights frame remain wedded to

notions of political theodicy, emanating from the black religious experience?

Chapter Three

Follow the Civil Rights Road? The Black Policy Agenda and American Political Development

Introduction

The influence of the black church via black pastors is twofold: first, discursively and second, institutionally. This chapter will explore the former: the power of policy images. The policy images that emanate from the institution of the black church are crafted by its leaders: black pastors. The notion that religious messages are efficacious for inspiring black political participation is clear from the literature (e.g. Barker 1990; Reese and Brown 1995; Calhoun-Brown 1998; Harris-Lacewell 2005), but what remains unclear in the literature is the content of pastoral policy images and their influence on the *black consensus agenda*. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a case study sheds light on the truisms of black politics, especially on the notion of a black agenda.

To understand how black pastor's images affect the black consensus agenda, it is first necessary to isolate the black agenda. Since a black agenda is frequently referenced, but scarcely defined in either the policy or black politics literature, it is necessary to identify proxies for the consensus black agenda. So that this contemporary examination of the black consensus agenda in light of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is not ahistorical, this chapter examines the platforms of select black civic groups and movements over time, including the first black political manifesto that the researcher could locate from the National Afro-American League of 1890 (Cruse 1987). The agendas of the three major denominations of interest in this study are analyzed for themes and frames relevant to black politics and also for evidence of the denominational orientation toward the issue of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Finally, the

recent legislative priorities of those groups that claim to be the authentic representatives of black interests, namely the NAACP and the Congressional Black Caucus are coded for thematic content, for evidence of how issues are framed in the post-civil rights era, and for evidence of opinion on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The current research lays the groundwork for the development of a theory of the *black consensus agenda*, inclusive of the broad terrain that is *black agenda politics*.

The themes emerging from the analysis of the black agenda will be utilized to identify the central frame of the black policy agenda. An expected theme of significant importance is the civil rights frame given the collective orientation of black politics. African Americans proceed in politics according to the notion that individual black welfare is inextricably tied to the welfare of the entire group. If cues for black political decision-making are not based in individualistic action frames, but collective ones, we might expect the salience of the civil rights frame to endure in the black political realm. This is especially logical given that civil rights-based appeals are predicated on such a group-orientation. What does the black policy agenda of civic elites and the policy pronouncements of black church pastors reveal about the salience of the civil rights frame? A unique contribution of this research to the black politics literature is the predominant policy image utilized to portray these "permanent interests".

What Do Hip Hop and Civil Rights Have in Common?

What do hip hop and civil rights have in common? This is not the beginning of a bad joke. In 2005, hip hop music celebrated its thirtieth birthday. On this festive occasion, Greg Tate, a purveyor of black culture queried in the *Village Voice* about whether hip hop was dead. The argument centered on hip hop's lackluster record for

pressing critical discourse and activity about political and social interests of the black community. Hip hop's success has left cultural pundits scratching their heads about how a commodified medium can be an authentic voice for political and social uplift. At the heart of Tate's commentary was an implicit assumption that remained unspoken: the black community is an identifiable collectivity. What was once communal is now commodified. Perhaps few political scientists are concerned with whether 30 years after its invention, hip hop is dead, but the cultural question illustrates the broader dynamics of contemporary black politics. Whether or not the *geimenschaft* of the civil rights era has given way to the *gellenschaft* of globalization and atomization on the level of black society, there remains a strong sense of the collective in black politics. Furthermore, there are residues of the civil rights movement in black politics. If we follow the civil rights road, we can illumine questions of contemporary import and complexity.

Black politics writ large is illustrative of the enduring significance of the civil rights movement. Black politics is inseparable from a broader socio-historical-cultural milieu. The resilient black consciousness and distinct black culture culminated in a movement that transformed American society (Levine 1977), including politics. Indeed, the civil rights era has become the line of demarcation for the study of black politics (see Tate 1994). While historically speaking, social justice and especially racial equality have dominated black concerns, most contemporary scholars of black politics assert that other policies and problems now dominate concerns (Tate 1994; Dawson 1994; Harris-Lacewell 2005) such that “civil rights is no longer considered to be a priority issue among most Black Americans” (Tate 1995, 47). *The point of departure for this chapter is not whether civil rights as an issue is at the top of African Americans' list of policy*

priorities, but whether liberation/protest imagery represents the dominant policy image (Baumgartner and Jones 1993) of the black consensus agenda.

All political processes can be understood with reference to issue definition and agenda setting (Stone 1989; Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Rochefort and Cobb 1994). Politics in the black mold is collective, emphasizing group concerns and group goals. Thus, we might expect black political discourse and issue definition to reflect this communal orientation.

If black politics is distinctive, so are black policy images. Fred Harris (1999) describes collective action frames in much the same way that the policy literature describes policy images. In the black political domain, policy images are likely to be culturally-laden with referents to the black struggle, black indigenous institutions, black leaders, black cultural symbols, and black idioms (including religious ones). Even in the post-civil rights era, it is reasonable to expect the pulse of black politics to beat in the language of the quintessential mass movement: civil rights. As David Chappell's (2004) landmark work on the civil rights movement indicates, it was prophetic language that propelled the civil rights movement to success. It is logical to assume the traditional interlocutors of black interests--black pastors--to retain a salient discursive role in black politics in the post-civil rights era. Policy images can resonate across multiple issue domains and policy areas. Thus, civil rights laden policy images need not be relegated to issues with a clear or primary relation to racial or social justice issues.

For example, many members of the Congressional Black Caucus object to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative not upon the grounds that the policy violates the separation of church and state, but rather upon the grounds that faith-based participants

may *discriminate* in hiring. Broad objection to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative by black political powers-that-be, however, defies mass black public opinion since 81% of African Americans support the Faith-Based and Community Initiative (Pew Center 2008). This recent public policy calls into question how neatly black faces represent black interests (Swain 1993) and whether the consensus black agendas reflects collective interests.

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative

In the post-civil rights era, black politics epitomizes the substance and tactics of mainstream electoral politics (Rustin 1965; Smith 1981; Tate 1994) and simultaneously maintains a commitment to protest ideals broadly (Tate 1994). Per this nugget of conventional wisdom about black politics, the shift from protest to politics occurred circa 1972 at the height of the black power movement and at the acme of the incorporation of black elected officials into the halls of power at all levels of government. Furthermore, this shift has purportedly affected all facets of black politics: political behavior, policy objectives, and the orientation of African Americans toward politics. The focus of most black political scientists has been on black political behavior (e.g. Dawson 1994; Tate 1994) and black political ideology (Dawson 2001; Harris-Lacewell 2005). While the subject of determinants of political participation; representation; and the direction of framing of politics are important topics, the policy objectives of the oft-referenced black policy agenda are scarcely objects of study. Thus, "black collective interests" have taken on a life and lore of their own, but there exists no theory about the black consensus agenda and the discourse that frames it. Consequently, there is scarcely any discussion about black interests that diverge from the black collective norm and/or from the

consensus black agenda. To understand the dynamics of black politics, it behooves scholars to understand the dynamics of agenda setting in the black political realm.

While the welfare reform law of 1996 represented welfare retrenchment to many African Americans (the NAACP and other organizations decried the five year time limit among other provisions), the Charitable Choice provision of the legislation allowing for religious-based providers of welfare-related social services to compete for federal funds was well-received by African-Americans generally (Bartkowski and Regis 2003). The Faith-Based and Community Initiative goes beyond the Charitable Choice provision to permit government funding of non-welfare related services on a competitive basis. African Americans' overwhelming support of the Initiative has not waned since 2001 and black Protestant support of government funding of faith-based service efforts was at 83% according to a 2008 survey (Pew 2008).

All the Political World is a Policy Stage

Politics is acted out on the stage of public policy. Indeed, political drama is most often policy drama. The manipulation of policy images by political actors represents the ultimate political power: the transformation of issue definitions to comport with new ideas about policy problems and solutions. The institutional venue (side stage) in which policies are addressed also represents a fundamental political resource given structure-induced equilibrium and the scope of conflict. The interaction between policy image—public understandings of policy problems and policy venue—the policy arena with authority to make decisions concerning the policy issue, indicates the fundamental importance of institutions to the policy process. The expansion and retraction of the scope of conflict is fundamental to politics (Schattschneider 1960) and has implications

for issue definition and policy agendas. Institutions make possible periods of relative policy stasis where a particular group or a small constellation of groups monopolize how a policy issue is defined (Schattschneider 1960). The inherent difficulty of penetrating policy subsystems means that policy punctuations (instability in the agenda setting process) are both possible and likely. That is, policy monopolies which are stable in the short run are subject to relative volatility and instability in the long run given the potential for policy actors and previously apathetic audiences to transform predominant understandings of policy questions. Issues, and therefore political agendas, are transformed by the manipulation of images about policy problems and policy solutions.

Just as the best-written plays utilize metaphor, subtlety, synecdoche, and other devices to dramatize plots, policy issues are also dramatized. Symbols and discourse, then are crucial components of policy agendas. Importantly, symbols “enable us as individuals to read ourselves into social programs and collective actions” (Stone 1997, 162). Policy images interact with policy venues. In the case of black politics, the emphasis on collective interests and collective outcomes means that symbols are often invoked to engender unanimity. A prime locale for the aggregation of and articulation of black interests is the black church. If black politicians haunt the halls of power, black pastors are important interlocutors in the black community whose images about black politics often affect black agenda politics. Discourse defines the boundaries of the political realm (Stone 1989; Cohen 1999). In the black political realm, discourse exalts certain issues as legitimate black interests and paints other issues as out of the bounds of blackness—and therefore, outside of the confines of the black agenda. Discourse theory allows an examination of the notion of black collective interests expressed via the black

consensus agenda.

Discourse can be hegemonic, but discourse theory as applied to the black agenda does not assume fixed preferences or historical inevitabilities. While discourse theory embraces postmodernism and the notion that meaning is contingent, meanings in the social realm may become partially fixed. In the policy literature, this is termed a policy monopoly (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). One group may assert a monopoly on the definition of an issue for a time (i.e. industries and deregulation), but all policy monopolies may be upset by the court of public opinion (i.e. consumer movements) or by the exigencies of external events (i.e. trade wars). Similarly, certain discourses may monopolize meaning in the socio-political realm, but such monopolies are ultimately vulnerable. Accordingly, the meaning of the civil rights frame may change over time.

The current chapter explores the black agenda discourse historically and in present perspective. In the pre-civil rights era, agendas were protest-oriented and punctuated with religious references. If the contemporary era is typified by the notion that protest is mostly dead and politics as usual now prevails, what is the primary frame or nodal point of the black agenda? Does the cornerstone of historical black resistance, the black church, continue to contribute to black political discourse or are black pastors passé in the post-civil rights era? The linkage between policy image and political institutions is fundamental to an understanding of issue definition and agenda setting. In the case of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, it is important to understand black church discourse about black politics given 1) that the church is a central facet of black collective culture and 2) that the church is a vehicle of policy implementation under the Initiative. Agenda discourse sets the stage for black politics.

The American Political Development approach (Orren and Skowronek 2004) highlights how institutions, actors, and events like the black church, black pastors, and the civil rights movement, are fundamental to an understanding of the unique dynamics of black politics. The black consensus agenda, treated here as the public agendas of the Congressional Black Caucus and the NAACP, are examined to determine the messages conveyed therein. The policy images that frame black politics are explored herein via analysis of the policy pronouncements and legislative agendas of three black denominations, the Congressional Black Caucus, and the NAACP. The CBC and NAACP provide crucial information concerning black political dynamics relative to the black policy agenda. Black churches are crucial contextually and instrumentally in black politics. Black pastors receive, send, and filter political messages and are of integral importance to the black politics. In spite of a broad recognition of their roles as interlocutors in the black community, the political science literature is silent as to how prophetic voices affect the black consensus agenda and black agenda politics. The current chapter seeks to build a theory of the black agenda by identifying its various components and by summarizing themes for culturally-relevant content.

In terms of case selection, given that the black church is not monolithic, three distinct black denominations are explored herein. Individual churches are certainly idiosyncratic in terms of membership and leadership, but given shared histories and theologies of discrete African-American denominations, the possibility of relative unanimity within umbrella groups renders denominational variety across the black church spectrum of utmost importance for this research.

The Congressional Black Caucus was selected as representative of the black

political realm because its' members are duly elected and because the group explicitly claims to represent the interests of *all* African Americans--ambassadors at large for the entire country. The NAACP was selected for study given its claim to represent the civil rights of African Americans. The premier African American interest group, the NAACP seeks public goods via platforms in public forums. Importantly, the selection of these prominent black institutions allows an exploration of the conventional wisdom regarding black politics that black people have collective interests in a consensus black agenda. A unique contribution of this research to the black politics literature will be the identification of the predominant policy image utilized to portray these "permanent interests" on the consensus agenda and the consideration of the black church as integral to black agenda politics.

People with Permanent Interests: Contemporary Black Politics

Famed black actor, Ossie Davis' speech at the first Annual Legislative Conference of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) in 1971 exemplifies the zeal and the zeitgeist of black politics:

...the burden of my appeal is to you, to the thirteen Congressional Black Caucus members, to give us a plan of action. Give us a plan of action...a Ten Black Commandments, simple, strong, that we can carry in our hearts and in our memories no matter where we are and reach out and touch and feel the reassurance that there is behind everything we do a simple, moral, intelligent plan that must be fulfilled in the course of time, even if all of our leaders, one by one, fall in battle (Clay 1993).

More than 35 years hence the formation of the CBC, the search for the holy grail of black politics continues unabated. Then and now, collective interests and bloc power represent the name of the game in black politics. A black agenda is an unspoken artifact of black politics and Ossie Davis alludes to it here when he peaks of a "plan of action". If a black

agenda exists, perhaps it is forged in the black counterpublic.

The Black Counterpublic

In the post-civil rights era, the *black counterpublic* (Dawson 1994; Harris-Lacewell 2004) is a critical space that facilitates black political dialogue. A sense of communalism in politics emphasizes black interdependence and reinforces the centrality of the black counterpublic. Black institutions and social networks constitute a unique space for black political discourse.

Shared institutions (i.e. the black church), shared experiences (i.e. racism and other civil rights battles) and common sources of information (i.e. the black media) engender a sense among African Americans that one's fate is linked to the fate of the black collective (Dawson 1994). Michael Dawson (1994; 2001) affirms a *sui generis* black consciousness and a distinct black space for discourse which he terms the black counterpublic. While certainly influenced by the dominant public, a unique and vibrant political discourse exists among African Americans and within black institutions.

Conversations conducted in the realm of the black counterpublic serve to demystify politics while also imbuing individual black experiences with broader social significance and meaning. African Americans are certainly heterogeneous politically, but the ideologies developed in the black counterpublic both impinge upon political elites and serve as a tool for the black masses to interpret the authenticity of elite claims (Harris-Lacewell 2004). A unique discourse emanates from actors embedded in the black counterpublic and affects black politics. If it is the case that black politics is worked out in culturally specific venues, we should expect this to affect the *content* of the black consensus agenda and the *framing* of black interests on the black agenda.

"Say It Loud! I'm Black and I'm Proud!": Do Black Interests Equal A Black Agenda?

In a comedy routine for a late night talk show, Chris Rock takes to the streets, instructing interviewees to finish the phrase, "Say it Loud! _____". White participants generally groped to create some free association while black participants quickly retorted, "I'm Black and I'm Proud", to the tune of the James Brown song that made the phrase iconic. The gesture was not intended to lampoon the white participants, but to demonstrate that culture and context matter.

The black counterpublic is a domain where black politics is worked out in culturally specific venues. Furthermore, everyday black talk (Harris-Lacewell 2005) is central to the working out of black politics. Yet, debates about whether black ideology is imposed from the elites above or bubbles up from the masses below—while important questions—will not answer fundamental questions about the black agenda. Ostensibly, agendas outline the political goals of a collective. Do black interests equal a black agenda? What are black interests?

Few scholars of black politics have touched questions relating to a black agenda. Kerry Haynie (2001) equates the black consensus agenda to policies deemed important by African Americans including "...laws that prohibit discrimination in housing, education, and unemployment, and laws that support unemployment compensation, jobs programs, food stamps, and educational interests" (24), his primary focus is the committee assignments of black Southern state legislators to black-issue committees and their successes relative to the list of black interests. While Haynie (2001) began with asserting that there is something approximating a black consensus agenda, his focus on roll-call votes and state-level legislative committee assignments precludes an inquiry into

the policy images that set the stage for black agenda politics.

If Haynie (2001) overlooks the importance of discourse to black agenda politics, Adolph Reed (1986) asserts that both black elected officials and black everyday discourse are the key to an effective black politics. For Reed, black politics should be bereft of symbolic appeals based on race, but mindful of black collective interests nonetheless. Indeed, Reed views political discourse as a *salient* albeit *problematic* feature of black politics in the post-civil rights era. In Reed's purview, black political discourse often devolves into mere symbolic politics, negating programmatic politics (that seeking distributive benefits). For Reed, the black agenda politics are most often reductionist, resulting in appeals by black politicians to racial loyalty in the guise of vote getting.

Beyond surface level appeals to racial loyalty, Reed critiques black politicians for failing to produce a plumb line by which to navigate among various political proposals or by which to measure black political progress. While Reed acknowledges discrete black interests, he avers that "A lack of concrete substance is the only symbol that unifies black politicians" (Reed 1986, 10). Is black politics bereft of meaningful symbols? Does there exist a frame that typifies the issues of the black consensus agenda?

On the one hand, Reed (1986; 1999) laments the fact that, in his estimation, there is not a substantive black agenda forged through deliberation. On the other hand, he decries current black politics as mired in racial appeals. By Reed's account, given the lack of a black agenda as a political referent, "black elites have responded to current debates in a unidimensional language of racial entitlement" (Reed 1986, 84). Indeed, black political claims predicated on race are profligate in the post-civil rights era.

While Reed (1986; 1999) critiques black agenda politics as hampered by what he

terms racial entitlement discourse, the current chapter examines black agendas to discover whether this civil rights frame is actually central to black politics. By definition, then, this research does not presume that racial entitlement language is necessarily vacuous. The current research affirms the scholarly notion that black politics is predicated on collective racial interests (Dawson 1994) and examines how black interests are framed and codified on a black consensus agenda.

A perusal of the historical record indicates that black political agendas have been framed in terms of liberation, prophecy, and protest (Chappell 2004) since at least the nineteenth century. Unlike Reed's (1986) more pejorative language of racial entitlement, I term this the *civil rights frame*, consistent with the black political literature's demarcation of black politics by that time period. Protest-oriented civil rights talk is the lingua franca of all of black politics given the pervasiveness of prophetic and liberation imagery in the black past and the black present.¹⁴ Additionally, the Faith-Based Initiative offers an opportunity to explore how issues outside the purview of the black consensus agenda are framed in black agenda politics.

Black Agendas in Historical Perspective

The discourse literature avers that meanings can be partially fixed in certain fields of discourse. The public policy literature affirms this notion, noting that certain groups may maintain a monopoly on the image of a public policy. In the black counterpublic, black liberation has comprised the spoke of the discursive wheel at least since the nineteenth century.

The National Afro-American League

¹⁴ The term prophetic need not exclude the likes of Malcolm X and other African Americans who have paved the way for black progress. Indeed, prophets are defined as those who tell the truth. One need not be a black Christian to be prophetic.

The National Afro-American League was established in 1890 by T. Thomas Fortune, although organized black assemblies have been traced as far back as 1830 (Library of Congress). The League sought to redress black grievances, including racial violence and civil rights issues and was a precursor of the famed Niagara Movement (1905) which culminated in the creation of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The League's Constitution is inclusive of ten objectives and represents the first codified black agenda

(emphasis added, <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/rec/congress.html>):

1. To investigate and make an *impartial report* of all Lynchings and other outrages perpetrated upon American citizens.
2. To assist in testing the constitutionality of laws which are made for the express purpose of *oppressing the Afro-American*.
3. To promote the work of securing legislation which in the individual States shall *secure to all citizens the rights guaranteed them by the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments* to the Constitution of the United States.
4. To aid in the work of Prison Reform.
5. To recommend a healthy migration from terror-ridden sections of our land to States where law is respected and maintained.
6. To encourage both industrial and higher education.
7. To promote business enterprises among the people.
8. To educate sentiment on all lines that *specially affect our race*.
9. To inaugurate and promote plans for the *moral elevation of the Afro-American people*.
10. To urge the appropriation for School Funds by the Federal Government to provide education for citizens who are denied school privileges by *discriminating State laws*.

The National Afro-American League articulates the collective interests by invoking a discourse of constitutional rights rooted in the Civil War Amendments to combat racial oppression; to encourage impartial government reporting in the vein of the Progressive era; and to combat discrimination. These early agendas follow the *Slaughterhouse Cases* (1873) which conferred individual rights on corporations, but did not extend the same protection to marginalized persons and groups. This irony was not lost on early African

American political organizers. This is an early glimpse at the protest language of African Americans in the United States.

The Niagara Movement

The Niagara Movement's *Declaration of Principles* (1905) represents an more explicit and nuanced articulation of the early black agenda. The nineteen planks of the agenda run the gamut from suffrage to civil liberties to duties imposed on the race. The notion of the collective is strong and the invocation of the civil rights frame is pronounced. Further, the salience of black religion is evident. While all of the principles are listed, a few have been selected for full elucidation

(emphasis added, www.yale.edu/glc/archive/1152.htm).

- Progress
- Suffrage
- Civil Liberty: *We believe also in protest against the curtailment of our civil rights. All American citizens have the right to equal treatment in places of public entertainment according to their behavior and deserts.*
- Economic Opportunity: *We especially complain against the denial of equal opportunities to us in economic life; in the rural districts of the South this amounts to peonage and virtual slavery; all over the South it tends to crush labor and small business enterprises; and everywhere American prejudice, helped often by iniquitous laws, is making it more difficult for Negro-Americans to earn a decent living.*
- Education
- Courts: *We demand upright judges in courts, juries selected without discrimination on account of color and the same measure of punishment and the same efforts at reformation for black as for white offenders.*
- Public Opinion
- Health
- Employers and Labor Unions
- Protest: *We refuse to allow the impression to remain that the Negro-American assents to inferiority, is submissive under oppression and apologetic before insults. Through helplessness we may submit, but the*

voice *of protest of ten million Americans must never cease to assail the ears of their fellows, so long as America is unjust.*

- Color-Line: *Any discrimination based simply on race or color is barbarous, we care not how hallowed it be by custom, expediency or prejudice. Differences made on account of ignorance, immorality, or disease are legitimate methods of fighting evil, and against them we have no word of protest; but discriminations based simply and solely on physical peculiarities, place of birth, color of skin, are relics of that unreasoning human savagery of which the world is and ought to be thoroughly ashamed.*
- "Jim Crow" Cars
- Soldiers: *We regret that this nation has never seen fit adequately to reward the black soldiers who, in its five wars, have defended their country with their blood, and yet have been systematically denied the promotions which their abilities deserve.* And we regard as unjust, the exclusion of black boys from the military and naval training schools.
- War Amendments: We urge upon Congress the enactment of appropriate legislation for securing the *proper enforcement of those articles of freedom, the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments* of the Constitution of the United States.
- Oppression: We repudiate the monstrous doctrine that the oppressor should be the sole authority as to the rights of the oppressed. The Negro race in America stolen, ravished and degraded, struggling up through difficulties and oppression, needs sympathy and receives criticism; needs help and is given hindrance, needs protection and is given mob-violence, needs justice and is given charity, needs leadership and is given cowardice and apology, needs bread and is given a stone. *This nation will never stand justified before God until these things are changed.*
- The Church: Especially are we surprised and astonished at the recent attitude of the church of Christ—of an increase of a desire to bow to racial prejudice, to narrow the bounds of human brotherhood, and to segregate black men to some outer sanctuary. This is wrong, unchristian and disgraceful to the twentieth century civilization.
- Agitation: Of the above grievances we do not hesitate to complain, and to complain loudly and insistently...Persistent manly agitation is the way to liberty, and toward this goal the Niagara Movement has started and *asks the cooperation of all men of all races.*
- Help
- Duties: And while we are demanding, and ought to demand, and will continue to demand the rights enumerated above, God forbid that we should ever forget to urge corresponding duties upon our people:
 - The duty to vote.

- The duty to respect the rights of others. The duty to work.
- The duty to obey the laws.
- The duty to be clean and orderly.
- The duty to send our children to school.
- The duty to respect ourselves, even as we respect others.

This statement, complaint and prayer we submit to the American people, and Almighty God.

The use of the term *civil rights* occurs here, perhaps for the first time in a formal black agenda. Certainly, the Principles call for a broad-based movement predicated on cooperation. The Niagara principles equate black dignity with theological notions of personhood. While blacks' service in World War II opened a window of opportunity for the civil rights movement to highlight the bitter irony of the U.S. version of justice for all (Branch 1988), the authors of the participants in the Niagara Movement presaged this development. Not unlike King's powerful rhetoric demanding that African Americans be judged not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character, the Niagara Principles avow that judgments based upon ascriptive characteristics as "relics". The Niagara Movement's demands concerning the judicial system read like a page from the NAACP's current agenda calling for truth in sentencing and commutation of capital punishment. The Principles concerning Labor betray elements reminiscent of the black power and Black Marxist movements, predicated on racial pride and protest, not to mention revolution. A century after the Niagara Principles were penned, the black discourse of today sounds strikingly familiar.

The Black Panther Party

As indicated previously, black militant ideologists, black separationists and even those who disavow black religion can be counted black prophets. These minority voices *within* the black minority have powerfully shaped black politics (Ture and Hamilton

1992). The Black Panther Party's Ten Point Program (1966) mingles Marxist notions of equality with black power. Although the Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana (1972) ended without a consensus agenda, many elements of the draft agenda reflected the demands of the black power movement. The last tenet of the Black Panther agenda is followed by the Declaration of Independence, itself a political manifesto. The Ten Point Program follows, with elaboration included on most points

(emphasis added except where indicated in text,

http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/Panther_platform.html)

1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community.
2. We want full employment for our people.
3. We want an end to the robbery by the white man of our Black Community.

We believe that this ***racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules***. Forty acres and two mules was promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of black people. We will accept the payment as currency which will be distributed to our many communities. The Germans are now aiding the Jews in Israel for the genocide of the Jewish people. The Germans murdered six million Jews. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over twenty million black people; therefore, we feel that this is a modest demand that we make.

4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings.

We believe that if the white landlords will not give decent housing to our black community, then the housing and the land should be made into cooperatives....

5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society.
6. We want all black men to be exempt from military service.

We believe that ***Black people should not be forced to fight in the military service to defend a racist government that does not protect us***. We will not fight and kill other people of color in the world who, like black people, are being victimized by the white racist government of America. We will protect

ourselves from the force and violence of the racist police and the racist military, by whatever means necessary.

7. We want an immediate end to **police brutality** and **murder** of black people (emphasis in original).

... The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all black people should arm themselves for self defense.

8. We want freedom for all black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails.

We believe that all black people should be released from the many jails and prisons **because they have not received a fair and impartial trial.**

9. We want all black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States.

10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace. And as our major political objective, a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony in which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their national destiny.

Black power as exemplified in the Black Panther Party contextualized civil rights aims in terms of colonialism worldwide. Beyond black separatism, black power demanded substantive domestic policy changes reflective of black economic concerns. National self-destiny supplemented calls for civil rights, but Panthers retained a focus on the collective struggle in the aftermath of the legislative victories of the Second Reconstruction.

Spanning a century, these agendas share a common emphasis upon impartiality, equal protection, and antidiscrimination. These agendas call for substantive policy objectives. What is intriguing about the argument that black politics has moved beyond protest is the consonance of these pre-civil rights era agendas with the broad scale agendas of recent history. Indeed, the proponents of the protest to politics thesis argue that policy orientations would shift in the post-civil rights era. What is lost on most

scholars of black politics, however, is the signal importance of collective action frames for binding policy agendas together. Does a civil rights frame retain salience in the post-civil rights era where unfettered black access to mainstream political institutions and mechanisms ostensibly precludes the necessity of appeals based on race (Reed 1986; 1999)?

Black Church Agendas

Black collective action frames are shaped by black religion. The social and legislative successes of the civil rights movement were largely predicated on the symbols, leadership, and resources of the indigenous black church. What frames emanate from the black church about politics in the contemporary era? The civil rights frame evokes collective commitment to secular political goals while upholding the social prophecy role of black religion. What of black prophecy with regard to contemporary political issues? Has a transition to conventional politics “(lessened) blacks’ traditional political appeal to conscience” (Howard-Pitney 2003, 106)? For example, some argue that financial partnerships between government and the black church could serve to diminish the confrontational voice of protest that epitomizes black pastors. What follows is an examination of the policy pronouncements of three black denominations and some related organizations.

The origins of black political discourse are theological. The first act of black protest was the creation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The language of black religious discourse has been institutionalized via black liberation theology. While all African Americans do not subscribe to or adhere to the liberation vision, this theological innovations bears an indelible imprint on black culture, particularly the

practice of black politics. In fact, in the contemporary black political context, the effect is so pronounced as to be easily overlooked.

African Methodist Episcopal Church, Incorporated

The African Methodist Episcopal Church, Incorporated (AME), organized in 1794, claims a membership of 2 million in 7,000 congregations across the world (www.ame-church.com/about-us/history.php). The church's doctrine and order of worship reflect the broader Methodist tradition with separation predicated on historical necessity rather than on doctrinaire. The mission of the AME reflects the social gospel tradition of its mainline Protestant predecessor.

At every level of the Connection (corporate church) and in every local church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church shall engage in carrying out the spirit of the original Free African Society, out of which the AME Church evolved: that is, to seek out and save the lost, and serve the needy through a continuing program of (1) preaching the gospel, (2) feeding the hungry, (3) clothing the naked, (4) housing the homeless, (5) cheering the fallen, (6) providing jobs for the homeless, (7) administering to the needs of those in prisons, hospitals, nursing homes, asylums and mental institutions, senior citizens' homes; caring for the sick, the shut-in, the mentally and socially disturbed, and (8) encouraging thrift and economic advancement.

(www.ame-church.com/about-us/mission.php)

This focus is unique in its primary emphasis upon social justice and black liberation.

The hierarchical, Episcopal mode of organization of the larger AME church body is complemented by a strong local emphasis. While the AME's supreme body, the General Conference, meets every four years, Annual Conferences are conducted at the regional level on a yearly basis. The Council of Bishops, the executive branch of the AME, also meets annually to conduct public sessions on issues of import to the denomination. The AME Church's most recent pronouncement, the "Public Statement of Council of Bishops", reflects a variegated agenda consonant with the breadth of the

church's social commitments.

Progressively, the church has formed an Economic Development Partnership with General Motors and the General Motors Acceptance Corporation that provides new and refinanced mortgages for individuals and churches in one AME district. With regard to government, the church plans to conduct its Second Annual Summit on Education to “address strategies to close the achievement gap among African American students in K-12. Our goal is to holistically address the national policy “Leave no Child Behind,” (sic) as African American students are affected.” The Council also approved an “international health initiative that would positively affect the quality of health for African people in the Diaspora” (Public Statement of Council of Bishops 2005). In the tradition of black liberation theology, the AME is committed to proactive efforts of racial uplift and self-help.

Church of God in Christ

The Church of God in Christ (COGIC) was loosely organized in 1897 and was incorporated in 1907. The church now boasts around 8 million members and represents the second largest Pentecostal group in the United States (www.cogic.org/history.htm). The doctrine of the church reflects the holiness tradition's emphasis upon outward, charismatic manifestations of inner sanctification by the Holy Spirit. While home and foreign missions represent core church functions, the doctrinal emphasis upon individual holiness and the worship experience seemingly relegate social, communal goals a la the AME Church to a second tier status in the hierarchy of church priorities.

Indeed, one is hard-pressed to find evidence of a national COGIC commitment to revitalizing the black inner city. Nevertheless, one does detect evidence of the church

leadership's concern about perceived moral decay in the broader society as it impinges upon the individual holiness of the COGIC believer.

...in spite of the progressive normalization of alternative lifestyles and the growing legal acceptance of same-sex unions; we declare our opposition to any deviation from traditional marriages of male and female. Notwithstanding the rulings of the court systems of the land in support of same-sex unions; we resolve that the Church of God in Christ stand resolutely firm and never allow the sanctioning of same-sex marriages by its clergy nor recognize the legitimacy of such unions.

While other policy pronouncements were not available, the conservative moral orientation of the General Assembly of the Church of God in Christ is unmistakable here. There was evidence of support for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative of the Bush administration at the website of a regional jurisdiction of the Church of God in Christ (www.nemichigan.org/news.htm). Furthermore, the alliance of some COGIC ministers with the National Center for Faith Based Initiative is further evidence of a conservative denominational bent (at least where social morality is concerned) and a willingness to align with Republicans if necessary.

National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

The National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., founded in 1886, boasts the largest membership of all black denominations with 7.5 million members. In the Arminian tradition (free will and non-Calvinist), the doctrine of the church emphasizes universal salvation and is orthodox in other aspects of Christian belief. Unlike the other denominations explored herein, the "Articles of Faith" of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. explicates the denomination's view of the role of government vis-à-vis the Christian faith:

We believe the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be

prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth.

Ironically, the convention refused to support the philosophy and tactics of the civil rights movement, leading to a schism whereby Martin Luther King Jr. and other luminaries created a splinter group, the Progressive National Baptist Convention, which boasts an explicit agenda of social reform as well as alliances with black civil societal groups that are committed to the same.

In January 2005, an historic meeting of the four black Baptist denominations, including the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., the National Baptist Convention of America, the Progressive National Baptist Convention, and the National Missionary Baptist Convention, convened in Nashville, Tennessee to discuss issues of commonality, rather than difference. According to Rev. William Shaw, president of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. the conference represents "...an affirmation that what binds us and calls us together is stronger than the incidents that caused us to separate. We are one body in Christ" (Alligood and Green 2005). If the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. was uncomfortable asserting its voice as social prophet to the government during the civil rights era, its obeisance to the will of the other black Baptist conventions at the joint meeting represents a departure from historical precedent.

The four presidents of the black Baptist conventions signed a statement with nine points of agreed action including a call for an end to the war in Iraq and withdrawal of military personnel from Iraq; an extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; a national living wage; opposition to the confirmation of Alberto Gonzales as Attorney General; a full commitment to public education and opposition to vouchers and charter schools; an

end to efforts to cut welfare and safety net programs for children; an end to the prison-industrial complex; an opposition to permanent tax cuts; aid relief to Africa; the Caribbean, and Central and South America (Joint Baptist Board Meeting Points of Agreed Action 2005). Citing unity and reflecting the collective black interests, the pastors decreed: “As leaders of our respective bodies whose constituents total almost 15 million black persons, we will continue to work together on these and other issues of common concern” (Joint Baptist Board Meeting Points of Agreed Action 2005). The following is indicative of the continued salience of the civil rights movement as regards the causal stories spoken by the black Baptists united in one social prophetic voice regarding electoral irregularities and the extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965:

It is ironic, to say the least, that while U.S. military personnel face the hazards of war in Iraq and the administration intends to seek Congressional appropriation to spend billion more in that engagement, there is no effort underway to extend the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that are scheduled to expire in 2007. Dr. King and other principled people of good will from across the racial, religious, economic, and political landscape struggled in the face of police brutality, bomb threats, hate campaigns, and even murder to bring substance to the right to vote guaranteed by the Fifteenth Amendment. Yet, each election cycle reveals disturbing evidence of continued and deliberate efforts to intimidate, discourage, or suppress voting by people of color, senior citizens, and people of limited income and impaired physical ability. Democracy in the United States deserves, at least, as much attention as democracy abroad.

For the black Baptist churches, the impetus to press for black liberation and civil rights remains in the post-civil rights era.

The Black Contract with America on Moral Values

If the meeting of the historically star-crossed black Baptist conventions was unprecedented, so was another meeting conducted in January 2005. The Black Contract with America on Moral Values is a product of the High Impact Leadership Coalition (Banerjee 2005). Ministers associated with the project wear various denominational

stripes, including Bishop Charles Blake Sr. of the West Angeles Church of God in Christ and Bishop Harry Jackson of Hope Christian Church outside of Washington D.C. The Contract's six prongs call for family reconstruction; wealth creation; education reform; prison reform; healthcare; and African relief.

Even this black conservative effort retains a collective orientation. With regard to healthcare the Contract calls for: "Affordable healthcare for blacks that acknowledges the higher disease and mortality statistics in minority communities" (2005). Not unlike the Congressional Black Caucus, the group emphasizes wealth creation with an emphasis on lowering black unemployment; home ownership programs for minorities; and the transformation of minority communities through governmental provision of "infrastructure for indigenous businesses" (Black Contract 2005).

Table 3.1 Policy Pronouncements of Select Black Denominations

Black Denomination	Core Doctrinal Focus	Public Policy Positions 2004-2005	Possible Religious Orientation	Possible Religious Allies	Possible Civic Allies	Civil Rights Salience
African Methodist Episcopal	Social Gospel	No Child Left Behind	Sphere Sovereignty	Catholics; Mainline Protestants	National Urban League	Implied
Church of God in Christ	Holiness	Gay Marriage	Moral Prophecy	Evangelicals; Fundamentalists	Focus on the Family	Little to None
National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.	Orthodoxy	Iraq War	Social Prophecy	Mainline Protestants; Jews	Rainbow Coalition	Explicit

❖ **Public Policy Pronouncements**

- *African Methodist Episcopal*
 - Public Statement of Council of Bishops (2005)
 - Education
- *National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.*
 - Joint Baptist Board Meeting Points of Agreed Action (2005)
 - A national living wage
- *Church of God in Christ*
 - Marriage: A Proclamation of the Church of God in Christ Worldwide (2005)
 - Traditional marriage

The churches explored herein are each squarely in the Christian tradition, yet they vary in their doctrine (theology) and their religious distinctives (how theology is lived out). The denominations differ in the extent to which they explicitly engage or oppose government. This may stem from religious orientations or worldviews (whether explicit or implicit) that serve as guides to action. Religious and civic groups sympathetic to the mission and orientation of each denomination are indicated here as possible allies in

forays into public action or prophecy. Finally, the salience of the civil rights frame appears more or less explicitly with regard to the policy pronouncements of the different denominations.

The AME Church is strongly committed to liberation theology and the social gospel, thus, the corporate church emphasizes local bodies as vehicles of social service and mission. The denomination is relatively silent on political issues, with an interest in public education emphasized not only in reference to the No Child Left Behind policy of the Bush administration, but also in consideration of how the church might best address educational attainment at the local level. While the achievement gap between black students and white students is addressed here, there is little explicit intimation that this gap might be due to discrimination. What is interesting to note here, however, is that the two issues addressed by the Bishop's Public Statement—No Child Left Behind and aid to Africa, are among the key legislative priorities of the NAACP, the premiere civil rights organization in the United States as well as of the Congressional Black Caucus, the guardian of the black collective interest in the halls of power.

Given the AME's emphasis upon local responsibility and control, possible religious allies include Catholics with their belief in subsidiarity, a preference for addressing problems at the local level via local institutions whenever possible and utilizing the resources of the state only when that option is insufficient to adequately address problems and Presbyterians and other mainline Protestants who espouse sphere sovereignty, the belief that governments and civil societal institutions should be sovereign within their sphere of influence. Given their emphasis on economic liberation and social justice for the poor, the Catholic preferential option for the poor squares nicely

with AME doctrinal and religious distinctives. The emphasis of the National Urban League upon local economic empowerment makes them a natural ally for church initiatives in the civic realm. It is expected that some AME pastors would find the Faith-Based and Community Initiative consistent with these principles and thus, ripe for the black agenda.

The Church of God in Christ emanates from the Pentecostal tradition. Pentecostalism represents one of America's homegrown religious commodities and exemplifies the marketplace of religion in the United States (Finke and Stark 1992). The denomination's stress upon the individual religious experience and particularly upon holiness, comports with an orientation toward moral prophecy. Transformation of society in the moral prophetic vein occurs from within the individual as opposed to transformation from without at the level of governmental institutions a la the social prophetic vein. The denomination's only recent public statement was concerning a perceived attack on the sanctity of marriage. The language of the public rebuke highlighted the root of the problem: the sin of homosexuality, an individual lifestyle inconsistent with God's original plan for humankind. There are no references to the civil rights of individual believers or any evidence that the church publicly supports the traditional black political or civic groups that lobby on behalf of black collective interests.

The alliance of a prominent Bishop of the Church of God in Christ with the recent Black Contract with America on Moral Values was not met with denominational censure of rebuke. Given that the Black Contract was supported by conservative organizations like the Traditional Values Coalition, a natural civic ally for the organization is Focus on

the Family. Natural religious allies include Evangelicals and Fundamentalists to the extent that their religious worldviews complement the holiness orientation and social conservatism emblematic of the Church of God in Christ. Interestingly, the same theology is perhaps most inconsistent with support for programs like affirmative action, a civil rights initiative that most other African Americans support, but consonant with support for programs like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

The statement on civil religion in the Articles of Faith of the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. reflect a strong commitment to ‘rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and unto God what is God’s’. While the denomination was unsupportive of the civil rights movement of the mid-twentieth century, the recent revelation of its unity with other black Baptist denominations on issues of public import betray a belief that the line between church and state may be less demarcated than semi-permeable. Per other denominational statements and an examination of Convention President Rev. Dr. Shaw’s pastoral addresses to the annual convention, the denomination perceives their role as that of social prophet, addressing injustice and reciting God’s judgment for the society that neglects the imperatives of Scripture. The emphasis on social prophecy as revealed in the Joint Statement is consistent with the pronouncements and resolutions on social justice issues of many Mainline Protestant denominations and of some Jewish traditions in the United States. These umbrella religious denominations and traditions also actively lobby Congress on behalf of social concerns (Hertzke 1988; Hofrenning 1995). The Joint Baptist statement refers explicitly to civil rights concerns as they relate to the nine action items. Furthermore, there is an unmistakable congruence between the points explicated in the Joint Baptist Statement and the agenda of the NAACP and the Congressional Black

Caucus. Given an underlying populism in the denomination, a natural ally of the National Black Convention USA, Inc. is the Rainbow Coalition of Jesse Jackson.

The Contemporary Black Agenda

Prophets in Pharaoh's House: The Congressional Black Caucus

The black church tradition of discourse provides an important base of collective action in the black counterpublic. In the black political realm, has protest a la civil rights and social prophecy succumbed to politics as usual? Perhaps the institutionalization of unfettered social and political access has resulted in a new type of institutionalization--an entrenched black leadership beholden to the same electoral connection (Mayhew 1974) as white politicians: "The inertial logic of incumbency operates to constrict the field of political discourse"...favoring "a preference for a brokered politics as usual that limits the number and range of claims on the policy agenda" (Reed 1999, 121). Perhaps a vigorous commitment to social justice in the vein of the black prophetic tradition has been uninterrupted by increased access to the halls of power: "the transition from protest to politics is neither as sharp nor as irrevocable as political analysts have maintained" (Tate 1994, 17). Is there room for protest *and* politics in post-civil rights era black politics? The following will explore this question.

The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) was formed in 1971 upon the premise that "a more formal, more structured organization based on solidarity of purpose and program would enable (blacks in Congress) to wield a significant amount of influence in the House" (Clay 1993, 117). What opened the window of opportunity for the creation of this caucus (Kingdon 1984)? In the problem stream, the Nixon administration's assault on the programs of the Great Society galvanized blacks in Congress to action. In the

political stream, the looming 1972 elections made possible position taking concerning this attack and credit claiming for other victories (Mayhew 1974). In the policy stream, 'benign neglect' and Nixon's Family Assistance Plan were countered by the new caucus' alternative budget and a set of sixty recommendations comprising "The State of the Black Nation" (Clay 1993).

From its inception, this elite mouthpiece claimed to represent black interests. Despite the fact that black leaders could not agree among themselves on how to proceed regarding what demands to press on the 1972 Democratic presidential candidate with regard to a "Black Bill of Rights" (Reed 1986, 1999; Clay 1993), the Congressional Black Caucus has remained steadfast over the years in its insistence that:

*Black people have no permanent friends
No permanent enemies
Just permanent interests
(Clay 1993, 353)*

An examination of the recent agendas of the Congressional Black Caucus provides a window into the discourse of post-civil rights era politics. What collective action frames are utilized on the *black consensus agenda* of "just permanent interests"?

Analysis

Table 3.2 Legislative Priorities of the Congressional Black Caucus

Congressional Term	Legislative Priorities	Other Issues Addressed	Annual Leadership Conf. Theme	ALC Town Hall ALC Focus Forum
<p><i>107th Congress</i> Jan. 2001 to 2003</p> <p>“Broad Legislative Priorities”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election Reform • Racial Profiling • Hate Crimes • AIDS in Africa • Healthcare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mandatory Minimum Sentence ○ No Fear Act of 2002 ○ No Child Left Behind ○ Faith-Based and Community Initiative ○ Environment 	<p>Times Change: The Mission Does Not (2001)</p> <p>The CBC: The Voice for Global Understanding (2002)</p>	<p>Securing the Nation and Our Families (2001)</p> <p>Keeping the Faith: The Promise of Cooperation, the Perils of Government Funding (2002)</p>
<p><i>108th Congress</i> Jan. 2003 to 2005</p> <p>“An Agenda for America: Focused on the Many, Not Just the Few”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeland Security • Foreign Policy • Economic Policy • Healthcare • Education • Ending De Facto Segregation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leave No Family Behind ○ Faith-Based and Community Initiative ○ Civil Rights Act of 2004 	<p>Collective Leadership: Challenging a Bold New World (2003)</p> <p>Defining the Moment and the Movement (2004)</p>	<p>Educational Apartheid in the U.S.: Tracking Policies and Re-Segregation in America’s Schools (2004)</p>
<p><i>109th Congress</i> Jan. 2005 to 2007</p> <p>“Closing Disparities and Creating Opportunity”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Healthcare • Economic Policy • Justice • Social Security • Foreign Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social Security ○ Economic Empowerment ○ Home Ownership ○ Electoral Reform 		

While the Congressional Black Caucus' legislative priorities seem to reflect mainstream, middle-class issues in several instances, it is interesting to note the foci of the CBC's agendas from the 107th to the 109th Congresses. Calling itself the conscience of the Congress, the CBC proffers an alternative budget to that of the Congress, one which prioritizes civil rights and social justice issues. While the relevance of a civil rights frame is clear on issues like hate crimes and racial profiling, less clear perhaps, is the connection between civil rights and economic policy; education; and healthcare to name a few. The best depiction of the CBC's continued use of civil rights as the dominant causal story and policy image of black politics is found in the language utilized by the members themselves as they define and describe public policy issues in their quest to represent black collective interests.

Healthcare

In the 107th Congress, then Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, John Conyers, expressed his commitment to universal healthcare via "eradicating disparities in (the) health care system". In further elucidation of the commitment of the CBC to the issue, Congresswoman Donna Christensen of the CBC called for "Health Care Justice NOW...With Disparities for None and Access for All" (June 2001):

Currently, I am co-sponsoring a bill, the Working American Families Health Insurance Act of 2001 (The Medical Access Plan)...(that) will extend Medicaid to cover the 42 million uninsured in America, the majority of whom are of color...We plan to fight for passage of (a) Medical Access Plan to guarantee one of the last civil rights not granted to all American citizens--the right to the quality health care that they deserve (9)

In the 108th Congress, CBC Chair, Representative Elijah E. Cummings, described healthcare policy as among the preeminent concerns in the pursuit of a just society (2003):

America has a critical and unfulfilled obligation. More than 9 million children are not receiving the care that they need and deserve--and 18% of these children are African Americans. Minorities are less likely to receive sophisticated medical treatments...The CBC is determined to eliminate the appalling disparities that plague America's health care system by assuring universal, nondiscriminatory access to affordable, high quality care. America deserves a health care system in which its citizens' income, where they live and the color of their skin are no longer mortality factors (3).

The causal story of civil rights with regard to health care is clear. Per Representative Christensen, African Americans and other citizens deserve health care as a matter of fundamental civil rights. Per Congressman Cummings, access to health care represents not a matter akin to capitalistic commodities whereby citizens opt in or out, but a fundamental civil right that may not be denied any American. Rather implicit in both statements is the notion that African Americans are discriminated against in terms of adequacy of treatment and in terms of access to the system. Even less explicit is the notion that the issue of universal access itself is an issue easily shunned by most of Congress given that the primary beneficiaries of universal health care represent a minority of the population. In the tradition of black prophetic utterances against social ills, these CBC members condemn the United States for her failures. The policy image of civil rights in health care is more complex than simple, with numbers used to strategically define the problem as primarily a black one (Stone 1989, 1997).

Education

One of President Bush's key domestic policy issues, the No Child Left Behind Act, has become a favorite target of the Congressional Black Caucus. While the CBC focuses on the dearth of funding for the domestic initiative; closing educational achievement gaps between blacks and whites; and bridging the digital divide, there is mostly subtle civil rights framing in the educational plank of the CBC legislative agendas

from the 107th to the 109th Congresses. The CBC does, however, act as social conscience, here calling President Bush and Congress to task for their failure to fund fully the education initiative (Owens 2002):

Those in firm opposition are conspirators seeking to lull us into a deep sleep by insisting that the passage of No Child Left Behind legislation is all that is needed to improve education in this decade. Meanwhile, the President is refusing to support the funding promised for his own “most favored” legislation. The Congressional Black Caucus has the duty and responsibility to serve as the “whistleblower” (9).

The CBC acts as grand black prophet, consonant with the black church tradition by vowing to call the President to task for failing to implement his policy fully.

In more strident civil rights vernacular, at the Annual Legislative Conference in 2004, a Focus Forum (featuring controversial remarks by Bill Cosby) revolved around the topic of “Educational Apartheid in the U.S.: Tracking Policies and Re-Segregation in America’s Schools”. In general, however, the language of education reform as regards the congressional agenda of the CBC is less explicit about the linkage between black educational achievement gaps and systemic discrimination. That is, the rhetoric of CBC members offers no remedy proposed for closing the gap; they only express disdain for No Child Left Behind and school vouchers. The CBC’s lack of answers framed in racially-specific images for the ongoing educational problem in black communities is puzzling given that literature points to obvious discrepancies in the educational equality of opportunity for black and white (for example, Kozol 1992).

The strongest language with regard to education and civil rights found in the CBC’s very public legislative pronouncements over the past several terms relate back to funding for No Child Left Behind: “Under-funded federal education mandates only perpetuate existing inequalities” (Cummings, 2003). Why the Congressional Black

Caucus does not utilize what appears a natural frame given the centrality of public education victories to the civil rights movement and the recent anniversary of the landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education (1954)* decision remains a mystery. In 2003, the CBC even co-opted the language of Bush's education bill to focus on the economic needs of African American families. While education was referenced in the *Leave No Family Behind Alternative Budget (2004)*, it was referenced primarily as the great equalizer for African American individuals and families vis-à-vis their white counterparts. While this emphasis on economic parity was certainly a key goal of the civil rights movement, the upper-middle class to upper-class status of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus may imbue them with a more Horatio Alger view of the educational system given CBC members' own successes in the educational system (recent Chair Melvin Watt was educated at Yale Law School). Perhaps a "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" view of the public education system is a partial explanation for the gap between black mass support of school vouchers and CBC opposition to the policy.¹⁵

Economic Policy

Economic policy is not a mundane, technical consideration where the Congressional Black Caucus is concerned. Representative Major R. Owens describes the importance of the CBC's *Leave No Family Behind Alternative Budget* for fiscal year 2004 in the following terms (Owens 2003):

The brand of African American genius that crafted and implemented the Civil Rights Movement has never been applied to the intense process of fighting to shape American Budget and Tax Policies. It is time to replicate the Civil Rights historic approach with many levels of innovative actions in motion at once. It is time to fully embrace the economic survival, prosperity and wealth accumulation challenge. We must Leave No Family Behind (8).

¹⁵ For the three Congressional terms covered here, the only CBC members who actively supported school vouchers were Rep. Floyd Flake (NY) and Rep. Harold Ford Jr. (TN).

Owens appeals to African Americans by reminding them of the success of the movement and the propensity for a similar concentration of effort to transform the budgetary priorities of the United States. The urgency of economic issues to the black community is illustrated by Owens' emphasis upon pressing for all relevant policies at once.

The policy image of economic policy a la civil rights is buttressed by causal stories that emphasize the quantitative divide between black and white Americans (Cummings 2003). Subjective indicators of economic gaps between black and white Americans are not lost on CBC members as they frame policy agendas:

The economic downturn has been especially hard on African American working families. African American unemployment is nearly twice the national average, and the weak labor market has caused the wage gap between African Americans and whites to widen...African American small business owners continue to confront unreasonable difficulties in achieving their fair share of government contracts...we stand firmly behind responsible economic stimulus measures (3).

'Fair share' might represent a benign reference, but more than likely refers to minority set-asides. The contention here by the Congressional Black Caucus is that fiscal and economic policy in the United States is irresponsible with regard to black economic interests, resulting in a racial gap between black and white employment and earning potential.

Environmental Policy

In an ingenious appeal for justice, Representative Barbara Lee calls for the 107th Congress to address the discriminatory aspects of environmental policy in the United States. Lee paints causal stories about the locus of control for environmental degradation while illustrating that the current course of governmental inaction poses intolerable policy trade-offs (Stone 1997) between efficiency on the one hand and liberty and

security on the other:

Environmental injustice grows not only out of poverty, but racism...Lower income communities and especially minority communities bear the life-long costs of industrial development while enjoying few of the benefits...Superfund sites that are underfunded; factories and plants that emit carcinogens under the protections of grandfather clauses; healthcare that is racially biased...all demand our attention and financial resources...Dr. King portrayed justice as a river. We can build on that metaphor and legacy: we can work to eliminate disparities at home and inequities abroad. Environmental justice cannot be dammed up; this darker side of the American inheritance must be addressed and remedied, and our children must be allowed to grow up in freedom, safety, and equality (14).

Since minority communities have been targeted for toxic-waste dumping and other forms of pollution, Lee deems the remedy for environmental injustices the invocation of the civil rights frame. Her prophetic utterance not only frames problems in racially-specific terms, it also powerfully presses the government to work at a solution in the name of racial and environmental justice.

In summary, the language of the policy priorities of the Congressional Black Caucus demonstrates the centrality of the civil rights frame in black politics. William Clay (1993), a founding member of the CBC, maintains that the propensity of the Caucus to transform politics rests on a continued emphasis upon the collective in the black community: "...we understand that the destiny of each of us is inextricably bound to the destiny of 32 million other black brothers and sisters, and that their struggle and our struggle are irrevocably tied one to the other" (353). Also necessary is "...*unified support* in...individual districts...and the will and determination of...black communities to insist that their white elected officials support the programmatic agenda of the (CBC)" (emphasis added, Clay 1993, 380). Congressman Clay typifies the black utility heuristic. The collective aspirations of African Americans are codified in the language of civil rights. Remarkably, whatever the nature and content of the political issue, the civil rights

frame is the most salient on the consensus agenda of the Congressional Black Caucus.

‘Making Democracy Work’ for the People: The NAACP

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the most recognizable of all African American civic institutions and among the most revered (see Harris 1999). The organization was founded in 1909 with a mandate to ‘secure these rights’ for the whole of American society, particularly black Americans. With an explicit civil rights mission and vision, this non-partisan organization seeks to “ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination” (www.naacp.org). While a flagship cultural institution in the black counterpublic, the NAACP has never secured a mass base (Olson 1965; Morris 1984, 15). Operationally speaking, the NAACP resembles an interest group and must battle the problems attendant with collective action and provision of public goods. What policy images prevail at this civic institution?

The objectives of the NAACP are action-oriented, placing the organization squarely within the controversies of the political and civic realm. As such, the organization publishes Legislative Priorities; Issue Briefs; Action Alerts and Issue Alerts; Federal Legislative Report Cards. Table 3.3 represents the coding and counting of recent press releases from the NAACP on issues that the organization prioritized in congressional terms from 2001-2005. Table 3.3 provides a breakdown of major umbrella issues to determine the primary legislative emphases of the group and also to determine the primary frame used to talk about legislative issues.

Analysis

Table 3.3 Legislative Priorities of the NAACP

Press Release Year	Civil Rights	Labor	Health and Housing	Education	International	Social Security *	Other Domestic **	Total ***
2001	60% (28)	11% (5)	2% (1)	11% (5)	2% (1)	0	15% (7)	47
2002	65% (39)	7% (4)	7% (4)	5% (3)	12% (7)	0	5% (3)	60
2003	44% (20)	24% (11)	9% (4)	9% (4)	7% (3)	0	7% (3)	45
2004	57% (25)	7% (3)	0% (4)	11% (5)	7% (3)	0	9% (4)	44
2005	73% (24)	6% (2)	0	9% (3)	3% (1)	6% (2)	3% (1)	33
Total	136	25	13	20	15	2	18	229

*Social Security was added to the code list given the salience of the privatization issue.

**Other Domestic programs include programs like transportation and other discretionary programs not included in the NAACP's priorities, but which are nevertheless addressed by the organization.

***Press releases on Internal Issues highlighting organizational accomplishments were excluded.

❖ **Other Tactics**

- *Issue Briefs*
 - President Bush Proposes the Elimination of 60 Programs in 2005 Budget (February 23, 2004)
 - Discriminatory “Faith Based” Provision Retained by U.S. House of Representatives (February 26, 2004)
- *Action Alerts and Issue Alerts*
 - NAACP Supports H.R. 3809, The Civil Rights Act of 2004, The “Fairness Act” (April 26, 2004)
 - NAACP Urges U.S. House and Senate Members to Co-Sponsor The End Racial Profiling Act (February 25, 2004)
- *Legislative Priorities for the 109th Congress*
 - Civil Rights/Equal Opportunity/Racial Disparity/Criminal Justice Issues
 - Labor Issues
 - Health and Housing Issues
 - Education Issues
 - International Issues
- *Federal Legislative Report Card*
 - Key civil rights votes that progressed beyond the committee level

The NAACP categorizes as fundamental civil rights issues those related to civil rights, equal opportunity, racial disparity, and criminal justice. Perhaps the results of Table 3.3 come as little surprise, that from 2001 to 2005, the NAACP's press releases and issues briefs prioritized civil rights over every other issue. Even given their emphasis in press releases on civil rights issues like racial profiling, most other issues on the NAACP agenda were framed in terms of civil rights. Indeed, since part of the NAACP's mission is legal advocacy, the primary focus on overt civil rights issues in press releases and issue alerts to activists might be for the purpose of galvanizing funds and grassroots support. That said, the other issues on the NAACP agenda represent black collective interests.

The Legislative Priorities of the 109th Congress demonstrate that recent political issues related to civil rights are inclusive of judicial nominations--"Equal Opportunity at the U.S. Supreme Court"; capital punishment--"Death Penalty Moratorium/Abolition"; and government funding of religious activity--"Eliminate Potential Discrimination in Faith-Based Initiatives". With regard to the latter, the NAACP avers (Legislative Priorities 2004):

...The NAACP recognizes the crucial role faith based organizations have played throughout our nation's history in addressing some of our nation's most serious ills. Yet the NAACP is in opposition to the faith based initiative (sic) approach as presented by President Bush as it can result in legalized and federally funded discrimination...Unfortunately, the leadership of the US House of Representatives appears intent on lacing provisions into several individual bills that would allow faith-based institutions to discriminate against people because of their religion when implementing programs funded by federal taxpayers' dollars while eliminating anti-discrimination safeguards. Specifically, they inserted this language into legislation reauthorizing a slew of job training programs, as well as bills reauthorizing the "Head Start" program and the Community Block Grants program.

The NAACP invokes a civil rights frame, discrimination, in order to oppose the Faith-

Based and Community Initiative. They castigate Congress for allowing “discrimination in hiring” provisions to be attached to legislation of essential importance to black Americans.

What is perhaps most remarkable about the NAACP’s Legislative Priorities is their consonance with the agenda of the Congressional Black Caucus. While each of the five legislative priority categories of the NAACP for the 109th Congress consists of related legislative issues:

- Civil Rights
- Labor
- Health and Housing
- Education
- International

This broader agenda mirrors that of the Congressional Black Caucus for the 109th Congress with its focus upon:

- Education
- Healthcare
- Economic Policy
- Justice
- Social Security
- Foreign Policy

The congruence between the legislative priorities of the CBC and the NAACP provide evidence of collective black interests (Dawson 1994) and their codification in a *black consensus agenda* in American politics. Both the CBC and NAACP utilize the civil rights frame bathed in the language of the black church.

Progress and Public Policy: The Civil Rights Movement in Rhetorical Perspective

The civil rights movement underscores the significance of black institutions like the NAACP and black leaders (Morris 1984, Findlay 1993). Indeed, an enduring lesson of the civil rights movement is the notion that the protest may be galvanized from the

black counterpublic and black counterelites (Lee 2002). Less spontaneous combustion of masses than an organized effort of various centers of pre-existing movement activity (Morris 1984), the civil rights movement represents a successful amalgamation of civil societal institutions and individuals in pursuit of political goals. A defining moment in history, the civil rights movement represents an important locus of African American political development.

The axis of the protest to politics thesis (Rustin 1965; Tate 1994) is the notion that the Second Reconstruction (Woodward 1955) was efficacious for African Americans pursuit of broad-scale civil rights. Thus accomplished, the 14th amendment, as a route for securing black social gains (above and beyond those of the protest era), has been tapped out (Rustin 1965; Marable 1983). Black politicians and black political activists, therefore, need utilize mainstream maneuvers to press for collective black goals. Professional politicians in the halls of power, Adolph Reed (1986; 1999) intones, represent the best chance to pursue black interests in the post-civil rights era. The policy images and discourse that emanate from the church are unnecessary, and at best redundant, in the post-civil rights era according to this view.

Other scholars and the present research accord an exalted place for the black church in contemporary black politics (Harris 1999; Harris-Lacewell 2005). The black church represents the crucible of the civil rights movement; the fulcrum on which success was predicated. Certainly, the efforts of the NAACP and other organizations should not be underscored. However, the formal, institutionalized approach of the NAACP was not amenable to the type of grassroots insurgency that emerged during the height of movement activism (Morris 1984; Branch 1988). Indeed, the NAACP's institutional path

was more consonant with incrementalism than with dramatic social disruption and significant policy change.

Nevertheless, the windows of opportunity afforded by the legal victories of the elite NAACP were capitalized upon by churches and religiously-related organizations that specialized in reaching the masses (Morris 1984; Findlay 1993). A dominated group transformed basic resources into a successful movement for social and political change via the efforts of various indigenous local centers of protest activity. Beyond the task of resource mobilization, the black church became the center of coordinated activity at the local level that transformed national identity and shaped the future of black politics.

Pulpits and Prophetic Politics: Black Pastors

Many historical and political accounts have attributed a great deal of credit to the black church for generating political activism among African-Americans and for imbuing them with civic skills (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Harris 1999). Other accounts (McAdam 1982; Carmines and Stimson 1989), less numerous but no less significant, seek to buffer claims that the black church was the decisive factor in the civil rights movement, claiming that white elites or forces outside of the church were the true catalysts for the civil rights movement. Given that confrontation (Morris 1984), defiance (Harris-Lacewell 2005), and protest (Morris 1984) are labels frequently utilized to describe black politics in the contemporary era, how does the prophetic tradition of the black church reify this black political bent? “The larger significance of black protest lies in the fact that it is forever present in some form” (Morris 1984, x). Indeed, the black counterpublic (Dawson 1994) nurtures an oppositional civic culture (Harris 1999) that utilizes the symbols of black religion to demonstrate resistance to all forms of injustice.

The current chapter seeks neither to overstate nor to oversimplify the role of black pastors in black politics. Rather, it seeks to understand the confluence of the black church and black agenda politics.

Importantly, the black church has served as a source of information, organizational skills, and political stimuli since its inception (Morris 1984; Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Harris 1999). While the civil rights era demarcates a historical highpoint in this regard, the black church remains a central black institution, shaping the political fortunes of her members and nonmembers alike. Indeed, “the decline of party organizations and the increasing number of blacks seeking public office has probably stimulated *more* church-based political activism in black communities since the civil rights movement than took place during it” (emphasis added, Harris 1999, 180).

How, in the post-civil rights era, does the black church continue to shape black politics? At the helm of the cornerstone of black culture, black pastors, are important shapers of collective action frames--those cognitive categories that guide collective black action (Harris 1999). ‘Everyday talk’ (Harris-Lacewell 2005) in the black counterpublic is laced with religious symbolism, yet sacred symbols need not work in isolation from secular ones (Harris 1999). Black religion is the source of many of the oppositional worldviews that African Americans develop in the political realm. From using religious language in political discourse to lacing sermons with political references, “the religious culture of African Americans not only stimulates mobilization by serving as a guide for interpreting political goals, but just as important, it also provides sacredly ordained legitimacy to political action” (Harris 1999, 135). Rather than affirm the critics of the black church who charge that black pastors muck up black politics (Reed 1986; Marable

1983), the current chapter finds a functional and instrumental place for the black church and black pastors. Specifically, scholars of black politics should explore, rather than discount, the discursive terrain that black pastors occupy in the black political realm. Black religious discourse shapes black agenda politics.

Conclusion

The current chapter explores and raises new questions that may potentially challenge and affirm key aspects of the conventional wisdom about the black church and politics. We have examined the content of the black Holy Grail, *the black consensus agenda*. The black church is a key source of the message of black communalism. If black politics in the post-civil rights era hangs on the black utility heuristic (Dawson 1994), how is the message of solidarity transmitted? While scholars of black politics do not cast the black church aside as irrelevant, they tend to neglect the policy images of the black church and black pastors. These images formed the basis of the first black agendas and as evidenced by the agendas of the Congressional Black Caucus and the NAACP, the prophetic themes of the black church continue to punctuate black agenda politics. Black sacred images are utilized in the black secular and political realms to frame black agendas. This affirms recent public opinion literature (Zaller 1992; Carmines and Stimson 1989) as the black consensus agenda is admittedly constructed by political elites. Also, the current work does not overstate the level of activism of the black church or black pastors (see McAdam 1982), but rather affirms recent research that indicates that the black church shapes the way black political activists frame strategies given that sacred symbols are not isolated from secular ones in the black counterpublic (Harris 1999). The current work extends these insights by exploring the content of the black

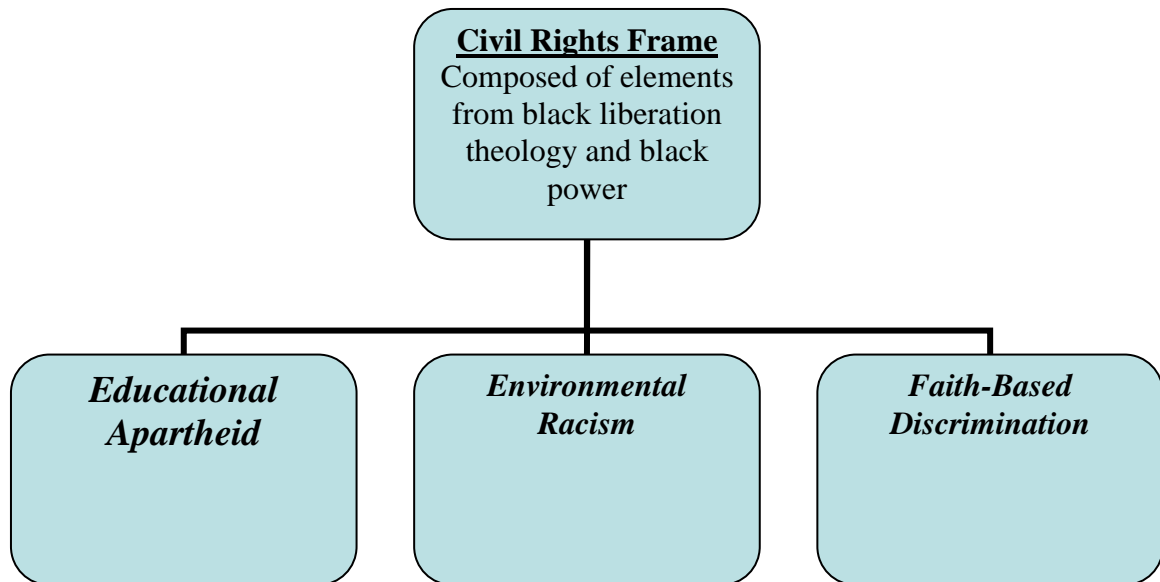
agenda through the lens of American political development. The major finding is that civil rights frames rooted deeply in black liberation theology are prominent in framing the *black consensus agenda*.

The confluence of black church and black culture renders a tidy separation between church and state impossible in the black milieu. This is evident in the voice of the Congressional Black Caucus, the conscience of the Congress, which continues to speak prophetically in Pharaoh's house. This is clear as the NAACP continues to speak truth to power from civil society. The black pulpit continues to be a source of both spiritual and political messages and the seat of the development of black civic skills (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). The black community's religious zeal (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990); black theology and black power (Cone 1969); and a shared culture and consciousness (Levine 1977; Harris 1999; Harris-Lacewell 2005), render the civil rights frame both accessible and salient to black politics with its continued emphasis on the collective, but in the realm of real politick, it may render black interests captive to the majority (Frymer 1999). The vibrancy of a black discursive space mediated by black pastors is a critical alternative to the visions of the black polity, or the polity writ large, that castigate black religionists by averring that a primary discursive role for black clerics in the black counterpublic, and the public sphere broadly speaking, is illegitimate in a liberal democracy (Marable 1983; Reed 1986,1999).

In terms of historical development, this chapter presents evidence of some core tenets of a *black consensus agenda* in the United States. Despite the shift from protest to politics, the civil rights policy image is the primary collective action frame in all spheres of the black counterpublic. But discourse theory reminds us that any agenda can be

hegemonic. In the black milieu, scholars and politicians resort to doublespeak, averring on the one hand that black interests are collective, but that black people do not speak with one voice. In the case of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, the black political establishment has largely utilized their position to vilify a policy issue with widespread black support. In doing so, black politicians like Bobby Rush termed the Initiative discriminatory, in the language of civil rights—affirming the contention made here that the nodal frame of black agenda politics builds on the liberation-prophetic language central to the black church. Figure 3.1 illustrates the centrality of civil rights language to elite framing of black agenda issues.

Figure 3.1 The Civil Rights Frame of Black Agenda Politics



The Faith-Based and Community Initiative was preceded by a shift in public discourse about federalism and public-private partnerships. Many black pastors were already familiar with the language of public-private partnerships via Community Development Corporations and other grant programs. Some black pastors, like Rep.

Floyd Flake, utilized their own images to support the Initiative. Policy images and causal stories enable scholars to examine the inadequacy of conventional paradigms concerning black politics, especially regarding the role of black pastors. It is much easier to emphasize competing leadership claims between black preachers and black politicians than to sort out black policy images emanating from black civil society.

Black pastoral policy images of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative will tell us much about *black agenda politics* in the post-civil rights era. The Faith-Based Initiative challenges the notion that collective interests correlate necessarily to the consensus black agenda and highlights the importance of black pastors' discourse. The concentration of black political eggs in the Democratic party basket reflects that party's commitment (in recent history) to issues of civil rights and social justice. Such loyalty, whether deliberate or blind, may backfire. Democratic party leaders, aware of the natural alignment between black issues and the Democratic platform, may view appeals to the loyal black base disruptive of a broader coalition. In the ongoing struggle to secure swing voters, a Democratic party has an incentive to *emphasize* majority interests and to *deemphasize* black interests. Ironically, African Americans remain captured by the Democratic party--the party of civil rights.

Chapter Four will examine the Faith-Based and Community Initiative's emergence on the policy stage with particular attention to how the issue was targeted to the black community, how the issue was received by the black community, and how the Congressional Black Caucus responded to the possibility of a black church alliance with a Republican president.

Chapter Five will examine black pastors' policy images about the Faith-Based

and Community Initiative. Some new theological strands and new churches in the black milieu represent a source of increasing individualism in black politics. The emergence of black megachurches with an emphasis on health and wealth gospels and other theological trends, as opposed to liberation, might portend a new individual heuristic (Cone 1969; Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Harris 2000). Black pastors' images about the Initiative will shed light on these trends and on the black agenda politics of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

Chapter Four

Caught in the Crosshairs of Politics: The Congressional Black Caucus Meets the Faith-Based and Community Initiative

This is a great case study on how silly politics is—it's not based on what works. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative got caught in the crosshairs of politics.
Former Congressman J.C. Watts

Introduction

Chapter Three examined how the Faith-Based and Community Initiative challenges the notion of collective interests, highlights the importance of black pastors' discourse, and illustrates the salience of civil rights/liberation imagery in black politics. The concentration of black political eggs in the Democratic party basket reflects that party's commitment (in recent history) to issues of civil rights and social justice. Black Democratic party leaders, aware of the natural alignment between the black agenda and the Democratic platform, tend to view outsider political appeals to the black Americans as disruptive of this cozy coalition. For example, many members of the Congressional Black Caucus view the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a wedge issue, intended to splinter otherwise solid black support of the Democratic party and the black agenda proffered by the Congressional Black Caucus. Black politicians' relative lack of support for the Initiative flies in the face of the supportive stance of the vast majority of African Americans toward the Faith-Based program. Perhaps even more interestingly, black pastors rather pragmatic role in the black community—becoming all things to all people—renders them very receptive to an Initiative that has the propensity to prop-up community service efforts. This chapter will explore the tangled web that is the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as it relates to black religion and politics.

The notion of a black agenda predicated on black collective interests. In the case

of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, the black political establishment (both most of the Congressional Black Caucus and the NAACP) has largely utilized the black agenda as a platform to undermine an issue with widespread black support. In doing so, they use a racialized causal story (Stone 1989), stating that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is anathema to black political purposes given that it does not resemble redistributive policy of the welfare variant—the preferred policies of many ideological liberals for ameliorating societal ills. Furthermore, CBC member Rep. Bobby Rush raised the rhetorical stakes of the debate by framing the Initiative in a policy image of discrimination. This claim of discrimination stems from the fact that faith-based institutions receiving federal dollars under the Faith-Based and Community Initiative can refuse to hire those individuals whose personal moral and/or religious philosophies fail to comport with the core mission of the faith-based program. Such exclusive policies, to Rush and those who agree with him, pose a threat to *e pluribus unum* and threaten the gains of the civil rights era. This strategic utilization of the language of civil rights to combat the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is a keen strategy given that the theme resonates with black as well as white constituencies.

If the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is in fact *challenging* civil rights as Rep. Rush and other prominent members of the Congressional Black Caucus like Rep. Charles Rangel claim, are indeed at stake, there is a not-so-subtle tinge of irony that most African Americans (some black political elites notwithstanding) embrace the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a mode of *empowering* black communities. Perhaps equally ironic is the fact that the Bush administration attempted to solidify black church support of the Initiative in part by utilizing a policy image of discrimination. Why, the Bush

administration asked, should any religious entity that provides social services (including, but especially black churches) be denied an equal opportunity to compete for government grant and contract competitions which are open to other non-profit and for-profit entities?

For years, black churches have been performing yeoman work...feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, seeking after the last, the least, and the lost. These labors meet legitimate needs yet church coffers are often more shallow than the depth of despair extant in many black communities. The Bush administration decreed that the spiritual segment of civil society could no longer be sidelined from the game of grantsmanship. Discriminatory rules that excluded the “armies of compassion” from grant competitions for social services would be replaced by ones that “leveled the playing field” for all service providers. Discrimination is indeed germane to the faith-based effort, Bush averred, but not in the same sense that many members of the Congressional Black Caucus claim.

Perhaps what also drove early opposition to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative by the Rep. Rush and some other black politicians is the fact that the President Bush could wrangle his way onto the black agenda by appealing to black religiosity broadly and black pastors specifically. In large part, President Bush bypassed black politicians¹⁶ and went straight to the other de facto black leadership--black clergy to make his plea for support of the new Initiative. Indeed, the administration seemed to realize the natural appeal of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative to the black church community. This parlayed nicely into Bush’s desire for a gestalt shift in a

¹⁶ This reference excludes Rep. J.C. Watts, a black Republican who championed the Initiative and hosted his own faith-based summit to garner the support of black clergy.

balkanizing conservative camp¹⁷ toward the utilization of civil society as the cornerstone of a compassionate conservative agenda.

The story of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative has been a political one, with significant implications for black politics and the black church. This chapter will provide an overview of the politics of this policy with particular attention to any implications for the black church as a policy venue and black pastors as policy implementers. Included herein are analyses from interviews with two former black Congressmen, an architect of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, officials in the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and a related executive agency operation, a contractor of faith-based grants, participant observation from a White House conference on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, media depictions of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, poll results indicating initial and recent levels of support for the Initiative, and an assessment of the current faith-based policy landscape.

Chapter Framework

The framework for this chapter loosely adopts John Kingdon's (1984) model of agenda setting. The story of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and the black agenda can be conceived of according to three streams: the problem stream, the policy stream, and the political stream.

The problem stream consists of indicators of a policy problem like focusing events, as well as a policy feedback loop that presumes a communicative connection

¹⁷ By the 2000 election, the conservative camp consisted of libertarians committed to individual autonomy, neoconservatives committed to morality and foreign policy as a source for good in the world, paleoconservatives committed to strict construction of the constitution, the religious right committed to traditional moral values, and crunchy conservatives committed to goodness, truth, and beauty and thus, even the environment. For a brief assessment of conservatism by conservatives, see "The Future of American Conservatism: In Honor of Ronald Reagan" in *Regent University Christian Leader*, Spring/Summer 2006.

between political elites and citizens. The mere communication of a policy problem does not ensure agenda action, however. Indeed, constructive policy alternatives must exist or arise to address a policy problem.

The policy stream, interestingly, does not consist merely of *new* policy ideas. Old ideas and past policy approaches and alternatives are always alive, even if in the background. For example, consider think tanks whose goal is to presage policy problems, dream up solutions, and wait for problems to arise so as to proffer the prefab solution. Similarly, in the policy realm, there is little new under the sun. Old policy ideas marinate in the policy primeval soup. New policy ideas are dumped in for spice, sometimes reflecting old ideas, and sometimes combining with old policy ideas to produce new aromas and convections. Which policies are operative at a given time are often contingent not merely on whether the enactment of the policy is technically feasible, but additionally upon the political winds.

The political stream equates with the political context and the historical times. For example, the national policy mood (liberal or conservative), public opinion on particular issues, the state of the economy, and events such as elections or wars or other upheavals all determine whether or not a political issue can garner a place on the governmental agenda. While politics are important for agenda setting, it is individuals who exploit the times for the purposes of problem solving.

Policy entrepreneurs are actors or institutions who act to set agendas. While policy solutions lie in waiting to solve policy problems, they are often wedded by rational actors with an interest in and investment in coupling solutions to problems. These entrepreneurs capitalize upon the fortuitous political times when the three streams

coalesce and policy agendas are set. The opening of policy windows of opportunity requires a shrewd policy entrepreneur who reads the political tea leaves and couple policy problems and policy solutions.

This chapter includes insights culled from interviews with one current and two former officials in the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, two former Congressmen, and one administrator of millions of dollars of faith-based grants. Additionally, Congressional testimony by David Kuo as well as the contested claims of his tell-all book on life in the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives are explored here. While the protocol for interviews with political elites is included in Appendix C, the interviewer probed for answers about the intent of the Initiative, the value of the policy, obstacles to implementation of the policy, the implications for federalism of the policy, and the implications for the black church of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

The Problem Stream

Many analyses of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and the black church underestimate the coup that President Bush accomplished via the compassionate conservative agenda. During the 2000 presidential campaign, Gore announced support of the idea of an Initiative first. And while President Clinton had signed Charitable Choice (the forerunner of the Initiative) into law, Bush deftly adopted the issue and became the go-to candidate on the Initiative (see Black et al. 2004) after giving the Duty of Hope speech¹⁸. Indeed, the co-optation of black public sentiment for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative so soon after the disenfranchisement of black Americans in the 2000 presidential elections is astounding.

¹⁸ This landmark speech is detailed later in this section.

Bush v. Gore and the Black Vote

President Bush assumed a presidential mantle bereft of a presidential mandate. The 2000 presidential election, awash in a sea of “hanging chads”, was ultimately resolved by *Bush v. Gore* (2000). The black community widely decried this decision as political and little more than voter nullification. Statistics from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (2001) indicate that while black voters comprised a mere 16% of voters in Florida in the 2000 presidential election, black voters represented 54% of ballots rejected by automatic machines. Other voters’ rejection rate was 1.6%.¹⁹ This remarkable chasm between black voters and everyone else fueled widespread black suspicion that free and fair elections at the turn of the twenty-first century were a farce for African Americans. Some 79% of African Americans disapproved of the way that the 2000 election was decided (American National Election Study, 2002). The feeling that blacks had been shafted by a technicality in the form of the butterfly ballot aroused suspicion of the victor of the presidential race. The fact that President Bush’s fate was secured by a Supreme Court that was ideologically conservative on the balance did little to allay black fears that black votes were excluded because they would presumably solidify a Gore victory.

If feelings of voter nullification were pervasive among African Americans, George W. Bush sought to reconcile hard feelings by building bridges to the black community. What the new President lacked in terms of a mandate, he claimed in terms of a mantle: compassionate conservatism would serve as the bulwark of the newly minted administration’s domestic agenda. Whereas Bush’s father sparked a “thousand points of light” to combat societal ills and President Clinton encouraged work and individual

¹⁹ U.S. Commission On Civil Rights, *Voting Irregularities in Florida During the 2000 Presidential Election* (2001)

responsibility to “end welfare as we know it,” President Bush stemmed the tide of the welfare state via “compassionate conservatism.” From whence did this kinder, gentler conservative ideology arise?

Welfare Reform meets the Tragedy of American Compassion

The vision of compassionate conservatism that President Bush sought to implement in 2001 must be read in the context of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, commonly termed welfare reform. Five years after the implementation of welfare reform, welfare rolls had dropped from a high of 4.1 million families in 1994 to a low of 2.1 million families in 2001 (White House 2002). When President Bush entered office with a plan to immerse civil society in the delivery of social services to the needy in 2001, the poverty rate was 11.7%—down from 13.8% in 1995 (U.S. Census Bureau 2008). Welfare reform, per the new President’s own rhetoric had been a success, helping Americans in the quest of “Working Toward Independence” (White House 2002) and thereby meeting the bi-partisan aims of the original legislation of reconciling “personal responsibility and work opportunity.”

Ironically, Democratic President Clinton’s success with welfare reform was in part possible because of Republican President Reagan’s successful reframing of the welfare debate. One of the greatest ideological triumphs of the past 30 years was the conservative framing of welfare recipients as lazy individuals content to suck the government coffer dry rather than work (Pear 1983, Schram 1995). Welfare dependence, upon the triumphant conservative view, was a disease to be cured at the level of the individual. Fixing welfare, then, was no more complex than convincing people that they needed to take responsibility for themselves—dignity would be found in

the market (Murray 1984). The obvious market solution would be an incentive program—and since in the case of welfare, alleged abuse by welfare recipients is portrayed as the problem, a *disincentive* program was proffered. Needy families would receive temporary assistance for lifetime maximum of five years. Welfare was transformed from the quintessential entitlement program to a temporary aid program. As expected, welfare rolls declined dramatically in the United States. But the readiness of Americans and their politicians to remove a permanent social safety net is unquestionably related to perceptions about the race of the bulk of welfare recipients (Gilens 1999, Hancock 2004).

Despite the unmistakable success of welfare reform efforts and declining rates of poverty in the United States²⁰, a story of race lurks beneath the surface of welfare reform. A major work of public opinion has established that Americans disdain for welfare programs in the United States is explained in large part by their perception of welfare as a program that primarily caters to African Americans. This perception of African Americans as the preponderance of welfare recipients is erroneous, but is further compounded by the view of black welfare recipients as lazy (Gilens 1999). Americans find it easier to cut programs when recipients are deemed unworthy and racially other. Misinformation about welfare renders welfare a racialized debate in the already frenetic realm of politics and public policy (Kuklinski et al. 2000).

²⁰ This is not to assert causation. While Peter Edelman, a former Clinton aide continues to assert that welfare reform is among Clinton's worst policy moves, [see Peter Edelman, "The Worst Thing Bill Clinton Has Done," *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 279, No. 3 (March 1997), pp. 43-58], other liberals maintain that the plan has worked, especially in states with strong work incentives [see for example Rebecca M. Blank and Robert F. Schoeni, "Changes in the Distribution of Children's Family Income over the 1990's," paper prepared for annual meetings of the American Economic Association, Washington, D.C., January 2003.]

If white perception of *black laziness* is a consistently the powerful predictor of white opposition to welfare (Gilens 1999), there is the additional burden of welfare recipients being viewed as *black females* (Hancock 2004). The “welfare queen” has dominated public portrayals of welfare recipients since President Reagan’s reign. Studies indicate that the race of the welfare queen is black (see Gilens 1999 and Hancock 2004). So long as the public identity of the welfare queen remains a black female trapped in the culture of poverty, public policy and democratic deliberation will rarely favor her, or her black counterparts. Who will care for the poor among us?

African Americans view the Democratic party as most capable of dealing with government aid to blacks. Both whites and blacks view the Democratic party as best for African Americans with 42% agreeing that the Democratic party is best and only 5% agreeing that the Republican party is best (American National Election Study, 2002). With regard to which party is best for the poor, 53% of respondents agreed that the Democratic party is best for the poor while only 9% believed that the Republican party was the best for the poor (National Election Study 2002). Certainly the fact that Democrats can claim the New Deal and the Great Society bolsters their reputation as the champions of the poor and disadvantaged.

If the Democrats are the carriers of the banner of black progress, it is ironic that Bill Clinton, whom Toni Morrison labeled the first black president²¹, campaigned on a promise to end welfare bespeaks efforts to ramp down the Democratic party image as solidly on the side of poor blacks.²² The welfare reform law of 1996 represented welfare retrenchment to many African Americans (the NAACP and the Children’s Defense Fund

²¹ See her article “The Talk of the Town” in *New Yorker*, October 5, 1998.

²² The irony stems from the fact that this is emblematic of Richard Nixon’s strategy of disassociating the Republican party from black issues so as to capture the votes of white Southerners.

decried the five year time limit among other provisions). Some Democrats in Congress even utilized racialized images that portrayed welfare recipients as amoral animals breeding and raising additional animals on the public dole (Hancock 2004). Despite the Democrats' attempt via welfare reform to win back white voters who had previously left the party because of its image as the party of African Americans and the welfare state, the tactic scarcely worked on whites. Even for disaffected blacks, the Democratic party remained preferable to the alternative.

The preference of black voters for the Democratic party did not deter the Republican party from seeking their votes. Following on the heels of 8 years of Democratic dominance in the executive, the Republican party took bold steps to regain the executive as it had gained the Congress in 1994. The 2000 Republican National Convention revealed a party that had undergone an "extreme makeover". In an effort to channel the Rainbow Coalition rather than the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution, the party emphasized a message of inclusion and highlighted speeches by prominent black Republicans like Colin Powell and Condoleeza Rice. Indeed, the number of speeches by African Americans more than tripled from the 1996 convention and the number of black delegates increased as well (Philpot 2007).²³

Republican claims of racial inclusiveness in an attempt to return blacks to the party of Lincoln require teeth given that African Americans have heard the forty-acres and a mule bit before. Furthermore, given black distrust of the 2000 election outcome, how could President Bush reverse his dismal fortunes in the black community? Never fear...compassionate conservatism is here.

²³ For an excellent analysis of the 2000 Republican National Convention and the effort to change the racial party image see Tasha Philpot, *Race, Republicans, and the Return of the Party of Lincoln* (2007).

The entrée of compassionate conservatism into the American lexicon was the hotly contested 2000 presidential elections. President Bush sought to soften the Republican party's image of social Darwinists and/or callous Christians of the Religious Right by fashioning himself a kinder, gentler Republican who actually cared about social policy. Compassionate conservatism's American variant has interesting roots beyond its convenient alliteration. Thus, for the purposes of scholarly inquiry, it behooves scholars to refrain from summarily dismissing compassionate conservatism as a mere labeling ploy of the Religious Right.

In addition to a definite mirroring in conservative ideology, a bit of political philosophy undergirds the compassionate conservatism moniker. The American tendency to divide the political realm into discrete poles precludes consideration of moderate political alternatives that nevertheless have a firm grounding in global politics. For example, the Christian Democracy tradition thrives in Europe. The Christian Democratic philosophy arose during the early 19th century and countered the growing Enlightenment belief that unfettered liberalism could pose problems for polities. Christian Democracy's alternative to the invisible hand as arbiter of all fates was the concept of the social safety net—individualism and modernization could be coupled with concern for neighbor enshrined programmatically in the state.²⁴

Certainly the “Christian” in Christian Democracy is significant for religion. For a time, Christian Democrats were linked solidly to churches, but this was eventually discouraged by none other than the Vatican. Nevertheless, the party continued to emphasize the importance of religion to societal stability. “(F)undamental political

²⁴ See Virgil Nemoianu's “Compassionate Conservatism and Christian Democracy” (*Intercollegiate Review*, Fall 2002) for a summary of Christian Democracy as well as an explanation of how compassionate conservatism is linked to it.

principles which...have given Christian Democracy the status of a true political *gestalt* in the modern age” include “personal dignity” (the fundamental worth of every human apart from the ability to earn), “subsidiarity” (the notion that the family is the primary unit of authority with authority rippling out to other institutions), and “the recognition of the human being as an imperfect creature” (the idea that humankind is imperfectible and the need for societal institutions to restrain the sinful nature) (Nemoianu 2002, 47). Families were viewed as essential building blocks of communities as well. Economies were to be free, yet structured so as to ensure the thriving of farmers and small businesses. The working classes were to be beneficiaries of protectionist policies. Authority was to be decentralized, concentrated as close to the local and regional level as possible.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the big-tent, two-party system prevails in the American political context. Given the hegemony of the two-party paradigm, political visions are often constrained by the political tenor of the times.²⁵ Thus, some discount the significance of compassionate conservatism. While some pundits view it as a fly-by-night pseudo-philosophy intended to garner the median voter, at least some on the political right are dedicated to compassionate conservatism as political philosophy. In President Bush’s compassionate conservatism, one scholar asserts, “what we are really witnessing is not so much political ‘triangulation’ as a genuine and consistent American Christian Democratic position” (Nemoianu 2002, 48). From whence did this American variant arise and why the doubts about its authenticity?

The father of compassionate conservatism, Dr. Marvin Olasky, penned *The Tragedy of American Compassion* in 1992. Rarely do academic tomes make such a

²⁵ For example, as recently as 2004, it was difficult for many political scientists to believe that the Gingrich Republican Revolution would crumble anytime soon.

splash, but Olasky was well-connected to conservative political channels that propelled the book to prominence. Charles Murray, a conservative scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, wrote the foreword, Newt Gingrich, then Speaker of the House of Representatives, made it required reading for the freshmen of the 1994 class of revolutionary Republicans, and former Secretary of Education under President Reagan, William Bennett, intoned: “This is the most important book on welfare and social policy in a decade. Period” (Olasky 1992).

The tragedy of American compassion, Olasky asserts, is that compassion American style lacks theological discernment. Olasky agrees that charity should be an outgrowth of compassion, but contends that the predominant American version of charity requires nothing of its recipients. Tough love, over and above a mere charitable hand-out, considers a person’s situation, willingness to work, and other factors. Seven marks of compassion²⁶ that were commonplace in the nineteenth century have been lost on today’s bureaucratic cadre of welfare and social service professionals who consider a person’s economic means irrespective of their character and willingness to work. In short, compassion cannot be contained in a governmental box.

True compassion, declares Olasky, should be cautious in choosing an object and the truly compassionate should exercise situational discernment in meting out charity. The logical result of this approach is that every poor person does not deserve compassion and thus, charitable acts should be more intentional and less conspicuous.²⁷ On the contrary, the paradigm ushered in by the New Deal and Great Society era welfare

²⁶ Olasky (1992) lists the seven marks of compassion as affiliation, bonding, categorization, discernment, employment, freedom, and God.

²⁷ Olasky terms conspicuous compassion those acts of charity directed toward anyone who claims to be poor.

programs was far less catered to an individual's circumstances. The legal notion of entitlement dictated that every poor person in a particular income category be treated equally and accorded various welfare benefits. By the early 1990s when Olasky penned the book, he posited that this historical trajectory had culminated in a situation where the government scarcely met a welfare applicant whom it did not accept.

The central fallacy of the all-inclusive, non-excludable charitable orientation of government, to Olasky, was theological: "(u)nderlying this demand for mass transformation was the belief that man was naturally good and productive unless an oppressive system got in the way" (Olasky 1992, 120). Charity that failed to challenge the worse angels of human nature—abusive behavior, addictions, etc.—amounted to "charity without challenge" (Olasky 1992, 121) and encouraged "conspicuous compassion" (Olasky 1992, 194) by government welfare programs, nonprofit organizations, and individuals within society. According to Olasky, the troubling turn of many mainline churches in the post-war era toward "liberal theology" and the social gospel de-emphasized and marginalized the Christian notion of original sin—which is central to the 19th century view of "cautious compassion" (Olasky 1992, 197-8) that Olasky claims represents the ideal type. This changing view of human nature that emerged from the church actually paved the ideological path for the American welfare state and aided in the solidification of government entitlements for the poor in the American psyche.

If the church aided and abetted the state in its politicization of poverty, the church should be at the heart of the solution according to Olasky. As his argument goes, the poor will always be among us, but the intractableness of the problem of poverty does not

necessitate a one-size-fits-all governmental response. The politicization of poverty in the early 20th century rendered charity a matter of the state rather than a matter of the soul.

The cure for what ails American compassion, to Olasky, lies not in the state, but in ourselves:

Isn't it time, with rats running wild, that we adopt a policy of moral realism that prizes cats of any sort as long as they can catch rats? As matters stand, many government agencies and private charities are dispensing aid indiscriminately; in doing so they ignore the moral and spiritual needs of the poor and are unable to change lives. Isn't it time that we start managing by results, even if that means returning social services to those private and religious institutions that emphasize challenging compassion? (224)

The policy of “moral realism” dictated here by Olasky is the essence of “compassionate conservatism”—only those institutions that emphasize the moral and spiritual dimensions of the problem of poverty can constitute a holistic solution. “Certainly our political leaders can break down some programmatic barriers to compassion, but isn't it time we realized that there is only so much that public policy can do?” (Olasky 1992, 232)

According to Olasky, the solution is less public policy and more civil society.

Fortuitously, Olasky's tome was consonant with a broader trend among political liberals and conservatives to “reinvent government” (Osborne and Gaebler 1992).²⁸ By the time that welfare reform rolled around, everyone in Washington seemed to agree that red tape, unwieldy bureaucracies, superfluous rules, and duplicative government programs thwarted the democratic process—both for politicians and citizens. President Clinton made downsizing government (usually a Republican mantra) a part of his campaign to “end welfare as we know it”. Vice President Gore oversaw the National

²⁸ The authors of *Reinventing Government* (1993) advocate that governments and bureaucracies adopt a businesslike approach to governance by considering factors often outside the paradigm and perimeter of governance. This seminal book on running government like a business includes suggestions such as adopting a customer focus, honing a mission statement to drive the organization.

Performance Review which ushered in the Paperwork Reduction Act among other measures to streamline government policies, bureaucratic practice, and citizen interaction. Thus, Olasky's injunction that the time had come to "...start managing by results, even if (it) means returning social services to those private and religious institutions that emphasize challenging compassion" (Olasky 1992, 224) was an idea whose time had come. Charitable Choice, a provision of welfare reform, represents an early example of "reinventing government" that encouraged alternative public service delivery by religious institutions.

While the Charitable Choice provision of the welfare reform legislation, which allowed for religious-based providers of welfare-related social services to compete for federal funds, was well-received by African-Americans generally (Bartkowski and Regis 2003), President Clinton did little to tout that particular provision of welfare reform under his watch. President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative goes beyond the Charitable Choice provision to permit government funding of non-welfare related services on a competitive basis. So how does this relate to those black voters left reeling by the 2000 presidential election?

Would African Americans care to be a part of a Republican effort to "...renew Ronald Reagan's small government coalition by adding to (the) societal list of problem solvers the civic and religious groups that often do a better job than government" (Olasky 2003)? Will the Faith-Based and Community Initiative move the black church?

Prophets or Pawns? Black Pastors and the Faith-Based and Community Initiative

The civil rights movement is indicative of what the church might do when mobilized. Even beyond movement politics, the black church retains relevance as an

institution with the capacity to affect politics on multiple levels. African Americans are the most religious demographic in the United States. Almost 90% of African Americans claim that religion is extremely important in their lives; a majority attend church weekly; and over half consider themselves to be born-again Christians.²⁹ Even allowing for overzealous reporting of church attendance and the possibility that faith is only skin-deep in the black community, the black church represents a semi-involuntary institution (Ellison and Sherkat 1995b). Thus, even among nonreligious African Americans, and in urban areas of the country where secular alternatives to the church abound, the black church retains a functional and symbolic place in the black community. For example, when Tavis Smiley unveiled his *Covenant with Black America* (2006), he chose an historic black church in Houston, Texas with limited seating capacity (he might have chosen any one of Houston's major arenas) as the venue. Why? The centrality of the black church in African American history precluded any sense of opprobrium about church-state entanglement. Smiley realized that if his effort to address policy issues of concern to the black community were to succeed, the black church needed to be on board. Indeed, the term *covenant* connotes not merely a vow, but a sacred vow. This terminology is familiar to many African Americans given the blending of sacred images in broader black culture.

Beyond the provision of sacred images central to the black experience in the United States, the black church promotes civic skills among congregants (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Given that sacred symbols do not exist in isolation from secular ones, the black church lies at the heart of an oppositional civic culture that shapes

²⁹ See the Pew Research Center, 2003, *Evenly Divided and Increasingly Polarized: 2004 Political Landscape* and the *National Election Studies*, 2002.

the way that political activists frame politics (Harris 1999). Beyond the institutional capacity and brick and mortar of the black church, black pastors are a group deserving of study in black politics and in American politics more generally. Some black pastors even enter the formal political fray formally via public office and other types of political advocacy at the local, state, and national level (Smith and Harris 2006, Hertzke 1988).

At the helm of the seminal black institution, black pastors' discourse about public policy shapes black political dynamics. Nevertheless, the sermons and political messages of black pastors are scarcely the subject of scholarly inquiry.³⁰ Two premier sociologists of religion (Ellison and Sherkat 1995, 1265a) have noted that in order to advance the study of the “integrative” role of religion in society, including politics, scholars need examine church artifacts and ideas, including the role of theological ideas and the place of in-house publications and materials. Some of the few political scientists studying the effect of religious messages concluded that there exists a need to consider “religious messages separate from religiosity” (Reese and Brown 1995, 41). Beyond whether or not religiosity inspires civicness and/or voting, pastoral policy images are a phenomenon worthy of study. If the black church reinforces racial identity and provides a bulwark for the oppositional civic culture of African Americans, the messages presented in individual religious settings by religious elites need to be unpacked. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative allows an opportunity to examine black pastors policy images given that the Initiative was so directly targeted at them.

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative was formally established by executive order on January 29, 2001, as one of the first domestic policy acts of the Bush

³⁰ This is not to state that the black church is not a subject of inquiry. Scholars like Harris-Lacewell (2005) and Harris (1999) acknowledge the integral importance of black pastors, but neither embarks upon an analysis of sermons or political messages as the central focus of research.

presidency.³¹ While government has long contracted with sectarian providers of social services like Catholic Charities and Lutheran Social Services, Charitable Choice and the Faith-Based and Community Initiative extended an invitation to houses of religion of whatever stripe (not merely their non-profit arms) to walk the aisles to receive government money. The Initiative represents a significant policy change in terms of service delivery given that it defines churches and other religious institutions as key venues of policy implementation.

President Bush and those loyal to the faith-based program pressed for black support of the Initiative. The President held an exclusive White House meeting with fifteen hand-picked black pastors in February 2001. Republican Conference Chair, J.C. Watts held the House-Senate Majority Faith-Based Summit for some 500 black pastors in April 2001. Bush visited a black congregation in Wisconsin in July 2002 to promulgate his Faith-Based plan (Edsall 2002; Milbank 2002). The President and his White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives invited black pastors and heads of religious organizations to the White House in March 2005 for a conference on the issue (Bumiller 2005).

If a 2001 executive order represented the debut of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, the philosophical groundwork had been previously laid by the likes of Marvin Olasky, the father of compassionate conservatism and John DiIulio, an academic by trade and the first director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and

³¹ The Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiative has centers of operation in 11 government departments and agencies. These include the Agency for International Development, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Justice, the Department of Labor, the Small Business Administration, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Community Initiatives. In 1999, DiIulio penned an article that concluded that "...black churches and other faith-based grassroots organizations that perform youth and community outreach functions in poor inner-city neighborhoods is a necessary and vital although insufficient condition for repairing the social fabric and restoring economic vitality in truly disadvantaged urban neighborhoods." (DiIulio 1999, 153).

Despite the ideological groundwork laid by Marvin Olasky, the path for President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative was perhaps paved as much by President Bill Clinton's penchant for welfare reform as anything else. Welfare reform represented a gestalt shift in the social services paradigm. So perhaps it should come as little surprise that President Bush called the Initiative "...the next bold step of welfare reform". More than likely, this was also a veiled reference to Charitable Choice, the progenitor of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. But it is important to emphasize the window of opportunity that welfare reform occasioned for future politicians—not merely those present at its passage in 1996.

As evidence of his commitment to highlighting the centrality of the black church to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, President Bush strutted the streets of Queens during his presidential campaign with former Representative and always Reverend Floyd Flake. Flake did not defrock himself when took up the political mantle and his church is a beacon of the "Bible-and-bootstrap ethic" (Tapper 1999). Indeed, Rev. Flake's church runs a private school, a senior citizens center and a credit union to name only a few. This is the kind of community uplift that President Bush intends for one of the signal programs of his compassionate agenda.

While *The New Republic* termed the program as among “the first Republican initiatives [of any sort] in decades that capture(s) the spirit of black, as well as white, Christianity” (Beinart 2001), would all of the courting actually convince the black faithful of the worthiness of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative? Table 4.1 lists the efforts of the Bush administration to sell the black church on “The Duty of Hope”.

Table 4.1 Bush Courting of the Black Church

Spring 1999 Professor John DiIulio article “Supporting Black Churches” appears
May 24, 1999 Presidential candidate Al Gore announces support of a Faith-Based Initiative
July 22, 1999 Presidential candidate George W. Bush announces support of a Faith-Based Initiative in Indianapolis speech
October 8, 1999 Candidate Bush visits black pastor and former Democratic Congressman Floyd Flake at his 13,000 member Allen African Methodist Episcopal Cathedral in Jamaica Queens, NY
June 9, 2000 Candidate Bush invites John DiIulio to advise on faith-based issues
December 20, 2000 Bush meets with 20 select black pastors, including Bishop Charles Blake of the 18,000 member West Angeles Church of God in Christ
January 29, 2001 Faith-Based and Community Initiative born by executive order and John DiIulio appointed as Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiative
March 7, 2001 John DiIulio speech to the National Association of Evangelicals emphasizes need to support minority communities with faith-based monies
March 19, 2001 Fifteen black pastors, including Rev. Eugene Rivers III, are invited to the White House to pray and hear President Bush’s testimony
April 25, 2001 Faith-Based Summit held for over 400 black pastors by black Republican Congressman J.C. Watts
August 18, 2001 John DiIulio resigns as Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiative
May 2002 Republican National Committee announces that attracting minorities is its “number one priority”
July 2, 2002 President Bush delivers speech at 5,000 member Holy Redeemer Institutional Church of God in Christ in Milwaukee, WI

The Bush administration's efforts appear to have paid dividends. Faith-Based and Community Initiative is one public policy issue where a Republican president appears to have the largely Democratic African American community on his side. The African American populace embraced Bush's plan for community renewal with the black church as the prime policy venue. According to a Pew survey of April 2001, 81% of African Americans supported the Faith-Based and Community Initiative (compared to 68% of whites)³². Yet, the notion of a social service delivery partnership between government and the black church elicited lukewarm support from black pastors in 2000 with 53% disagreeing and 46% agreeing that "it is helpful that the government is now encouraging churches to apply for and use government funds to provide social services (Smith 2002)." Despite a reticence to partner with government in an explicit fashion, it is interesting to note that fully 24% of the churches in the survey received government funding for various programs. By 2006, however, the tide had turned to the extent that fully 59% of black pastors surveyed by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies support the Initiative. Furthermore, the survey indicates that fully 53% of black pastors in the sample plan to apply for faith-based funds and 11% of black pastors in the sample had already applied for a faith-based grant. Tables 4.2 and 4.3 illustrate black mass opinion as well as black pastoral opinion on the idea of government funding of church-based social service delivery, like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

³² The question asks whether the respondent supports, opposes, or does not know about "Allowing churches and other houses of worship to apply, along with other organizations, for government funding to provide social services such as job training or drug treatment counseling to people who need them."

Table 4.2 Black Mass Opinion on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative

	Black Mass Support
Pew Survey (2001)	81%
Pew Survey (2008)	81%

Table 4.3 Black Pastors Opinion on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative

	Support	Oppose	Plan to Apply	Already Applied For or Already Receive Govt. Funding
PIAAC Survey (1999-2000)	46%	53%	n/a	24%
Joint Center Survey (2006)	59%	20%	53%	11%

In spite of this broad support by African Americans and their clergy, the Faith Based and Community Initiative is awol from the black political agenda. The Congressional Black Caucus (with a few notable exceptions like former Rep. Floyd Flake and current Rep. Sanford Bishop) decries the Initiative, averring that it violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment and that it legalizes discrimination given a provision of the executive order that allows religious contractors to refuse to hire employees whose religious views diverge from those of the organization. Rep. Bobby Scott called the Initiative "...a major step back in civil rights" (Goldstein 2001). The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) opposes the Initiative for the same reasons as the CBC. Two of the flagship political and civic organizations of the black community, the CBC and the NAACP, disavow the Faith-Based Initiative. The African American populace embraced Bush's plan for community renewal with the black church as the prime policy venue. Indeed, even though members of the Congressional Black Caucus—and the vast preponderance of black voters

preferred the Democratic candidate Gore in the contested 2000 presidential election, both Gore and Bush advocated Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. And so did African Americans.

Perhaps the Congressional Black Caucus' angst about the Initiative, despite their framing of it as an affront to civil rights, stems from the electoral connection (Mayhew 1974) and from the CBC's perception that black agenda hegemony is threatened by the Initiative. Where the Initiative is concerned, some view black pastors as mere pawns in a political chess match with a two-pronged attack: 1) bring black voters to the Republican fold and 2) rid government of the welfare function altogether, whether incrementally or in the short run. Are black pastors unwitting participants in a Republican plot to slough welfare from the governmental smorgasbord in the name of expanding opportunity and combating discrimination against the religious sector of civil society? Are black pastors pragmatic prophets, partaking of governmental fonts that would flow elsewhere if left untapped by them?

Given that upwards of 90% of black congregations care for their broader communities (in addition to their congregants) via outreach programs like tutoring, gang prevention and mentoring, government monies are viewed as a means of entrenching and expanding extant services (whether formal or ad hoc).³³ In short, the *Initiative* seems *intuitive* to many black pastors. If the prophets of the Hebrew Scripture engaged Pharaoh, then why not black pastors—the prophets of the black church? An intuitive relationship is complicated by the gatekeepers of the black agenda—black politicians,

³³ The estimates are all within the margin of error. Cnaan and Boodie place the number at 93% while Tobi Jennifer Printz (1998) estimates 95% in an Urban Institute study, *Faith-Based Service Providers in the Nation's Capital: Can They Do More?* and the Joint Center Survey (2006) indicates 93%.

who have primarily engaged in agenda denial on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

The story of the black church and the Faith-Based and Community Initiative illustrates an emerging rift between the old civil rights guard (like Rev. Jesse Jackson and Rev. Al Shartpon) and emerging cadre of black leaders, like former Congressman Harold Ford Jr. and Senator Barack Obama. Adolph Reed's (1986) declaration of the waning effectiveness and duplication of effort exhibited by the civil rights era activists in the post-civil rights era (especially as epitomized by black preachers), was perhaps overstated. Marshall Frady's (1996) *Jesse* highlights the significance of a Jesse Jackson removed from the front of the political sphere. Frady depicts Jackson's hamartia as his continual seeking of the political limelight when the height of his heroism has been as a behind-the-scenes negotiator in global situations like the Iranian hostage crisis. Nevertheless, Adolph Reed's sense that turnover in black political leadership was imminent has come to fruition.

Kweisi Mfume, President of NAACP when the Faith-Based and Community Initiative was unveiled, averred that there was less friction between a new breed of black ministers and the historical black leadership than there was between the Democratic party and the black constituency within the Democratic party. Ironically, it is exactly this sense of black capture that led some black ministers to align with the Republicans on certain issues like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative or to cross-over to the Republican party. Rev. Eugene Rivers disagreed with Mfume and commented that the new cadre of black ministers supports the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and as pastors plan to also challenge the black political establishment. "He criticized the Congressional Black

Caucus and civil rights leaders for not accomplishing more during the Clinton administration, including failure to block the 1996 welfare bill.” (Leland 2001). Rivers vowed to fight the black politicians and pastors who seek to thwart the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

Ironically, the incorporation of black elected officials into the halls of power in the immediate post-civil rights era, as well as their entrenchment as the black political establishment, has been the occasion for the resurgence of black clergy like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton as active leaders on the national political scene. Even if black clergy leadership was unnecessary for black politics in the post-civil rights era (Reed 1986), black clergy remained politically engaged in public policy issues at the local level (see Smith and Harris and Sinclair-Chapman 2005). Given this local activism by black pastors, the Bush administration’s targeting of black pastors was perhaps initially more about preaching to the choir by going to a natural policy constituency as it was about garnering an increasing share of the black vote four years hence. Black pastors work on the ground already predisposed them to support something like a Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

The Policy Stream

There certainly exist intellectual and political precursors to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Yet, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative must be viewed on several accounts as a microevolutionary development for civil society; for federalism and bureaucracy; and for beneficiaries, whether defined as citizens, clients, or churchgoers. President Bush was committed to a country where federalism had religion as a friend.

Federalism Gets Religion

Devolution and trends such as reinventing government have ushered in an era where even some conservative critics of ‘big bureaucracies in Washington D.C.’ have cast off their criticism. Instead of lambasting the *size* of government, they are embracing a shift in the *locus* of government. In the current political landscape, programs may be administered in the nation’s capitol, but the prevalence of block grants means that states and localities are responsible for the implementation of many federal programs. Former House Speaker Tip O’Neill’s famous quip, “all politics is local”, has never been more true in the realm of public policy.

The implementation of federal policies in state and local policy channels and the dissemination of federal funds to state and local governments is not necessarily new (Nice and Fredericksen 1995). Even civic and non-profit organizations have been the beneficiaries of government grants and contracts for years (Monsma 1996). Governments have been contracting out services, privatizing certain functions and tinkering with alternative forms of service delivery for decades (Peters 1996). This is not new. What *is* new is the scope and type of programs being delivered at lower levels of the federal food chain. The advent of the Faith Based and Community Initiative has expanded the tendrils of government funding even farther into civil society. In his 2000 presidential election bid, President Bush foreshadowed the compassionate conservatism that would become a new variation in the conservative DNA and a hallmark of his presidency. The “Duty of Hope” speech of July 22, 1999 reveals the seedlings of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as well as the ramifications of the policy for government generally.

While his speech towed the Republican party line on economic issues (e.g. tax cuts would be an immediate priority if elected), candidate Bush carved out a new niche for the Republican party. In the speech, candidate Bush avowed a commitment to economic conservatism, but simultaneously asserted that “prosperity must have a purpose.” Prosperity must be committed to compassion. Referencing a phrase frequently utilized by his father to explain Reaganomics, the younger Bush announced a kinder, gentler approach to social welfare than that of his father and President Reagan: “...(a) rising tide lifts many boats, but not all...The invisible hand works many miracles. But it cannot touch the human heart.” But what do governments or bureaucracies have to do with compassion? Are they not more concerned with the dispassionate amelioration of social problems—avoiding riots, appeasing the masses (Piven and Cloward 1971) with a view toward maintaining societal stability?

While an injunction to touch the human heart cannot be found in the blueprint of the Constitution, Candidate George W. Bush said Social Darwinism be damned and laid the blueprint for “a different role for government [not to mention the Republican party]...(a) bold new approach” to compassion that involved churches and charities:

Real change in our culture comes from the bottom up, not the top down. It gathers the momentum of a million committed hearts.

In every instance where my administration sees a responsibility to help people, we will look first to faith-based organizations, charities and community groups that have shown their ability to save and change lives. We will make a determined attack on need, by promoting the compassionate acts of others. We will rally the armies of compassion in our communities to fight a very different war against poverty and hopelessness, a daily battle waged house to house and heart by heart...

And we will recognize there are some things the government should be doing, like Medicaid for poor children. Government cannot be replaced by charities, but it can welcome them as partners, not resent them as rivals.

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative would cast civil society in a new light by making nonprofits, churches and community organizations the first line of defense in the war against poverty and by creating a new cadre of social service soldiers with a “co-responsibility” (see Trulear 1999) for the problems that plague society. Social workers and sermon deliverers would fight on the same social battlefield, united by the almighty government dollar.

If the Faith-Based and Community Initiative would afford a new role for charities and churches while preserving a role for government, the Initiative would clearly also signal a paradigm shift in welfare. Welfare could no longer be viewed as the primary province of government bureaucrats and bureaucracies. Furthermore, this new revolution dictated that welfare service delivery would not only be quantified by efficiency as in the past, but also would be measured in terms of the hallmarks of compassion.

In the past, presidents have declared wars on poverty and promised to create a great society. But these grand gestures and honorable aims were frustrated. They have become a warning, not an example. We found that government can spend money, but it can't put hope in our hearts or a sense of purpose in our lives. This is done by churches and synagogues and mosques and charities that warm the cold of life...

This will not be the failed compassion of towering, distant bureaucracies. On the contrary, it will be government that serves those who are serving their neighbors...

Positioning himself in opposition to old regimes, the future president portrayed impersonal towers of bureaucracy looming in Washington D.C. as the crux of the problem. Not unlike a conscientious board of directors in the business realm, government must take its' own annual report into account and make adjustments for the sake of solvency and stakeholders. While President Clinton and Vice President Gore's National Performance Review reflected a similar penchant for the bottom line and

streamlining government, it did not lead them to this type of perspective³⁴ whereby government serves civil society.

So why did candidate George W. Bush stake his candidacy on the *Duty of Hope*, a plan that would be certain to alienate the libertarian wing of the Republican camp? Perhaps because he could still utilize the common language of capitalism to convince conservative critics of compassionate conservatism that street-level churches and charities using government money in civil society are preferable to buffoonish bureaucrats and banal bureaucracies delivering services from their impersonal posts.

It will be government that directs help to the inspired and *the effective*. It will be government that both knows its limits, and shows its heart. And it will be government truly by the people and for the people.
We will take this path, first and foremost, because private and religious groups are *effective*. Because they have clear advantages over government.
We will promote alternative licensing procedures, so *effective* efforts won't be buried by regulation.

The irony here is that the future president used policy images bathed in capitalism to propound a non-market initiative. The genius of this rhetorical device is so subtle as to be overlooked. In the same breath that Bush appealed to American ideals by speaking of faith-based initiatives as critical to the common good, he also channeled the spirit of capitalism by defining the utility of faith-based groups in terms of their *effectiveness*.

Bush used the term *effective* at least 4 times in his brief speech. It is undoubtedly significant that on each occasion, he used the term relative to government. While it is often the case that the term *effective* often connotes a comparative assessment, it is rarely the case that the terms *effective* is rendered synonymous with *efficient*. Deborah Stone (1999) articulates how political rhetoric appeals to certain goals that are simultaneously

³⁴ While candidate Gore did support the idea of faith-based initiatives and/or an extension of charitable choice in the 2000 presidential elections, he made no effort to propound similar programs as Vice President.

central to the political community and contested within the political community. George Bush painted a picture of government as the big, bad bureaucratic wolf whereas he depicted charities and churches as the angels in the outfield waiting for their turn at bat.

Sometimes our greatest need is not for more laws. It is for more conscience.
Sometimes our greatest hope is not found in reform. It is found in redemption.
We should promote these private and faith-based efforts because they work...
If I am president, federal workers in every department of my administration will know that we value effectiveness above red tape and regulation.

A sense of pragmatism pervades this call to action—faith-based efforts work, ergo they should be bequeathed government dollars. But all goals in the political community embody various tradeoffs (Stone 1999). Here, the tradeoff is the inefficiency of government regulation and the effectiveness of faith-based groups. While Bush acknowledged that a government out of the business of welfare altogether represents an untenable position, he also clearly asserted that churches and charities may be more effective and efficient than government.

So did the Bush transition team contemplate the peculiarities of the faith-based plan in practice? Conspiracy theorists notwithstanding, President Bush stated that the Initiative as implemented was not an incremental step toward ending welfare forever. Instead, the new plan reflected the infusion of federalism with religion. While praising the efforts of communities, Bush maintained that resources adequate to the amelioration of social ills are not extant in civil society: “It is not enough for conservatives like me to praise (civil society’s) efforts. It is not enough to call for volunteerism. Without more support and more resources, both private and public, we are asking them to make bricks without straw.” Indeed, Bush stated that the program that would propel the “Duty of Hope” was “...the next bold step of welfare reform.” Welfare reform embodied Charitable Choice, the grandparent of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, but also

devolved greater responsibility for welfare to the states while maintaining the aspect of federal funding: “Resources should be devolved, not just to states, but to charities and neighborhood healers. We will never ask an organization to compromise its core values and spiritual mission to get the help it needs.” In one fell swoop, the President laid the groundwork for a public policy that would challenge the borders and boundaries not merely of civil society, but also of federalism and of church-and-state. But did the grand vision to transform compassion materialize as conceived by the President? The 2000 presidential election alienated the President from a constituency that deems the church as integral to their community and their experience—African Americans. This constituency would be crucial to the success of a program aimed at addressing social problems through the vehicle of churches. African Americans posed a huge problem for the new President. The success of compassionate conservatism and the nascent Faith-Based and Community Initiative largely hinged on the response of black Americans to the Initiative.

Just as President Bush’s education plan promised to “leave no child behind”, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative was intended to exemplify malice toward no particular faith-based or community group while extending charity to all. In the “Duty of Hope” speech, Bush explained:

We will keep a commitment to pluralism -- not discriminating for or against Methodists or Mormons or Muslims, or good people of no faith at all.
We will ensure that participation in faith-based programs is truly voluntary--that there are secular alternatives.
... We will allow private and religious groups to compete to provide services in every federal, state and local social program.

Faith-based grants would not represent a quid pro quo for Bush’s evangelical base. The Moonies and the evangelical megachurch would have an equal opportunity for government largesse. Recall from the previous discussion that a sort of healthy

competition consistent with Bush's commitment to capitalism would represent a key part of the initiative. In this case, the open market for faith-based grants ensures that no religious or charitable group would be excluded on the basis of its character, charter, or conscience. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative was to combat discrimination by "leveling the playing field", not promote discrimination by playing favorites.

Leveling the Playing Field

Executive orders are signed with the stroke of a pen but the implementation of public policy is fraught with pitfalls. Leveling the playing field has been more controversial and complicated than it sounds on the surface. In this section, various officials shed light on the policy objectives of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. As to the policy objective that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative seeks to address, many answers were rather reflective of the Bush administration's stated goals. One interviewee, however, was in a position to discuss the policy as it has evolved given his position in the upper echelons of one of the executive agency Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Another interviewee, a manager of a \$3.5 million contract to implement a faith-based initiative in a policy area targeted by the President. One additional interviewee served in the original White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and had a hand in penning the signature documents of the Faith-Based and Community Initiatives: "Unlevel Playing Field: Barriers to Participation by Faith-Based and Community Organizations in Federal Social Service Programs" and "Rallying the Armies of Compassion". Another interviewee works in a think tank on issues related to the Charitable Choice and the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and has co-authored a book on the subject.

This statement, from an overseer of faith-based grants confirms that a major objective in practice is to level the playing field:

The church should be at the political table. Jesus statement “I send you out as lambs among wolves” speaks to the wisdom of those who represent the church in the marketplace and the business arena.

This is reminiscent of Bush’s claim that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is a necessary corrective to the fact that churches and charities have been excluded from full competition for social service grants in the past.

A top official working in an executive agency satellite office of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative told a more nuanced story about the purpose of the Initiative:

The treatment community needs a recovery component outside of the treatment center for when people come out of the system...a holistic but also more comprehensive system of care. From pathology to the light of success.

In short, the Initiative serves as one component of a more comprehensive approach to community services, in this case, as one piece of the addiction recovery pie. Substance abuse prevention and treatment are among the centerpieces of President Bush’s compassion platform.

The overseer of a faith-based contract echoed the administration’s playbook as he discussed the primary aim of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative: “The intention is to level the playing field; to get as many engaged as possible; capacity is expanded and there is more efficient service delivery.” This respondent claims that in reality, leveling the playing field not only has the effect of including religious service providers, but also of expanding the capacity to serve particular populations and of making such implementation more efficient.

While not all respondents claimed that faith-based programs were inherently more efficient than other programs, there was a clear consensus among the respondents that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative represents a paradigm shift in social service delivery with significant micro- and macro-level implications. In the short and long term, the ripple effects of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative will be felt in from campaigns to courts, legislatures to bureaucracies, and throughout federalism and civil society.

A respondent at the top of the faith-based bureaucracy described the Initiative as a momentous innovation in public policy:

We are on the cusp of a shift in how we think about policy. Grassroots in service delivery. It's not a top-down model; it's bottom-up. They're the front lines. Jay Hein says, "The more leadership outside my office, the more I succeed."

Ostensibly, grassroots, bottom-up policy a la the Faith-Based and Community Initiative would mean less federal imposition of mandates on states and more federal recognition of extant outstanding programs through the awarding of grants. The true laboratories of democracy, then, are not governments, but grassroots groups. A federal faith-based official stated:

We are a clearinghouse...a connector (of government and faith-based and community entities) rather than a distributor (of money alone). I'd love to see bureaucracy move in this direction. It requires rethinking the role of the state.

This official views the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as spearheading a bureaucratic shift whereby the state facilitates partnerships between faith-based entities and government rather than merely meting out bucks and calling the shots.

In terms of future ramifications for other government policies, this paradigm shift could mean that in the area of environmental policy that regional, state, and local

environmental initiatives would spearhead efforts by community groups to confront environmental concerns with the aid of Lady Liberty's largesse. Indeed, one respondent views this type of policymaking as rewarding the "(s)uccess [of] the grassroots and those who are entrenched." Government has long been a partner with states and communities and charities, but per this new trend, the government is inviting the non-governmental to share the secrets of their success. Rev. Dr. Floyd Flake states it thusly: "The government approached us because of what we were already doing. We didn't approach them." In the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, the government rewards best practices and engages in policy learning.

Other significant implications for federalism are not necessarily new insights, but the Faith-Based and Community Initiative perhaps represents the newest incarnation of devolution. Indeed, a new battle cry in politics and service delivery seems to be that the state knows best.

The states have the opportunity to know what's happening on the ground. Having the most impact means affecting implementation. The Blaine Amendments are an obstacle, especially Georgia.

Blaine Amendments bar state legislatures from directly funding private religious schools.³⁵ Thus, even if the states know best and are ideally located to implement faith-based policies, state constitutions and legislatures can hamper faith-based efforts.

Furthermore, states are often hamstrung financially. The faith-based efforts of each state are contingent upon a faith-based liaison and/or office at the state level. So while states can be a boon to the faith-based plans, they can also represent a liability:

... (state governments) don't have a lot of money; it's a lot of ceremonial things. Some [state faith-based] offices have grantmaking [ability], maybe Ohio and

³⁵ Interestingly, the amendments have their roots in anti-Catholic bigotry, but present an obstacle to faith-based efforts.

Indiana, but the state would be the ideal place for faith-based engagement to happen because the stakes are more known. Illinois has no formal office and strategy to engage the faith community.

The states may be federal labs of democracy, but the politics of state legislatures and of state budgeting can also impede the progress of faith-based policy.

The Devil of the Faith-Based Initiative: Implementation

In the end, the compassion initiative was...politically significant policy that wasn't ever going to be implemented.

David Kuo, Former White House Deputy for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

An axiom of public policy is that the devil is in the details. Policy implementation is perilous and fraught with pitfalls (Pressman and Wildavsky 1984). The state and local level are increasingly the venue for faith-based social service delivery. Currently, 35 states, Washington D.C. and 100 cities have faith-based offices. But implementation of the Initiative is hampered by several things, including politics, administrative capacity, and legal obstacles.

Some view the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as an effort to get rid of welfare, but David Kuo, a former Deputy in the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives insists that welfare obliteration was never the goal. Rather, the policy was to be a boon to extant efforts: "This [the Faith-Based and Community Initiative] isn't about either federal welfare or faith based groups. This is about using both resources at the same time" (Kuo 2006, 87). Compassionate conservatism was not to be an iron fist in a velvet glove, stamping out welfare. If the issue was politicized in this manner, those at the top of the faith-based fiefdom were not the responsible parties. Instead, those in the faith-based office as well as those who conceived the policy and its

political apologists aver that the initiative is a new and innovative public policy with its own tale to tell.

One interviewee at the top of the policy echelons of an executive agency faith-based office claimed that the Initiative as implemented could never replace welfare given the way that funds are doled out. An unspoken ancillary of this comment is that there is a dearth of faith-based funds to be distributed so as to demote welfare and replace it with churches and synagogues and volunteers: “We are encouraging people towards a system of smaller grants.” If the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is primarily about getting rid of welfare, the Bush administration has yet to put its money down that rabbit hole. David Kuo (2006) claimed that the political will to fund the Initiative was lacking given the \$7.5 billion gap between the promised \$8 billion for the Compassion Capital Fund and the \$30 million actually committed to the policy. A few small grants here and there scarcely amount to a dramatic divergence of welfare funds from bureaucrats to Baptists.

If the Faith-Based and Community Initiative does not represent an effort to make welfare funds fungible so as to allow civil society to co-opt the core functions of the American welfare state, it does represent a huge shift in terms of who is implementing policy. In the present case study, black pastors are potential policy implementers. While black pastors wear many hats—serving the black church, the black community, and beyond, managing government contracts is a new task for most. A faith-based policy official in the federal government stated: “Implementation for religious organizations is a huge shift for them. They don’t have an understanding of how the system works.” Even if black churches are unfamiliar with the government, black churches are already doing

yeoman work on behalf of beleaguered communities. In that sense, the administrative tasks are new, but not the work of social and community service.

As one interviewee pointed out, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) supported welfare reform, but the NASW has failed to support an offshoot of welfare reform's Charitable Choice provision—the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The major charge leveled against the Bush administration is that the implementation of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative constitutes government subsidization of religion. There exists a fear by some opponents of the Initiative that a needy person's faith (or lack thereof) could become the litmus test for the receipt of social services. An official in the trenches of the faith-based office counters this notion that the service itself is religious. "The policy goal is secular. Religious nature shouldn't be a factor in service. There are not huge policy implications. It's secular service." While the NASW insists that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative may potentially blur many lines of church and state, this official in an executive agency office of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative insists that faith-based social services are in fact, no different than secular ones, other than who delivers the treatment and perhaps where the treatment is delivered. While the legal logic this informant relies upon is based upon *Lemon v. Kurtzmann* (1971³⁶), this argument requires some mental gymnastics. Some supporters of the Initiative have insisted that faith-based remedies are in fact qualitatively different than secular ones and thus, the difference between a faith-based program and a governmental one makes all the difference! If, as this faith-based official claims, the

³⁶ According to this case, laws or programs like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative do not violate the establishment clause of the First Amendment so long as they serve a secular purpose (this is what the informant means when referring to the policy as secular), neither advances nor inhibits religion, and does not foster an excessive entanglement between government and religion. These three prongs are referred to as the Lemon test.

service is secular, it matters little *who* delivers the service. A venue shift is insignificant and in fact, levels the social service delivery playing field. But this nuanced argument has a fatal flaw.

If it is indeed the case that faith-based entities deliver secular social services, the friends of this Initiative have a problem. The claim that the policy goal or service itself is secular obliterates arguments about the need for people of faith to deliver them. Under the auspices of the Civil Rights Act, faith-based groups possess the right to discriminate in hiring—that is, to hire only those individuals whose religious constitution comports with that of the organization. In the case of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, an important if contentious proviso is the insistence that religious groups maintain this right when implementing programs under the aegis of the Initiative. But if the service is secular, some question why faith-based advocates want a menorah to remain in the room where drug treatment programs are dispensed.

It is certain that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative stands on the precipice of the church and state line. Up to the present time, however, the wall heralded as impenetrable seems to represent a miniscule obstacle to the implementation of this cornerstone of compassionate conservatism. One respondent, a pastor and former Congressman stated: “I’m a taxpayer just like you. (The Faith-Based and Community Initiative) is not a church-state issue.” The Supreme Court seems to agree. The ruling in the Cleveland voucher case, *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris (2002)*, indicates that as long as a secular alternative is available, faith-based service delivery of government-type services (like education) is permissible.

While very large religious aid organizations and smaller religious relief groups have benefited from government backing in the past, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative also represents a dramatic shift in terms of how policy interacts with bureaucracy. Despite obvious implications for the federal bureaucracy—the Initiative created Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiative in seven executive agencies—the bureaucracy literature has virtually ignored this bureaucratic upheaval. An architect of the Initiative and former official in the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives under John DiIulio affirmed that the Initiative is consistent with broader norms in bureaucracy and government:

The context [of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative] is continuity with broader, dynamic change. In *Tools of Government*, Lester Solomon has no recognition of the Faith-Based Initiative in a book about government steering instead of rowing. Bureaucracy literature has paid little attention [to the Initiative].

The Initiative is certainly congruent with other shifts in bureaucracy—contracting out, privatization, and reinventing government, nevertheless, the Initiative receives short shrift in journals of public administration and bureaucracy.

If bureaucracy scholars have paid little attention to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, then bureaucrats themselves also represent an impediment to the Initiative. Change is often the enemy of bureaucratic survival (Downs 1967). In an act of self-interest, conservers in a bureaucracy seek to maintain the life of the organization by resisting change. Goal displacement occurs such that the maintenance of the organization becomes the preeminent goal over and above the mission of the agency. A faith-based official in the federal government stated:

Culture and systems--these are the biggest obstacles [to implementation of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative]. These are perceived and real barriers.

Implementation rules and how they relate to the activities of different programs. As for [bureaucratic] culture, we don't have a policy category for helping people change minds [about the appropriateness of faith-based policy delivery].

Bureaucratic inertia flows from institutions, hamstrung as they are by rules, but also from bureaucrats interested in their survival as well as the life of the agency. If there exists a hint of a possibility that the niche carved out for faith-based entities by the Faith-Based and Community Initiative could crowd out social service bureaucracies, those ensconced in government agencies have little incentive to “help” Faith-Based programs.

An expert on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives from a D.C. area think tank explained bureaucratic inertia in terms of both administration and politics:

The political culture and delivery of services haven't caught up yet. There is turf-consciousness in state governments. They should look at models in existence; partner; make an effort to get government to work better with what's already happening. But government has so many different agendas.

In a governmental realm where “turf wars” are the norm (national vs. state, state vs. state, state vs. local, bureaucracy vs. bureaucracy, etc.), it should perhaps come as little surprise that some bureaucrats, and indeed, entire bureaucratic apparatuses, are reticent to accept faith-based service delivery as a modal practice (Downs 1967). Beyond the fact that the Initiative may create competition with extant programs, a plethora of government agendas hamper the implementation of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

An architect of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and co-author of “Rallying the Armies of Compassion,” concurs that implementation of the Initiative is lagging behind the grandiose vision extolled by the President:

On one side, the faith-based initiative is very formalistic. It changed requirements to help tap into new “markets.” The visionary language of rallying the armies of compassion was disconnected from the practical reality. Not enough is done by the [White House] faith-based office to address the secular, programmatic aspect. Removing impediments says nothing about positive programs and redesigning

services delivered. You can see in the documents like “Rallying the Armies of Compassion” about civil society that [the Faith-Based and Community Initiative] presupposes a larger political philosophy.

On the practical side, this expert avers, the policy rubric is in place for churches and synagogues to compete with charities and commercial contractors. But the political will to implement a real shift toward civil society as presupposed in the original faith-based manifestos seems to be lacking. The overseer of a large faith-based contract agrees that the Initiative has succumbed to politics and the various agendas of government mentioned by a previous respondent: “The Faith-Based and Community Initiative is programmatic policy because of the executive order, but funds are [placed] in various agencies based on the political winds.” Have the political winds prevailed? Is the creation of a level playing field for faith-based contractors of social services to be President Bush’s lasting legacy on the Faith-Based component of compassionate conservatism?

As one policy wonk and supporter of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative stated,

In the narrow sense, technical issues are obstacles... In the broad sense, rethinking how government relates to civil society...and re-conceiving how services are delivered [are obstacles]. The reality of the Initiative doesn’t get on the stage. [The reality of the Initiative is] (s)stories about lives impacted thru programs.

The devil may be in the details of implementation, but the impact stories that this policy expert believes prove the worth of the Initiative are often obscured by politics as usual.

The Political Stream

The President's Faith-Based Fiat

As has been discussed, the Initiative entered the world with the stroke of a pen. A Washington Post editorial (Washington Post 2002) declared the Initiative “faith-based by fiat” given that the new face of compassionate conservatism entered the world not via the legislative process, but rather via executive order. It should be noted that it is not unusual for newly elected presidents to unveil domestic policy initiatives via executive order: recall Nixon’s Environmental Protection Agency or Johnson’s Affirmative Action or Truman’s desegregation of the armed forces were both enshrined via executive order.

Whether or not President Bush’s utilization of the executive order signifies weakness on the part of a president who resorts to command and control rather than persuasion is debatable (Neustadt 1990), but it is safe to say that President Bush capitalized upon a policy window of opportunity. The window was opened by the 2000 presidential elections. Presidential agenda setting (Light 1999) often occurs during the critical first 100 days in office when a president possesses a reserve bank of “presidential capital”. Bush set the domestic policy agenda with the Initiative in part to reconcile himself to black voters following the Florida fiasco. Furthermore, Bush hewed to the domestic policy agenda laid forth during the first major domestic policy speech of his 2000 campaign effort. Finally, if compassionate conservatism was to have any cache, it was imperative that President Bush spend his political capital early. President Bush did not want to repeat recent presidential history by allowing an integral presidential agenda plank to plummet to the dustbins of Congress.

One of President Clinton's biggest domestic achievements was the passage of welfare reform discussed heretofore. On the other hand, President Clinton's biggest domestic disappointment was his failure to get a healthcare reform bill passed during his eight year tenure. The golden opportunity to set the policy agenda on healthcare reform was early in Clinton's first term. Rather than pressing Congress, Clinton allowed First Lady and future senator Hillary Clinton to "study" the issue in a task force.³⁷ President Bush did not waste his honeymoon, but rather utilized his presidential capital to enact his pet domestic policies early in his first term—No Child Left Behind and the Faith-Based and Community Initiative were born "early" in agenda setting terms. The education policy came via the regular legislative route, but the community renewal came with the stroke of a pen (Mayer 2001).

Pastors Invited And Yet Left Out?

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative was rooted in welfare reform. The context of welfare reform is significant if for no other reason than African Americans have the highest poverty rate³⁸ of any ethnic group. The appeal of money to combat social ills is obvious. What was not so obvious at the time that President Bush laid down the compassionate conservative gauntlet was whether black churches would take it up. Early polls indicated African American support for Charitable Choice (see Bartkowski and Regis 2003), but this might be attributed to the popularity of welfare reform and to the popularity of President Bill Clinton among African Americans. Indeed, the average

³⁷ While other factors contributed to the failure of healthcare reform such as Clinton's penchant for "crafted talk", utilizing polls to manipulate the public toward his viewpoint. For a full treatment of the public opinion dynamics of healthcare reform see *Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness* (2000) by Lawrence R. Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro.

³⁸ While most welfare recipients are white, African Americans and Hispanics both have higher rates of poverty as respective groups.

American was unaware that then Senator John Ashcroft was a key sponsor of the Charitable Choice provision. So, if a Republican administration cast a faith-based social service net, would black pastors take the bait?

Early on in the Bush administration, black pastors' support of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative was crucial to giving the Initiative wings. But the Bush administration had to convince black pastors that the efforts more than mere symbolism. As evidenced by the increase in black pastoral support of the Initiative over time, Bush's courting of black pastors convinced some black pastors that his effort to include the prophetic voices of black pastors and their churches was more genuine than mere political pandering. Black pastors were invited into the faith-based party with open arms, but were they ultimately left out in the cold by the winds of politics?

As semi-involuntary institutions, black churches tend to focus efforts on the broader community as well as the local congregation. Black pastor and former Rep. Floyd Flake proclaims: "Black churches are responsible for the sustainability of communities... Reality (is) when government seeks to partner with churches. Reality (is) when churches make government responsive." Despite this idyllic portrayal of government and churches partnering together, do black churches really make the government responsive?

According to the overseer of faith-based grants, the government, not black churches, was always driving the faith-based gravy train.

The White House did the ground work early-on with the black church. They had a meet and greet before they brought forth the National Conferences. At the meet and greets, they raised expectations about money. I think that they implied that there was more money than there was.

Black pastors' expectations were raised by government rhetoric about money to solve social problems. While hopes were high, in the end, there was "no there, there".

In the meeting between President Bush and black pastors, they walked away with nothing. It was a rubber stamp. From the beginning, (the Faith-Based and Community Initiative) was not funded well-enough....The J.C. Watts Summit couldn't even get the support of the President. This shows the true intentions (of the Bush administration).

Black pastors got to rub elbows with the President, but in the end were left saying, "Show me the money." One administrator of faith-based grants went so far as to state that the administration never intended to offer black pastors money. For black pastors, the faith-based rhetoric seemed a far cry from reality.

An official in a Faith-Based executive agency views the early meetings with black pastors differently. This official posits that the meetings were an end in and of themselves.

We had Roundtables of Compassion...We were inviting them to conversation. It was huge for black pastors that their voice could be heard. Voice is important, but not always the most important. There is sometimes a victim mentality [among black pastors] that my problem is bigger than yours. What is needed is clarification of the problem not perception of need. The other part is expertise.

Giving pastors a voice was important to the administration, but a key reason for inviting black pastors in, according to this policy official, was to provide a platform with the President and to grant them perspective about a hierarchy of needs. The message seems to be a paternalistic, "if you think you've got problems in Sisco, TX, then look at Seattle, WA". But in the trenches of their communities where problems loom large, the sense of urgency that black pastors feel is perhaps warranted.

In addition to urgency, there was a sense by pastors that the government left them groping in the dark. While they were finally at the governmental table, many black

pastors felt left to their own devices in the navigation of the grants process. What black pastors needed more than chastisement concerning their sense of urgency to solve black social problems through faith-based efforts was information about the process of applying for government grants. An overseer of faith-based grants who has also conducted workshops to help black churches apply for funds stated:

(Black churches) are at an expertise and resource disadvantage. I went to an OIC meeting in Fort Lauderdale and showed them a link to the standard form [for applying for government grants]. No one had heard of it and it simplifies their life in the grant process. Because the need is so great, people fail to see the long term implications. It's teaching a person to fish versus giving them a fish. The strength of the grassroots program is that it works over time. A service treats you once. We need more of that...growing a person over time. It is hard for African-American churches to see larger social situations and small changes happening slowly.

Indeed, there is a sense of urgency about black social problems given that in many cases they were thrust upon African Americans by social and historical circumstance and have persisted well past the civil rights movement that purportedly leveled the American playing field in every sphere of life. It is both interesting and ironic that the black church is at the center of a debate about leveling the playing field in terms of social service delivery.

Ignorance of the grants process is often an issue for small nonprofits of any ilk, including many black churches. Perhaps, then, the early meetings with black pastors might have filled the information gap. But one overseer of faith-based grants notes that if information was lacking during early meetings with black pastors, the Bush administration is no longer to blame.

In my opinion, there is a lot of information about the Initiative. When (the White House) comes for conferences they get information out to the churches. Many churches are looking for quick fixes. 60% of audiences I engage are not aware that a grantmaking process is a competitive process. Many do not understand

how to make themselves competitive. It's not a lack of information, it's about ignorance.

Even if the Bush administration raised black hopes about a fountain of faith-based funding to wash away the ills of their communities, they could not force organizations to fill information gaps. Highly politicized conferences held by the White House Faith-Based and Community Initiatives office were intended to bridge information gaps of this sort.

The scaling down of the big talk to black pastors about big money for their churches is certain. The official from a Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives stated:

Jay Hein [Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiative] talks about growing small (with) real people making real change (in) smaller parts. Mom and pop shops are a vital part and partner.

Small grants are to become the new game in the faith-based town. Storefront churches and small programs, not megachurches, are to become the new face of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Diminishing black pastors' expectations about grant size is a deliberate political strategy. The pie is sliced more thinly, but it goes farther than before. The more black churches that see some funds, the more political support for the powers that be. More importantly, the more easily that the White House can claim numbers and deflect attention from the claim that faith-based funding is a farce (see Kuo 2006).

In addition to going to a system of smaller grants, the Bush administration also sought to address the feeling of black pastors that they had been invited in, but left to their own devices in applying for grants. The administration remedied this with a series of conferences.

Coming to a City Near You

This new rhetoric about growing small was solidified in a tactical shift toward new policy images by the Bush administration. I witnessed the pageantry that accompanies new policy images during participant observation at a workshop sponsored by the White House Conference on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in Charlotte, North Carolina on November 16, 2006. The conference began with a live video greeting from President Bush followed by a speech by Jay Hein. Other big hitters of the faith-based fiefdom—ranging from the Director of the U.S. Department of Education’s Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to the Director of USA Freedom Corps extolled the virtues of the Initiative. The entire first half of the conference was devoted to honing the Bush administration’s message on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. There was no choice about conference content before lunch as the agenda consisted of four speeches on Federal Reform (for example, “Guidance on Partnering with the Federal Government”), one report on State and Local Activities (from Florida’s Faith-Based Office where President Bush’s brother was governor at the time), and finally two presentations concerning Private Strategies (such as volunteering).

The atmosphere of the conference was reminiscent of a revival with attendees nodding in agreement and shouting amen, yes, and mmm-hmm during government officials’ pronouncements of statistics and facts about the efficacy of the Initiative as well as during testimonials of lives changed as a result of faith-based programs. The audience was predominantly minority and I estimate that half of the approximately 1,000 attendees were black. The religious diversity of the audience was apparent to some degree with Jesuits wearing their robes, black Muslim women wearing head scarves, and Jewish

males donning their yammikas both in attendance. One black male presumed to be Christian sported a leather biker vest with a monogrammed quote on back in red, white, and blue:

Vote Jesus

Jesus is the Answer

While it is impossible to know what percentage of the African Americans in attendance were Christian, it is safe to assume that most hailed from the black church given that 95% of the black community is Christian and about 85% of that number attend a predominantly black church. Another reason that it is safe to assume that the preponderance of black attendees hailed from the black church is that women outnumbered men at the conference. In most black denominations, women remain relegated to the realm of layperson, but exert considerable leadership via various church programs—even where excluded from the pastorate (Harris 1999; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995).

The leadership of women was apparent at the conference during the workshop sessions. Three major topics—View from the Federal Agencies, Capacity Building Workshops, and Grant Writing Tutorials—were covered with optional breakout sessions accompanying each. The women in these sessions had one major question: ‘How can we help our congregants, clientele, and communities?’ This is where the Bush administration sought to fill the information void that many black pastors felt at the outset of the Initiative. Advice was meted out. Be smart in your applications. The money is scarce. One undotted ‘i’ or uncrossed ‘t’ could cost you millions. Think small.

Think small indeed. Mini-grants, according to a faith-based policy official interviewed herein, are the preferred form of faith-based award. Mini-grants are targeted at helping faith-based and community organizations to ramp up their internal ramparts. No faith-based grants can be utilized for brick and mortar projects, but mini-grants are intended to strengthen the capacity building efforts of organizations in one or more of five areas as identified by the federal government: leadership development, organizational development, program development, revenue development strategies, and community engagement. Empowering the grassroots to empower communities sounds like a plausible and sustainable strategy, whether the Faith-Based and Community Initiative survives politically or not. But will black pastors and black community organizations see the faith-based light?

The scuttlebutt in the black community says that black megachurches are the big winners in the fierce battle for faith-based funding. Chapter Five will explore these policy images of black pastors concerning the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. But what did the policy officials who designed and who implement and tweak faith-based policy say about black pastors propensity to “grow small” as opposed to the myth that megachurches are the intended beneficiaries of faith-based funding? An administrator of millions of dollars of faith-based grants states:

The biggest obstacle [to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative] from the faith side is ignorance. There is a group that was fearful from the start. My (relative) will have no involvement at any level—he’s been a pastor for thirty years. Other [pastors] have a traditional model of their own [so]...a nonprofit arm piece is foreign [to them]. Technical assistance is critical. Geography is important too. The East Coast is more advanced. The Midwest is just coming to grips (with the FBCI). The West Coast has a better knowledge base.

The savvy states of the East and West Coast, per this informant, understand that *a* grant is better than *no* grant. What they fail to understand per this informant who works with faith-based organizations, is that “\$25,000 to a small faith-based organization or community development organization is a lot.” Furthermore, this informant asserts that a generational gap may predispose the more traditional and presumably older pastors to forego this potentially profitable partnership with government.

Certainly those black pastors (even middle-aged ones) at the helm of megachurches appear to be more in step than out of step with postmodern trends in society and with new trends in government. Generational gap notwithstanding, the charge that megachurches are the big winners in the faith-based competition may be a euphemism for saying that politics prevails. Perhaps fancy White House events to woo megachurch pastors are intended to secure the promise of Republican victory in a close contest and increasing inroads into the black community. The megachurches get big money and they deliver big votes. Does the Faith-Based and Community Initiative cast politics aside or is it mired in partisan mud?

Policy Entrepreneurs

Politics Aside?

I think that the concept is great and a lot has been accomplished. Politics aside, it's a great Initiative.

Informant, Administrator of Faith-Based Grants

The vision cast by Bush's “Duty of Hope” speech is being implemented in real time. Compassionate conservatism is more than a societal mantle; it is presidential mandate. But one administrator of millions of faith-based grants was quick to disparage the heightened role that politics has played in the Initiative in terms of raising the hopes

of black pastors about free-flowing government funds to worthy projects. Does the Faith-Based and Community Initiative represent an unadulterated act of good will toward the black community? Is it the linchpin of a compassionate conservatism philosophy with designs of getting government altogether out of the business of welfare? How have the grand designs to draw in the black faithful to the faith-based flock been derailed due to the vagaries of politics?

Former Congressman J.C. Watts, is in a position to know a little something about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Watts is a minister and a politician and a businessman. He is a Republican who rose to 4th in the Congressional ranks—Republican Conference Chair. And he is a black man steeped in the tradition of the black church. As such, during his tenure in Congress, Watts co-sponsored programs like the Community Renewal Act which would have permitted faith-based providers of drug treatment to accept government vouchers as payment for services. He supported the Charitable Choice provision of welfare reform. He sponsored a summit for black pastors to promote the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. But J.C. Watts avers that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative “got caught in the crosshairs of politics.” And politics won.

Former Congressman Watts laments that while the Faith-Based and Community Initiative might have been a boon to black church efforts on the ground, it has languished due to partisan politics.

In the black community, when a pastor opposes the Faith-Based Initiative, it's because they're Democrats. In the white community, when a pastor supports the Faith-Based Initiative, it's because they're anti-big government conservatives. There are two ways around it: If you don't want the money, don't take it. I encourage my Christian brothers on the right and the left to listen to hear, don't listen to respond. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative is a community

service bill that says don't discriminate against faith organizations [that wish] to receive funds.

In a determined yet wistful tone, the Congressman stated: "The first question in public policy should be does it work?" A pragmatic approach should drive politics rather than partisan straightjackets.

Watts is particularly critical of the claims of some vocal members of the Congressional Black Caucus that the Initiative amounts to discrimination. Watts places the discrimination charge in the context of black history to dismiss its relevance. Indeed, photographs and paintings of prominent moments in black history punctuate the walls of Watts conference room in his D.C. office.

1964...there [points to the wall] is a picture of LBJ signing the civil rights bill. It gave religions a waiver to say that they can determine...if you're a Jewish organization, you are not forced to hire a Christian. But, you cannot deny food in the soup kitchen to someone of a different religion.

What do (the Congressional Black Caucus) say? (The Faith-Based and Community Initiative) is discriminatory. Well, go ask Dr. King. Who works in a church or synagogue's soup kitchen? It's the people who attend services who volunteer their time [at the soup kitchen].

In the black community, when we hear discrimination, we throw up our hands. That's not a bad sensitivity, but where it hinders us [is when] we throw up the red flag and never peel the onion to see if (the claim of discrimination) is so.

Watts believes that what really drives the CBC's opposition to the Initiative is a distaste for President Bush and Republican politics, not a true opposition to the goals of the Initiative. Chapter Three highlighted the importance of civil rights discourse in black politics today.

What intrigues Watts about the Black Caucus is the fact that while other Democrats are trying to reassert their commitment to religion, some black Democrats appear to be doing the opposite on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative: "Some

would say the Democrats have had a Damascus road experience because they're finally talking about faith again." So while it is counterintuitive on the surface for some black Democrats to buck the Democratic retreat back to religion, the discourse of the black agenda remains focused on civil rights. Of course, the black church is central to black politics and it is not an overstatement to claim that none of the black politicians in Congress would be there save the black church. This covalent bond between black churches and black politics is what flummoxes Watts about the claim that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is discriminatory. If the black church is "central to every inch of progress the black community has made" given that it represents "the only institution in most black communities", Watts views the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a no-brainer for black politicians of whatever political ilk.

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative is a community service bill that says don't discriminate against faith organizations' ability to receive funds. Joe Lieberman says that people of faith can operate in the public square without being intolerant or pushing religion down people's throat. Both parties need to understand that.

Watts turns the discrimination language of the Congressional Black Caucus on its head by claiming that citizens of faith can play fairly in the public square. Per Watts, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative should have primarily been about expanding our view of community development to include religious organizations and other community organizations at the grassroots, but has nevertheless become mired in politics of a different color.

If the Congressional Black Caucus' claims of discrimination have hurt the efforts of the likes of Watts to sound the drumbeat of the Initiative in black churches, Watts and his fellow Republicans may have hampered efforts as well. On April 25, 2001, then Congressman Watts sponsored a Summit for black clergy to bolster support for the

President's new initiative. But only Republicans were allowed to invite pastors and this resulted in a lack of bipartisan support. Watts claims that the President's failure to promote and sponsor the event was more detrimental than who designed the invitation lists given that apparent enthusiasm for the Summit resulted in the was interested not merely in some uninvited guests in addition to those on the official slates:

I had the pastor's conference, 500 people showed up for 350 spots. We had people sitting on top of one another. The White House wouldn't send anyone over because they said it wasn't a bipartisan thing, but heck, 90% of the black pastors there were Democrats!

A book on the Initiative by three prominent political scientists suggests that the partisan nature of Watts' Summit spelled the death knell for any bi-partisan efforts to ensconce the Faith-Based and Community Initiative in meaningful legislation—and thus to imbue the Initiative with substantial funding (Black, Koopman, and Ryden 2004). For many Democrats, the Summit proved that the Initiative was political indeed and aimed at “the most susceptible slice of minority voters” (Black et al. 2004, 144). In the end, Black and her colleagues conclude that Watts Summit proved that the GOP a la the Faith-Based and Community Initiative was “interested in racial symbolism more than substance” (Black et al. 2004, 4).

David Kuo is also in a position to know a little something about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. A Republican's Republican, Kuo worked for the likes of former Representative Jack Kemp and former Secretary of Education under President Reagan, Bill Bennett. Finally, Kuo worked as Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives at the White House under President George W. Bush. His conservative credentials are impeccable.

But Kuo too claims that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative has drowned in a senseless sea of political posturing.

David Kuo bears mentioning not because he was interviewed for this work, but because his tell-all book, *Tempting Faith: An Inside Story of Political Seduction* (2006) chronicles the fate of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and leaves the reader with the impression that politics always corrupts religion. Whatever the original impetus, Kuo says it all went awry. Kuo's temptation as a zealot for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is to paint the Initiative in stark terms. Thus, he portrays the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as either a pure policy or as a tainted political tool. Perhaps the belief that any policy would not fall prey to the ambit of beltway ballyhoo is too wide-eyed a perspective for a Washington insider, but Kuo does provide some interesting insight into the purposeful inclusion of the black church in the hype and hoopla surrounding the unveiling of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

Recall the previously posited linkage between welfare reform and compassionate conservatism. This bond goes deeper than the genesis of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative in the Charitable Choice provision of welfare reform. Indeed, compassionate conservatism claims that conservatives—generally speaking Republicans—actually care about the poor. Kuo dismisses this as nonsense claiming that the vast majority of Republican voters “...don't really care about poverty issues” (Kuo 2006, 88) and Republican donors are uninterested in funding such issues. If Kuo is correct about a lack of general Republican interest in the Initiative, why did President Bush make his commitment to compassion for the poor a central component of his domestic agenda? It was all within the calculus of politics according to Kuo.

This chapter has already noted that African Americans do not perceive the Democrats, not the Republicans, as most concerned about poverty and welfare. More specifically, Republican activists were not interested in black poverty around the time of the 2000 election. But, the Republican strategists had done their math and concluded that reaching the likes of African American voters could reap political dividends. While technically a nonpartisan policy of compassion, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative had more potential to “evangelize” (Kuo 2006, 170) black voters than any other policy. So the red carpet was rolled out.

Kuo documents the rise of the Regional Conferences similar to the one that the researcher attended in Charlotte, North Carolina. Racial diversity abounded at the conferences. Kuo recounts stories of African Americans in attendance at the conference who expressed that they finally felt embraced, not merely by Republicans, but by the government.

No one really listens to the black churches anymore. People don't visit except election time and that's to take money and tell us we shouldn't vote for Republicans because they are all racists. Thank you for coming. We may not agree on everything but thank you. It means the world. (231)

Kuo claims to have heard this sentiment echoed by African-Americans in every city where conferences were held. Eventually, the reality that there was little faith-based funding and that applying for faith-based largesse was no easy task would meet the rhetoric extolled at the Regional Conferences would hit many black pastors. But in the meantime, the cheerleading sessions had their intended effect.

In 2004, a shift in black voting patterns occurred with some 11% of African Americans voting for the incumbent Republican President, George W. Bush compared with 8% African American support for Bush in 2000 (Portrait 2004). Perhaps this cannot

be termed a faith-based fait accompli, but as Kuo points out, the swing state of Ohio was a key target for the Regional Faith-Based Conferences and in this crucial state, 16% of black voters cast their vote for President Bush. In the end, it was all political Kuo said. Black pastors were pawns not prophets.

While Kuo posits that black pastors are mostly pawns in a faith-based political chess game, he disagrees with claims that the Initiative represents an ideological tool for the chipping away of the welfare state. “This isn’t about either federal welfare or faith-based groups. This is about using both resources at the same time” (Kuo 2006, 87). The Initiative is intended to complement the work of welfare bureaucrats and bureaucracies, but it was also intended to garner black votes according to Kuo. At the metalevel, the Initiative should have been more about the efficacy of civil society than anything else. The purity of the beloved Initiative fell victim to the seductive powers of politics--and black churches, whether willingly or not, were implicated in the whole affair.

Conclusion

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative is both programmatic policy and political tool. It is indeed a politically significant policy. And it is indeed political. Some African American leaders have cried foul given Bush’s prescient insight that the way to the heart of the black community is through the black preacher. Political claims obscure those of pure compassion when reports begin to proliferate about particular black pastors converting to the Republican Party after receiving faith-based funds. President Bush’s miraculous recovery from a nadir of black support following the *Bush v. Gore* decision to his gain in black electoral support in the 2004 presidential election are likely linked to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. But whatever the case, some black

churches and community organizations are receiving the benefits of Bush's efforts. In fiscal year 2005, more than \$2.1 billion were awarded to religious organizations as a part of the Initiative (African American Leadership Summit, 2007). Furthermore, the Supreme Court continued to affirm the constitutionality of the Initiative by dismissing a case against the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. And whether or not Republicans managed to woo some black voters by targeting black churches, the Initiative remains popular among African Americans generally and most black pastors specifically. Even Democratic presidential contender Barack Obama averred that he would keep the Faith-Based and Community Initiative if elected president. So has compassionate conservatism taken root?

The armies of compassion, per the Bush administration, have waged a "quiet revolution in the way government addresses human need" (White House Fact Sheet, January 29, 2008). Michael Gerson, the famed former speechwriter for President Bush, portrays the compassionate conservatism agenda a "fait accompli" and claims that President Bush gets short shrift for his accomplishments in this regard:

Bush has received little attention or thanks for his compassionate reforms. This is less a reflection on him than on the political challenge of compassionate conservatism. The conservative movement gives the president no credit because it views all these priorities—foreign assistance, a federal role in education, the expansion of an entitlement—as heresies, worthy of the stake. Liberals and Democrats offer no praise because a desire to help dying Africans, minority students and low-income seniors does not fit the image of Bush cruelty they wish to cultivate...Compassionate conservatism is a cause without a constituency. (Gerson 2008)

Whatever history may say about President Bush, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative will be a central part of the story.

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative exemplifies two things clearly: 1) fissures in what is often depicted as a unified black agenda and 2) the continued importance of the black church in the black political realm--even in the post-civil rights era. Chapter Five explores how black pastors cast his Faith-Based and Community Initiative, arguably one of the core planks of his agenda of compassionate conservatism. Chapter Five unearths the policy images of 28 black pastors across three black denominations, including one President of a convention and two high level denominational officials. Their framing of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative will tell us a great deal about black agenda politics.

Chapter Five

Standing in the Gap: Black Pastors' Policy Images of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative

Black pastors policy images about the Faith Based and Community Initiative are the culmination of the arguments made in this dissertation concerning the nature of the black consensus agenda specifically and black agenda politics more broadly. As Chapters One and Two demonstrate, black politics is linked to black churches on a fundamental level. Culturally, black communalism is rooted in an oral tradition. Throughout the African American experience, the black church has been among the fundamental civil societal institutions of African Americans. While the black church remains one of the signal institutions for the facilitation of and transmission of communal narratives, it has been underestimated as a fundamental facet of *black agenda politics*. Contemporary scholars tend to claim that while the black church remains a crucial constituency in the “normal politics” that epitomizes the post-civil rights era, the politics of black pastors are ambiguous at best. The black church has moved to the background of the study of black politics according to some scholars (e.g. Reed 1986; Tate 1994). Yet, an examination of black agenda politics via the policy images of black pastors on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative reveals that black liberation themes rooted in religion remain salient in the post-civil rights era.

While the black church is not a monolith—the variety is epitomized by the eight denominations represented under the black church umbrella—there exists an important link between almost all black churches. The tie that binds the black church is its rootedness in the peculiar institution of slavery. The racial order of slavery required slaves to define the black church in a manner both consistent with and contrary to the

dominant mode of Christianity. The black church clung to the “blood-stained banner of the Cross of Jesus”, consistent with the New Testament Christianity which was the religion of the oppressor (in many cases), even though his slave catechisms³⁹ perverted the faith into a tool of false consciousness and forced obedience. But the black church contravened the Christianity of the slave catechism to the extent that it heralded the prophets of the Old Testament who emphasized exodus out of slavery by prophetic leadership, protest against unjust institutions, God’s judgment on the heads of unjust rulers, and liberation from bondage by a truth that would constitute the foundations of a renewed sense of national purpose. These ideas form the basis of liberation theology and are crucial to our understanding of black politics past. But scholars should not neglect the extent to which these ideas inform black politics present. Do the policy images of black pastors reveal prophetic themes?

In A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow (2004), historian David L. Chappell thoroughly examines the factors that compelled the civil rights movement. In a crucial chapter, Chappell avers that contrary to popular conceptions that the civil rights reformers had abiding faith in the founding documents, the pessimism of prophetic utterances propelled the movement more than optimistic longings for a piece of the American Dream. The original Constitution deftly avoided the moral dilemma of slavery. The Civil War Amendments which were meant to make amends were promises unfulfilled. Forty-acres and a mule was a farce. Dred Scott was a

³⁹ A catechism from 1844 is partially reproduced below (Levine 1977). In liturgical traditions, children are catechized at a young age as a form of religious education. A slave master turned a religious tool into a weapon of oppression. The questioner is the slave master and the respondent is the slave.

Q: What command has God given to Servants, concerning disobedience to their Masters?

A: Servants obey in all things your Masters...fearing God

Q: What did God make you for?

A: To make a crop.

dreadful moment in Supreme Court jurisprudence. Jim Crow merely reified the racial order under the banner of federalism. Hope that one day we might all be judged by the content of our character was part of King's dream, but a copious student of the rhetoric of the dreamer will find that such phrases served primarily as a foil for the reality that the prophet was railing against.

Prophetic utterances of liberation permeate the black church milieu. Prophets of the Old Testament portend gloom and doom for countries that fail to conform to God's vision of the just society—one where the last are first and the first are last. Prophets are often without honor in their own land, as was Martin Luther King, Jr. among his own National Baptist Convention for a time. But prophetic sermons are what delineate black preaching from the rest. Black liberation theology emerged from this prophetic tradition. Black theology emphasizes the oppressed of society, promotes the liberator of oppression as a black Jesus Christ, and posits a unique place for the black church in politics

The extent to which an individual pastor or particular denomination ascribes to the formal tenets of black liberation theology is less significant than the fact that prophetic liberation themes are what delineate black churches from their white or mainstream counterparts. Indeed, the formal articulation and codification of black theology occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but messages of liberation have existed since the days of slavery. Thus, liberation theology was preached prior to its academic entrée.

Black sermons, despite a history that often claims their *other-worldliness* (e.g. Frazier 1964; Marable 1987), are jeremiads or protests about the times. They call the church and the world to task for failing to right the wrongs of the contemporary world. While the believer prays that the sweet chariot will (eventually) swing low and carry her

home, she is called by Scriptures to be about social justice in the meantime. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah avers that social justice is a fundamental pursuit for God's people—pure religion is defined as fathering the fatherless and caring for widows in distress. So black sermons in the tradition of the prophets have implications for *this world*—and especially for politics. Most claims of black church ambiguity on matters political are rooted in a misunderstanding of black liberation themes—*hope for heaven does not preclude political protest at home*. Indeed, Chapter Three indicates that black consensus agenda planks in the post-civil rights era are often laced with explicit themes and implicit overtones of black protest in the vein of liberation theology.

The black church is not the only conduit for the transmission of black stories, but its importance for black politics is intimately linked to the narratives that *black pastors* weave. The literature on black political churches demonstrates the importance of black pastoral messages. Various studies reveal that whether or not black pastors' sermons are overtly political, these messages still have great import for black politics. As we would expect given the prophetic emphasis, black sermons communicate civic awareness and promote political participation (Reese and Brown 1995). Further research on political churches indicates that in general, pastors sermons and speeches are independent of denominational stances on issues (Djupe and Gilbert 2002). Thus, even if black pastors are located in hierarchical denominations like the Church of God in Christ or high control denominations like the African Methodist Episcopal church where pastors serve at the behest of the denomination, clergy still speak out on issues that they deem of importance to their congregants and communities. Djupe and Gilbert (2002) find that public speech by clergy is more frequent when "their congregations constitute a minority within the

community”. The historic location of African Americans in the position of the oppressed has rendered the relatively free black pastor a central communicator of political and moral pronouncements, campaigning, endorsement, and protest (Guth et al. 1997).

Black pastors are integral to black political rhetoric and thus to the framing of everyday political issues as well as iron-clad ideologies (see Harris-Lacewell 2005, Dawson 2001). Elite framing is a central aspect of the *conversation* between elites and citizens in a democracy (Nelson and Kinder 1996). In regard to group-based politics, as in the African American community, elite framing is an especially important concept to behold. While the black utility heuristic remains an important way to understand black politics (Dawson 1994), a recent study indicates that some political issues may be immune to the racial lens (White 2007). If it is indeed the case that race does not always matter in the evaluation of political issues, what appears to activate the race frame for African American masses is the elite framing of issues. Thus, even if the way that blacks think about politics is not axiomatically racialized, what makes black political issues racialized appears to be the provision of racial cues by political elites: “...the racial meaning of ostensibly nonracial issues among African Americans is malleable and dependent on appropriate racial cues to encourage racial interpretations” (White 2007, 339). Given that they are potentially key implementers of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, it is important to learn how black pastors’ frame the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Thus, this chapter analyzes the policy images of black pastors on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, assuming these frames contribute to the black agenda politics that surround the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The

images that follow certainly challenge the predominant CBC framing of the Initiative as outside the “boundaries of blackness” (Cohen 1999).

Prophetic Pragmatists

Black pastors are prophetic pragmatists. Given the roots of the black church in slavery, the slave religion adopted prophetic themes to navigate injustice and to secure justice. The peculiar institution of slavery, the unfulfilled promises of Reconstruction, and the purposeful exclusion of blacks from full citizenship during most of the twentieth century required artful responses. The centrality of black pastors to black society meant that they were often required to straddle simultaneously divergent ideals: scriptural justice and the reality of injustice. The language of the prophets—Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others—were a ready tool for this balancing act. Not only did biblical language allow a ready rhetoric for the reality of the black condition, it also allowed a principled basis for working out the dilemmas of minority life. The great irony of American history is that Christianity as a tool of coercing slaves into compliance became—and remains—a tool of liberation for black people (Harris 1999; Chappell 2004).

The realities on the ground in black communities require pragmatism. Even black politics operates on the basis of prophetic language. Chapter Three illustrated how portions of the Congressional Black Caucus’ formal agenda were framed in terms of prophetic themes via the civil rights frame. Pragmatism extends to black politics in the form of *speech* and *style*. Barack Obama is the quintessential prophetic pragmatist. From the beginning of the Obama campaign, the candidate’s style, cadence, and emphasis upon a political movement were predicated on the style of the black church.

While separated by a generation, Barack Obama mirrors Jesse Jackson in that he evinces the same prophetic pragmatism in politics. While some scholars take pains to depict the Jesse Jackson political persona steeped in black prophecy as what ails black politics (Marable 1983; Reed 1986, 1999), it is the case that this very mode of black politicking is what secured Barack Obama's victory. Jesse Jackson's moral center is a pragmatic political position, combining moral authority with political reality (Frady 1996). From what was arguably his first campaign speech at the Democratic National Convention in 2004 to his Call to Renewal speech on faith and politics in 2006 to his Inaugural Address in 2009, President Obama has patterned his image on the prophetic pragmatist model epitomized by black pastors. Just as the civil rights movement required rhetoric, youth, and technology, Obama built his own political movement on the lessons of the prophetic pragmatists. Obama's kinder, gentler brand of politics, the politics of inclusion and the "yes we can" mantra have a forerunner in Jesse Jackson's moral center for politics, the Rainbow Coalition, and the "you are somebody" mantra.

This point cannot be underestimated. The interesting irony of the Obama campaign lies in the fact that it partially disavows black politics literature of the past twenty years (Rustin 1965; Smith 1981; Tate 1994). The fact that the Obama campaign is widely likened to a *movement* partially defies a central axiom of black politics--that in the post-civil rights era, protest politics a la the civil rights era are anachronistic and ineffective. Perhaps protest politics is disavowed precisely because it is already ingrained into black politics. Prophetic language and protest politics are blended into black politics as oppositional civic culture (Harris 1999)—sacred and secular frames have been melded in the post-civil rights era.

Black political theory about protest to politics might be modified along the following line: protest is central to black politics because the prophetic rhetoric of the black church and the prophetic pragmatism of black pastors has become interwoven into the threads of black politics. *Just as prophetic ideas propelled the civil rights movement, the prophetic ideas and protest actions of prophetic pragmatists propel black agenda politics in the post-civil rights era.*

Religious, protest-oriented rhetoric remains integral to contemporary black politics. The major omission of black political literature is not the insistence that mainstream political maneuvers define contemporary black politics. The major omission of contemporary black political literature is the failure to regard black religious rhetoric as central to black agenda politics. To miss that fact is to miss that the content of the rhetoric is often rooted in the protest themes of black Christianity.

Federalism and the Policy Venue of the Black Church

Black pastors are political elites by default. As state church of the black community, the black church has politics thrust upon it and the black pastor is required, like the President, to wear many hats. The separation of church and state is not practicable in the black church milieu. In the NAACP's magazine, *Crisis*, the younger breed of black ministers are described as representing a "power bloc outside the political parties" (Leland 2001), nevertheless, this bloc has power precisely because black pastors from the prominence of T.D. Jakes of the 40,000 member Potter's House in Dallas, Texas to the pastor of the small house church in Gotebo, Oklahoma are all recognized not only as political elites, but also as implementers of services crucial to black communities.

Black churches especially, understand the nuances of federalism because black denominational structures replicate and recreate the dynamics of American federalism. For example, in black Baptist denominations, each congregation exercises autonomy over local issues, but are aligned with the major umbrella organization, sending money (taxes) for various purposes better managed in the central governing organ. For example, international missions projects are coordinated through the national body. Sunday School curricula emanate from the national denominational headquarters and are distributed to local churches throughout the country. Black pastors understand federalism intuitively because they encounter instances of federalism in the black church comparatively frequently.

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative capitalizes on the federal nature of the black church. To the extent that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative seeks to redefine federalism and intergovernmental relations so as to include religious institutions like the black church as explicit policy venues, scholars need to probe black pastoral policy images. Given the centrality of the black church to the Bush administration's overtures in this regard⁴⁰, black pastors are ideal objects of study.

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative is an interesting issue where a Republican president managed to get putatively Democratic African Americans on his side. In spite of this broad support by African Americans and their clergy, the Faith Based and Community Initiative remains missing from the black consensus agenda. At

⁴⁰ This became especially true given the initial response to the Initiative by the likes of fundamentalist and evangelical leaders like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson. Casting a broad religious net could mean that non-Christians and even "cults" would be included in the canopy cast by the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. While most white evangelicals support the notion of the Initiative, white evangelical institutions that comprise Bush's base were not the primary cheerleaders and consumers of the Initiative early on—racial and ethnic churches were.

the time of its unveiling, the Congressional Black Caucus (with a few notable exceptions like former Rep. Floyd Flake and current Rep. Sanford Bishop) decried the Initiative, averring that it violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment and that it legalizes discrimination given a provision of the executive order that allows religious contractors to refuse to hire employees whose religious views diverge from those of the organization. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) opposes the Initiative for the same reasons as the CBC. During the Bush era, two of the flagship political and civic organizations of the black community, the CBC and the NAACP, disavowed the Faith-Based Initiative, even though a substantial portion of the black community supported (and continue to support) it.⁴¹ The Faith-Based and Community Initiative exemplifies two things clearly: 1) the *black consensus agenda* is kept by black political elites and 2) the importance of the black church to *black agenda politics*--even in the post-civil rights era.

Black Agenda Politics

In the case of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, it is important to understand black church discourse about black politics given that the church is a vehicle of policy implementation. *Discourse sets the stage for black agenda politics*. Black churches expand the scope of conflict via their discourse they expand the audience and contribute to black agenda politics

The best scholarly effort to examine black agenda politics emanates from Cathy Cohen's *Boundaries of Blackness* (1999). Cohen demonstrates how the black consensus

⁴¹ 81 % of all black Americans and 83% of black Protestants according to the Pew Research Center (August 2008).

agenda (this is my term, not Cohen's) most often obfuscates or is willfully bereft of the interests of marginal facets of the black community. Her argument strikes a blow to the primary argument that black political fortunes are linked (Dawson 1994), rendering black political pursuits inclusive in the pluralistic vein of reasoning. Thus, even communal black politics has its boundaries. Cohen's work, while illuminating, does not utilize the public policy literature. The current chapter seeks to build upon Cohen's insights by exploring black pastors' policy images of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

Chapter Three illustrated how the Faith-Based and Community Initiative demonstrates the nature of black consensus agenda. Indeed, this recent public policy calls into question how neatly black faces represent black interests (Swain 1993) and how succinctly black agendas reflect collective interests. This chapter seeks to explore black agenda politics via the black church. Cues for black political decision-making are not based in individualistic action frames, but collective ones. Thus, in spite of the shift from protest tactics of the civil rights era to mainstream political mechanisms (Rustin 1965; Smith 1981; Tate 1994) by bona fide black politicians in the post-civil rights era, we might still expect those at the helm of the quintessential black collective--black pastors, to proffer policy images relevant to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative to affect both black agenda politics and implementation.

Prophets Meet Politics: Pastoral Images of the Faith-Based Initiative

Black political discourse occupies a separate and observable space, distinct from, yet rooted in, the dominant political system (Dawson 1994; Harris-Lacewell 2005).

Hidden transcripts (Scott 1985) remain in their secret niches until revealed by scholars.

The world where I conducted my interviews was both familiar and foreign to me: familiar

to the extent that I was “raised in the black church” and foreign to the extent that the black church is no monolith. It is not uncommon for African Americans in black churches to speak of being reared in the institution. One’s experiences in the institution, however, might vary contingent upon which black denominational tradition one was reared in. A shared African American history, however, means common cultural referents across the black church milieu. Denominational hierarchies, theological distinctives, and worship styles may vary, but even in the post-civil rights era, black pastors remain precariously, sometimes purposely, intertwined in the political whirlwind.

The contributions of some black pastors during the Civil Rights Movement are well-documented.⁴² Whatever their political proclivities, black pastors occupy a crucial space between the black political and civic spheres. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative provides a unique opportunity to explore the policy images of black concerning a policy issue with discernible impacts upon church-state relations; black community life; partisan politics; and the institution of the church. This chapter explores and analyzes the policy images of black pastors about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

Expected Policy Images

During the interviews,⁴³ black pastors were queried concerning their views about the black church and politics broadly and the FBCI specifically.⁴⁴ I expected policy images of black pastors about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative to fall within

⁴² Certainly, not all black pastors and black churches were supportive of the movement. Doug McAdam (1982) estimates that a mere 12% of churches were involved. The National Baptist Convention, USA opposed Martin Luther King Jr.’s efforts to bring the denomination into the racial struggle, resulting in the formation of the Progressive National Baptist Convention.

⁴³ For interview protocol, see Appendix B.

⁴⁴ I added a single question about school vouchers to determine whether there might be some correlation between or similar rationale applied toward support FBCI and support for vouchers.

five frames—constitutionality, political party, policy venue, race, and government. I derived these frames from media accounts of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and from the political science literature:

- **Constitutionality** (e.g. issues of separation of church and state). Groups like the Baptist Joint Committee and the American Civil Liberties Union claim that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative breaches the wall of separation between church and state. Some members of the Congressional Black Caucus have made similar claims in media accounts.
- **Political party** (e.g. Republican inroads into what is traditionally Democratic territory--the black vote). Again Rep. Bobby Rush has publicly stated that the Initiative is a wedge issue, intended to divide the black vote which has been firmly entrenched in the Democratic party in the post-civil rights era.
- **Policy venue** (e.g. federalism; the black church as the level of social service delivery; mission creep). The public policy and public administration literature declare that the institutional venues with power to make decisions and to implement public policies are central to agenda setting and to policy success.
- **Race** (e.g. civil rights; the black church; the needs of the black community). Since its inception, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative has been targeted at black communities. The first Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, John DiIulio Jr., penned an article declaring that such without the efforts of the black church, cities would crumble (2001). The high levels of support by African Americans for the issue further warrant scholarly inquiry into the racial component of the issue.
- **Government** (e.g. civil society vs. big government; funding;). Political theory highlights the separate space occupied by churches and other groups vis-à-vis the political realm. Indeed, even scholars of mass politics have become interested in civil society (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995). Beyond debates about social capital, civil society both complements and competes with government. This policy issue dramatizes this tension as prophets become beholden to Pharaoh. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative brings these tensions into sharp relief.

A year after the advent of my research, several of these frames were affirmed as statistically significant by separate research that sought to determine how pastors' attitudes about government funding affected their likelihood of applying for funds (Owens 2006). Michael Leo Owens (2006) found that church-state separation and government entanglement with religion were significant in a negative direction. While he did not use the term policy venue, he found that social welfare provision as a mission

of the church was significant in a positive direction. Owens controlled for race and found that black congregations are more likely to apply than white congregations. Owens did not include any controls for party identification of political ideology, but as Chapter Four indicates, it is likely that President Bush's promulgation of his compassionate conservative brand among the African American community is significant.

Coding and Counting of Policy Images

The charts throughout this chapter encapsulate the policy images of black pastors within the rubric of the five frames explicated above. While categories or frames were determined a priori via an extensive review of the literature and of media accounts of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, policy images emerged from the interviews. I did not expect specific policy images as the nature of qualitative research dictates that theory be grounded in the data. Accordingly, it was important to analyze text units in the vein in which they were uttered. Some pastors spoke in Shakespearean soliloquies and some spoke in choppy sentences a la Hemingway. A single text unit as paragraph sometimes embodied one frame with multiple images, but at times, a paragraph embodied multiple frames and multiple policy images. Sometimes choppy sentences embodied one frame, but more than one policy image. Thus, textual units of analysis were phrases, sentences, and paragraphs, contingent on the discourse. I categorized policy images according to the five frames. Again, these words and phrases were not chosen a priori, they were articulated by pastors. Some of the emergent policy images are listed in Table 5.1 and will be analyzed in detail in this chapter. While every specific image is not listed here, the chart emphasizes those that occur most frequently across the three denominations of this study, Baptist, Church of God in Christ, and African Methodist Episcopal.

Table 5.1 Specific Policy Images about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative

Policy Images	Brief Explanation
Accountability	Accountability of black church to government
Administrative Capacity	Ability of black church to handle extra administrative burden
Autonomy	Independence of the black church from government
Black Church as Target	Bush efforts to draw the black church into the Initiative
Bush/Republican effort	Initiative as somehow political
Black Friendly Republican Party	Initiative as effort to paint the Republicans as open to blacks
Buy Black Votes	Initiative as a Bush effort to get black votes in 2004
Church Image	Initiative can taint the image of the black church
Church Focus	Initiative can detract from the spiritual focus of the church
Church Purity	Initiative can taint the church by mixing with government
Church Size	Large churches get the Initiative and small churches lose out
Church Superiority	Church is superior to government in meeting needs
Civil Rights	Initiative as related to the broader goals of civil rights of black communities
Dependence	Initiative creates dependence on government for money
Discrimination	Initiative promotes discrimination in hiring
Divide Black Voters	Initiative creates fissures in the black community
Fear	Initiative is scary because black churches in the past lost 501c3 status for failing to keep government money separate
Funding (programmatic lack)	Initiative is under-funded and thus not realistic
Getting Rid of Welfare	Initiative is an effort to dismantle welfare
Government Control	Initiative means the government controls the church
Government Trust/Distrust	Initiative support rests on trust of government/opposition on distrust of government
Government Inept	Initiative shows that government cannot do welfare
Grassroots	Initiative shows that the grassroots does social services best
Implementation	Initiative requires black church to implement policy

Indigenous Intimacy	Initiative right-on because indigenous churches most intimate with communal needs
Legal Woes	Initiative could create legal problems for churches
Liberation	Black theology means the focus of the church is social justice
Money from Government	Black church should not accept funds from Pharaoh
Motive	Initiative part of a hidden Bush agenda
Natural Venue	Initiative realizes that the black church is a natural place for program delivery
Necessity	Initiative support because it meets needs
Opportunity Cost	Initiative support because failure to apply as a missed chance for funds
Partnership	Church-state and public-private
Pawns to Politics	Black pastors risk being used in a game of faith-based politics
Preferred Venue	Black church not only a natural venue but the best venue for the delivery of social services
Principal-Agent	Initiative may mean that government is the church's new principal
Prophetic Voice	Initiative threatens the historic role of pastor as conscience of the state
Revolving Door	Initiative allows the state to enter into the church
Selection/Favoritism	How will the administration choose among black churches?
Self-Help	Black church committed to self-help
Selling Out	Black churches traitors who accept Initiative funds
Shifting Welfare Burden	Initiative puts welfare on churches backs
Slavery	Initiative as a new form of slavery
Surrogacy	Initiative means government new surrogate for church
Timing	Will apply when timing is right
Welfare	Government is trying to give church welfare through the Initiative

General Opinion about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative

Table 5.1 indicated some of the policy images associated with the Faith-Based and Community Initiative across three black denominations. Table 5.2 below shows that in general, black pastors from across the black church milieu and within particular black denominations are supportive of the Initiative with 32% giving full support and 32% indicating cautious support of the Initiative.

Table 5.2 Pastors' Opinions about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative

	AME	Baptist	COGIC	Cumulative Percentage
Support	50% (4)	20% (3)	20% (2)	32% (9)
Yes..but	12.5 (1)	40 (6)	40 (2)	32 (9)
Oppose	37.5 (3)	40 (6)	20 (1)	36 (10)
N=28	8	15	5	

The indication that 64% of all black pastors in this study support the Faith-Based and Community Initiative generally is quite consistent with one recent study that indicated that about 53% of black pastors plan to apply for funds (Joint Center 2006). A major finding of this research, however, is that while pastoral support of the Faith-Based and Community is solid, support is *nuanced*. Support comes with many caveats that are revealed by the prophetic policy images of black pastors. Descriptive statistics like the following mask the nuanced stories that lie beneath the majority sentiment.

For example, there exist denominational difference in support for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The Church of God in Christ, the denomination whose emphasis on personal holiness and thus on moral stands like those of Republicans, is the very denomination evinces the most general support for the Initiative (80% general

support when collapsing support and yes...but). The most outright opposition to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative emanated from pastors in the Baptist (40% opposed) and African Methodist Episcopal (37.5% opposed) tradition. It is important to note that two pastors in the sample, one AME pastor and one COGIC, had received funds under the Initiative. Their general opinion about the Initiative, however, was favorable prior to receiving funds—otherwise, they would not have sought faith-based funds. Of course, their current policy images about the Initiative are colored by their receipt of government largesse.

Beyond general denominational support, Table 5.3 distills the general policy images of the 28 pastors across three denominations in this study. This table is purposely reductionist so as to give the reader an overview what is to come. As the data analysis explains, the conventions of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Church of God in Christ have issued position papers or statements urging caution on the Initiative, but no convention has prohibited pastors from applying for Faith-Based funds.

Table 5.3 General Policy Images of the Faith-Based Initiative by Denomination

Black Denomination	African Methodist Episcopal (n=8)	Church of God in Christ (n=5)	Various Baptist Conventions (n=15)
Policy Images	Initiative will silence the prophetic voice	Initiative is a God-send via government	Initiative is both good news and bad news
Analytical Frames	Government and Race	Policy Venue and Government	Policy Venue, Government, and Political Party

Obviously, the rich data that emerged from interviews with black pastors cannot be reduced to a simple chart. While the fear that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative could silence the prophetic voice is uttered most frequently and forcefully by AME pastors, pastors in both Baptist churches and COGIC churches uttered the same concern.

Furthermore, the fact that 80% of COGIC pastors agree with the Initiative does not preclude them from detailing potential pitfalls associated with implementation of the Initiative in the policy venue of the black church. While Baptist pastors were the most frequent vocalizers of a concern that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative represented political ploy that exploited the social conservatism of black Christian religionists and attempted to pull them into the Republican fold along that shared ideological component, AME pastors were similarly concerned.

Finally, many pastors acknowledged that they might be pawns in the Faith-Based Initiative chess game, but their pragmatism drove them to recognize the utility of funds for the critical social service work that the black church is doing now, and has been doing since its inception. Black pastors are prophetic pragmatists whose embrace of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is predicated on a mixture of the five frames, including the maintenance of black communalism via black self-help: the Initiative allows the black church to keep healing black communities, even if some of the funds come from the Pharaoh. Thus, Table 5.4 is not a standard by which to evaluate the policy images that follow (e.g. pastors in every denomination extolled policy images within all five analytical frames), but rather, a signpost, alerting the reader of major tendencies within the complex policy images of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The policy images of black pastors on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative follow. The analysis begins with Baptist churches, then proceeds to the Churches of God in Christ, and ends with the African Methodist Episcopal churches.

Baptist Churches

Black Baptist churches comprise the bulk of congregations in the black Christian milieu. Likewise, Baptist pastors represent the bulk of interviews in this sample, which includes the insights of 15 black pastors from Oklahoma, Texas, Wisconsin, Virginia, and California. While they share the same denominational label, black Baptist churches are not monolithic. There are National Baptists; Progressive Baptists; Missionary Baptists; unaffiliated Baptists; American Baptists; and countless other stripes. This denominational diversity is reminiscent of the broader lesson that the black church is not a monolith.

While many Baptist congregations adhere to denominational labels and *affiliate* with the national umbrella bodies, few Baptist pastors in this sample display strong *allegiance* to the national organizations. Indeed, Baptist pastors were more likely than their AME and COGIC counterparts to lack knowledge about the position of their denominational body on the Faith Based and Community Initiative. They were also more likely than their non-Baptist counterparts to lack knowledge about the position of their denominational body on the Faith Based and Community Initiative. They were more likely than their non-Baptist counterparts to send money to the broader body without attending national meetings or to attend meetings out of a sense of duty only. 67% of the Baptist pastors interviewed herein expressed the sentiment that the national organizations were superfluous at best—venues for power-grabbing or for social networking, but not for conducting substantive kingdom business of the type that saves souls and feeds the hungry—the last, the least, and the lost. Indeed, one pastor stated of the National Baptist Convention:

I think the National Baptist Convention is a farce. ...in the 19th century, institutions like conventions served specific purposes that they don't serve anymore. ...we don't know how to give them decent burials, but they're dead. They draw people primarily now for their social and recreational dimension as opposed to really any investment in ministry because they've become mired in the same kind of quicksand that has undermined every other American institution: Struggles for leadership, for power, ego issues.

This pastor believes that in an era where African Americans were formally excluded from politics and relegated to a black zone of existence, the Baptist conventions were more committed to holistic ministry arising out of needs at the local level. Furthermore, when the black church was the only locale where African Americans could lead—and be led by their own—the national conventions were also more relevant because they aggregated and galvanized resources for ministry at the local level—much as the federal government does in redistributing tax dollars.

Whatever the prominence of national black Baptist umbrella organizations in the past, their image has suffered in the contemporary era. Perhaps one major reason for the love-hate relationship with the national denominational bodies (commonly termed conventions) is that at times they have been, as the pastor in the previous quote lamented, historical laggards. For example, during the 1960s, the National Baptist Convention purposefully distanced itself from the politically charged civil rights movement. Nevertheless, in the contemporary landscape, the denomination has forayed into social prophecy, not unlike its spin-off, the Progressive National Baptist Convention. While the latter emerged when Martin Luther King Jr. and others sought to formally fuse the civil rights cause with the black church, both Baptist denominations largely disapprove of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative in the contemporary era.

Since variety is the name of the game in the Baptist milieu, some pastors were tightly tethered to the national Baptist bodies. For example, one pastor in the sample served as the President of one of the national Baptist denominations. Furthermore, in 2005, the Presidents of all of the black Baptist denominations assembled and signed a joint statement on politics, calling President Bush to end the war in Iraq and to address environmental racism among other issues. National denominational bodies may be dinosaurs, but pastors still find comfort, theological affinity or pensions under the denominational banners, so black Baptist churches remain the largest cadre of black religionists in the United States.

The pastors in this sample are an impressive lot. For example, one pastor in this sample holds four degrees, inclusive of two master's degrees and a doctorate. Another pastor was trained by the Black Panthers and on the verge of initiation into the black militant organization when he had lucid dreams that diverted him from his militant path toward the road of Christian ministry. One pastor herein served as the Mayor of a large city in Virginia. Another pastor was one rung from the top of the corporate ladder as Vice President of a Fortune 500 company when he felt called to abandon his corporate vocation for his spiritual calling. One pastor, a Yale seminarian, served on the school board of a major metropolis in Texas. Almost all have formal theological training with many Master's of Divinity and three Doctors of Divinity. I count only three pastors who do not hold post-graduate degrees, but even these have taken considerable coursework in theology. These pastors are exceptionally educated as compared to the general population. Black Baptist pastors are elites within the black community and without as they interface with black politics.

Since Baptist pastors affirmed their affiliation with an umbrella denominational organization, but were quick to add that they were inactive or only attended denominational meetings out of necessity, I expected varied responses to the notion of Faith-Based Initiatives given that pastors are unlikely to claim fealty to denominational dictates on the matter. Furthermore, the Baptist tradition of church-state separation led me to expect some, if not many, pastors to strongly disavow the Faith-Based and Community Initiative on the basis that it violates the Establishment Clause of the 1st Amendment. Conversely, the notion of local autonomy and the priesthood of the believer predisposed me to expect at least some support of the black church as an appropriate policy venue for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

The findings were mixed with some surprises and some confirmations of my expectations. I expected Baptist ministers to view the Republican party with suspicion, especially given a 2005 document signed by the Presidents of the black Baptist denominations that was highly critical of the Bush administration and its programs, most of which were unmistakably supported by the Republican party faithful. On the race frame, I expected Baptist pastors to evince a great deal of support for black politicians and black organizations. As the most visible of the black denominations, pastors in the black Baptist tradition have scarcely voiced opposition against Jesse Jackson or other African American leaders. The exception is the Million Man march, where opposition was based more solidly upon the notion that Louis Farrakhan does not represent Christ. Indeed, while pastors might have disagreed with Farrakhan's tactics or goals, few disagreed that his motive was to shore up struggling black communities and populations. Given a theology that dichotomizes the governmental realm and the spiritual realm as

two distinct kingdoms, I expected Baptist pastors to express distrust of government institutions generally. At a minimum, I expected them to view the government as a sphere of limited utility for attaining spiritual goals.

Findings

The pastors interviewed here express a general distrust of government, but simultaneously believe that the government needs the church in order to perform its job of serving citizens. Table 5.4 shows Baptist pastors policy images according to the analytic frames explained previously in this chapter. Individual pastors uttered numerous policy images, but each policy images was coded into one category only. Textual units of analysis included phrases, sentences, and paragraphs, contingent on the context of the comment. Table 5.4 indicates the frequency of policy images within the five analytical frames according to the support level of Baptist pastors.

Table 5.4 Baptist Pastors’ Policy Images of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative by Support Level

	Support (n=3)	Yes...but (n=6)	Oppose (n=6)	Total Codes by Frame
Constitutionality	0	0	7% (2)	2
Political Party	15% (4)	15% (7)	23 (7)	18
Policy Venue	31 (8)	42 (20)	27 (8)	36
Race	15 (4)	9 (4)	10 (3)	11
Government	38 (10)	34 (16)	33 (10)	36
Total Codes by Support Level	26	47	30	

What is perhaps most surprising here is the dearth of policy images concerning the constitutionality of the Initiative. While the counting does not indicate the content of the

sentiment, the two groups of pastors who support the Initiative did not mention the issue in a significant way. There is a general sense that the Faith-Based plan is too closely associated with the Republican party and with President Bush, especially by those who oppose the Initiative. Beyond disapproval of the President, the pastors express concern that the red-tape and bureaucracy associated with the application for and implementation of faith-based programs would limit the potential of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. In this sense, the pastors concede that there might be social and spiritual benefits associated with the Initiative, but their distrust of President Bush and his party seem to overwhelm any sentimentality. Indeed, one pastor claims that a Democratic president proffering a Faith-Based plan of the same nature as President Bush's program would receive his support!

Constitutionality

I literally thought that (The Faith-Based and Community Initiative) was one of the worst-conceived ideas as a public policy situation that I've ever seen...I think [the Faith Based and Community Initiative is] dangerous, I think it's a disestablishment situation for the church to give direct subsidies to churches.

A Texas pastor.

This Texas pastor, a Yale Seminary graduate, believes that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is poor public policy. He points out that Community Development Corporations are a more viable and constitutional alternative given that they allow for the creation of legal vehicles for utilizing government funds apart from the church. The pastor cites various legal entanglements posed by the possibility of faith-based funds being intermingled with other church funds as another reason to oppose the Initiative. He believes that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative traverses the inviolable wall of

separation between church and state established by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

This sentiment, expressed by a Texas pastor concerning his disavowal of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, is not a majority sentiment in the Baptist sample. While I expected to find that Baptist pastors would be the most inclined to reject the principle on the basis that it violates the separation of church and state, what the interviews indicate instead is that the majority of those who oppose the Faith-Based and Community Initiative reject it on some other grounds than that it violates the sacred American principle of church-state separation. Only two Baptist pastors of the sample of fifteen believed that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative violated the separation of church and state and four opponents see no excessive entanglement of the government in the church under the guise of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. For most Baptist pastors, the mixing of sacred and secular required by the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is not sufficient to raise a constitutional red flag.

So why were my expectations confounded? The following policy images indicate the primary reasons. Black churches have always addressed the panoply of problems that African Americans face, emphasizing self-help over government assistance. Clear lines demarcate the governmental and church realms, nevertheless, as African Americans gained legal standing as citizens, opportunities for governmental assistance expanded as did opportunities for partnerships between church and state in the provision of said assistance. Thus, black churches have long confronted the dialectical dynamism inherent in the First Amendment: “The establishment clause works best when viewed in service of the free exercise of religion, not in tension with it (den Dulk and Hertzke 2002).” This

reading of the First Amendment is what likely drives such overwhelming support of school vouchers by African Americans generally and also what enables thirteen of fifteen of the Baptist pastors in this sample to affirm the legality of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, even if they oppose it on other grounds.

On a practical level, as opposed to a legal/philosophical one, all fifteen Baptist pastors (even the six who opposed the Initiative and the two who deem it unconstitutional) admitted to speaking about politics from the pulpit—whether in the form of civic messages, policy specific messages, or candidate endorsements. The fact that the black church is the seminal institution in the African American community explains the space that some black churches have carved out for politics in the pulpit—the black church was among the only venues where black political philosophizing, strategizing, and organizing could occur without reprisal.

Church-State Balance

One pastor from Virginia summed up her view of church-state balance by describing what her church *does*. Her church works with the local Community Action Agency and the state's Department of Health in order to administer an AIDS program. Her church is also inclusive of a Community Development Corporation, indicating that she views church-state partnerships as vital to meeting the needs of her congregants and her community. She also indicated that many pastors “go solo, are loners” and thus, opportunities for synergy between churches is lost. Thus, she seeks synergy with the local, state, and federal government via various agencies.

The previous pastor views church-state separation as impracticable. Another pastor from Virginia stated that the church cannot avoid politics by definition—church and state, public and private cannot be easily disentangled:

We address the total person. Head, heart, and soul are never compartmentalized...The church has to address everything, even politics. We need to change politics, not vice versa.

For this pastor, to the extent that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative facilitates holistic ministry, he is open to considering faith-based grants.

Beyond the inevitable mixing of religion and politics within the institutional walls of the church, he also averred that black pastors have a duty to be active in politics:

Pastors *have* to be involved. Look at David, Daniel, and Paul. You cannot effect positive change unless you are involved in politics. You are called to walk your walk wherever you are. Play politics in the world, not in the church. We need to position ourselves to make policy.

This notion that pastors ought be explicitly entangled in political affairs was reified in this pastor's service as mayor and as chair of his city's Housing Authority. He cautions, however, that he does not favor the implementation of a theocracy via his advocacy of black pastors' service in positions of political power: "I don't believe that you can legislate righteousness because it (righteousness) is an affair of the heart." For this pastor, his religious faith necessitates inserting himself into the political realm rather than retreating from it.

Political voice is an important component of citizenship and a component that is culturally relevant as well in the black religious sphere. The tradition of prophecy, emphasized previously, assumes the ability to speak truth to power. A black church culture steadfastly committed to separation of church and state precludes the prophet the ability to speak in the public square. So the black church in its many variants has

managed to concoct modes of speaking and protest whereby the black preacher can speak to the government in his role as pastor. This space even allows for black pastors to serve as Congress members and the nation's first black Senator, Hiram Revels, was a minister. One pastor from Oklahoma averred that the black church need be involved in the political arena as a means of promoting the prophetic voice on political issues.

...(W)e have a voice and should seek to speak that voice as related to political issues as (they)...agree or disagree with biblical values. For instance, some issues that may be political but also relevant to Christendom, for instance, same sex marriage...I think we have a voice with that... But I definitely think the black church has a voice and should be active in the political arena.

This pastor's emphasis upon the prophetic voice is mingled with a sense that the prophet's voice in the political realm is fundamental to political justice. Indeed, this quote is in response to a query about the appropriate balance between the black church and the government. The equation of voice and democracy as articulated by this pastor is echoed in the political science literature (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1994). Prophetic politics in the black church context buttresses the notion that voice represents an essential component of political equality.

Activism from the Pulpit

While the Baptist tradition is often associated with a commitment to disestablishment and Baptist pastors are more likely than either AME or COGIC pastors to oppose the Faith-Based Initiative on the grounds that it is unconstitutional, it is interesting to note that Baptist pastors are more likely than their AME and COGIC counterparts to encourage political activism or to proffer political messages from the pulpit. While scholars have typified political churches as vigilant in certain types of activity including campaigning, rallies, voting efforts, and policy advocacy, (Brown and

Brown 2003; McClerking and McDaniel 2005), complementary research emphasizes the types of political messages that proliferate in the black church, including those that communicate civic awareness and those that promote political participation (Reese and Brown 1995).

Political messages within the church and other church activities accrue over time to imbue black church goers with civic skills that enhance their political voice, their sense of political efficacy and empowerment, and perhaps the feeling of equality in the public square. A pastor from Oklahoma stated: “I encourage (political) activism through sermons. I don’t encourage them (about) *how* to vote, but I encourage them *to* vote (emphasized in original).” A pastor from Texas challenged the notion that it is even possible for black pastors to avoid encouraging political activism from the pulpit.

Now, what is partisan? I have never told any congregation I’ve pastored who to vote for. Now I’ve told them who *I’m* going to vote for and what my reasons are. And if you have confidence in my judgment about other things and you have given me the time to do some things that you can’t do...and that’s study the issues...[since] I don’t work in the factory you know...but I’ve got time to sit there and read the 3 newspapers that I read everyday, the Houston Chronicle, the New York Times, and the Wall Street Journal, and watch the news programs...[since] you’ve given me that time, here’s my judgment on (politics)--just like you want to hear my judgment on Matthew 4:13...here’s my judgment on these issues which are going to affect you in a very real way. Yes, I think that’s political activism and I don’t think that’s illegal and I think the IRS needs to do better at defining what that is.

This pastor stated in no uncertain terms that his parishioners, given the socioeconomic dynamics of his congregation, expected him to cover politics in the pulpit given that politics and public policies affect their lives at the grassroots. He thereby questioned the legitimacy of the IRS and by implication groups like the ACLU for targeting the content of pulpit messages on the basis of Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

Perhaps more interesting than his explanation of politics in the pulpit is the fact that this

pastor is one of the two in the sample who rejects the Faith-Based and Community Initiative on the basis that it violates the very Establishment Clause! This tension is perhaps born of historical exigencies of the African American past and practical necessities of the African American present. Pulpit politics is often a practical matter in the black church venue.

A pastor from the capital of the Confederacy typifies how some pastors explore political themes through the sermon. In November 2006, in the four weeks leading up to the midterm Congressional elections, this pastor preached a sermon series depicting the first real debate between Jesus and Satan. One sermon is entitled “Why My Endorsement Counts” and another sermon in the series is entitled “Stick to the Issues”. This sermon series illustrates the pastor’s skepticism about whether church and state can really be separate. Indeed, he recounts the fact that through prayer, God revealed to him how deeply Jesus was concerned about social justice. This historical necessity and practical tendency to view Jesus as liberator in some black Baptist congregations trumps the abstract notion of church-state separation. A tidbit from the sermon expresses this reality:

We preach, teach, and share Jesus. Jesus spoke truth to power and that’s why he was punished. We cannot afford to be isolated from the rest of society. We have to be a part of this world.

Preaching and politics often mix in the black Baptist church, yet only three pastors in this sample indicated that they spoke about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative from the pulpit. Most often, pastors discuss the Initiative in smaller church meetings, at local ministerial alliances, or at state and national denominational conventions.

Several pastors indicated that pastors have a *duty* to encourage political activism and to cover political topics from the pulpit. A pastor from Oklahoma elucidated this view in the following manner:

...I try to keep abreast of and announce for our church some political issues that are at the forefront and that I feel will certainly interest and affect, both positive and negative, the church—not only the church, the community, our city, our state, our nation.

This is remarkably similar to the informational role that interest groups play in the political science literature. The pastor acts a conduit of the most pertinent political information for his congregants, just as interest groups supply congressional committees with the latest information on issues of political import (e.g. Carpenter et al. 2004). The previously cited Texas pastor who mentioned reading three daily newspapers and tracking the news shows so as to maintain a tab on political issues of import to his congregants also reflects the informational role that pastors play via their sermons.

Pastoral political activism from the pulpit runs the gamut from encouraging voter registration to encouraging voting to educating congregants on political issues. Black pastors are important political elites.

One of the main things I (encourage) is registration to vote. I think it begins there. If you don't have that, if you're not registered to vote, you don't really have...a mechanism to voice your opinion—other than just verbally saying something, but (you lack) power.

Almost all admit to encouraging civicness and presumably, this has relevance for how they engage and frame the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

Furthermore, Baptist pastors in this sample are more likely than the AME and COGIC pastors to allow political candidates to speak during worship services or at the church. One pastor from the South noted: “I am active in the political scene. [In

sermons], (y)ou choose a text to get your message through. Some candidates come to speak at the church.” Her comments raise the question of whether pastors who are politically active are more prone to allow candidates to speak from the pulpit than those who are less politically inclined.⁴⁵ Indeed, her activism leads her to press political issues via scriptural texts. A different pastor from the Southwest whose church maintains a political action committee also allows political candidates to speak in church, allowing equal time for both Democrats and Republicans, although he was quick to point out that Republicans never come knocking on that door of political opportunity.

In the main, the issue of constitutionality is not an impediment to Baptist pastors’ acceptance of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as legitimate public policy. The policy images included herein on pulpit politics are representative of the general sentiment of Baptist pastors in this sample. These images are a vivid illustration of how the location of the black church in history and at the core of black communities predisposes many black pastors to disavow a strict, formulaic approach to issues of church and state. Only two Baptist pastors view the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a violation of this sacred legal principle, yet even these pastors confess that in the black church, the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses represent more of a continuum than distinct poles.

This ability of black pastors and the black church to hold two seemingly mutually exclusive ideas without debilitating dissonance is neither illogical nor ignorant. Rather, it represents a realization by black pastors that there exists inherent value in the tension between the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses. The following pastor from

⁴⁵ The authors of the *Bully Pulpit* (1997) explore this question via their typology of pastors. They indicate that pastors of a certain ilk, not denomination, are more likely to be politically prophetic than others. Correlates include denomination, training, and age.

Virginia epitomizes this tension. He describes the church and government as two distinct spheres:

Personally, I prefer *not* to use government funds to do what the church is called to do. There is no biblical model (for this). I don't see going to Caesar to ask Caesar's help. I don't want to do a social program but we can't talk about the Lord. Obviously, a lot of what we're dealing with is spiritual. So, to deal with other aspects, dimensions.... (emphasis added)

On the surface, it sounds as though this pastor rejects the Initiative on the grounds that it violates a clear line of demarcation between church and state. Yet, while this pastor dichotomized the spheres by definition, he also affirmed that there exists overlap between them in function. Even in the midst of delineating the difference between Caesar and the church, he emphasized that both the government and the church conduct social programs with the difference between the two being the focus of the church upon spiritual dimensions of social problems and their solutions.

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative embodies this tension between spiritual and social problems. While this pastor had stated in no uncertain terms at the beginning of the interview that he preferred to use church money to perform the work of the church, he later admitted to discussing the possibility of applying for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative in a church meeting: "Nobody was too excited about government money. We would consider it as an absolute last resort." While this pastor indicated a lack of enthusiasm in his congregation about the notion of accepting government money, he also left open the possibility that the church would consider government funding via the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a last resort. This pragmatic mentality is less a disavowal of the Initiative than a willingness to remain open

to changing circumstances. Pragmatism says something is true if it works and such pragmatism marks the views on constitutionality of many pastors in this sample.

The sort of dialectic tension that demonstrated by this pastor epitomizes the black church and (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990) predisposes many black pastors to accept the legitimacy of the Initiative. Just as they are comfortable pronouncing political and civic messages from the pulpit, Baptist pastors in the main are comfortable that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative poses no threat to the sanctity of either sphere, church or state.

Political Party

Bush politicized the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. It is a carrot he offered to the black church to garner votes for his reelection and to silence the prophetic voice of the black church.

An Oklahoma pastor and President of one of the largest Baptist denominations in the country at the time of the interview.

I thought that it was President Bush's way to curry favor with black churches to try to pull some of those numbers over to the republican side.

A Texas pastor opposed to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

Political party was a salient theme for those who opposed the Initiative and for those who had mixed feelings about it. Those who support the Initiative still mentioned political party, albeit less frequently, and generally according to some of the same policy images and causal stories as those who opposed the Initiative. In general, there exists a strong feeling among Baptist dissenters and among those with mixed feelings that the Initiative is difficult to separate from the Republican party and President Bush. Specific stories about the Initiative run the gamut from a sinister plot to steal black votes from the Democrats, an effort to buy black votes with faith-based money, an effort to improve the Republican party image/diversify the party, an effort to divide the black church, or an

effort to silence the black church on political matters. Despite these ideas about the political motives underneath the Initiative, there exists a general sentiment that the Initiative is a well-conceived policy and properly directed at the black church. While some Baptist may doubt the sincerity of compassionate conservatism as a philosophy, few doubt that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative can be used to spread compassion in the black community.

Republican Politics as Usual?

In terms of macrolevel politics, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative illustrates the recent gulf between African Americans and Republicans. Despite the elevation of black Republicans to positions of prominence in the party—Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, and Michael Steele—African Americans overwhelmingly cast their lots with the Democratic party. While the Republican party is the party of Lincoln, it is also the party that opposes affirmative action and welfare. There is a deep suspicion of Republican policies by many pastors in this sample, especially by those who oppose the Faith-Based and Community Initiative like this one from Oklahoma City:

Most African Americans are Democrats and this faith-based thing is Republican. If you listen to Fox (News), they'll say we're doing more for the black community. You hear it nightly...look what George Bush did with Powell and Rice and look what he did on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. But it's a washing over what he did in New Orleans.

This pastor vividly describes his distrust for Republican claims of progress on the racial issues and avers that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative represents a political opportunity for the President to claim credit for a policy issue theoretically designed to help the black community but really engineered by Bush to garner black votes by

deflecting attention from dismal public approval in the black community in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Four other Baptist pastors evinced the view that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative largely represented an effort by President Bush to increase his margin of the black vote in 2004. Many of these pastors have nuanced knowledge of the electoral map. This pastor from Houston used swing states to bolster their claim about Bush's use of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative:

I thought that (the Faith-Based and Community Initiative) was President Bush's way to curry favor with black churches to try to pull some of those numbers over to the republican side. Looks like it worked (in 2004)...higher numbers for him. I don't think that it lost Kerry the election, but it might have hurt him in a couple of swing states like Ohio and a couple of other places...

The political savvy of the first pastor is apparent in that he is cognizant that President Bush won Ohio, a swing state, in 2004, largely predicated upon an up-tick over 2000 in his share of the African American vote in the state. Along these same lines, a pastor from a rural church outside of Oklahoma City discussed the aggregate outcome of the 2004 election in terms of black voters and the Faith-Based and Community Initiative:

When Bush was elected [in 2000], less than 9% of African Americans voted for him. He increased his percentage of the black vote to 11% the second time around and I believe that it was the Faith-Based and Community Initiative (that made the difference). (The Faith-Based Initiative) has had impact to the extent of 2% points—that's where most of the momentum came from. I feel that both Bush elections were stolen.

This pastor feels that the Initiative represented overt political pandering to the black community. He points out the irony that Bush stole the 2000 election (the implication is via the *Bush v. Gore* case) leaving many African Americans feeling disenfranchised and that he also stole the 2004 election partially by utilizing the Faith-Based and Community Initiative to garner more black votes. As discussed in Chapter Four, David Kuo, a former

Deputy in the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, indicates that many of the Faith-Based Initiative conferences—held in multiple states—were purposely held in swing states with the intent of wooing black voters to the Republican side via the selling of the Initiative as a boon to the black church and black communities.

One pastor, the former president of one of the largest black denominations in the United States, is sensitive to macrolevel dynamics of politics and the microlevel dynamics of the black church: “Bush was politicizing and polarizing the black church.” On the microlevel, President Bush’s actions on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative have served to divide the black church—both within denominations and across denominational lines. On the macrolevel, the black church has been thrust into the political limelight as a target of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative without being asked.

Another pastor from Oklahoma views the Initiative as engaging both macro and micro level politics. On the macrolevel, he also believes that the Initiative could possibly cast churches into the partisan thicket where the Congressional Black Caucus and the republicans duke out issues like discrimination in hiring. On the microlevel, however, he views the Initiative as a policy that need be neither partisan nor beholden to the actions of a few political individuals and personalities:

Blacks could lose by getting misrepresented and losing our focus and becoming codependent on things like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. We are allowing ourselves to be used as pawns in the larger political process. The real initiative is not one to promote certain individuals, parties, etc. I don’t want to lose help.

This pastor says that under the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, black pastors could become pawns in the larger tug of war between Democrats and Republicans.

While he supports the Initiative, he believes that it could seduce the good Samaritan to depend on government. Ironically, such co-dependence flies in the face of conservative efforts to end welfare, which is one rationale for the Initiative. This pastor turned the welfare reform metaphor of personal responsibility on its head and pointed out the irony that black churches, as opposed to individual citizens, could become dependent on government for support as a result of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. In the final analysis, this supporter of the Initiative believes it is probably less about wooing blacks to the Republican party and/or garnering votes for President Bush than it is about black churches getting help. This pastor's final statement—"I don't want to lose help"—is so simple as to be almost overlooked: whether the motive is overtly political or covertly political, many black pastors think pragmatically—to focus on possible political motives might preclude the possibility of government help to do what the black church does best.

What's Your Motivation?

Even if an excessive focus on political motivation might hinder the ability to help needy populations with money from the Initiative, one pastor indicates that black reticence to embrace the Initiative stems less from opposition to the policy and more from distrust of the motive behind the Faith-Based mask:

...one of the biggest hurdles that the President and the government at the time will have to get over related to the black churches is trust. That's the biggest issue. It's not whether [laughs heartily] it will work or not, it's do I believe you (President Bush)? Do I believe you have our best interest at heart? That's the biggest issue...one of the biggest things I've heard from black pastors is 'What are they (the Bush administration) up to?' So it's a matter of trust.

This pastor puts all of his cards on the table, stating that the biggest hurdle that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative has to overcome with regard to the black church is trust.

This barrier persists not only because of centuries of slavery and abuse while the federal government looked the other way, but also because of the recent alignment of most black Americans with the Democratic party. This alignment is understandable, yet ironic given that the Democratic party, according to some scholars, has scarcely pressed for black concerns in the past 40 years (Frymer 1999). Nevertheless, this pastor portrays a picture of “us versus them”, the black church versus the government.

A pastor who served as the President of his denomination continued the policy image of “us versus them”, portraying a causal story of the Initiative as one that is intended to re-enslave black communities.

I never thought (President Bush’s) gesture of financial kindness was done with a pure motive. Whenever the master called his subjects had to come. He was woefully disingenuous when he rolled out the Initiative. If he was sincere about the Faith-Based Initiative, he wouldn’t have cut support for Head Start. He wouldn’t have underfunded No Child Left Behind that he touted. He wouldn’t have cut the Pell Grant. These are indicators of how sincere he is about those who are last and left out. He talks a good game but at the end of the day...[where are the] funds?

This pastor views the Faith-Based and Community Initiative not as compassionate conservatism but rather as quid pro quo. The favor of money to churches required a requisite political response paid in votes. He likened this new relationship between churches and the federal government to slavery. This pastor further illustrated President Bush’s lack of compassion by pointing out the fact that the President cut social programs like Head Start and Pell Grants and underfunded his prized educational policy, No Child Left Behind. For this pastor, the surface motivation of the Initiative is to help the “last and left out”, but Bush’s other social policy priorities paint a different motivational picture of the heart of the policy.

Black trust was not bolstered by the way that the Bush administration consulted with black pastors well-known to be conservative on a broad range of social issues, like Kirby Jon Caldwell, T.D. Jakes, and Harry Jackson, prior to unveiling the Initiative. The President of most of the black denominations were excluded from this meeting, including one of the pastors in this sample. A pastor closely affiliated with the jilted President of one of the Baptist denominations stated that the administration made the Initiative political and subject to suspicion by only consulting with:

...black pastors that had the same political idea to start with. And I think that's an error. I hope they've kind of broadened...I don't think it was an open arms kind of thing with (Bush saying), hey I know you guys disagree with my political view and how I view things, but this is what I want to do and I want you guys input on it. And I think he chose guys he knew would not challenge him much. And see that again goes to trust. But I hope that the administration itself has opened up some.

This pastor personally believed that the Initiative is good public policy, but felt that Bush missed an important opportunity to build trust among black pastors before the Initiative was unveiled. Bush invited certain black pastors to the White House to discuss the Initiative, but these pastors were known to align with conservatives on social issues—if not most political issues. Thus, this pastor feels that Bush allowed ideology to dictate the invitees to the input meeting, imbuing the Initiative as reserved for a closed cabal rather than open for the entirety of the black community.

The previous articulation that the Initiative might be reserved only for Republicans was affirmed at least three Baptist pastors. A pastor from Virginia summarized the range of these sentiments quite simply: “There is no money unless you're a Republican.” While this pastor suspects that being a Republican is key to getting a grant from the government, he does not believe that the Initiative will woo black

voters to the Republican party, primarily because he believes that African Americans are firmly anchored in the Democratic party on most policy issues. In his estimation, even if black pastors pursue the Initiative, they will be subject to political litmus tests.

So It's a Republican Thing, Who Really Cares?

In the final analysis, however, it seems like the *politics* matter less than the *practical needs* that exist in churches. Almost all of the pastors in this sample noted the high level of support for the policy among their pastoral peers. While six denounced the Initiative, only one of the six believed that the majority of pastors opposed the Initiative. Given the salience of partisan politics relative to the Initiative, how is it that support of the Initiative is so broad?

A pastor from a small church in the heart of urban Oklahoma City who is vehemently opposed to the Initiative indicated that support of the Initiative is a pragmatic, rather than a political matter: "Those who support the Faith-Based and Community Initiative embrace it for the sake of help and support not for the sake of the political agenda (attached to it)." Those who support the Faith-Based and Community Initiative do so out of necessity not out of political allegiance to President Bush. The embrace of black pastors of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, he believes, does not signify a broader black embrace of the Republican party or of President Bush's broader agenda. It represents an alliance on one policy in particular. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative is illustrative of the prophetic pragmatism of black pastors who pick and choose among a panoply of policy alternatives, whether liberal or conservative, in the service of the black church and the black community.

A different pastor from the outskirts of Oklahoma City explains the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is definitely Republican and as such, perhaps intended to do things like garner black votes for the Republican party. But he also holds out hope that the Initiative is pure in its effort to level the playing field for religious providers of social services.

My general perception is I'm optimistic in the sense, I like to hope that it's the motive and the plan is genuine. I can't say comfortably that I believe it *all* is, but I like to hope. I definitely think it's in line with his political views and his party's political views... You know, I give him credit for that, I don't really have a reason not to, only I can say based on what I see. I don't let my personal feelings get in the way of what I feel. I think (the Initiative is) a good thing if it's done properly.

In the final analysis, he believes that the fact that a Republican offered a policy like the Initiative rooted in conservative views about civil society is perhaps less significant than the fact that it seems to be effective. This pastor does not fault President Bush for sticking to his political views in the Initiative, but he does imply that the proof will be in the pudding. The success of the Initiative will hinge on how it is implemented and black pastors will be watching.

New Policy, but Same Party and Same Image.

One pastor from Virginia discussed President Bush's failure, despite his rhetoric of compassionate conservatism, to comprehend the pulse of the black community on the Faith-Based Initiative and otherwise: "This is the mistake of Bush vis-à-vis blacks: a failure to show compassion." A kinder, gentler Republican party has failed to materialize according to this pastor.

A pastor from Milwaukee believes that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is all about appearances: "I don't know if (the Faith-Based Initiative) was to get the Republican party to appear more black friendly." The "I don't know" here is rhetorical

as this pastor went on to elaborate how he suspects that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative was part of a larger plan to make the Republican Party appear more friendly to African Americans than it has been in the recent past. In the short term, this public relations campaign may or may not increase the Republican share of the black vote. In the long term, the appeal to black voters may have the cumulative effect of diversifying the base of the party. This is especially important given that African Americans, and particularly the black church, are conservative on social issues. An ongoing effort to appear black-friendly will likely reap rewards in terms of coalitions on particular issues of importance to both the Republican base and black voters.

This same pastor articulated that the diversification efforts of the Republican party via the Faith-Based and Community Initiative are, in essence, efforts to lure black people into a political trap: “It’s another way to enslave black people. They try to show the Republican party as a multiracial party. Give them money and they’ll show up (at the polls).” This pastor juxtaposes the Republican party’s attempt to paint a more inclusive image with his own image of the Initiative as a form of modern slavery. The incentive for black churches to sign onto the Initiative is the lure of money, clearly a moral hazard in the eyes of this pastor since it also provides an incentive for black churches to retain allegiance to the party of faith-based largesse. This would be disastrous in his view because he does not believe that the Republican party is more inclusive of black concerns, it merely wants more black votes.

Black Capture, but If It Ain’t Broke, Don’t Fix It

The sensibility that the Democratic party represents the interests of African Americans better than the Republican party is widespread. The belief that the Republican

party does not care about issues of particular concern to black Americans is clearly one reason that many black pastors question the motive behind the Faith-Based and Community Initiative--a public policy targeted at the black church. The following pastor from Virginia suggests that the divide between Republicans and black Americans is so pronounced that most African Americans would rather remain in a Democratic party that “pretends” to care about black issues than join the Republicans.

Bush didn’t understand that blacks had the Democratic party who give the *illusion* that blacks have a say. ‘As long as you heard me, I’m okay.’ (emphasis in original)

While critiquing the Republican party for intransigence, this pastor spares no criticism for the Democrats and for his fellow African Americans. Indeed, this pastor places his finger on the Democratic capture phenomenon whereby the party of African Americans tends to take the black vote for granted. On the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, black capture means that the Congressional Black Caucus and other Democrats in Congress took for granted that they could ignore the overwhelming support of African Americans for the Initiative.

After traipsing through the history of black party allegiance since Reconstruction, including a very accurate and succinct description of realignment, a pastor from Houston articulated the black capture phenomenon as well as any political scientist:

I think that (black people have) become identified with the Democratic party...and let me give a disclaimer...I am a registered Democrat. I have great disappointments and frustrations with the Democratic party, but since the time of FDR, they have been the ones who have championed the African Americans...prior to that, it was Republicans. I mean I’ve had some young people absolutely amazed when I’ve told them there was a time in this country when black people voted Republican. You know, my grandfather voted Republican until the day he died because he remembered the fact that it was the Republicans through Lincoln that freed the slaves and created for the first time the vision of political equity in the South during the Reconstruction period, but

circumstances change and by the time FDR came in, and the creation of that coalition which blacks were a part of, blacks, Jews, laborers, you know... which has dissipated totally, you know it doesn't exist today... The most reliable constituency the Democratic party has is black folks. And they still don't treat (black people) right.

Despite the reliability of the black vote, this pastor feels that African Americans are ignored by Democrats. Exacerbating this tendency, African Americans scarcely revolt against the reality that partisan politics tends to gloss over black concerns. Of course, the question of where or to what African Americans would revolt in protest looms large. So long as the two party system prevails and Democrats carry the banner of civil rights, many black voters remain embedded in the Democratic party.

All fifteen pastors in this sample admitted that the tendency of African Americans to align electorally with the Democratic party belies the fact that many black Christian religionists hold policy objectives in common with the Republican party. From homosexual marriage to the breakdown of the family, there exists unmistakable symmetry between many of the concerns of the black church and the agenda of the Republican party and the Christian Right. For example, one pastor from Oklahoma sounded like a poster boy for the Moynihan Report as he waxed poetic about social policy.

We're always concerned about the family, anything that would affect the family, positive or negative, we're always concerned about that, we always want to promote anything that will build the family structure, keep the family structure strong. One of the things that I really push and preach and teach about is the full, the complete family, that is the husband, wife, father/mother, children, and you know, my church constantly hears me cry the sad fact that according to statistics, I don't know if it's increased but last time I saw it, 7 out of 10 African American children are born out of wedlock. I mean, that's terrible. And so things like that, the family, the elderly, those are always issues at the forefront.

While the Democratic party is not unconcerned about “family values”, this pastor utilized statistics to paint a causal story of out-of-wedlock births that would hold up in a welfare reform hearing. This same story was painted by many predominantly white evangelical groups, like Focus on the Family and Concerned Women of America in Congress and in public during the welfare reform debate (see Hancock 2004). It is this type of affinity between black church morality and the Religious Right that opens the door to black pastoral support of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

Distrust of a Republican president who “stole” the 2000 election is not enough to deter many black pastors from supporting the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The major reason is that there exists a remarkable symmetry between African Americans religious-inspired social concerns and the moral agenda of the Republican party/Christian Right. Illustrative of this fact, a pastor from Oklahoma City admitted that he unwaveringly agrees with white evangelicals (and Republicans) on most political issues with a perceived moral component:

Well, on most of the moral issues I mentioned—same-sex marriage, the marriage institution, abortion, euthanasia, (we are) closely (aligned with evangelicals) *if not exactly*...on most moral issues yes (we agree with the Christian Right). But I think we divide on some things of course. I don't like for instance most Democrats labeled liberal and all Republicans labeled conservative. I don't like the terminology...I listen to both sides often, both Republican and Democrat, and I have friends on both sides, and when Democrats speak of conservatives it's like a bad thing and when Republicans speak of liberals...you know, I just don't like it. I think I'm conservative *and* liberal depending on what you're talking about, what the issue is, you know. (emphasis in original)

This quote is included at length because it illustrates many complexities of religion and politics in the black context. First, this pastor begins by referring to the affinity between black churches and white evangelical ones, but by the end of this quote, he has equated evangelicals with Republicans. Republicans and most African Americans are at odds

over economic policy and some facets of social policy, like affirmative action. There is unmistakable division. Nevertheless, Baptist pastors find it difficult to deny that they are “conservative” on many issues. For many black Baptists, Scriptural orthodoxy necessitates a view of moral issues more consonant with the politics of the political right than the political left. This pastor’s concern for Scriptural orthodoxy paints him into a corner when it comes to black politics—how does the African American with orthodox religious views about social behavior define himself politically? Neither the liberal nor conservative label is very meaningful to this pastor who evinces a viewpoint that black politics is necessarily pragmatic politics—“I think I’m conservative and liberal depending on...what the issue is”. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative embodies what might be termed tension between white conservatives and black liberals, but the prophetic pragmatism of many black pastors allows them to reconcile the tension inherent in supporting a “Republican program”.

In the black milieu, tidy partisan and ideological categories fall apart where religion meets politics. The pastor cited below considers himself supportive of liberal policies on some fronts while on others, he recognizes that the conservative position represents him and his congregation.

And I say both of these parties are wrong, and both of them are right. There’s some things the republicans are right about and there’s some things the democrats are right about. And there’s some things that both of them are terribly wrong about.

This pastor sees beyond his party allegiance to the reality that neither party has all the answers. This black populism necessitates pragmatism on political matters. The issue of homosexual marriage, raised by respondents without prompting in fourteen of fifteen interviews, brilliantly displays the tendency for political lines to blur. The current

research illustrates the centrality of the black church in the topsy-turvy world that is black agenda politics.

If homosexual marriage is an example of why African Americans find affinity with Republicans on myriad issues, then it also illustrates exactly where the affinities end. Generally speaking, the black church disavows homosexual behavior by church members, nevertheless, the black church is attuned to issues of diversity. Politics in the African American milieu is about a group heuristic, not as a mechanism of exclusion of other races per se, but to ensure the inclusion of all members of the black counterpublic. The counterpublic was necessitated by historical circumstance, but the movement that culminated in civil rights for African Americans secured civil rights for women and other minorities as well. This legacy of inclusion (typified by the NAACP's mission to secure rights broadly for all oppressed and disadvantaged groups) is a hallmark of black politics.

The legacy of inclusion leads many African Americans to the Democratic party, in spite of their sympathy for some planks of the Christian Right's platform. A pastor from Texas, therefore, agrees that homosexual behavior is sinful, but unequivocally supports civil unions and welcomes homosexuals in political office. His stances are predicated on the notion that discrimination of any sort is wrong. Thus, he described what he told a delegation of gay rights activists who came to express concern about a Baptist pastor running for office in a district where a large gay population resides:

...my response was very simple. I don't believe in discrimination of any kind. I don't believe that the government should involve itself in our sexual preferences...I do not believe in marriage between homosexuals. I will not be marching in the gay pride parade...[but]...I will not allow people to be discriminated against and oppressed for any reason. I do believe in civil unions. I do believe in spousal benefits protection, but I believe marriage has a particular definition for me based on my theology and I'm not giving that up. I'm not pandering. And...I have supported gay candidates in the city...I'm not prepared

to yell faggot because there's no difference between yelling faggot and yelling nigger. From a strictly political view, I would undercut myself in the black church community to declare (homosexuality) to be normative.

The pragmatism of this pastor allows him to simultaneously disavow homosexual behavior while protecting homosexual rights. This pastor need not perform mental gymnastics to justify his support of civil unions given that the rhetorical frame of non-discrimination is ever-present in the black milieu, including the black church.

While speaking about the relevance of the issue of same-sex marriage to Christendom, another pastor, from Oklahoma, richly described how the bridge between black Christian—mainly Democratic religionists and white evangelical—mainly Republican religionists, is often breached.

...some issues that may be political but also relevant to Christendom, for instance, same sex marriage...(we must be) sensitive and not (come) across as condemning or judgmental to those who have a different view...I think we have to be careful to voice our differences, but voice them in a way of not ostracizing ourselves or not coming across to be separating (ourselves from) or condemning those others who have a different view because it's a political forum, they are political issues...my Religious Right brothers, they come across to be more stand-offish, more antagonistic toward the [gay] individual himself...So you know I think that's the difference between (the Religious Right) and (the black church)... (Black pastors) can say 'hey, I don't agree with (homosexuality) and I'm not for (gay marriage), but...I can see you and I can talk to you. We can even go to dinner but you know where I stand and I know where you stand.

The difference between an African American pastor's opposition to homosexual marriage and his perception of the Christian Right's opposition is a matter of inclusiveness—in rhetoric and in reality. This pastor believes that black Christians can oppose gay marriage and be inclusive at the same time whereas he believes that the Christian Right fails in this respect. Inclusiveness and basic civil rights for all groups was a basic theme in these interviews. This is not to aver, however, that all Baptist pastors in this sample would agree with the assertion by some gay rights activists that homosexual rights are

akin to civil rights and that the discriminatory acts against gay Americans are somehow comparable in urgency and in egregiousness to the experiences of many African Americans before the civil rights movement. Nevertheless, there is a sense that African Americans can at least empathize where gay Americans might experience discrimination, even if black Christian religionists disapprove of homosexual behavior.⁴⁶

While the particular examples utilized varied, this emphasis on inclusiveness highlights the notion, iterated by virtually all of the Baptist pastors in this analysis, that a black political agenda is most consonant with the Democratic party.

Now I think the common thread is usually helping the less fortunate, the downtrodden, and that's where I think the term liberal comes from because we favor what others would say, just want to give something to everybody. So I think that's pretty much the general theme. And the Democratic party, which is now predominantly supported by the black race...is usually more liberal.

The liberalness of the Democrats on race-related issues (at least since the civil rights era) thrusts the majority of African Americans into Democrats open and inclusive arms. The partial success of the Bush administration in selling the Faith-Based and Community Initiative to black churches and to the black masses is remarkable in that he had to overcome the Congressional Black Caucus' portrayal of the Initiative as exclusive and discriminatory. This compassionate conservative policy found a place among African Americans precisely because it was depicted as an inclusive policy, leveling the playing field by opening the monetary floodgates of the government to black churches. Distrust of Republicans and President Bush was not sufficient to overcome the general sentiment

⁴⁶ Indeed, Cathy Cohen's work illustrates the extent to which members of the Congressional Black Caucus and prominent black pastors and denominations turned a blind eye to rising rates of HIV among the African American community, presuming the rates to be linked to black homosexual behavior. As black culture largely disavows homosexuality within the community, the black church certainly has swept issues regarding homosexuality under the rug for most of its history.

that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is inclusive enough to be included on the black agenda, at least for most Baptist pastors.

Policy Venue

... we have very much of a parish view here. All of Houston can't be my parish... But we have chosen a geographical designation of one square mile around this building that we intend to be personally responsible for. That's five thousand households in one square mile. And whether those people are members of our church or not, we have a responsibility for them...we've launched a major campaign here called "You're a Mile From Your Miracle"... where we designate the one square mile north, south, east, and west.

A Houston pastor.

You're A Mile from Your Miracle

The motto of a Houston church's effort to bring about change in the mile radius surrounding the church—You're A Mile from Your Miracle—succinctly summarizes the structure of the Baptist polity. The *local* principle prevails in the black church. In spite of supra-national bodies like the Progressive National Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention, local autonomy is a hallmark of Baptist denominations of all stripes. The fact that black Baptist churches are centered and anchored in the community creates an awareness of the tenor of local problems. The pastor of the Houston church mentioned above explicated the social situation in his neighborhood.

The zip code area that we're in, that you're sitting in right now, 56% of the families with children are headed by single females. 38% of the people in this area do not have a high school diploma. The fastest growing demographic group is 0 to 20. And the highest statistics of female HIV transmission (in Houston) is in this area. We've got a lot of work to do (in this zip code).

If this pastor is painfully aware of the problems of his strip of Houston, he is definitely pleased that many of the downtrodden view his church as a haven in times of trouble:

For a lot of people, the church isn't on their radar screen unless they need something. And that's okay. I don't see every person that we help as somebody that we need to reel in. I see them as a *potential* part of this faith community, but

more than anything else I see them as an opportunity for us to objectify God's purposes in their lives in a very concrete way....

The church, for this pastor, is an instrument of meeting the *material* needs of community members, irrespective of whether those served by the church ever join the faith community.

Contrary to many critiques of the black church (Frazier 1964, Reed 1999), this Houston pastor does not advocate pie in the sky religion to the neglect of this worldly concerns.

What does it take to rebuild the walls of our community? I think that the spiritual aspect is at the center but it's not the only aspect. People live in a material world and they've got to have material things. They've got to have decent housing, and they've got to have quality education...all that praying and fasting and everything (that Christians do on behalf of the poor) will prepare you to be involved in those things, but those things in and of themselves are not going to be the final answer. Faith without works is dead. You got to do something.

The black church in this pastor's estimation is a crucial locale for assessing and meeting communal needs. The principle of localism means that the black church can tailor programs specific to communal needs like high rates of HIV transmission, single-parent households, and dismal high school graduation rates.

Ostensibly, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is intended to do just what this Houston pastor describes—utilizing the policy venue of the black church to deliver relevant, timely, and needed social services. What makes this pastor so intriguing is that while he views the black church as a natural venue for social services—his own church includes a Community Development Corporation as well as a private school—he rejects the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as unconstitutional, but not because the church is an inappropriate venue for the delivery of social services. In fact, the pastor asserts that the motivation for the black church as policy venue for the internal church

community as well as the external non-church community is rooted in the liberation gospel:

We understand the tension between internal ministry and external ministry. I think we witness to Christ by what we do for people--for the least, the last, and the lost. It says in Luke 4, in Jesus' statement of His own ministry, that the Spirit of the Lord is upon me for He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to set at liberty the captives, to give sight to the blind. And in some ways those are literal and in some ways they are metaphorical but in other ways they speak to the fact that we have a responsibility to show the face of God and Jesus Christ to those people that surround us.

This church defies Robert Putnam's (2000) characterization of evangelical churches as primarily exhibiting bonding social capital and directing charity work inward, rather than outward toward the larger community.⁴⁷ Indeed, while the orthodoxy of most black churches place them in the category of either fundamentalist or evangelical, many otherwise "theologically conservative" black pastors express an affinity for liberation theology. "The least, the last, and the lost" and the Luke 4 passage quoted by this pastor, and twenty other pastors across all three denominations explored herein, is the sine qua non of black liberation theology. In this regard, perhaps the AME is most akin to Mainline Protestant churches that emphasize the social gospel.⁴⁸

To the extent that the social gospel compels Christians to engage the community beyond the four walls of the church, the critique that the black church promulgates ambiguous politics (Reed 1986, 1999) falls apart. Indeed, the mission and mandate core to liberation theology necessitate that the black church be at once public and private space--devoted to uplift, spiritual, social, economic, and otherwise, for members and also devoted to the same type of uplift for non-members. Liberation theology constitutes a

⁴⁷ Putnam (2000) states: "Mainline Protestant churches encourage civic engagement in the broader community whereas evangelical churches do not..." (78)

⁴⁸ As Chapter Four explicates, the social gospel emphasizes the role of the church in ameliorating societal ills.

ready theological paradigm that eases the entry of some black pastors into the realm of governmental grants, Community Development Corporation, and the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Perhaps the black church is a natural venue for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

Bush is Correct—About One Thing

Even pastors opposed to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as proposed by President Bush are not averse to the idea that the black church is an ideal venue for the delivery of social services. Two pastors in the Baptist sample who expressed no desire to apply for faith-based funds acknowledged that President Bush was correct about one thing—the black church is the pulse of the black community and an unparalleled venue for the delivery of social programs. Resource-mobilization accounts of the civil rights movement trumpet the location of the church at the heart of the black community as a major reason for civil rights success. The sociology of religion literature’s account of the church as a semi-involuntary institution that all African Americans ascribe to—whether on a tacit or explicit level—affirms the notion that the black church is a natural policy venue in black communities throughout the country.

For example, a pastor from Texas described the centrality of the black church to the black community in economic terms, not merely spiritual ones:

...the bottom line is that the African American church is still the largest property owner and the largest generator of liquid income in the black community. See that ain’t true for white people. That’s why they basically can just list their preachers of their churches because here, I pastor this church, I can’t just preach on Sunday. I’ve got to be a developer, I’ve got to be an advocate, I’ve got to be a builder, I’ve got to do all this. Because the expectations that we have of our ministers are much higher than they do in the white world, their expectations are relatively low.

The black pastor is all things to the black community and the black church is central not just for its provision of internal ministries and external service/advocacy, but also for its position as an economic entity in the black counterpublic.

Beyond the economic force of the black church, the black church undoubtedly serves a social service function in black communities. This fact makes it difficult for pastors to disavow the premise of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. A pastor from Houston described how a spiritual venue also doubles as a social service agency:

All of Houston can't be my parish, I think that it's ridiculous to assume that. All of this historic black community, Third Ward, Southpark, Sunnyside, can't really be my parish. But we have chosen a geographical designation of one square mile around this building that we intend to be personally responsible for. That's five thousand households in one square mile. And whether those people are members of our church or not, we have a responsibility for them—for helping to educate their children, or helping providing services for whatever their needs are to make sure they are met, or if they want to be part of this worshipping community to provide the kind of quality in terms of teaching and worship that allows them to grow.

This pastor deems it imperative that churches go beyond spiritual sustenance to social service provision. There can be little doubt that faith-based largesse would provide a boon to churches like this one who engage the social gospel.

Of course, this notion that churches are already providing a broad range of social services is central to the rationale behind the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. There is almost no disagreement that the Bush administration got this piece of the Faith-Based puzzle correct. A pastor from Dallas averred that not only are churches ideal policy venues for the delivery of social services, but that churches position in civil society makes them better at social service delivery than government :

When Bush and others made the observation that the church is doing the best job [of delivering social services], he made a good observation. Church is the best channel because people live there. I agree with the initial philosophy...money to

organizations doing (welfare) better than the government. The church helps people best where they need help...the grassroots.

This pastor's rationale for black churches as a preferred locale for social service delivery is predicated on the fact that churches are already providing a wide array of services to communities. This is substantiated by scholarship (Cnaan 2001). This pastor deemed churches as preferable as policy venues because they do social service delivery better than the government. Clearly, this is as a matter of quality given his insistence that churches live where people live. This kind of intimacy likely renders the provision of services by churches, in most cases, more personal than government provision of the same. This pastor underscores the inherent value of civil society in his assertion that grassroots institutions like churches are acquainted with needs in a manner that is foreign to government—personal knowledge and personal relationships trump bureaucratic impersonality. It is the very position of the church in the non-governmental realm, where people live, that facilitates the delivery of services in a manner consistent with current trends in federalism and in a manner consistent with the goals of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

Many black churches, as a matter of historical necessity and ongoing reality, are involved in delivering social services. One pastor from Oklahoma City stated that the intent of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is:

...to help (churches) do what they already do. I have no plans to apply because I don't need it currently. Churches can do lots of things without the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, instead of arguing about what Catholic Charities gets.

This pastor has a firm understanding of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

While he suspects that there is not much money to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, he understands that its primary aim is to enable churches to expand existing

programs rather than merely create new ones. While he does not plan to apply for funds, he views the Initiative as legitimate public policy and is actually involved in developing curriculum for a Healthy Marriages Initiative in his state which receives faith-based money. This pastor's lack of current need for faith-based funding does not preclude the possibility that he might apply for funds in the future. Thus, if a program in his church could benefit from additional funding, he will consider applying for faith-based funds. This pragmatic pastor asserts that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative simultaneously enhances civil society and creates public value.

The codification of a public policy like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, then, is only a recognition of what the black church has been doing since its inception. For example, the African Methodist Episcopal Church spawned the first black mutual aid societies and insurance companies (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990).

Baptist pastors find it difficult to argue with President Bush's logic that the black church is a venue fortuitously situated and uniquely equipped to deliver services to needy populations, especially in the black community. Indeed, all of the pastors in this sample demonstrated their concurrence with this notion via the development of legal entities, like Community Development Corporations or non-profit arms of the church, intended to meet community needs. On some level, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative makes intuitive sense because black pastors see an opportunity for additional resources to perform the tasks that the church has been performing since its inception.

Even if theological paradigms like liberation theology, the place and purpose of black churches in black civil society, and the pragmatism of many black pastors predisposes them to accept the logic of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, as

with most public policies, the devil is in the details. All have opinions about how the black church as policy venue via the Faith-Based and Community Initiative will play out in the short-run and in the long-run. They are watching and waiting to see how the policy plays out but many have hunches about the dynamics operative in the Initiative.

Size Matters

Four of the pastors in this sample mentioned church size as a significant facet of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. One pastor of a small church in the South averred that the size of her church in addition to bureaucratic hurdles, posed a conundrum:

The proposal process (for the Faith-Based Initiative) is an obstacle, especially in a rural church. Not everyone is educated. Some people pastor 3-4 churches. You would have to call in grant writers.

While this pastor views the church as an appropriate policy venue, she also recognizes the difficulties inherent in the application process for rural pastors, who are often either bi-vocational or circuit-preachers, traveling from church to church.

The pastor of a 500 member church in Virginia also believes that size matters, but not merely because smaller churches are less equipped to maneuver the maze of government grants:

(The Faith-Based and Community Initiative) goes to 5000 member churches. [Bush] only incorporates the insights of the bigger churches. Quantity not quality is emphasized in the Faith-Based Initiative.

Interestingly, a 500 member church is larger than the average black church of 250 or less (Joint Center 2006), but this pastor's enumeration of the 5,000 mark indicates his belief that the Faith-Based Initiative is directed toward *megachurches*, not simply large ones since his church is on the large side, statistically speaking. In this interview, the pastor

mentioned a Dallas pastor, Dr. Tony Evans, whose Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship boasts 8,000 members received a grant from the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

Similarly, a pastor from a small church in Oklahoma City who disavows the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a political stunt and steadfastly maintains that he will never seek funds believes that church size is deterministic of whether or not one receives federal funding:

I believe that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is political. It is favoritism. It is weighted toward megachurches and churches that are highly televised...Smaller churches stand to lose more than to gain under the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Because it's politically motivated, small churches lose out.

In terms of the winners and losers, some black pastors perceive small churches as the real losers on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. In terms of the political brain, this assumption is well-founded. If racking up more black voters for the Republican party is the principal motive behind granting money to black churches, it does not take an Einstein (or a Karl Rove) to figure out that showering a few megachurches with government money is the most rational and cost-effective route to the electoral goal. While it is true that large churches are more likely than small churches to receive Faith-Based grants from the federal government (Joint Center 2006), it is also the case that small churches are less likely to apply for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative than large churches.

Whatever the application rate of smaller churches, a pastor in Los Angeles believes that larger churches who receive Faith-Based funds fail to share with smaller churches.

(The Bush administration) donate(s) funds to larger churches like West Angeles and expect(s) them to distribute funds, but they don't. I have 400 to 500 in

attendance on Sundays and I don't hear them knocking on my door.

The theme of church size is salient to this pastor. There is a belief that large churches can take federal money and act as a clearinghouse, distributor, and contractor of faith-based largesse. The complaint that the large churches do not share money does not connote disagreement with the Initiative by this pastor. This pastor's lament implies several things. This pastor is frustrated with a lack of administrative capacity to maneuver the grant process and to secure funds on his own. This pastor mistakenly believes that megachurches have a special responsibility vis-à-vis the Faith-Based and Community Initiative to share the money that the federal government has entrusted to them. This pastor has the expectation that a kind of trickle-down charity economics will occur in black communities where megachurches reside. This is certainly never implied in the literature of the Bush administration and is likely a by-product of this pastor's own belief that black communalism would dictate this kind of beneficence from black churches blessed with Faith-Based grants.

The pastor of a small rural church in Virginia relates another size story, indicating that larger churches have the luxury of ignoring the Faith-Based Initiative while smaller churches cannot afford that same luxury: "Some (pastors) think [the Faith-Based and Community Initiative] is nothing. Depending on the financial base of the church, they have other funding resources." Using a church's financial base as a proxy for church size, this pastor illustrates that for churches with large budgets, Faith-Based grants represent a drop in the bucket. Even the pastor of a megachurch in Dallas echoes the same concern on behalf of churches with small budgets: "People need to be cautious about how much they receive. Our budget is \$4.6 million so \$25,000 is miniscule (for

us).” This pastor makes an excellent point about the need for churches to consider the pre-existing church budget when making decisions about whether to apply for faith-based funds and about how much money to accept. While not explicit in either of these quotes, this is a variation of the caution echoed by so many concerning the inherent danger of the Initiative. The small church Samaritan could become dependent on government and seduced to pay political obeisance to keep money flowing to vital programming.

Size matters on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, but perhaps this is because large churches possess capacities that smaller churches lack. These capacities are often built-in and related to the various functions that larger churches have to perform by virtue of their girth. A survey of black churches (Joint Center 2006) indicates that of churches with less than a \$50,000 budget, only 2% applied and of churches with budgets over \$1 million, 28% of churches applied. Just as the black church is a natural policy venue for the delivery of social services in black communities, perhaps larger churches are naturally more adept than smaller churches at navigating the government grants process.

Jumping Through Hoops and Untying Strings

While synergy exists between black churches pre-existing activities and the Bush administration’s plan to include black churches in the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, many Baptist pastors are hesitant to leap in. What gives many pastors pause is that the formalization of the black church as a policy venue under the Faith-Based and Community Initiative entangles it in administrative snares. One-third of the Baptist pastors mentioned this theme.

A pastor from a medium-sized church in Virginia indicated that while he deems the church an important policy venue, he hesitates to apply for Faith-Based funds: “It depends on the strings. I have not decided (whether or not to apply for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative). A seniors program is the next step.” This pastor has mixed feelings about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Despite a broad-scale programmatic agenda at this church and this pastor’s savvy working with government—he served previously as mayor and currently serves as chair of the Housing Authority of his city—this pastor is leery of the requirements associated with accepting and overseeing government grants. In spite of his reticence, however, this pastor acknowledges that he would like to buttress programming to senior citizens in the church. While financial issues might eventually move him to apply for faith-based funds, for the time being, he has mixed feelings about the Initiative.

Similarly, a pastor from Richmond, Virginia expresses that his mixed feelings about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative stem from the fact that accepting funds requires something extra from the black church. “Would I take money with no strings? Sure. Nothing in life is free.” This pastor has a sense that hidden strings attached to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, yet, his addition of a variant of your father’s age-old wisdom that there is no such thing as a free lunch implies that he believes the Bush administration will want something in return for extending the policy venue capacity of the black church. Other pastors share this skepticism regarding whether the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is really “free”.

A pastor who is the President of his denomination offered a macrolevel assessment of what befalls churches who accept money from the government. “As a non-

profit, the church has to be careful about lines. In the past, black churches were penalized for not dotting i's and crossing t's." This pastor whose church already receives some governmental grants expressed mixed feelings about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative during the interview. He is highly suspicious of the Bush administration, but this causal story indicates that he is also quite convinced that black churches could threaten their non-profit status if they become overwhelmed by the administrative aspects of grant-management.

A pastor from Texas who vehemently opposed the Faith-Based and Community Initiative on the grounds that it traverses the inviolable wall of separation between church and state established by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution is equally vehement in his prediction about what will happen to churches that accept money from the Initiative:

I just think taking that money from the government directly...was a real invitation to disaster. I saw some areas where a lot of preachers would end up in serious legal trouble with the government by not having the internal controls on that money...That money's going to be intermixed in stuff, it's just a dangerous thing.

Interestingly, this pastor has two Community Development Corporations associated with his church and believes that they are a more viable than Faith-Based funds given that they allow for the creation of legal vehicles for separating government funds from the church. He strongly fears that black pastors will inadvertently mix faith-based funds with other church funds and deems the Initiative dangerous due to this potential pitfall. This sense of looking out for the black church writ large is echoed throughout these interviews, but especially in terms of policy venue.

A pastor from Oklahoma City who strongly supports the Faith-Based and Community Initiative views the administrative pitfalls somewhat differently than the

previous pastor who opposes the Initiative, nevertheless, he evinces his concern in terms of the black church more broadly, not merely his church in particular. “Most [black churches] lack staff to utilize and gain from the FBCI. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative needs to provide staff.” This pastor laments the fact that most black churches lack the institutional resources to pursue the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. This deficit, however, is not sufficient justification in his view to kill the Initiative. Rather, he suggests that the government provide assistance to black churches. Indeed, this pastor knows about the existence of the Compassion Capital Fund designed to provide intermediaries to assist churches in the navigation of the government grant-writing process, not to mention in establishing the legal standing to apply for funds. For example, some churches have even learned that they lack 501c3 nonprofit status.

What could allay all of the fears about administrative obstacles, church capacity, and strings is information about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. A pastor from Richmond, Virginia explicates what he believes is an information gap between the policy venue of the black church and the Bush administration:

There is a Faith-Based and Community Initiative Conference on Thursday, November 16 at the Blake Hotel in Charlotte, N.C. sponsored by the White House and the Department of Justice. It is free but it requires pre-registration. No one contacted me about it.

This pastor finds it ironic that while he lives within driving distance of a Regional Conference on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, he was not invited to the conference. Perhaps a dearth of information on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative contributes to confusion about the goals of the policy and its intended effects. A recent survey of black churches indicates that 75% of black pastors have heard of the Initiative, but more information and contact from the federal government increases the

likelihood that churches apply for the Initiative. The survey indicates that 25% of churches contacted by the federal government applied as opposed to only 8% of those who were not contacted. This pastor in Richmond seems to confirm that contact from the federal government matters.

Misinformation about the Policy Venue of the Black Church

If information matters, so does misinformation. It is clear that some pastors' views about the Initiative are often based on misinformation. For example, two pastors in this sample believed that the Initiative could be applied to building projects. This pastor of a megachurch in Texas stated: "Housing, economic development, community services...any church building anything that is not a sanctuary probably has faith-based money." This pastor actually misunderstands how money from the Faith-Based and Community Initiative can be utilized. While he is perhaps correct that some black churches may receive outside funding and perhaps even government grants for building projects, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative cannot be utilized for the purpose of building construction. Another pastor evinced a similarly misinformed sentiment about how his church would use faith-based money:

We have talked about (the Faith-Based and Community Initiative) at church meetings because the church was built by former slaves but we need more space. A new building to help with programs like addictions; after-school; daycare. We need \$4-5 million to build.

This pastor discussed the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a way to supplement building funds but the program does not allow the money to be used in that manner.

Which Venue? Playing Favorites

While some pastors believe that *church size* dictates who gets money under the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, some pastors believe that certain *categories* of

churches will be preferred under the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The following quote is lengthy as it summarizes the crux of the question about which types of churches will get money. This pastor believes that traditional churches will be favored under the Initiative.

...how do you decide who to give (the Initiative) to? Because then you have to decide who's legitimate and who's not. And I don't think the government ought to be doing that. Well, we don't want the Shrine of the Madonna to have it, they seem a little strange, so we'll give it to the Baptist church around the corner because we're kind of familiar with them. [*The pastor groans disapprovingly at this point*]. To me, that's constitutional issues, and I'm not a lawyer, I'm not a judge, but in my laymen's reading of these documents [holds up a copy of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution]...that's what the first amendment is about—don't establish a religious preference...Well, a guy says, I'm the Church of the Cannabis, we all smoke marijuana...Well [the government says], "we're not going to give you any money." Well, no, they're a church like everybody else. So then government gets involved in terms of making decisions and I don't think they should do that.

This pastor eloquently illustrates how the Shrine of Madonna, and later in a more sarcastic tone, the Church of Cannabis would be an unlikely candidate for funds from the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. For some black pastors of the civil rights era, a government that has systematically discriminated against *racial and ethnic minorities* in the recent past cannot be trusted to level the playing field on behalf of *religious minorities*. This pastor makes a compelling argument that while the Bush administration spews rhetoric about how the Faith-Based and Community Initiative seeks to combat discrimination by leveling the playing field for all religious providers of social services, it nevertheless discriminates against outsider religions in the deciding which are legitimate for the purpose of receiving faith-based funds.

Keep Your Money: Self-Sustaining Venue

While all pastors concur that the black church is a natural policy venue, two who reject the Initiative do so on the grounds that the black church is a self-sustaining venue. Generally speaking, this pastor from Washington D.C. believes that the black church has to contribute outward to the broader culture, but look inward for help: “(The black) church has to add culture. Look to ourselves for charity.” This pastor indicates that a major job of the church is to provide charity for its own. To the extent that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative violates this principle of self-help, he is unwilling to support it.

A pastor from Virginia whose father was arrested for protesting during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s believes that the Initiative glosses over the liberation impulse inherent in some of black churches. “Do you want to deal with the branches or do you want to deal with the root...the causes? My purpose is to be a change agent; a liberator and a facilitator.” Consonant with liberation theology, this pastor asserts that his goal is liberating the oppressed and catalyzing change by addressing the root causes of problems. In his view, this goal stands in stark contrast to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative which puts band-aids on symptoms as opposed to addressing real problems a la the black church. This emphasis on liberation is telling and reflects not merely black communalism, but black self-help ideology as reflected in the likes of Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X.

Principled or Pragmatic Support?

While some pastors reject the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as anathema to the self-sustaining nature of the black church, the majority of black pastors in this sample favor the Initiative for a simple reason: it augments the ability of the black church

to act as a policy venue in the service of black communities. A pastor from Los Angeles sees no problem with the Faith-Based and Community Initiative so long as it is used to help people: “If they’re using (faith-based money) to help people, then great, but if it is to be the biggest then shame on them.” This pastor paints a picture of black churches as legitimate policy venues so long as the funds benefit those who need help. He also disavows the perverse incentive of churches vying for federal money so as to be the biggest policy venue as opposed to the most helpful. His impression of the Initiative is notably pragmatic: it is fine so long as the motivation is pure and so long as the funds actually help needy people. Insofar as the Initiative works in practice, it works.

A pastor from Oklahoma City who opposes the Faith-Based and Community Initiative believes that other black pastors support the Initiative for reasons related to the monetary needs of the policy venue of the black church: “Most black pastors support the Faith-Based and Community Initiative for what they can get out of it.” This pastor expresses the notion that the widespread support of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative among black pastors is merely pragmatic. Yet, he intimates that pragmatic support does not equate to principled support. It is often the case that something is right if it works for the black church and the black community. While this pastor acknowledges that such pragmatism is widespread, he prefers to cling to his first principles concerning the black church as a self-sustaining venue rather than embrace the pragmatic approach of many of his clergy colleagues concerning the black church as policy venue for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

A pastor from Virginia with mixed feelings about the Initiative agrees that black pastors support of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is pragmatic, but he

disagrees with the previous pastor that the motive is mainly money: “It is a way to bring money to communities to help people lead better lives.” Most pastors deem the policy goal of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as beneficial to black communities. In this case, the pastor views the policy as beneficial because it is a way to help black churches to improve the lives of people in their communities.

Race

Black people have no permanent friends

No permanent enemies

Just permanent interests.

Motto of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Throughout these interviews, when queried about the “black church”, many pastors were quick to point out that the black church is not monolithic. While this is true, each of these pastors also spoke in ways that reified the salience and importance of the black church as a discrete category—the tie that binds the black church is its rootedness in a racial history that includes slavery, oppression, and freedom. The persistence of black churches in the post-civil rights era signifies the fact that race remains a salient feature of American political development (King and Smith 2005). How does race relate to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and the black church?

The answer about how race relates to the Initiative is clearly multi-faceted. Black churches represent distinctly racial zones. Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X’s movements which revolved around the notion of black self-determination are not rhetorical relics of a bygone era. They are the foundation for new variants of black self-help and black militant discourses and political movements (Dawson 2001). By these accounts, racial uplift primarily comes about via the efforts of black folk in black communities.

On the flip side, however, African Americans have bought into the American

Dream with as much fervor as the immigrant who set foot on American soil by choice (Hochschild 1996). African Americans retain many cultural distinctive venues, but they are rather integrated into many vestiges of American life. This is not to deny the latent effects of slavery and other forms of structural, cultural and social oppression given the multiple traditions interwoven with the supposed ideal of equality for all (Smith 1993).

Harold Cruse (1987) critiques the individualism rampant in black society capitalist society, but his argument reflects less a call for economic revolution than a social and philosophical one via pluralism. He argues that, “separate but equal” institutions should have been replaced by “plural but equal” institutions (249). A proper reading of the 14th amendment, Cruse maintains, would allow for all black institutions to thrive alongside non-black or integrated institutions. In a riff on the integration of educational institutions, Cruse questions why educational institutions should be required to reflect cultural diversity a la integration whereas the black church is allowed to remain a zone of blackness. Per Cruse, pluralism is not separatism, but a “truly democratic doctrine” that bridges the “theoretical and sociological divorce between liberation and integration (241)”. In short, Cruse makes an argument for a civil society reflective of racial distinctiveness—black institutions.

Given his high view of distinct black institutions, Cruse accords a high place for the black church in black society and in black politics. Institutionally speaking, the black church is “the only indigenous institution under full black control” (Cruse 230) and the black preacher is the only black figure with a natural black constituency (Cruse 208). Despite the benefits of built-in leadership and a captive constituency, the black church per Cruse is plagued by collective action problems. Cruse (230) suggests that class

divisions divide the black church across and within denominations. As a “class-ridden aggregation of denominational bodies” (230), the potential strength of black church networks is precarious at best. Yet, Cruse calls the black church “the social fulcrum around which is grounded (his) pluralistic relationship of the black majority in the American nation” (257) and the “only institutionalized basis for the pluralistic legitimacy of blacks in a pluralistic society” (258). How is the church so fundamental if so misguided? The Faith-Based and Community Initiative provide an answer.

The Core of the Black Community

Concurring with Cruse’s analysis, one pastor maintained that the black church, as opposed to churches generally, is the most effective institution in the black community: “The black church is the most influential in our (black) community.” This pastor claims that the church is the hallmark institution of the black community and thus, a logical venue for the dispensation of social services. Yet, he feels the black church has not been as effective as it could be, leading some scholars and pundits to declare that the black church is now irrelevant to black politics (Marable 1983, Reed 1986, 1999).

The reason is we don’t have the resources. I can’t recruit gang members and hookers without a 12-step program for them to come to. When we have the resources, we *are* the most influential (emphasis in original).

This pastor embodies the dialectic. On the one hand, he claims that the black church is the most influential institution in the community but on the other hand, he laments the dearth of resources available in the black church. He indicates that the lack of resources may have contributed to a reduced role of the black church in politics.

Given this dearth of resources in many black churches and communities, perhaps the Faith-Based and Community Initiative represents a window of opportunity. Even the

most rigid devotees of black self-help might see in Faith-Based money an opportunity to use black venues and culturally relevant methods to meet black needs. While Malcolm X would certainly point out that Faith-Based money comes from “the man”, the black church would be using the man’s money to accomplish black uplift in exclusively black venues.

Discrimination and Civil Rights

Race is an important frame to explore because many statements of the Congressional Black Caucus concerning the Faith-Based and Community Initiative utilized rhetoric that would likely be interpreted by black pastors and the black public in racially specific ways. Chapters Three and Four explored the notion of discrimination in hiring as framed by the Congressional Black Caucus and others. This theme was among the least salient in the Baptist interviews. Discrimination’s remedy is civil rights. Therefore, pastors were asked whether the Faith-Based and Community Initiative was related to civil rights—whether it in any way furthered civil rights or hindered civil rights. Five Baptist pastors stated that the Initiative was unrelated to civil rights in any way.

A pastor from the South who supports the Initiative casts doubt on the story of some members of the Congressional Black Caucus that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is discriminatory given its provision allowing religious organizations to refuse to hire program workers whose religious beliefs are out-of-step with the organization’s goals or mission. This pastor actually reframes the issue: “With any funding decision, you can discriminate in who you hire.” Every decision of every sort requires “discriminating” between the options. In her estimation, the Faith-Based and Community

Initiative has to discriminate between churches during the grant selection process. Thus, she does not buy the Congressional Black Caucus' claim that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is discriminatory because it allows churches to "discriminate" between job applicants on the basis of their religious fit to the church.

Two pastors agree that the Initiative furthers civil rights to the extent that it furthers the ability of the black church to help people. A pastor in Virginia stated:

Anytime you can help people out of bondage, that's improving civil rights in a way. Civil rights as everyday living where people feel like they don't have access. Any roadblocks are included. Ex-felons (at this church), some of them are in leadership, many can't vote and can't find a job. That comes as a civil rights issue—having paid their debt to society, they cannot prove themselves (by working and voting).

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative in this pastor's estimation, is valuable to the extent that it allows black churches to remove the kinds of roadblocks that befall black congregants and black citizens. The issue of the disenfranchisement of ex-felons falls much more squarely upon black communities than other communities given that the incarceration rate of black males is the highest of any group in the country.

A pastor from Oklahoma City also relates social issues of African Americans to civil rights more broadly.

I think (the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is) definitely related...I think when you talk about faith-based initiatives I think you're talking about providing something of, assisting, or providing some help, and that always involves African-Americans and that certainly involves the black church. I think it can be a help.

This pastor believes that the Initiative is related to civil rights to the extent that it involves helping the disadvantaged and downtrodden. To the extent that the black church is involved, he views the Initiative as related to civil rights, but he does not view the Initiative in terms of discrimination as the Congressional Black Caucus does.

One pastor in the entire sample agrees with the framing of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as discriminatory. He opposes the Initiative and as the following illustrates, his opposition is largely predicated on his distrust of the Republican party and President Bush:

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative was initiated by people who don't care for civil rights. The same leadership who developed the Faith-Based and Community Initiative are cool toward affirmative action. For instance, they allow them to hire people who do not conform to the civil rights agenda.

The Republican party's attempt to create a Rainbow Coalition image in 2000 and 2004 were to little avail in this pastor's estimation. Indeed, the fact that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative allows churches to "discriminate in hiring" is added proof that the Grand Old Party is the Same Old Party of benign neglect and anti-affirmative action.

Black Organizations

Interestingly, black pastors in this sample trust the black church and little else about the black counterpublic. One pastor from Virginia stated that her black sorority was more effective than the other black political and civic organizations (excluding the church):

With my sorority, Deltas, I have had a chance to rally civic and faith organizations. Some issues of concern are reflected in Congress. HIV/AIDS is really being addressed sufficiently.

While she admits that some issues of concern to the black church are reflected in Congress, she lamented the fact that the Congressional Black Caucus did not really listen to black pastors:

They listen more to the big fish. Unless you're a name, no one listens. You have to do it in your own area. At the local level, you have more influence and pull.

This pastor affirms the truism that all politics is local and illustrates why so many black pastors view the black church as a natural policy venue for policy implementation of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The local principle is consonant with the orientation of most Baptist denominations. While larger umbrella organizations serve as a canopy over the local churches, the principle of local autonomy and even independence from national bodies is emphasized more by the Baptist pastors in this project than either the AME or the COGIC pastors. Thus, more than any of the denominations explored herein, Baptists are perhaps the least constrained by denominational dictates and are willing to support the Initiative whether or not it holds a place on the agenda of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Another pastor from the South trounced the Congressional Black Caucus and touted local politics as the most effective route for policy resolution:

I don't believe that [the Congressional Black Caucus] has a clue sometimes. Constituents can't touch them like citizens of [this city] can touch the city council. [Member of the CBC] have their own private agendas. You have a better chance to affect the local politicians.

Rather than the CBC, this pastor viewed the NAACP and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) as the most effective black organizations. Significantly, both organizations rely upon the work of local branches and units. Aldon Morris (1984) contends that the civil rights movement emerged out of the efforts of local movement centers and this pastor affirms the utility of this notion. Perhaps the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is attractive to some Baptist pastors because it capitalizes upon this familiar principle of local control via the policy venue of the black Baptist churches.

We Have No Leaders?

One pastor from the South indicated that black leaders are more interested in politicking than leading:

Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton are activist more than anything else. They are just trying to get their name out there. When issues die down, but are not resolved, they are gone.

This impression that activism does not equate to leadership is echoed by other pastors across the three denominations, yet, no other pastor makes the distinction so eloquently. The observation that activism does not advance black issues very far, but might advance black leaders' own fortunes is astute, and echoed by scholars and pundits who criticize both Jackson and Sharpton, not merely as passé, but as lacking substance.

Of course, a new generation of leaders is emerging. One pastor from Virginia evaluated leaders based upon their willingness to dialogue with the black community and the problems that plague it: "Barack Obama [then Senator] talks to everyone. Colin Powell is also very effective at building bridges. He is able to talk to people." This emphasis upon discourse as a mechanism of building bridges is unique among the sample. Perhaps this emphasis is emblematic of this pastor's political experience in local politics.

Government

The church and the state comprise two distinct realms. Nevertheless, American political development reveals the intermingling between the church and the state. As far back as the Civil War, the United States government has granted money to churches for the education of Native Americans and in the contemporary era, organizations like Catholic Charities receive up to half of their funds from the federal government (Monsma

1996). So the Faith-Based and Community Initiative does not represent the first time that sacred and secular have mixed in American politics. Beyond First Amendment issues, what do black Baptist pastors believe about the relationship between the government and the black church where the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is concerned?

Involved with Government but Not of It

Although Baptist pastors tend to view the black church as a natural policy venue, many pastors express caution that the church maintain its distinctive focus upon spiritual things.

I am supportive of partnerships in general. Blacks could lose by getting misrepresented and losing our focus and becoming codependent on things like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative...I desire for churches to be involved in government.

While this pastor supports the Initiative, he believes that it could seduce the Samaritan to depend on government. Ironically, such co-dependence on government flies in the face of efforts to reinvent government and to downsize government.

A pastor with mixed feelings about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative from Dallas approves of partnerships between the government and the black church. Indeed, his church manages two grants from a local foundation that receives Compassion Capital Fund support and thus, already has the capacity and expertise to manage faith-based grants: "Opportunities for partnership are okay but not corporate partnerships." Interestingly, this pastor feels that partnerships between the church and other institutions are permissible, so long as the institutions do not have the profit motive, like the private sector. For this pastor, the government is preferable as a partner because government principles are closer to those of the church than business principles. Church and state are

more alike than different in some important regards, namely, both have the goal of justice.

A pastor from a small church in Oklahoma City who opposes the Initiative holds little hope that there can exist harmonious and healthy relationships between black churches and the federal government.

Sooner or later if you scratch my back, you'll want me to scratch yours. The church needs to be the church and the federal government needs to be the federal government.

The back scratching by the federal government in this case is money for faith-based programs. This pastor fears what the federal government will ask of black churches in return for federal funds. His simple, albeit not simplistic, solution is to maintain a dichotomy between the functions of the federal government and the functions of the state. Even if black churches have welfare-like programs, this does not imply that churches should partner with government. In this pastor's view, the net effect of black churches and the government working *separately* need not be less than the net effect of black churches and government working *jointly* in explicit partnerships.

A pastor from Virginia who opposes the Initiative also rejects partnerships between government and black churches.

Black people place limitations on themselves when the purpose is anything less than divine. A black preacher in politics is the same as selling your birthright for a bowl of porridge.

This pastor believes that participation in the Faith-Based and Community Initiative limits the black church. Government is secular and therefore, partnering with secular government dilutes the purity of the sacred church. Just as Esau sold his birthright to

Jacob for a bowl of porridge, so does the black preacher who accepts Faith-Based money. For this pastor, it is impossible to be involved with the government and not of it.

Trust

While most pastors believe that there is synergy when church and government work in concert, one pastor warns that the government is less trustworthy than the church. “All the time, we should be involved and working alongside government. I trust the church more than government.” This pastor believes that it is imperative that the church work with, not against, government. In fact, this pastor was appointed by his governor to serve on a state board. This pastor’s healthy skepticism of government may propel his penchant for church-state partnerships. A subtle implication of his statement is that the church is the plumb line for all institutions. Where the black church works alongside government, government’s tendency toward corruption is checked in Madisonian fashion by the preoccupation of the black church with prophecy and liberation—speaking the truth to power on behalf of the last, the least, and the lost.

Doing What Government Should be Doing

Even his harshest critics among the Baptist pastors in this sample agree that President Bush has one thing correct on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative—he recognized the yeoman work that the black church was already doing on behalf of beleaguered congregants and community members. Beyond what the church already does, three pastors believe that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative represents an effort to ease the black church into doing what the government should be doing—providing welfare services. Some pastors in this sample detect in the Faith-Based and Community Initiative a sinister effort to turn the black church into the new policy venue

for welfare service delivery and to get the government altogether out of the welfare business.

A pastor from Milwaukee who opposes the Faith-Based and Community Initiative believes that this policy piece of the compassionate conservative movement is a thinly-veiled effort to get the black church into the business of government.

I don't think of (the Faith-Based Initiative) as a broad-based effort... It's (Republicans and President Bush) trying to buy some votes and trying to get the churches to do what the government should be doing. Some of them wanted to get rid of the Department of Education. It's *poppycock* (emphasis in original)!

This pastor believes that in addition to “buying some votes” from the black religious segment of the polity, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative represents a concerted effort to dismantle welfare along the same lines as the Reagan administration's attempt to dismantle the Department of Education. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative would give the black church a new job—providing welfare to black communities. A revolution in civil society of this nature is not what this pastor has in mind for the black church.

A pastor from Los Angeles who actually supports the Initiative also believes that the government is playing a sleight of hand and attempting to redefine itself at the expense of the black church: “I think they want us to rehabilitate people so they won't have to. That's why they want to send money (to the black churches).” It is interesting that this pastor discusses the reason for the federal government's sloughing off its welfare role as shifting the burden of rehabilitation to the church. Indeed, a fundamental assumption of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is that civil society rehabilitates people *better* than government, which can dole out money and in-kind benefits but cannot prick the human soul.

A pastor from Oklahoma agrees that the heart of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is to transform welfare, but he finds problematic the fact that the Initiative does not solve the broader problems associated with welfare: “I don’t want to create a welfare state. It’s hard when people feel entitled.” Interestingly, this pastor views the Initiative as creating a new venue for welfare in the church and exacerbating the sense of entitlement that some welfare recipients and citizens already feel. In this way, he views the Initiative as problematic for society, for government, and for welfare recipients. This is an intriguing perspective that I have scarcely seen articulated in any academic treatments, journalistic pieces, or other interviews. Indeed, the implication here is that the federal government cannot devolve responsibility for welfare to churches by increasing the monetary supply of churches without creating a new market and increased demand for welfare services from the church.

Funding

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative will certainly increase the black church coffers and as the previous pastor implies, perhaps even the demand for services. A pastor from Virginia who supports the Initiative registers concern about whether Faith-Based grants will be sufficient to make a dent in social problems of concern to her and her congregation:

There is not enough money to fund initiatives. HIV/AIDS programs have benefited from monies, but there is not general money for things like youth programs...the pot is very minimal.

A pastor from Oklahoma opposes the Initiative in part because his discernment tells him that the promise of money black churches is in fact a pipedream: “There is no funding! I attended a meeting about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative (and learned this).”

This pastor states that there is not enough money to fund church based social services on a broad scale via the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, especially if the purpose is to devolve welfare to churches. In his controversial account of President Bush and the Faith-Based office, David Kuo claims that the Initiative suffers from a severe lack of funding. Only \$30 million was placed in the budget for the Initiative's Compassion Capital Fund, as opposed to the \$8 billion promised for the Initiative in the first year alone, a gap over \$7.6 billion dollars (Kuo 2006, 211).

A different pastor from Oklahoma City indicates that he is averse to the notion of government funding of any sort on principle—and not on principles of the U.S. Constitution, but rather on the principle of church charity.

We will not seek funding here under the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. I have been preaching 27 years and I have no desire to do it. As long as the people of this church give tithes and offerings, we will minister through what the Lord has given us.

This pastor juxtaposes money from the Lord with money from the government. This pastor's insight is intriguing as no other pastor in the entire sample framed the issue of funding in this manner. While other pastors do note numerous problems associated with utilizing government money, almost none maintain that money for the purpose of ministry *must* come solely from the Lord via church tithes and offerings. Indeed, even some pastors who are averse to the Initiative are amenable to various governmental grants, Community Development Corporations, and the like (and at least 6 pastors in this study receive some of the aforementioned). This principle of Christian support for Christian work is reflected throughout church missionary work and is predicated on the example of the Apostle Paul, who depended on the offerings of churches spread throughout the emerging Christian church for his ministry support. While church-

government partnerships are not unusual today, this pastor rejects government money as incommensurate with the principle of Christian charity.

Revolving Door

A pastor who supports the Initiative states that black pastors who oppose the Initiative do so because they fear the government inserting itself into church affairs. This is quite different from a lack of administrative capacity or opposition on the basis of the First Amendment.

(Other black pastors) wonder, if I get involved in this, or I get my church involved in this, um okay, I've got the government in my church. Now what are they (the government) going to do next? Is this a door they just want to (use to) get into my church? You know, things of that sort. That's an issue of trust.

This pastor poignantly portrays a revolving door that could result where churches accept government funds. The type of oversight and administration required for faith-based funds requires that the government, in a real and metaphorical sense, enter into the church. This raises real concerns for some black pastors who rightfully wonder whether the government will want to peer into something other than the books of the church.

A pastor from Virginia who did not hide his disdain for the Initiative equates the revolving door of the Initiative to a government desire to control the black church: "My concern with the faith-based initiative is that it's all about control. When you apply for money, you have to open your books." This pastor is primarily concerned that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative represents a slippery slope whereby the black church slowly loses control over itself. The autonomy of the church is compromised by its pursuit of government funds and thereby oversight.

Prophetic Voice

A good number of supporters, those with mixed feelings, and detractors of the

Faith-Based and Community Initiative concur that one of the greatest dangers of the policy is that it could change the way that the black preacher relates to government. Pastors of every denominational stripe, not merely Baptists, frequently refer to this as the prophetic voice. This finding is significant given that the researcher did not ask a specific question about the prophetic voice and that pastors of every denomination independently raised the issue as a core concern. A pastor from Texas discussed the issue in the following way:

(The Faith-Based and Community Initiative) is a challenge. The church is in a unique position because it is receiving money from a government agency when it is supposed to be an agency that reports to God. Government may end up influencing decisions parallel to what happened in Amos...false prophets. Do I report to God or to government?...If government is wrong on an issue, I still will speak against them.

This pastor claims that the principal-agent relationship of the historic church has been upended by the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. God—the Original Principal, is replaced by a new principal—the federal government under the Faith-Based and community Initiative. God’s agents, Christians—and particularly pastors—should be wary of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. This pastor likens black pastors to prophets of Scripture and frames the conflict surrounding the Faith-Based and Community Initiative in terms of the prophet Amos.

One of Amos’ railings against the oppression of the poor became a keystone of Martin Luther King Jr. during the civil rights movement: “...let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream” (Amos 5:24). Israel to whom Amos prophesied was steeped in religious and social corruption, with “false prophets” leading the faithful flock to worship idols and other gods and to forsake the true tenets of the faith which emphasized service to the poor, the orphan and the widow as the epitome

of true religion. As prophets called the church and the government to task, they often stepped on the toes of the religious and governmental elite. Prophets were unafraid to call government and society to task and they were usually lone voices in the wilderness, railing against oppression and injustice. This pastor fears that the black pastor qua prophet could lose that voice or worse, become a false prophet in the name of governmental money. Ironically, the loss of the prophetic voice might be for the sake of government dollars for the purpose of performing tasks that lie at the heart of the Judeo-Christian imperative to pursue social justice for the least, the last, and the lost.

At least one pastor believes that shutting the prophetic voice is not a by-product of taking Faith-Based money, but rather an explicit purpose of President Bush's proffering of the Initiative.

Bush politicized the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. It is a carrot he offered to the black church to garner votes for his reelection and to silence the prophetic voice of the black church.

On this view, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a purposeful effort of the Bush administration to quell any sort of activity in the black church with political ramifications. This is not inconsistent with a former White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiative official's portrayal of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative Conferences held across the country in 2004, but especially in swing states where additional black votes could be the key to a Bush victory (Kuo 2006). It is not clear, however, that seeking to silence the prophetic voice of those churches that embraced the Initiative silences the voices of other black churches.

A pastor from Milwaukee asserts that while all black people are different, the historic black church should have a voice vis-à-vis the federal government.

Black people are not a monolith, but the black church should have a voice. My friend Tim McDonald says “A dog can’t bark with a bone in his mouth”. Faith-based limits our voice...I want to have a voice. You can’t do that if your block grant is riding on it.

This pastor maintains that the black church has to have a voice to call the government to task, but money necessarily compromises the ability of the black pastor to speak truth to power. A pastor from Texas declared that even where pastors endeavor to keep the government accountable for pursuing justice, they are cast between a rock and a hard place—in between two signal institutions.

At the Social Justice Conference, we talked about it a lot. They were firmly against it.

The stalwarts of the Social Justice Conference are the old guard civil rights leaders like Jesse Jackson, Joseph Lowery, and Al Sharpton. They were bashing it because it can make you in allegiance to the government. It puts you in the middle. Even if it doesn’t close your mouth, it says something about your church.

The old-guard black pastors qua civil rights leaders are opposed to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative because it divides the loyalty of black pastors. Even if it does not close the mouth of the prophetic pastor, it complicates her decision-making. Perhaps the church that is willing to take money from Pharaoh is also willing to sacrifice its latitude in criticizing Pharaoh. The black pastor endowed with a Faith-Based grant might fight less vigorously and vociferously than the black pastor without a hand in the governmental cookie jar.

Slavery Take Two

At least three Baptist pastors spoke of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a new form of slavery for the black church.

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative enslaves the church and African Americans all over again. We have a new slave master and the new master is the government.

Unlike chattel slavery, this new form of slavery is sanctioned by the federal government. The Initiative of the government keeps the black church in symbolic chains. While this pastor did not offer any sort of conspiracy theory to complement his metaphor, he did express a deep distrust of anything with such categorical implications for the relationship between the government and the black community.

Government Inept

A pastor from a small church in Oklahoma City decries President Bush's revolution for black civil society partially because he does not trust government's ability to deliver *any* program, not simply the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

What black churches stand to gain from the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is some kind of a spotlight in the community if resources are coming in. If political points of view stay out (then fine) but the federal government has never done anything without messing up something. The black church mostly stands to lose (from the Faith-Based and Community Initiative).

Beyond his suspicion that politics will enter into the administration of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative the motives, this pastor expresses a strong skepticism about the federal government's ability to implement any program, including the Initiative, effectively.

Analysis

Baptist pastors are an interesting lot because they are the most numerous in the black church milieu—54% of African Americans are members of black Baptist churches (Sherkat and Ellison 1995). This fact, however, does not render Baptist pastors the modal ones of the black milieu. Yet, we can learn much from an examination of Baptist pastors. Baptists are a motley crew of dissenters against the status quo—with the exception of the President of a major Baptist convention, they largely disavow any

denominational hierarchy. Congregational autonomy is the name of the game in the Baptist church polity. This loose confederation of Baptist churches squares with the American experiment of federalism. To the extent that the national conventions impose unfunded mandates and pass regulations that are ignorant of indigenous realities in black churches, many Baptist pastors deem them irrelevant and outdated.

There is something intriguing about this independent streak in Baptist pastors. Indeed, it indicates that Baptist pastors exhibit a parochial bias in favor of local affairs as opposed to national concerns. This is both pragmatic and perhaps short-sighted. Sometimes, coordination across communities is the most efficient means of solving problems.⁴⁹ At other times, local control is as the crux of community development and service provision. To the extent that Baptist pastors disavow top down solutions of any sort, they may miss opportunities to address local issues. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative appeals to Baptist pastors as the best of both worlds—top down funding and dictates (Derthick 1972; Pressman and Wildavsky 1984) are mixed with bottom up implementation (Lipsky 1983).

For Baptist pastors, even those who opposed it, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative represents a recognition that the black church is the policy venue at the cornerstone of the black community. None of the pastors queried here demonstrated qualms about this public-private partnerships—at least three of the Baptist churches operated Community Development Corporations and others have managed or currently

⁴⁹ Although controversy persists about whether there exists a real effect, the so-called welfare magnet states are those that women and children allegedly flock to for the generous benefits, relative to other states. Coordination would mean, for example, that states within certain regions of the country set their welfare payment levels consonant with regional cost of living. Perhaps the “welfare magnet” phenomenon would be partially mitigated, or at a minimum, there would be some mechanism of control for testing the severity of the problem.

manage government grants. Indeed, some Baptist pastors called such partnerships natural given that indigenous institutions can deliver services in a relevant, even if racialized, manner. Some pastors, reflecting President Bush's rhetoric in the matter, indicated that the black church knows the needs of the black community best.

An additional reason for black pastors' level of ease with the church as a policy venue in that a rhetorical shift concerning the appropriateness of 'contracting out' and public-private partnerships has been successfully accomplished in the United States. The most recent shift in federalism has been toward the state and local level where over 85% of programs are implemented (Goodsell 2004). Since a plethora of government programs are delivered in the vicinity of the black church and under the nose of Baptist pastors, no Baptist pastor found it odd that the black church would constitute a venue of policy implementation under the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

While some members of the Congressional Black Caucus aver that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative teeters perilously close to violating the wall of separation between church and state (in addition to promoting "discrimination in hiring"), this does not represent a salient concern among black pastors. The notion that politics and religion mix often in the black community may render black pastors more amenable to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative than their white evangelical counterparts for whom such explicit blending of sacred and secular is less forthright and less culturally and historically salient. Certainly white evangelicals utilize religious reasons to craft policy arguments about issues like abortion, nonetheless, the aforementioned constitutional issues limited white evangelical receptivity toward the Bush Initiative.

83% of black Protestants support the Faith-Based and Community Initiative compared to 69% of white evangelicals (Pew 2008). This fact is significant and likely attributable to theological differences as well as the cultural ones mentioned above. For example, AME pastors overwhelmingly indicated that liberation theology requires engaging politics—remaining separate from politics except on select issues, like abortion, is not an option for most black pastors. The black church demands that the black pastor be all things, including the conscience of the state, a get out the vote captain, and deliverer of social services to name only a few. Most Baptist pastors in this sample view the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as an opportunity to enhance their role as prophetic pragmatist.

While Baptist pastors instinctively agree that the black church represents a critical policy venue, some express misgivings. Both supporters and detractors of the Initiative fear that small black churches lack the institutional capacity to administer Faith-Based grants. Other pastors doubt the ability of black churches to maneuver the bureaucratic red tape that would accompany the Request for Proposals process required to apply for Faith-Based grants.

Perhaps these concerns explain why Baptist pastors are more likely than other denominations in this study to adopt a wait-and-see approach to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative (67% of Baptist supporters evince the yes...but attitude). Most Baptist pastors who evince this wait-and-see attitude claim that they will apply for funds when the timing is right or when the government funds the Initiative more generously. Still, a few Baptist pastors suspect that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is reserved for large churches only.

Of the 40% of Baptist pastors who oppose the Initiative outright, all mentioned the political nature of the policy. In general, they maintained that Bush used the Initiative to garner black votes and to slowly drive a wedge in the solid support of African Americans for the Democratic party. A new alliance between black Democrats and Bush Republicans with the potential to divide the black vote along the lines of policy issues like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is a reprehensible idea to these black pastors. Baptist pastors who oppose the Initiative cannot countenance the idea that the denomination of Martin Luther King Jr. might be aligned with the party that pillories affirmative action.

Interestingly, the Congressional Black Caucus' rebuff of the Faith-Based Initiative on the grounds that it violates civil rights did not resonate with fourteen of fifteen Baptist pastors. Indeed, several believe that the Initiative actually aids civil rights goals to the extent that it enhances the ability of the black church to pursue social justice in black communities. Baptist pastors are pragmatic and view the right of churches to maintain religious integrity by co-religionists as a logical extension of the church as policy venue.

Baptist pastors, echoing concerns of their AME counterparts, fear the loss of the prophetic voice if the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is embraced. While Baptist pastors' pragmatism necessitates government involvement, it raises a concern core to the prophet: does taking money from the state compromise the prophet's voice as conscience of the state? For example, if compassionate conservatism is actually a ruse for dumping welfare onto black churches (as some suspect), the pastor of a church receiving government money is in a precarious position. Indeed, some of the most vehement

opponents of the Initiative in the Baptist sample liken it to slavery, a state which normally rouses prophets to call the government to task. Baptist opponents of the Initiative fear that at that point, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative will have taken the country too far along the path of “privatization”.

Church of God in Christ

The Church of God in Christ (COGIC), a denomination within the Pentecostal tradition, was loosely organized in 1897 and was incorporated in 1907 in the wake of a famous California revival.⁵⁰ The church now boasts around 8 million members and represents the second largest Pentecostal group in the United States (www.cogic.org/history.htm) and is the fastest-growing African American denomination.⁵¹ Pentecostalism emphasizes sanctification, or the process of becoming holy as manifested in individual behavior or lifestyle. Thus, it is not uncommon for Pentecostal believers to speak in tongues at church, as evidence of true conversion (or the receipt of the Holy Spirit). Since true faith is embodied in one’s entire life, Pentecostal believers assert that a righteous (morally upright) lifestyle is evidence of true faith. Pentecostals eschew drinking, smoking, and sex outside of marriage. In this respect, the denomination is morally conservative in the vein of many white evangelical churches. Yet, given that the Church of God in Christ is historically African American, the denomination exhibits a social consciousness consistent with other historical black denominations. Indeed, one pastor interviewed herein proudly recounted the fact that Martin Luther King Jr.’s last speech was delivered at the headquarters of the Church of God in Christ in Memphis, Tennessee.

⁵⁰ The Azusa Street Revival occurred in 1906 and spawned the creation of many Pentecostal denominations, including the Assemblies of God and the Church of God in Christ.

⁵¹ See Fowler et al. *Religion and Politics in America* (2004).

Given the emphasis of the Church of God in Christ on holiness, I expected that there might be an element of sacred and secular division in COGIC pastors images of the Faith-Based and Community. That is, perhaps the Pentecostal penchant for remaining pure from secular influences might lead the church to disavow any entanglement with the political realm. For example, during the World War II era, sanctification of the family was emphasized by the denomination as a way to change politics—good children make good citizens. As for the contemporary era, I searched the COGIC website for policy pronouncements and found that the most widespread initiative undertaken by the Church of God in Christ in recent years promoted public health *indirectly* by encouraging exercise and weight loss and by cultivating proper diets. This initiative is consistent with personal growth, but does not emphasize how and to what extent the denomination is interested in secular affairs, including politics. It was unclear at the genesis of the research whether or not COGIC pastors would embrace the Faith-Based and Community Initiative given the sacred-secular divide, but I supposed that the denomination's desire to promote personal holiness among congregants and in communities might compel COGIC pastors to embrace Faith-Based funds.

Findings

The five COGIC pastors hail from Oklahoma, Wisconsin, California, and Virginia. The churches in the COGIC sample range in size from a very small storefront church with less than 150 members in Los Angeles to a megachurch in Milwaukee. 80% of COGIC pastors support or have mixed feelings about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and only one COGIC pastor opposes the Initiative. In line with prophetic pragmatism, COGIC pastors viewed the black church as a natural policy venue and as

Table 5.5 reveals, most of their policy images were devoted to that theme.

Table 5.5 COGIC Pastors’ Policy Images of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative by Support Level

	Support (n=2)	Yes...but (n=2)	Oppose (n=1)	Total Codes by Frame
Constitutionality	11% (3)	19% (4)	38% (3)	10
Political Party	11 (3)	5 (1)	0	4
Policy Venue	52 (14)	38 (8)	38 (3)	25
Race	7 (2)	10 (2)	13 (1)	5
Government	19 (5)	29 (6)	13 (1)	12
Total Codes by Support Level	27	21	8	

In the final analysis, COGIC pastors were the most open and possibly the most committed to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The following analysis of policy images reveals two fundamental reasons for COGIC support: first, many pastors are familiar with the Initiative because a very prominent church in the denomination, West Angeles Church of God in Christ, has received Faith-Based funding and second, many COGIC pastors see an opportunity in Faith-Based grants to advance the denomination’s theological emphasis upon holiness through the provision of programs to individuals within and beyond the COGIC borders.

Constitutionality

Moses’ dialogue with Pharaoh. David’s elevation to King. Religious leaders are called to be government leaders. The Old Testament is replete with individuals. Customs and traditions change (but) when the righteous are in authority the people rejoice. A Wisconsin pastor.

With respect to the First Amendment, COGIC pastors’ views of the appropriate

relationship between church and state are interesting and varied. There is a storied symbiosis between black Christendom and politics. The notion of the black church as an all-encompassing institution was perpetuated by historical necessity on the one hand and by civil rights success on the other.

Church-State Balance

As to what the appropriate balance between church and state should be, one COGIC pastor from Virginia stated: “The church as an entity should focus on its biblical God-given purpose. From its purpose, (the church) influences all of government.” This pastor suggested that the primary business of the church is creating sanctified individuals who thereby affect the government. Yet, he also maintained that the church exists as a natural ally of government: “There are biblical precedents for government supporting church. Ezra sought money from Artaxerxes to go back to Jerusalem to build the temple.” While this pastor recounts how the Old Testament prophet Ezra sought money from the government to rebuild the temple, he suggests proceeding with caution on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative: “At the national level you enter into these arrangements with caution because it’s a slippery slope. A very large church can lose the integrity of ministry.” The spiritual focus of ministry for this pastor is more important than money from government. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative, for him, is scary not because it violates the notion of church-state separation, but because it could detract from the primary focus of COGIC—ministry for the purpose of holiness.

A pastor from Oklahoma who supports the Faith-Based and Community Initiative shared this perspective that the Church of God in Christ’s role in politics should be minimal and at best secondary to sanctification:

Political activism from the pulpit is more the role of Baptist churches. But Martin Luther King Jr.'s last speech was from the COGIC headquarters. We have a more spiritual approach to politics. We prepare members to be aware for when the wind changes--learning the system and who to contact. Government is there for people and they should expect a reasonable level of services.

The province of the church is spiritual and the province of the state is political from the vantage point of this pastor. In spite of this division between sacred and secular, the pastor emphasizes a necessary connection between personal sanctification and political participation. This pastor trains his congregants to use their spiritual senses to see, feel, and smell changes in the political winds.

Both of these pastors view church and state as positively connected. Both desire that the sacred realm affects the secular realm for good and therefore, support the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Nevertheless, both pastors state that their spiritual lenses dictate viewing the Initiative through skeptical, not rose-colored, glasses.

No Room at the Inn

Two of the five pastors in the COGIC sample expressed the view that church and state are completely incompatible realms and that politics has absolutely no place in the black church. There is no room in the black church for politics. A pastor from Los Angeles disavowed the idea that preachers should pontificate about politics and politicians from the pulpit.

There should be no politics in church because church and state is [sic] separate. We have secret ballot (in U.S. elections) but it is not a secret ballot if (preachers) are telling (congregants) how to vote...they're still guided by someone else.

He also articulated his belief that preachers and churches were subject to becoming pawns in the election game, especially where pastors efface political utterances from the pulpit: "Bribes were being offered to megachurches and small churches, before and after

the Faith-Based Initiative.” This assertion that preachers endorse candidates from the pulpit in exchange for kickbacks for the congregation, for the community, or simply for the preacher’s pocketbook is the stuff of urban legends in many black churches, but few informants willingly reveal names or sources, and even fewer can substantiate their claims. There is ample evidence, however, that black pastors are elites whom politicians would be remiss to bypass. The extent to which pastors engage politicians, however, is clearly variable with some pastors eventually seeking local, state, and/or national office and others disavowing formal public office preferring to call for justice via the prophetic voice (Smith and Harris 2006).

Despite this strong disavowal, a pastor from Los Angeles who was unequivocal in his disavowal of politics from the pulpit admitted that he encourages *civic engagement* from the pulpit:

Every election, because of the price that has been paid, I encourage every member to go vote. Don’t say your vote doesn’t count. In 1996, when Bishop Patterson first ran (for International Presiding Bishop of the Church of God in Christ), he lost by one vote. I encourage national citizenship as well as spiritual citizenship.

The important, even if sometimes unintentional, role that black pastors play in the political lives of their parishioners is illustrated by this pastor who resoundingly repudiated mixing religion and politics for any reason. This pastor views no tension between his position that church and state are separate and his assertion that spiritual citizenship implies a duty to exercise national citizenship via voting. This dialectic allows civic messages like get out and vote (Reese and Brown 1995) to proliferate alongside messages such as remain untainted by the world. It is precisely this role as a conduit of social capital (Putnam 2000) that predisposes many COGIC pastors to embrace the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

The Church within the State

An indirect means of church and state commingling occurs when Christians assume positions of power. In this sense, some pastors ridiculed the notion that the First Amendment was ever intended to preclude church influence *within* the state and in the public square more generally. A COGIC pastor from the South unabashedly proclaimed that God not only utilizes people from the church to influence government, God intends for the government to be run by Christians according to Christian principles:

I believe every seat of power is intended for a righteous person to sit in it. It doesn't mean that they expound Scripture from a seat of power, but they rule in a righteous way. Every aspect (of government) God intends for a righteous person to be involved in it. Where mercy needs to be meted out. Where judgment. God intends for the world to be run justly.

This pastor articulates principal-agent theory through his explanation of church-state relations. Per his reasoning, God's intention for just rule requires human agency. The righteous are God's agents in government, ruling with a consciousness based in Christianity.

Lest one believe that this Southern pastor's opinion is an artifact of Southern evangelical influences on the black church, a pastor from Los Angeles reiterated the same theme:

There are times when people in church should run for political positions and if we had more (Christian politicians), we would have less corruption (in politics).

COGIC pastors' likeness to evangelicals and/or members of the 'religious right' seems independent of region. Indeed, COGIC pastors from Virginia to Wisconsin to Oklahoma to California argued that public office is a necessary and appropriate calling for Christians.

A pastor from the Milwaukee echoed this sentiment concerning Christians interfacing with the public square:

(From) Moses' dialogue with Pharaoh (to) David's elevation to king (to) Nehemiah...religious leaders are called to be government leaders. The Old Testament is replete with (religious) individuals (who engage government). When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice.

This pastor theorizes that the constitutional language regarding religion was “designed to protect the church so that no overbearing burdens are placed on the church by government”. He then related religious freedom to another first amendment freedom, freedom of speech:

The church cannot be silent...The Civil Rights Movement was successful because it addressed the ills of society Isaiah said ‘Cry loud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.’

Utilizing the prophet Isaiah, this pastor attributed the success of the civil rights movement to the church's willingness to “address the ills of society” in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets. Yet, he cautioned that balance is necessary where the church interfaces with the government: “There is room for (partnering between church and state) as long as the church does not compromise.” The black church prophet should be pragmatic, but should also be wary of government wolves in sheep clothing.

A pastor from the Midwest maintained that pragmatism propels a close relationship between the church and government.

The church addresses all issues—body, mind, and spirit. The best way to do this is to be at the table. Historically speaking, we find a need; the church sponsors a seed; from the seed we find partners with an expected end and outcome.

A COGIC pastor from Oklahoma agreed with this view that it makes practical sense for the religionists to know politics from within the belly of the governmental beast:

There must be someone inside the (government) with a heart for God and who knows the system.

For these pastors, where the church seeks to meet needs beyond spiritual ones, partnerships with government via programs like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative are a no-brainer.

Political Party

While the Church of God in Christ does not endorse a political party, the theology of sanctification and holiness align the denomination with evangelicals and the Christian Right on moral and social issues. The doctrine of the church reflects the holiness tradition's emphasis upon outward, charismatic manifestations of inner sanctification by the Holy Spirit. While home and foreign missions represent core church functions, the doctrinal emphasis upon individual holiness and the worship experience seemingly relegate social, communal goals a la the AME Church to a second tier status in the hierarchy of church priorities. Nevertheless, one does detect evidence of the church leadership's concern about perceived moral decay in the broader society as it impinges upon the individual holiness of the COGIC believer:

...in spite of the progressive normalization of alternative lifestyles and the growing legal acceptance of same-sex unions; we declare our opposition to any deviation from traditional marriages of male and female. Notwithstanding the rulings of the court systems of the land in support of same-sex unions; we resolve that the Church of God in Christ stand resolutely firm and never allow the sanctioning of same-sex marriages by its clergy nor recognize the legitimacy of such unions. (www.cogic.org)

While other policy pronouncements were not available, the conservative nature of the General Assembly of the Church of God in Christ is unmistakable in this instance. There was also evidence of support for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative of the Bush administration at the website of a regional jurisdiction of the Church of God in Christ

(www.nemichigan.org/news.htm).

Republicans as Roadblock to Faith-Based?

The fact that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is proffered by President Bush, a Republican, has not deterred one COGIC pastor in this sample from implementing millions of dollars worth of programs funded by the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. In fact, President Bush visited this church in the Midwest and regaled the benefits of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative for black churches. The media upheld this visit as an opportunity for Republicans to make inroads into the black community. The pastor of this church, a prominent bishop in the Church of God in Christ, rejected the media's assessment of a partisan angle.

It is always an honor when a head of state comes, both Republicans and Democrats...The President (Bush) visited to find out what faith-based organizations can do.

Indeed, this pastor asserted that religious provision of social services was a hallmark of all COGIC churches prior to President Bush's codification of a program to fund such initiatives.

According to this pastor of a large church in the Midwest, the party of the President or the partisan affiliation of the community partner is less important than federal funding for critically necessary programs:

COGIC has constantly been involved in empowering individuals. We did faith-based initiatives before the program. If we can find like partners, we embrace them. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative is critical as it addresses critical needs of our community. Any partner should be embraced.

Partnerships of the type described by this pastor are consonant with trends in public administration that emphasize creating public value; contracting out; and engaging in public-private partnerships; therefore, a Democrat, like President Bush's opponent, Al

Gore, could equally embrace the concept of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Thus, this pastor emphasized that he “never endorses a political party; encourages individuals to get the facts; and gives balance to Democrats and Republicans.”

Interestingly, none of the COGIC pastors portrayed the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a partisan attempt to sway or otherwise divide the black vote. This represents a significant departure from Baptist pastors. Indeed, even Baptist pastors who support the Initiative believe benign politicking accompanies the Initiative—for example, improving the Republican party’s image. Perhaps COGIC pastors’ meticulous maintenance of the lines between politics and the pulpit (save civic messages) renders them less likely to view political overtures as explicitly aimed at swaying the church. Furthermore, the emphasis on individual sanctification predisposes COGIC pastors and parishioners to tune their heartstrings to the content of public policies as opposed to the political party of the policy maker. Furthermore, given the COGIC emphasis upon individual sanctification, perhaps COGIC pastors feel more closely aligned with the moral and social platform of the Republican party than either Baptist or AME pastors.

Policy Venue

COGIC pastors possess varied views of the black church as a venue for implementation of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Certainly, more than 90% of black churches are often involved in meeting various social and economic needs—beyond the spiritual sustenance of their congregants (Cnaan 2001; Joint Center 2006). While COGIC pastors are already in the business of providing a variety of social services, do they think that the church should serve as an institutional conduit for public policy? Can the House of Prayer deliver the President’s premier domestic program?

Preferred Policy Venue for a Panoply of Problems

A pastor from Wisconsin averred that the black church is the prime locale for helping the needy given that the church is the only societal institution equipped to help people on all levels:

Ministry is about wholeness; excellence. We are one of a group of churches that understands the need for total involvement. We have over 6,000 members and over 40 programs (including) a credit union, 4 schools, a clinic, a water park, a library, senior housing, over 200 houses, GED training, and other partnerships with the area.

This pastor postulates that the church that addresses only this spiritual aspects of holiness are less than “whole”. Churches should tread where social ills persist. This pastor views the black church as the preferred venue of community renewal.

A pastor from a small church in Oklahoma made a similar claim, but went beyond the previous pastor to aver that the church does some things best—better than government is the implication:

We combine resources with a ministry focus. There are things we can do best, but we can not be all things to all people. We can serve as a base of social services and as a network system.

This pastor supports the Initiative and government grants generally for the black church as policy venue. This pastor has received a state grant to implement a vocational rehabilitation program at his church to address the problems of his community, but he admits that his church has necessary limitations. In short, while the pastor of the 6,000 member megachurch in Wisconsin strives for a holistic ministry whereby *all* needs are met in the policy venue of the church, the small church pastor in Oklahoma realizes that the church can be an important locus of service provision, as well as an important connector of people to other resources, but cannot be all things to all people. Both

pastors view the black church as a crucial policy venue and both support the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

Mission Creep

Some COGIC pastors express concern that if the black church serves as a *policy venue* it could compromise its integrity as a *spiritual venue*. Concerning this tension between the church as policy venue and spiritual place, one pastor from Virginia asserted that the purpose of the church is loftier than any program:

Our mission is to establish a house...where (God) is head and He is exalted; dedicated to His presence, for the benefit of the people to come be in the presence of God. We have expanded to meet whatever needs people have...Senior ministry is part of the social side of things, but that is ancillary. We are not driven by ancillary ministries.

While this pastor does deem the church as an appropriate venue for social services, he also suggested that the provision of services is ancillary to the primary function of the church, which is the worship of God. Given this view of worship as central to the church experience, he disavowed pastors who portray the church as “a civic organization (where people) get respect.” Thus, for this pastor, the black church is neither a social/civic organization nor an appendage of social/civic organizations. Not surprisingly, this pastor’s primary policy image relative to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is a cautionary one: the black church must not “lose the integrity of ministry.”

This same pastor asserted that the black church as a policy venue for social service delivery *competes* with the spiritual goals of the church.

The church is a house of God so when you become a social service agency, you’ve lost your focus. It changes the tenor of the message on Sunday morning.

Thus, while Jesus addresses the needs of the whole person, this pastor views program provision as ancillary to belief. This tension between sanctification and social service

provision in COGIC reflects the broader dialectic of the black church. This pastor's pragmatic embrace the Faith-Based and Community Initiative consists of nuanced support and friendly opposition.

A pastor from Los Angeles who opposes the Initiative deems oversight of all Faith-Based program implementation as integral to protecting the integrity of the *spiritual* mission of the church. If COGIC churches partake of faith-based funds for *social* services, one pastor demands that a board of directors comprised of Christians be charged with overseeing the program:

I prefer (board members) to be saved. When a board becomes community-based, you've got a problem. An ungodly man...your vision becomes bastardized.

This pastor questions whether spiritual progress can be assessed by a non-believer. In his view, only Christian advisors with spiritual eyes can maintain the appropriate vision and wield the appropriate measuring stick for a social service program delivered in the policy venue of the black church. Just as the Faith-Based and Community Initiative allows discrimination in hiring for the purpose of protecting programmatic integrity, this pastor demands that the same must be true of those who exercise oversight of Faith-Based programs.

One Venue or Many: Will the Black Church Please Stand Up?

The delineation between the church as a venue for worship and a venue for services is not shared by a pastor from the Midwest. He contends that since all issues affect well-being of congregants, the church should address "...all issues—body, mind, and spirit". This minister asserts that a primary role of the church is to exist as the central venue for the creation of synergistic relationships with community partners.

Historically speaking, we find a need; the church sponsors a seed; and from the seed, we find partners with a similar expected end and outcome.

He suggested that the policy venue of the black church could spawn numerous sub-venues that address the needs of congregants as well as community. For example, his church is not waiting for a national healthcare plan, they are meeting the healthcare needs of congregants and community members through creative leveraging of resources, expertise, and partners:

The clinic that we have here—we partner with the neighborhood hospital. This provides a venue for the uninsured and underinsured.

This pastor is committed to the notion that the black church represents a key locale for policy implementation and goes so far as to aver that “*any* partner should be embraced” (emphasis added) given the critical needs extant of the last, the least and the lost in the community. Prophetic pragmatism also led to the development of a credit union and four schools on the premises of this church. In this case of the black church as a policy venue, necessity is the mother of invention.

A pastor from Los Angeles eloquently explicated *why* the black church is a natural venue for the delivery of social service programs:

The church is located where the rubber meets the road. Most black churches are trying to move from the east side to the west side. They almost frown on churches that stay on the east side, but (the east side) is where people need help.

For some black pastors, the church is necessarily a policy venue because it exists to connect people who need help with the help that they need. In addition to meeting spiritual needs, the black church fills material and social voids. The black church is a vehicle for connecting public policy and peoples’ needs. For this pastor, the semi-involuntary black church is deemed the most relevant entity in civil society given its location between government and the grassroots.

Church Size: Too Large, Too Small, and Just Right

While COGIC pastors deem the black church as the connectional nexus of the black community, many believe that church size can cripple efforts at compassion. For example, a pastor from Virginia suggested a direct correlation between the size of the congregation and the policy pitfalls of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. He expressed fear that large churches are at particular risk of compromising their religious focus in the mix of programmatic details that accompany the implementation of social service programs. Conversely, a pastor of a large urban congregation in Wisconsin contended that the size of a church is less important than a church's commitment to "keep balance" between running programs and being the church. For the latter pastor, there exists no tension in the reality that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative requires houses of God to serve as venues of policy implementation in addition to their original roles as venues of religious impartation.

In fact, the pastor of a megachurch in the Midwest maintained that the large size of his church is precisely what enabled it to offer a panoply of programs and services to meet the needs of the community. He touted the fact that his is the only church in the country that operates four schools on the church campus. Unlike the pastor in the Baptist sample whose parish view led him to adopt the mile around his church, this COGIC pastor's vision of ministry extends to the entire 97 square miles of the city of his urban locale. Thus, the size of his 6,000 member church is consonant with his conviction that the scope of his church's ministry should be far flung.

Whether or not COGIC pastors believe that large churches implementing social services lose their ministry focus, four out of five believe that size matters where money

is concerned on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. One pastor from a small church in Los Angeles averred that there is a funding gap between large and small churches with regard to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. This sentiment of large church versus small church was echoed prominently by Baptist ministers:

My church won't apply for funds. Megachurches will get the majority of faith-based (money) so we went after private funds (to fund our social service program).

In one statement, this pastor emphasized an important theme. He depicts a Faith-Based Initiative that is open to all churches in theory, but reserved for large churches in practice. He related a story connected to this theme:

Every second Sunday, there are meetings of every COGIC pastor from the jurisdiction. At one, (the Bishop of a megachurch) had a speaker come speak about AIDS and (the Bishop) got a check for \$85,000 (from the government for his AIDS ministry). Who benefited? He did.

This pastor from a small congregation saw firsthand how megachurches with mega-ministries benefit from Faith-Based largesse. In his small-church eyes, the playing field is not so level after all—it is tilted toward the megachurch players.

The pastor of the previous vignette's view that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative goes primarily to large churches is true, but perhaps this is only correct by default, so to speak. Using church budget as a proxy for church size, one survey of black churches found that only 2% of churches with budgets of less than \$50,000 budget had applied for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, while 28% of churches with budgets over \$1 million had applied for the Initiative (Joint Center 2006). The pastor's deduction is technically correct, but his *perception* that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is reserved for the largest churches became a self-fulfilling prophecy because small churches like his own do not apply for funds. Thus, a pastor located in a high-

poverty area of Los Angeles chose not to apply for Faith-Based funds and applied for private funding instead—mostly predicated on his view that the Faith-Based deck is stacked against small churches. While he disavowed the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a source of funds, his decision to apply for other grants underscores his belief that the black church is an appropriate venue of social service delivery—even if Faith-Based funds are unavailable to him.

At least two pastors in this sample believe that large COGIC churches get all the money because they have more information on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Two Baptists pastors expressed a similar sentiment. A pastor from a small church in Los Angeles stated that large churches perpetuate an information gap on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative:

When little churches don't know about this because megachurches don't give information, it should be (large churches') responsibility to pass it down through their jurisdiction.

While this pastor emphasized the importance of megachurches sharing information about how to secure government funding, another pastor thrust the responsibility upon a higher power, denominational bodies:

COGIC is the same organization, but it's divided. Some people are not sharing information. We are not speaking the same language.

Indeed, he faulted a denominational leader who has received faith-based funding for failing to help other COGIC churches to secure funding:

Bishop X is the presiding Bishop. He will bring in someone to talk about (the Faith-Based and Community Initiative) to tell you there is money out there, but nobody helps you get it. It's like telling someone you could be saved if I throw you a rope, but nobody throws you a rope.

For this pastor, denominational rifts in addition to divisions between large and small

churches contribute to the information gap on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. While some COGIC ships enjoy smooth-sailing in their applications for government grants, other COGIC ships are sinking and informational lifelines on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative are slow in coming at best and non-existent at worst.

Accountability and Administrative Capacity

A pastor from a small church in Virginia depicted church size as problematic, but not because of information gaps or because of a funding system that favors large churches. Instead, he emphasized foibles related to the ability of churches to maintain accountability for the administration of faith-based programs and funds: “You need good oversight and accountability. An older preacher ended up in jail because he didn’t understand accountability of the funds.” This same theme was echoed by other COGIC pastors. One from Los Angeles stated: “If you get state money, you need a separate set of books.” This theme of an extra set of requirements imposed on churches under the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is different from the theme echoed by Baptist pastors of a revolving door for the federal government, but similar to Baptist pastors’ concerns about dotting i’s and crossing t’s.

Beyond the issue of keeping church funds and government funds separate, four COGIC pastors expressed doubt that most COGIC churches possess the internal capacity to administer the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. One pastor stated: “You need people able to handle a ministry of that size.” Another pastor stated support for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative at the denominational level, but doubted that there was the expertise and knowledge at the local church level to implement it:

There is enormous support in COGIC. In the Council of Bishops, there is a hunger, but there is no venue or connection to make it happen.

Perhaps large churches, by virtue of their breadth and depth are more likely to possess the technical knowledge and/or staff to manage a partnership with the government.

Conformity to governmental requirements and administration toward government accountability are tedious tasks even for civil servants. But perhaps the task is made easier where there is a pre-existing infrastructure and level of knowledge, like that in megachurches.

Race

I am because we are and since we are therefore I am.
A West African proverb.

In the black milieu, communalism transcends group interactions and extends into political behavior. African Americans largely define their political interactions in terms of group concerns. There exists a perception that Justice Thomas cares little for black interests. This section explores how black interests punctuate COGIC pastors' policy images of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

Black Communalism and Black Self-Help

A pastor from Oklahoma contended that while communalism is a hallmark of African Americans, the Great Society programs of the post-civil rights era have had the effect of eroding community in the black counterpublic. This pastor identifies what the black political literature describes as the shift from "protest to politics" (Tate 1994) and elaborates on how the shift affected the black church as it interfaces with black society:

Integration brought the awareness of other (government) services. Welfare is a trap. We need to recreate a sense of community from pre-integration and the biblical days where churches met the needs of people.

This pastor lauded church-based delivery of social services above government delivery of programs given his sense that "...black people need to be prepared to help themselves in

order to meet the demands of a changed society.” Black communalism means the church helps black people to help themselves. As such, he called the Faith-Based and Community Initiative “a God-send”.

A pastor from Virginia also sounded the theme of race by highlighting black self-help and black community responsibility. Not unlike the previous pastor, he condemned the black community for expecting government help and challenged black people to help themselves.

We [black people] are in a mindset of they [the government] need to do something for us versus we need to do something for ourselves. We as [black] people have to be legal, just, and fair. What are we [black people] going to do for us?

This pastor’s depiction of a black community with an entitlement complex sounds strikingly similar to much of the congressional discourse on welfare reform during the 104th Congress, and the subsequent legislation encouraging personal responsibility. Yet, this pastor transcends the *individualistic* frames of the welfare debate, calling the black *community* to heal itself. Indeed, black self-help is consonant with black prophetic religion.

As for how the black community can accomplish self-help, the Virginia pastor drew a parallel between immigrants to the United States and black Americans.

Black people have to change the mindset. I was struck during my work in international sales how immigrants here send money back to their home countries; back to their communities. (Black) people are forgetting where they came from. We who succeed cannot lose our blackness. (Black people cannot say) I’m green now and I hobnob with people who are green. We have to give back.

Sociologists, historians, and economists have long compared the plight of black Americans to immigrants in their assessments of African American progress and faulted the black community for a failure to provide the internal supports that other immigrant

groups did in their climbing up the American economic ladder (see for example Herrnstein and Murray 1994). Yet, the parallel drawn by between immigrants and black Americans by this pastor is striking for its emphasis upon cultural support within the racial or ethnic group.

A pastor from Milwaukee explained that black self-help is necessary because textbook pluralism scarcely works to the advantage of African Americans (Dahl 1960). There are no poor-people's political action committees (Schattschneider 1961) as one pastor explains: "Don't look for the white community leaders to address our (black) concerns." This assertion of black concerns affirms the notion of a black politics built around common black concerns. This pastor detects a disconnect in representation along racial lines: between majority politicians and mainstream politics and black issues. While descriptive representation would suggest greater representation for African Americans where black members of Congress represent black interests (Tate 2003), this has not resulted in the promotion of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative by most members of Congress. Citing the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and school vouchers as evidence, this black pastor from Wisconsin contests the notion that an identifiable black agenda exists given that the record of the Congressional Black Caucus fails to support two issues that African Americans favor so overwhelmingly. Perhaps a low view of the CBC explains this pastor's simultaneous solidarity with the notion of black issues and his disavowal of the notion of a black agenda.

Since there are legitimate black issues missing from the so-called black agenda, where does black self-help happen? How are black concerns realized and addressed if they do not have a place on formal governmental agendas of black representatives? The

expectation that African Americans “give back” is consonant with the emphasis on communalism in the black counterpublic. Black organizations, like the black church, become the focal point for the resolution of black issues left off of the black agenda and other agendas, and as such, an important racialized policy venue.

Black Organizations

Whether or not a particular black pastor views his/her church’s primary mission as social outreach, many African Americans *expect* that the black church, one of the most enduring black organizations, serve in this capacity. Yet, other black organizations serve as beacons of the black community, especially in matter of politics and public policy. How do black pastors view the efficacy of other black organizations and how does this relate to the black church and the Faith-Based and Community Initiative?

A pastor from Los Angeles indicted the NAACP as opportunist, merely responding to black concerns, rather than anticipating and averting problems:

The NAACP is effective but it seems they only come out when a crisis takes place and we have people living in crisis situations everyday right here. Why do they wait until someone is drowning to come to the beach?

This preacher’s penchant for metaphor aptly encapsulates the sentiment of many pastors of all denominations in this study that everyday black concerns usually fail to faze the leadership of black organizations, ostensibly in existence to champion everyday black concerns! Indeed, a COGIC pastor from Oklahoma City stated that black civic organizations like the NAACP:

... are still well-respected, but are not utilized in the manner that they were intended....they see others as out of the game.

According to this pastor, black civic organizations squander the opportunity to use their clout to mobilize African Americans behind issues of everyday concern. Instead, they

rely on elites and view the average black citizen as “out of the game”. This pastor paints a scene where black organizations could adopt a local movements center model (Morris 1988) of black politics by frequently utilizing the black masses to pursue grassroots issue advocacy rather than always burdening black political elites to address issues at the treetops. Black umbrella organizations are missing opportunities to galvanize around issues of concern to most African Americans. Any black agenda that claims to represent black interests without the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is an astroturf agenda according to three of the COGIC pastors.

A pastor of a large urban church in Milwaukee suggested that the “grassroots is most effective” for addressing black problems. While he considered the SCLC and the NAACP as effective in some areas, he also upheld local political action committees and clergy caucuses as equally effective as the national umbrella organizations. If black organizations are deemed most efficacious at the local level, how did these black pastors view national black political leaders?

We Have No Leaders?

When asked to identify the most effective black political leader or leaders, the responses of pastors varied. Some pastors readily embraced the notion that the black community has readily identifiable leaders while others challenged the idea that the black community has anointed individuals to lead the political charge. Black pastors commentary about black leaders reflects the subtle shades inherent in black communalism. Indeed, some pastors challenged the idea that black people have leaders on the premise that white people are never queried about whom their leader might be.

Others resist the notion of a black leader as it implies an exceptionalism whereby African Americans, more than other groups, *need* some sort of savior leadership.

A pastor from the South detected few effective black political leaders who pushed black concerns:

Some of the Old Guard [Jesse Jackson] are trying to help people. There is no (single) person today on the horizon who is concerned about the black community specifically. Senator Obama is just talking about issues; he's not concerned about the black community. He's just got a platform. No one can say 'call this man or this woman who talks to the people; to the grassroots'.

This pastor challenges the idea that Senator Barack Obama, who had not yet declared his candidacy at the time of this interview, really cared about the black community. A pastor from Los Angeles asserted that black political leaders are susceptible to corruption by the government. This fear of corruption is consonant with the COGIC emphasis upon individual sanctification. Speaking of Obama, this pastor doubted the candidate's ability to maintain his moral ground while in office:

(Obama) knows the ropes and the ground rules, but if he gets in the position, he's going to go on the other side. A man has to be really sold out to be able to speak out and stand for truth...Our nation doesn't want that.

In one swath, this pastor displays the view that government represents the "other side". It is not a large leap to infer that the dichotomy that this pastor speaks of is the sacred-secular divide. Additionally, the pastor implies that personal morality is not a criterion that most Americans employ when selecting a President. The view that power will corrupt even a black presidential candidate who claims to have Christian faith is reminiscent of a Star Wars struggle between good and evil.

A pastor from the Midwest refused to name any *single* black leader as most effective, maintaining instead that black leadership is situational:

There are a number of effective leaders in various venues. There is a window in which black leaders are anointed. A window and a mantle.

This pastor contended that evaluations of black leadership should be venue-specific. Yet, he also hinted that black leadership implies more than professional expertise or training. This pastor's claim that leaders are "anointed" and have a "mantle" suggests that black leaders serve as if appointed by God for a specific mission. The "window" suggests that black leaders need to be sensitive to timing—namely, God's timing. Service to the broader black community is an important facet of black communalism. Black leaders, including black politicians, are called to a high standard.

A pastor from the Southwest also suggested that there is no black political leader per se, but rather, a panoply of black leaders emerge contingent upon context or the times:

Black leadership is situational. It's not (Louis) Farrakhan or Jesse Jackson. Condoleezza Rice has a powerful opportunity and can provide more insight than most black political leaders.

Perhaps the most profound lesson to be drawn is that communalism need not infer consensus concerning black political leadership. Indeed, if black leadership is contextual and contingent upon power vacuums, as some pastors here have suggested here, it is perhaps logical for black pastors to wear many hats, including political ones. Prophetic pragmatism may dictate that aligning with Republicans on some issues, like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, and Democrats on other issues. But since the black church is not monolithic, black prophets must be sensitive to windows of opportunity where the times and the political winds converge (Kingdon 1984).

Discrimination and the Faith-Based and Community Initiative

Both the Congressional Black Caucus and the NAACP object to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative upon the grounds that the policy allows participant religious venues to may “discriminate in hiring”. Broad objection to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative by black political powers-that-be, however, defies mass black public opinion. An overwhelming 81% of African Americans support the Faith-Based and Community Initiative (Pew Study 2001).

When queried as to whether or not the Faith-Based Initiative was related to civil rights or involved discrimination, four of five pastors answered in the negative. Some pastors articulated the Bush administration position that religious providers of social services who receive government funds need to reserve the right to hire individuals consistent with their religious vision. Some pastors pointed to the fact that the request for proposals was open to all religious providers of social services, consistent with the ideals of civil rights. A pastor from the South stated:

Any organization that is religious can apply for funds, any religion. They may try to screen out unfavorable organizations and that is discrimination. (emphasis in original)

This pastor disagrees with the Congressional Black Caucus’ line that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative represents discrimination in hiring, but presciently points to the fact that there is *potential* for discrimination in the grant application process if the Faith-Based powers that be have declared certain religions unacceptable a priori. As a Baptist pastor pointed out, if the Church of Cannabis is automatically suspect, discrimination is part and parcel of the Initiative.

A pastor from a small congregation in Oklahoma detected neither civil rights implications nor discrimination in the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

If anything, there is an indirect relation to civil rights. There is a need to redefine (government) terminology to respect the tenets of the faith. But really, it's not a civil rights issue.

This pastor detects discrimination in a federal system that previously excluded religious applicants for social service grants solely on the basis of the religious nature of the policy venue. The policy architects and zealots of the Faith-Based Initiative certainly seek to redress this grievance.

A pastor of a 6,000 member church that receives Faith-Based funding agreed that the Faith-Based Initiative has little to do with civil rights:

As for the Congressional Black Caucus' claim about discrimination in hiring, the EEOC has nothing to do with religion. (The discrimination claim) is not fair because (the Faith-Based and Community Initiative) set a standard and gave (churches) the option to participate. You cannot assume that (churches) will participate in something not proven. You don't put an illiterate person over your reading program. Setting standards...there is nothing wrong with setting standards. The church has a right to say: 'here are our standards for expected outcomes'.

This pastor avers that churches delivering social service programs with Faith-Based funds deserve the opportunity to demonstrate the efficacy of their specific programs—administered according to standards and staffed by individuals of their choice—in accordance with the general design and goals of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Otherwise, churches with grants from Faith-Based and Community Initiative represent mere repositories for government programs rather than unique creators of public value in the policy venue of the black church.

Two pastors of small churches in Los Angeles agreed that there was little to no linkage between the Faith-Based Initiative and civil rights. One pastor, however, provided a blueprint for *equality* in the dissemination of faith-based funds:

(There is) so much money...to be given away but (the government) limits who (they) give it to. A record of every church (should be kept). To do (the Faith-Based and Community Initiative) right would be to divide (money) among churches down the line.

This pastor believes that parity should prevail in the dissemination of faith-based funds across churches and does not agree that discrimination in hiring as posed by the Congressional Black Caucus is an issue. His major desire is that the government consider the grant proposals of small and large churches equally with regard to faith-based programming. Ironically, while this pastor supports a Robin Hood approach to distributing Faith-Based funds, he opposes the Initiative, leaving the researcher to conclude that this pastor is likely much more pragmatic in his approach to the Initiative—willing to accept funds if he felt that large churches were not favored over smaller ones.

A COGIC pastor from California suggested possible race favoritism in the impetus for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative:

I believe black churches should stay out (of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative). (Bush) didn't have black churches in view because he looked at the fact that white churches would benefit.

This pastor views the Faith-Based Initiative as a way that President Bush can reward his evangelical base with government funds for their pet projects. Thus, the hype in the black community about the Faith-Based Initiative, in his estimation, is much exaggerated given his view that black churches will not see the bulk of funds. But black churches and related organizations (e.g. the National Center for Faith-Based Initiative) have been among some of the biggest beneficiaries of Faith-Based largesse to date.

A pastor from Milwaukee detected discrimination on the Faith-Based Initiative to the extent that black churches lack access to governmental channels: “It is unfair and discriminatory that there is no access for churches to the government (channels that

would help facilitate funding).” The issue of minority access to governmental largesse is certainly a reasonable consideration. A great deal of research illustrates the difficulty of penetrating iron triangles and policy networks in the governmental subsystem. If established interest groups, congressional committees, and bureaucrats “own” certain issue areas (Hecl 1978), it is doubtless true that individual black churches have an uphill battle to fight as they seek recognition for faith-based dollars.

A pastor from Milwaukee also intuitively senses a racial motivation underlying opposition to the Faith-Based Initiative:

Many 501c3's have been working with government for years, but now (the Faith-Based and Community Initiative) is an issue since black churches have come to the table.

His belief that some opponents have an inherent distrust of black churches delving into program delivery may be well-founded. For example, some 65% of Catholic Charities budget comes from government grants (Monsma 1996). Indeed, the government has a long history of funding faith-based non-profits and other nongovernmental organizations. Thus, this pastor rightly wonders why the governmental buck should pass over the *black* church. He senses an attitude of racial paternalism on the part of those who are opposed to the black church receiving Faith-Based funds.

Government

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative is consonant with devolution and other trends in federalism. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative brings COGIC pastors' views of government to the foreground.

Sphere Sovereignty

Does the Faith-Based and Community Initiative compromise the sovereignty of black churches in their own sphere? Some black pastors question whether the autonomy that is generally accorded religious institutions will give way to regulation of civil society—normally, a zone of freedom. A recurrent fear with regard to the church as a policy venue was a loss of autonomy by the church and a consonant rise in government oversight of the institution as well as of institutional behavior.

Despite the fine print of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative that avers church autonomy will remain intact, many pastors postulate an inevitable governmental desire for input into church administration of programs once the government holds the purse strings for those church programs under the Faith-Based rubric:

I am not opposed (to the FBCI) but (I am) cautious because whoever gives you money wants some measure of control. It can be a slippery slope where the church's direction is determined by government who says you are going to do *this*. (emphasis in original)

Indeed, a pastor expressed concern that accepting faith-based funds would lead to government attempts to control the church and to impose an alternative agenda to that of the local church:

(The Faith-Based Initiative) is another trick of the enemy (Satan) because once you receive their money, you will be controlled by their agenda. This money can sidetrack you from the word of God. (Bush's) objective is...to get it where the state can govern the church.

A different pastor from Los Angeles registered his fear that government money corrupting the province of the church: "Once the church attempts to finance (programs) from him (President Bush), church and state come together. Church and state funds commingle. Government can control the church then."

A pastor from Milwaukee explained how some pastors might reconcile fear of government control with the pursuit of governmental funds:

To try to insulate ourselves from the risk of government control of their church, some people set up independent corporations related to the church.

While Baptist pastors expressed the image in terms of a revolving door where the government enters and exits the church at will, this tension between fear of government control and insulation against the same is pronounced across all three denominations. For example, a pastor suggested that partnering with the government always means a slippery slope whereby the government regulation of finances will affect church behavior on *all* decisions, including those unrelated to faith-based initiatives:

I went to a seminar on funding. It's illegal to receive an offering without a 501c3 set up. There is a law being passed at the national level that you would need to turn in a report of your finances every 3 months. It's illegal to give a pastor appreciation service. A love offering is illegal now. The state is trying to eliminate the free will offering.

It is not uncommon in the black church for congregations to collect a special offering, often called a love offering, for the purpose of an honorarium for guest speakers.

Furthermore, many black churches hold a special service to laud the pastor, frequently bestowing him or her with gifts and an offering collected specifically for the purpose of the event. This pastor lamented what he views as a decline in the ability of churches to decide how to spend money and how to shower blessings on community members without fear of reprisal by the IRS.

For those who partake of faith-based funds, requirements as to how the money might be used are deemed onerous by some: "There is a cap on what you can and cannot do with the money." While realizing the necessity of parameters for government money, this pastor expressed frustration that the Faith-Based Initiative could mean government

influence upon what is normally an independent decision-making process in a sphere that epitomizes American civil liberties.

A pastor from a small church in Los Angeles illustrated his belief that government is already encroaching upon religious free expression from the pulpit and will continue to do so under the Faith-Based and Community Initiative:

I'm really opposed (to gay marriage). (The government is) already telling us what we can't say in the pulpit. It's a serious problem. Pastors will be going to jail if this continues.

This pastor's view that the content of pulpit messages have become the focus of intense scrutiny is not unfounded. Reports that the American Civil Liberties Union has sued some churches for endorsing President Bush and the Iraq war have filtered throughout the religious community. Under the Bush administration, however, Christian churches were scarcely, if ever, the targets of such probing. Yet, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative raises the specter that Big Brother will be watching not just Faith-Based programming, but the pulpit as well.

Trust

A pastor from Oklahoma indicated that his *support* for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is predicated upon a *distrust* of government:

In my denomination, we have COGIC Charities, not unlike Catholic Charities. Government is not a dependable resource. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative (brings) an awareness that the public has lost faith in the government.

This pastor views the black church as the most reliable and dependable venue for helping black people help themselves. In his view, government programs like welfare are unreliable and fail to meet the "real needs of people". The Faith-Based and Community Initiative represents government's realization of its own ineptness and is recognition that

civil society can do a better job. Interestingly, this is quite a different story than that told by some Baptist pastors who detect in the Initiative a plot to kill welfare by dumping it on the back of the black church.

Analysis

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative highlights the confluence of race, religion, and politics. The Bush administration's efforts to "rally the armies of compassion" resonate with many African Americans. Nonetheless, the Congressional Black Caucus and the NAACP are primarily opposed to this plan. What can scholars glean from the policy images of pastors of the Church of God in Christ about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative?

The pastors interviewed here emphasized the social and spiritual benefits of the Initiative as well as the potential pitfalls inherent in the implementation of the Initiative. The theme of policy venue was salient for one primary reason: it makes practical sense that the only African American leaders with a natural constituency (Reed 1986) should deliver programs that meet needs. Even if President Bush has peddled the Initiative to the black community merely to garner votes, the principle of faith-based transformations via programs outweighs fear that political pandering is the primary intention. The majority view among these COGIC pastors is that the Faith-Based Initiative is more divinely inspired than politically motivated—as one Baptist pastor stated, even if President Bush's sole reason for proffering the Initiative to black churches was to garner black votes, God still sent the Initiative as a way to bless black churches via government money for programs and services.

The most intriguing findings of these policy images, however, lie not in whether a

particular pastor endorses or opposes the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, but rather in their depictions of the policy as it relates to the five frames. Indeed, the policy images depict a scenario far different from the one offered by the Congressional Black Caucus and the NAACP. Three of the five COGIC pastors interviewed here viewed the church and the state as natural allies. Each of the three offered scriptural justifications for and instances of partnerships between church and state. Welfare and social services per this view is a co-responsibility of church and state. The walls of separation are paper thin for these COGIC pastors. Interestingly, even the two pastors who declared that church and state should be separate admitted that they encourage civic responsibility from the pulpit. Further, these two “separationists” still believed that Christian morality should influence public policy and that Christians should run for public office. Thus, it appears that their repugnance for church and state was more a disavowal of pastors who endorse candidates from the pulpit.

If there are no constitutional barriers to partnering with government, do these COGIC pastors view the political party of the President as a barrier to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative? Of all three denominations explored in the broader project, the pastors of the Church of God in Christ are the most forthcoming about the congruence of their beliefs with the social planks of the Republican platform. One pastor who admits the Republicans are off base on affirmative action believes that the *principle* of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative trumps any misgivings about the *party* of the President.

If the principle of the Initiative is on target, what of the black church as a venue of policy implementation? These pastors all agree that the black church represents an appropriate venue of program delivery. Even those who feared tension between the

fundamental spiritual mission of the church and the technical mission of programs admitted that of all venues in civil society, the church is best positioned to address community needs. Indeed, all five COGIC pastors admitted that human needs dictate a social service role for the church at times. The truism that the black church is a semi-involuntary institution (Ellison and Sherkat 1995b) is affirmed by these pastors' desire to meet communal needs in addition to the spiritual function of the church.

If the black church is a prime target of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, how did race figure in COGIC pastors' policy images? Three of the five pastors viewed the Initiative as consonant with black self-help. Their policy images about personal morality sounded akin to President Clinton's calls for welfare reform. These COGIC pastors had little praise for the NAACP or for black political leaders. Indeed, none accepted the NAACP and the CBC's contention that some provisions of the Initiative are discriminatory and two of the five discussed how the government discriminates against black churches since they are finally at the governmental table on an equal basis with other providers.

So what is COGIC pastors' view of government from across the table? While the Faith-Based and Community Initiative acknowledges the efficacy of civil society for confronting and combating social ills, there is some fear of Big Brother. Indeed, the tales of government usurping church autonomy have nothing to do with the constitutionality of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, but rather illustrate fear that when government bucks flow to religious institutions, heightened scrutiny of religious activities will be the result. Thus, while all of these COGIC pastors view the church as an appropriate policy venue, almost all of these pastors—even those who support the Faith-Based and

Community Initiative, view it as a mixed blessing, especially as it relates to the autonomy of the church as an institution of civil society.

African Methodist Episcopal Church

The African Methodist Episcopal Church, Incorporated (AME), organized in 1794, claims a membership of 2 million in 7,000 congregations across the world (www.ame-church.com/about-us/history.php). The denomination's doctrine reflects the broader Methodist tradition of individual belief with separation from the mainline predicated on historical necessity rather than on doctrinaire differences. The church is Episcopal in terms of the structure of the church polity and the order and style of worship. The mission of the AME reflects the social gospel tradition of its mainline Protestant predecessor.

At every level of the Connection (corporate church) and in every local church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church shall engage in carrying out the spirit of the original Free African Society, out of which the AME Church evolved: that is, to seek out and save the lost, and serve the needy through a continuing program of (1) preaching the gospel, (2) feeding the hungry, (3) clothing the naked, (4) housing the homeless, (5) cheering the fallen, (6) providing jobs for the homeless, (7) administering to the needs of those in prisons, hospitals, nursing homes, asylums and mental institutions, senior citizens' homes; caring for the sick, the shut-in, the mentally and socially disturbed, and (8) encouraging thrift and economic advancement. (www.ame-church.com/about-us/mission.php)

The AME focus is unique among black churches given a particular emphasis upon social justice. As the first of all black denominations, the AME church is the blueprint for the black church as policy venue. The history of the denomination was recounted without provocation from the interviewer by every pastor in the sample.

The history of the AME, as recounted by a denominational official from Oklahoma, was told almost verbatim by every other pastor in the sample:

In 1787, a group of Africans or individuals of African descent in Philadelphia at St George's Methodist church. They were not allowed to worship with dignity and respect, and as a result they broke off from the church and formed the Free African Society. Out of the Free African Society was born the African Methodist Episcopal Church. One of the basic tenets is self-help and education...Our first schools were basically in churches, in sanctuaries of churches where slaves and former slaves taught themselves to read and write...and also their offspring.

The Free African Society was committed to mutual aid for all African Americans. Self-help in the past and self-help in the present is a hallmark of AME. Before Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X espoused self-determination, the AME paved the prophetic path.

Consonant with its genesis as a venue of black self-help, the AME emphasized rooting out racial injustice in the United States from its nascence. The denomination was not content to endure abuse from the system. A well-known pastor in the denomination from Los Angeles stated: "The AME is unique because it began as protest against racial injustice." A pastor from Virginia stated that her decision to join the AME and become a pastor was predicated on the denomination's history of protest: "The AME denomination as you may know is the only mainstream denomination not founded on a theological basis. It was founded on a sociological issue--that being racial injustice, and that was my passion." While it was not founded on a theological basis, the AME does emphasize a black liberation theology. In addition to the denomination's rich history, black liberation theology serves as an additional anchor for AME activity today.

Findings

There are seven pastors in the AME sample from California, Oklahoma, Virginia, and New York with churches ranging in size from 250 to 20,000. One California church, located in the area depicted in the film "Boyz in the Hood", is home to one of the infamous Crip gangs. In this locale, 8,000 children live in foster care and few families

own homes given that the average home cost is \$500,000. The pastor of this church holds four advanced degrees and was an optometrist and community organizer before being called to the ministry.

His church is clearly an important policy venue that serves many functions. Unfortunately, given its location, the beautiful stucco building is surrounded by iron gates. In the foyer of the church, pamphlets advertise a variety of things including job openings with Auto Zone and on the assembly line of Toyota; health issues like diabetes among African Americans; mortgages; Free Tuition at Harvard and the working world. Perhaps in conjunction with Black History Month (the interview is conducted in February), there are two framed posters at the front of the sanctuary—one concerning the Harlem Renaissance and the other about African American Women. The history of the denomination is emphasized as a poster of the past Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church grace the wall in the foyer. This monument to the past is juxtaposed with the high-tech present by the presence of a kiosk located in the same foyer which plays advertisements of businesses (presumably those of church members) and other information like healthy recipes. In this pastor's office, a picture on the wall depicts him leading a protest in Washington D.C. outside of the Capitol Building for health benefits. This black pastor is a political elite and his church is a policy venue.

The exterior of an AME church in Oklahoma is adorned with stained glass windows and punctuated by well-manicured flowerbeds and burns. The location of the church on a large corner lot on the northeast side of Oklahoma City reflects historical patterns of residential segregation. While this historic building is embedded in the core of the black community, some other black churches in Oklahoma City are located on the

edge of the black community, easily accessible to upwardly mobile middle-class commuters from the suburbs. In contrast to black churches located in the upper-middle class section of the black community, a city bus stop sits near the corner of this church. There were 10-12 cars in the church parking lot. One was a van from the Community Action Agency for Senior Transportation. Just as I ponder whether this might be associated with the ministries of this church, I notice a Head Start center connected to this church. An abandoned public school sits on the opposite corner of the city bus stop. Clearly this AME church has been, and perhaps remains, a hub of activity in this area of Oklahoma City.

Inside of this church hangs a banner with the motto of the African Methodist Episcopal church: God Our Father, Christ our Redeemer, Man Our Brother. Inside of the church in an office hung an old sign (it appeared to be 20-30 years old) encouraging NAACP membership. The sign was in black and white and read as follows:

*Don't Be a Free Rider
Please!
Get off our back!
Freedom is Everybody's Business*

The church office also boasted a poster of the Bishops and Officers of the AME denomination. Three of the twenty-one bishops of the denomination are female—in spite of the AME motto that affirms the place of men in the church (man our brother), but not women.

Table 5.6 illustrates that 43% of AME pastors opposed to the Initiative were concerned that it threatens to silence the black prophetic voice against government injustice.

Table 5.6 AME Pastors' Policy Images of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative by Support Level

	Support (n=3)	Yes...but (n=1)	Oppose (n=3)	Total Codes by Frame
Constitutionality	14% (4)	14% (1)	6% (2)	7
Political Party	14 (4)	29 (2)	14 (5)	11
Policy Venue	61 (17)	43 (3)	34 (12)	32
Race	7 (2)	0	3 (1)	3
Government	4 (1)	14 (1)	43 (15)	17
Total Codes by Support Level	28	7	35	

Related to the frame of policy venue, the majority of images of those who supported the Initiative concerned the notion that procedural and administrative ambiguities would be associated with the implementation of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. These pastors do not view the church as an inherently inappropriate venue for social service delivery, but they believe that the church does not necessarily need the government to do so. As such, detractors view the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a symbolic and insufficient gesture. While opponents are firmly convinced that the prophetic voice will be threatened by the Initiative, the 63% of AME pastors in this study who supports of their support for the Initiative are sensitive to this concern rooted in the AME's history as a leader in black protest.

Constitutionality

***The Faith-Based and Community Initiative is not a church-state issue.
AME Pastor from New York.***

Liberation Precludes Separation

This pastor's disavowal of a church-state problematic in regard to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is a sentiment shared by every AME pastor in this sample. This astounding level of agreement, even by opponents of the Initiative, that there is no church-state debate to be had on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative perhaps stems from the wide embrace of liberation theology in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Given that AME pastors are required to have seminary training, they are not ignorant of the First Amendment, but rather, view church and state as distinct, yet blended categories. Just as one can speak of the powers of the three branches of the United States government as separate yet blended, so can one summarize AME pastors' views of church and state.

A pastor from Los Angeles who opposes the Initiative explained how church-state separation is suspect from the standpoint of liberation theology:

Protest/equality is part of ministry. Separation of church and state is not an issue for (the AME). The gospel speaks to the whole person...If you espouse liberation theology, exactly what we espouse, there are social implications. It is not just an individual experience. The gospel is experienced individually and lived out in community and therefore, (there is) a responsibility to politics. Jesus' ministry was Luke 4:16-18: to set at liberty those who are captive. What his ministry is about is clear as He begins His earthly ministry. He comes back to His hometown, Nazareth. Preach the gospel to the poor. Heal the broken-hearted. Deliver sight to the blind and set free those who are captive. This is the beginning of His public ministry—the basis for liberation theology. Politics comes under the purview of the gospel. How do you transform systemic sin? Through politics—a constructive way to address it.

In liberation theology, Jesus is an explicit political figure. To the extent that AME pastors, and other black pastors, embrace this theology and live out its practical implications, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is not rendered automatically suspect on constitutional grounds. Rather, the church is a natural venue for politics and the state, in all its fullness, is a proper target of and tool for the message of liberation.

Similarly, an AME pastor from Virginia explained that while she has issues with the Initiative given what she deems a partisan intent, she does not object to the Initiative because it violates a wall of separation between the church and government:

I think the church needs to be involved in politics I think that in spite of the separation of church and state, politics is going to be impacted by religion and the church and I don't there is way to differentiate between the two. I don't think you can separate your political views from your theological views from your sociological views from your anthropology.

While this pastor reiterates the view of the previous pastor that theology affects politics, she adds a measure of incredulity. Indeed, she finds untenable the notion that individuals can easily disentangle the spheres of church and state given that each of her congregant's is a citizen. In a denominational milieu like the AME where Jesus is Liberator of not only the spiritually oppressed, but also the socially, politically, and economically oppressed, the Initiative is not out of place. In the AME, the church is necessarily a political institution.

An AME denominational official from Oklahoma City explained not only the philosophical reasons that the denomination does not hold strict disestablishment views, but also pontificated on historical anecdotes that demonstrate the utility of the tradition:

Some folks would say that the church should not be involved in politics and that there should be a distinction between church and politics. But when you look at the history of the African Methodist Episcopal church, the church and politics are intertwined. When you look at the great leaders of our country you will discover

that the basic foundation of them has been the black church. Floyd Flake, United States Representative, grew up in the black church young people's division and is in the ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal church and has become one of the great national leaders in our country...And the church has been a meeting place, not only for civic and for social, but for all political types of rallies. We've organized politically. Martin Luther King Jr. was a companion of the African Methodist Episcopal church. Montgomery, Selma—in all of those cities, the African Methodist Episcopal church was a base of operation for the Congress of Racial Equality and for Martin Luther King and his movement toward nonviolence and civil rights. So the black church has and will continue to be a stronghold for those of us who have aspirations politically as well as spiritually.

This pastor vividly illustrates the importance of the AME Church as an incubator of civic skills, both historically and presently. The fact that AME churches represent *intentional* political bases, as opposed to political venues by *default*, is an important facet of the embrace of AME pastors of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative.

It Takes a Political and Religious Village...

A pastor from Oakland believes that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative does not violate the principle of church-state separation because the Bible explicitly dictates public-private partnerships by example.

My view is Nehemiah 4:6--The city could build the wall because the people had the mind to work. It takes both politicians and ministers coming together...There should be more collaboration between politicians and pastors. Not just during election season but they should be visible at other times as well. Real collaboration. True to their word on both sides (in terms of promises of collaboration).

The crumbled wall around Jerusalem could not be built without the explicit mingling of God's chosen people with the government. It was the people of God who rebuilt the city's wall and guaranteed the protection of the city-state. Likewise, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative represents a commingling of the pulpit and politics in a way conducive to rebuilding broken lives and tattered communities. This pastor believes that so long each sphere, church and state, upholds her end of the bargain, the Initiative, and

other such collaboration can work.

Political Party

Initially, (the Faith-Based and Community Initiative) was a [political] effort to reach out to the black community. But the good result exceeds any motive (Republicans) had. Like Joseph said, man meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. AME pastor from California.

Purchasing Loyalty and Claiming Credit

Not unlike their Baptist counterparts, several AME pastors sense an electoral connection (Mayhew 1974) at the heart of compassionate conservatism. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative certainly afforded President Bush the opportunity to pursue the three activities that characterize re-election—advertising, credit-claiming, and position taking.

The Faith-Based Initiative as generally described is obscene because it is a political ploy on the part of the existing conservative administration by pandering to churches, buying off that loyalty. It's all about trying to mollify [the black church]...I don't see the fundamental legitimacy [of the Initiative] other than to award supporters of a conservative agenda while at the same time weakening services of those in our community.

This pastor from South Los Angeles opposed the Initiative, viewing it as little more than an effort to advertise Republican ideals in a black church community that is largely loyal to the Democratic party. Furthermore, he believes that the Initiative will hurt rather than help black communities given that it will likely go to conservative churches, perhaps removing government grants from the general pool and dispensing them to other venues with less critical problems.

A pastor from Oklahoma City believed that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is as much about claiming credit for having done something for black constituents as it is about getting votes from black constituents:

... the Bush administration's approach is not for all of its citizens in America but its' to do a little that the portfolio will show that they did something

Similarly, a pastor from Virginia asserts that the Initiative is about power and promoting the policy of compassionate conservatism as much or more than it is about the black church.

This is a poor attempt. It is not to benefit the black community. It is to help those in power get more power. Black churches are a parenthetical thought. It is a way to legalize what they wanted...The intent was not to empower black churches but the Religious Right.

Indeed, rather than appealing to black churches, this pastor believes that the Initiative is more of a boon to the base of the Republican party than it is to the black church.

Putting Politics to Good Use

One pastor from Los Angeles agrees with all of the sentiments concerning the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as teeming with political objectives, but dismisses them as irrelevant in the wake of the implementation of the policy:

Initially, (the Faith-Based and Community Initiative) was an [political] effort to reach out to the black community. But the good result exceeds any motive (Republicans) had. Like Joseph said, man meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.

Former Congressman Floyd Flake, a Democrat, served in Congress from 1986 to 1997 and was a model of bipartisanship. He also dismisses those who decry the Initiative as simply a "Republican thing":

A lot of things are dismissed because of party. Like welfare reform...if Bush had done it (rather than Clinton), black folks would be marching to the White House!

While encouraging pastors to rise above the political fray, Flake understands why some black pastors feel disappointed that the Initiative has not lived up to its hype and he admits that their malaise is due in part to politics. For example, Flake recounts how

President Bush's failure to make an appearance at the April 2001 Summit on the Initiative--held by J.C. Watts expressly for black pastors--"show(ed) the true intentions" of the President was to merely drum up black votes (in those pastors' eyes). If President Bush's own meeting with a select group of black pastors in January 2002 was intended to counteract such concerns, Flake states that it seemed perfunctory, like a political "rubber stamp" to many black pastors. Flake supports the Initiative but nevertheless believes that, "From the beginning, it was not funded well enough." Flake knows the reality of the Initiative and he understands the rhetoric about politics, but believes that the price of admission is worth it for the black church.

Policy Venue

Young people have never been free to go to a dance where they are free to dance. I hope to create an environment here where young people can dance.
AME pastor from Los Angeles.

Always Helping

As a venue, the black church has always been in the business of helping black people. The pastor quoted above is interested in creating a safe space in his gang-ridden neighborhood of Los Angeles where "a kid can be a kid" in the same vein as the famous Toys-R-Us slogan. The black church in the AME view, is the center of community given that liberation theology compels AME believers to move into politics and community armed with the rhetoric of prophetic justice. AME pastors are active in service to their communities. A pastor from the Oakland area stated: "We have a Legal Ministry where we give people opportunities to clean up their record. We partner with a legal aid organization here." The creativity in ministry and desire to serve as an essential policy venue is a salient theme throughout these interviews.

Rev. Dr Floyd Flake's church in Jamaica Queens, New York hosts a bevy of programs including a school, a community development corporation, a home ownership program, a clinic, and a job preparation program to name only a handful. Flake stated that this flurry of activity is "...rooted in the AME mission and model. Churches are responsible for sustainability of communities." Flake went on to state that the Bush administration targeted the black church as a prime policy venue showcasing the potential power of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative precisely because the AME and countless other black churches perform vital community and social services as a matter of course.

The government approached us because of what we were *already* doing, we didn't approach them... (The Faith-Based Initiative) is making government a partner and leveraging government resources.

Rev. Dr. Flake views the Initiative as an opportunity for the church to make a good business decision and leverage resources in a manner that allows the venue to do what it does best. Flake calls others to deal in the reality that the black church is a natural target for the Bush administration rather than deal in what he terms "Faith-based rhetoric" concerning the "real goal" of the Initiative.

It is a reality when government seeks to partner with church. It is a reality when churches make government responsive.

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative in Flake's view is a two-way street. Whether or not other pastors believe that the Initiative had a political intent, this former Congressman views it as a way to make government aware of and responsive to communal needs.

While former Congressman Flake supports the Faith-Based and Community Initiative on the basis that the AME church has always been a catalyst for and a vehicle

of community sustainability, a pastor from Oklahoma City opposes the Initiative because the AME church, in his view, has always used church dollars for community development and uplift:

And so as a whole (AME churches) have been asked to refrain from (the Faith-Based Initiative) because we've always been in the field of help, in the field of mission, in the field of lifting up our communities in every aspect using our own dollars and cents to do that. Create businesses which create jobs, educate our people which creates job opportunities as well as persons to begin and start their own businesses.

This pastor claims to have read a position paper from the denomination advising against partaking in the Initiative, even though several prominent pastors in the denomination, including a former member of Congress, have benefitted from Faith-Based grants. A different pastor in the sample indicates that the AME supports the Initiative to the extent that it leaves the decision of whether or not to pursue funds up to the discretion of individual congregations.

Beyond Chicken Dinners

Like the Baptist and COGIC denominations, AME pastor are also driven to apply for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative by the very pragmatic need for funding.

We've discovered that we can no longer run churches on chicken and fish dinners. That's one of the realities...grandma and grandpa were able to do that and do it effectively but economic times have changed and I've even suggested we can continue to sell chicken dinners but what economic development and faith-based means is we step out beyond the chicken dinners.

Many of the churches in this sample deal with serious issues ranging from high rates of HIV/AIDS in the neighborhoods surrounding the church to gangs to foster children. The problems of the constituencies and communities of black churches require significant funds and many pastors see in the Initiative an opportunity. One pastor from the Oakland area believes that the willingness of a pastor to pursue funds is correlated with age:

Pastor Floyd Flake has done it. Others say no. It boils down to the personality of the pastor. The type of era the pastor is brought up under makes the difference. Age 65 and up pastors' mentality of chicken dinners and BBQ dinners versus the new generation that is more education and more business mentality.

In fact, Floyd Flake agrees with this pastor's hunch that a generational gap may be operative with regard to who applies for funds under the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Flake maintains that while "old school civil rights leaders" give the Initiative a "bad wrap", the new school like Harold Ford Jr. and Barack Obama seem to feel no sense of dissociation between the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and black interests.

Size is No Object

While COGIC and Baptist pastors lament the fact that megachurches seem to get all the Faith-Based goodies, an AME denominational official believes that programmatic zeal and vision trump matters of size and budget:

So one congregation...caught this (vision). So they did an community assessment, a market analysis of the community where the church was located and they discovered a need for a local daycare center...the local church of less than 20 members caught the vision and so it doesn't matter how large the congregation, it's the will of the people in the congregation and the vision. And so we must continue to have vision so we can have a positive impact. So where they were struggling to make their budget, there's a vision that they can carry out to pay the budget. So that's a strong motivation.

According to this denominational official, size is less relevant than a strong desire to meet communal needs. The AME is remarkable for a dearth of messages about small churches being the step-children and large churches being the favored children of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Perhaps the salience and success of the Floyd Flake model of community development—regardless of his megachurch status—and the persistence of stories of small church triumph like the one recounted above soften the picture of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a wedge between large and small

churches.

Needs Yes, Faith-Based No

While there is undoubtedly consensus about the AME church as a natural policy venue, there existed wide disparity between those who support and oppose the Faith-Based and Community Initiative about its ability to meet needs. One pastor from Oklahoma who supports the Initiative maintained that it helps the church meet needs: “As a body we endorse anything that will help us with the ability to minister the gospel.” Conversely, a pastor from Los Angeles avers that the Initiative actually stifles creativity in meeting extant needs in black church communities:

Where I sit, the needs are great and scratching places that don’t itch doesn’t make sense ... There need to be conversations about unmet needs. This is not what is currently in vogue, but we are moving to go there. Congress (are you)...following the lead about needs of the community here?

This pastor expresses the view that while the church meets a variety of needs, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative limits the flexibility of churches in meeting this broad range of needs. If Congress and the President followed the lead of the policy venue of the black church, government would know precisely which places itch and thereby aid in addressing “unmet needs” that the black church encounters everyday.

Fine Print and Other Hurdles

AME pastors are like Baptist and COGIC pastors in their fear of the administrative hurdles associated with the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. One pastor from Oklahoma City who opposes the Initiative states that the legal requirements associated with government contracts prevent many pastors from partaking of Faith-Based largesse:

...many congregations are not a part of the Faith-Based Initiative because of those ambiguous policies that are written in the very fine print of the contracts.

This pastor goes on to state that while he realizes that administrative obstacles can be overcome, he nevertheless prefers not to go down the rabbit-hole that is receiving government funds:

...there are persons within our denomination, Floyd Flake is one of the primary and most outspoken advocates for it, who have shared with us ways to get around the limitations that the government tries to put on you as being a part of the Faith-Based Initiative...My experience as a norm, the black pastors as a norm, have shied away from faith-based initiatives because of the ambiguities, because of the limitations that are placed on those institutions when you sign up with them.

For some, while Floyd Flake demonstrates how Faith-Based money can work for communities, not even his charismatic encouragement can calm the fears of many pastors concerning partnerships with government.

A denominational official stated that each church needs to assess the utility of the Initiative from a cost-benefit perspective. Regulation is a cost, but perhaps the programmatic benefits outweigh the additional administrative burdens associated with taking government grants:

I believe you have to discover for yourself whether the cost-benefit whether the intervention of government outweighs the benefits you can gain from participating. It's an individual decision congregations and denominations have to make. And I think with government participation comes government regulation so we have to weigh the cost and decide whether to participate.

This pastor supports the Initiative but empathizes with other black pastors who ponder the dilemma posed by the policy--whether to apply for and accept Faith-Based grants.

There is a strong sense that taking free government money actually *costs* the black church. Yet, another pastor from California who supports the Initiative has little sympathy for those who are afraid of government peering into their books:

Some people say they are opposed because it would require you to dot all the i's and cross all the t's and keep money separate. Isn't church supposed to be accountable anyway?

In this pastor's view, to the extent that the black church operates a budget and is responsible to steward the contributions of its congregants, it should already be crossing i's and dotting t's. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative should not constitute an accounting nightmare for the black church, but a ministry miracle in the guise of additional funds to liberate the poor and oppressed of all stripes.

Holistic Healing versus Band-Aid on Wounds

The Bush administration's formulation of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative represents a hurdle to the acceptance of the policy for some black pastors. For example, a pastor from Oklahoma City admits that he would accept the Initiative were the policy designed more holistically:

Without question I know we would (support it) but again it appears it is not the design to be effective in a holistic approach to the needs of the citizens of America but to use a phrase to apply a band-aid to a wound that needs a major operation. ...those institutions such as the African American churches, particularly those mainline denominational churches, are not going to be satisfied with a band-aid approach.

While all AME pastors view the black church as a policy venue where critical needs can and should be addressed, some deem this effort at compassionate conservative as anemic at best. Especially where black churches serve as proverbial hospitals by healing the deep wounds of the black community, a Faith-Based and Community Initiative that only allows AME pastors to address symptoms is anathema. The venue of AME is concerned with a holistic approach that is not allowed by the Faith-Based and Community.

Pragmatism Prevails

Given that AME pastors view the church as an essential policy venue for the promulgation of liberation, two of them evinced a wait-and-see approach to the Initiative. While one pastor from Oklahoma opposes the Initiative in its current form, he admits that he could potentially embrace it contingent on the policy focus of the Initiative.

We have Head Start programs, we have various enterprises of day care centers and early childhood development centers but again the backbone of the African American community historically has been the black church and we intend to be in the mix with...people that would like to partner (with us) and understand the plight of the African American community...So if that means that at some point we can tie-in to a portion of the Faith-Based Initiative ideology and funding in order to do extended and major ministries; and (if) those funds and policies are conducive to what we believe needs to happen, then yes, we will (apply for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative).

Interestingly, this pastor opposes the Initiative but views government as a natural partner as evidenced by his church's Head Start program. While he believes that other programmatic areas of his church are ideal candidates for Faith-Based funding, he hesitates to embrace the Initiative given that the acceptance of funding could supplant the church's own view of what "needs to happen." This pastor's pragmatic compromise is to say no for now, but he plans to wait and see whether the Faith-Based and Community Initiative might be conducive to church goals.

A pastor from Virginia who has mixed feelings about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative admits that she cannot give the policy her full endorsement because President Bush's politics represent an obstacle to a full endorsement of the Initiative. She admits that the church is an essential policy venue and recounts how some of her friends in the ministry who also disagree with Bush nevertheless decide to embrace the policy: "Like-minded black pastors incorporate (the Initiative) but not with intentionality." This

pastor paints a causal story whereby those black pastors who embrace the Initiative do so not of a purposeful sense of solidarity with Bush, but rather out of pragmatism as Faith-Based funding fills a monetary void in the policy venue of the black church. From her perspective, black pastoral support of the Initiative is not intentional or principled, but born out of necessity. Her own pragmatic side says that even though she is suspicious of Bush, she would apply for the Initiative if funds were readily available: “I would apply if money was available. I talked about getting government funding (with some other pastors).” For this pastor, support of the Initiative boils down to a need for funding to deliver essential services and ministries. Her version of “show me the money” is less crude than pragmatic.

Pragmatism on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative prevails not only at the level of the local church, but also at the highest levels of the AME denomination. Interestingly, even in a hierarchical denomination where pastors serve at the behest of the denominational leadership and where the leadership issues position papers on policies like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, the decision of whether to apply for Faith-Based funding is under the purview of each congregation. A top-down denomination has dictated that each AME policy venue should determine whether to implement the Initiative given that a broad range of needs exist in the denomination contingent on the ministry context. In a manner of speaking, the denomination itself encourages a pragmatic stance on the Initiative. An AME official stated of the denominational stance on the Initiative:

Church leadership addresses the very issue you just raised. (AME churches) have to deal with the question [of whether to apply for the Initiative] from their own values, culture, background, and beliefs. We have to recognize people are different...Cecil Murray, is a retired AME pastor in Los Angeles California and

you see him all over the news as an advocate for the poor. He has at his church...\$ 40 million dollars of housing for the poor, programs for the homeless, programs for those individuals who are being released from prison...so, the evidence is clear that we can take advantage of faith-based programs and we can enhance our ministries... For example (a church in Oklahoma City) leases space to the Community Action Agency Daycare. That's a small initiative, but participating and partnering with agencies like that.

While pragmatism prevails, this AME official is cognizant that the Initiative allows for the creation of public value through church-state partnerships.

By Any Means Necessary

A pastor from California spoke of his rationale for unequivocally accepting President Bush's Faith-Based olive branch to the black church.

At the end of the day, I support President Bush. I support anything benefiting my community. The reality is that the Democrats for a long time took the black vote and black people for granted. I'm in favor of Faith-Based Initiatives because they serve a purpose...as Malcolm X said, by any means necessary...This church has sought funds and is finding grant writers. From the business standpoint, programs...need to be funded.

This pastor equates his own pragmatic support of the Initiative with support for President Bush! The remainder of the Bush agenda is less relevant than the fact that funds from the Faith-Based and Community Initiative can benefit the black community and other needy populations which his policy venue regularly serves. This pragmatic reason for support is that programs need funding and the Initiative represents just another option for that.

Consistent with prophetic pragmatism, this pastor believes the Initiative works in theory *because* it works it works in practice.

Black Politicians reach out to listen to concerns but still have their own agendas at the end of the day.

AME pastor from California.

Black Theology and Indigenous Help

Black theology is central to the AME church. Shorn of individual liberties and personhood, African Americans lived liberation theology long before it was made academic by James Cone's (1969) famous tome. This theology became the cornerstone of black communalism. Black self-help was an indispensable part of black thought early in the slaves' experience and black self-help resounds as a salient theme today in black religion and in black nationalist ideologies. A pastor from Los Angeles avers:

The State of Black America is not as poor as (blacks) purport to be. Why are we always on the giving side of the (economic) equation and not receiving? We have enough resources to control our own destiny. Why are we as a people not holding each other accountable? ...The nationalistic piece of the civil rights movement has been lost. A sense of self-help and development...that's what the Black Panthers and the Nation of Islam are about.

This pastor opposes the Faith-Based and Community Initiative primarily because he believes that it flies in the face of indigenous self-help. Given that black theology tends to fuse the sacred and secular dimensions, church-state partnerships do not pose an insuperable barrier; instead, this pastor questions whether black church acceptance of Faith-Based funds will divert attention from black communal goals and shine a spotlight on broader administration goals. This pastor deems black nationalism consistent with black theology and prefers that any services delivered via the venue of his church remain a black-funded and managed affair.

Black Organizations

Given the strong emphasis in the AME on black self-help, how do AME pastors view black civic organizations? A pastor from California lauds the NAACP at the national level, but views the church as most effective at the local level:

The NAACP is the most effective black political organization because it's the first one to come to mind when you think about black political organizations. Locally, it's not thriving, but nationally, yes. The church is the most effective local black organization.

This pastor states that the primacy of the NAACP renders it a force in the black community. Yet, this sense that the church is sovereign at the local level is an intriguing one. This implies that the church is an all-encompassing institution, laboring on the same types of issues as the NAACP does at the national level. This primacy of the black church in the black community is precisely why every black pastor in this study agrees that the black church is a natural venue for the implementation of the Faith-Based and Community. It is the racialized nature of the venue that renders it a haven for the least, the last, and the lost. The NAACP can use its legal arm to press the Supreme Court for civil rights concerns, but the black church can lean on the everlasting arms of God to address the pains of the human heart.

Black Politicians and Smart Politics

AME pastors appear to side primarily with Democrats, nevertheless, not unlike their Baptist and COGIC counterparts, they find affinity with Republicans on a number of issues. AME pastors also recognize that the interests of black churches on social issues are not always translated onto the agenda of black politicians who purportedly represent the black counterpublic: "Black Politicians reach out to listen to concerns but still have their own agendas at the end of the day. For example, Barack Obama favors civil

unions.” This Los Angeles area pastor notes a disconnect between the prevailing sentiment of the black church (and black citizens more broadly), and the agenda of black politicians. He supports the Initiative and had sharp critique of the Congressional Black Caucus for failing to support it as well.

Another pastor from Los Angeles has both praise and critique for the Congressional Black Caucus:

The CBC does a good job. So much, that it is under attack. Can black Republicans be a part? Other persons? The Black Caucus has not enlisted the faith community or the broader community in its efforts. It’s just a group of black legislators. That would be the place for a black agenda, but they have not leveraged their positions. They almost function in a vacuum. They work together and vote together, but what if they enlisted the church?

This pastor’s questions about Republicans and others joining the CBC are rhetorical questions intended to clarify that he defends black Democrats decision to remain separate, even though they come under attack for remaining so. This pastor does critique the Caucus for failing to include the black church in a broad-based effort to craft a black agenda. If the CBC had done so, it is likely that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative would be more prominent on their agenda than it was during the Bush administration.

Echoing the previous pastor’s lament, Rev. Dr. Floyd Flake believes that African Americans need to reexamine their politics given the tendency for black capture. This is a remarkable sentiment given the Rev. Dr. Flake benefitted from the black-Democrat nexus when he was elected and reelected to Congress for 5 terms: “There is a need for smart politics. It is foolish for 95 percent of black people to vote for one party.” This sentiment about black politics arose in the context of a discussion about how Congressman Flake’s black colleagues in the CBC swept the Faith-Based and

Community Initiative under the black agenda rug. In his estimation, if black people exercised “smart politics”, they could use their vote as leverage to get CBC support for issues like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and school vouchers that overwhelming majorities of the black public support.

Government

***I am uncomfortable eating Caesar’s food; drinking Caesar’s drink; and bowing down to (King) Nebuchadnezzar.
AME pastor from Los Angeles.***

Jesus Christ’s admonition to “render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and unto God what is God’s” is interpreted variably as a call for Christians to pay taxes or as a lesson for Christians to remain free from government entanglement, including voting or serving in public office. Whatever the interpretation of Jesus’ famous phrase, there is no disagreement that Caesar represents the government. This pastor paints a policy image of a Faith-Based program that requires the religious to engage in apostasy by worshipping the state. Can AME pastors eat the proverbial food of government and maintain enough distance to critique the government on fundamental questions of justice? Across all of the denominations in this study, AME pastors more explicitly evince a commitment to black liberation theology than Baptist and COGIC pastors. This is not to suggest that Baptist and COGIC pastors negate black liberation theology either in theory or practice, but the explicit AME embrace of liberation theology may mean that AME pastors are more committed to prophetic protest against government than other pastors.

Speaking Truth to Power

A prominent pastor from Los Angeles believes that the church calls government to task as an explicit function of ministry:

The prophetic aspect of ministry is speaking truth to power. Jesus quotes Isaiah, a prophet. There is not a distinction between human and civil rights.

He notes that the black church views human rights as indispensable, not merely civil rights. The prophetic voice is modeled on Jesus' example of pursuing justice for all of the oppressed on a range of issues, not merely on civil rights issues. This pastor seeks to combat the impression that the only appropriate time for the black church to engage politics was in the defense of black freedom.

If black prophets are to have a voice, they must be free to speak. A pastor from Oklahoma City avers that under the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, the government will seek to limit the voices of black pastors and the black church:

...(the government) want(s) to put locks on the mouths...of the black church [so] that we will not be the prophetic voice in the community calling into question and into judgment the powers that be. The very reason the black church as an institution garnered the support of the religious community all over America was to demand of the judicial system and the government to do right by all its citizens. Had the church not done that (African Americans) would still be in hundreds of years of slavery and depression...

This pastor expresses the very type of activity that the prophetic voice engages in and how it departs from regular political activism. This calling the government "to do right by all its citizens" invokes the liberation theology call to do justice to the oppressed. This pastor believes that the civil rights movement would have been insufficient, or perhaps nonexistent, without the black church. African Americans are free in part because black prophets spoke truth to power and the Faith-Based and Community Initiative could threaten prophetic freedom.

Given the historical role of the black prophet, an activist pastor from Los Angeles opposes the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as an effort to buy off the black church:

These initiatives with a faith component...are trying to buy off (the prophetic voice) by giving (the black church) irrelevant programs. I have concerns for anyone who puts money ahead of programs; profits ahead of being prophetic; and if churches that have had a critique of society are muted because of where money is coming from, I think they're selling out what our Lord and Savior represents.

This pastor berates any black pastor who accepts Faith-Based funds as a sell-out, lured by the promised of funding for programs. The black prophet who takes money from Pharaoh cannot, in this pastor's estimation, critique government when government is feeding him. The prophetic voice cannot co-exist with programs like the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The Initiative is fundamentally at odds with black prophecy.

A pastor from Virginia also feels the tension between accepting government money and the maintaining the prophetic voice, but she is unwilling to call black pastors who accept government money sell-outs:

I don't trust government. It relates to the Faith-Based Initiative. I don't want to get money that I'm not sure about. On the flip side, are you a sell out, an Uncle Tom because you get "money from master"?

Using a metaphor from slavery, this pastor laments the extent to which the Initiative makes the black church dependent on "master"—government. Yet, she has mixed feelings because she does not believe that the pragmatic decision to accept funds by black prophets renders them unable to call Pharaoh to task.

A pastor from Oklahoma City who opposed the Initiative also expressed the tension between the prophetic voice and the pragmatic need for funds.

We are continuing to review the procedures and processes for the faith-based initiative because we are hoping that there will be improvements, there will be clarity and that our voice, (government) will not try to hush our voice in the political process just because we are part of the faith-based initiative project. (Faith-Based and Community Initiatives) are needed, there are some positive things about them, but as a whole they try to silence the organizations or the institutions that come on board with the Faith-Based Initiative. They silence them

politically where they cannot speak out against the government. They cannot speak out against national policy.

This fear of silencing the prophetic voice leads him to reject the Initiative for now in favor of a wait and see approach. While the Initiative has potential to buttress programs, it also has the potential to prevent black churches from critiquing national programs and actions for fear of losing federal funding.

Control the Black Church

A pastor from Oklahoma City viewed the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as an effort by the government to control the black church in particular:

...it appears that Faith-Based Initiative proponents are wanting to control the black church...particularly to keep the church from speaking out against policies that are not good for the nation and policies that discriminate and tear down communities.

This theme was echoed by an activist pastor in Los Angeles who averred that his refusal to accept Faith-Based funds is predicated on the practice of liberation theology:

...we have not taken government money to be free. (Our church) is a great example of the praxis of liberation. I think that we have a significant role to speak with the prophetic voice. The black church is at its best when it does not abdicate the prophetic perspective.

This pastor asserted that black liberation theology dictates that black churches remain distinct from government so as to maintain the ability to critique it. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative requires black churches to become semi-public. For this pastor, since the prophetic perspective that is a hallmark of black liberation theology requires a distinction between public and private, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is dead on arrival at the steps of the black church.

From their Plate to Our Plate

Not unlike some Baptist and COGIC pastors, AME pastors see the Faith-Based and Community Initiative a balance transfer whereby what is left of welfare is bequeathed to civil society, and particularly the black church given that African Americans have the second highest rate of poverty in the United States (Beharov 2007). An Oklahoma pastor connects his lack of support for the Initiative to the fact that it represents an unwelcome shift of the welfare burden to the policy venue of the black church:

...officially we've been against the Faith-Based Initiative idea because the other aspect of that is it is a good excuse for the government not to step up to the plate and do what it needs to do by putting everything back on the churches in the laps of the churches.

In addition to dumping welfare onto the laps of black churches, the same pastor believes that the Initiative represents an opportunity for the government to claim that it is assisting the church:

...the Faith-Based Initiative concept is an idea for the government to say "yes, we're doing a little bit with the churches but it's the churches' responsibility (to do welfare)" when in fact it is the responsibility, constitutionally, of the national government to make sure that all citizens of this country have access, equal access, and have everything that they need to have a quality of life in this country.

This pastor provides a brilliant explanation of the difference between civil society and government. This pastor believes that churches have responsibilities in the sphere of civil society, but he believes that welfare is primarily the responsibility of the federal government.

A pastor from Virginia agrees that welfare is related to the implementation of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, but she does not view it as an effort to alleviate the federal government of the responsibility to provide welfare.

Some (black pastors) see the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as an extension of the welfare system. Opinion and participation (in the Initiative) is split along generational lines.

Rather, this pastor views the Initiative as an opportunity for black pastors to extend welfare-type services to black communities. Welfare, in this view, is a shared responsibility of churches and the government.

Make Government Responsive to Real Needs

AME pastors are activist in demanding action from government. Government as an entity is viewed as a locale for action regardless of the political persuasion of whoever happens to be assuming the Oval Office. Black liberation theology overflows in the AME church community, encouraging pastors to constantly examine the justice of governmental actions.

Analysis

African Methodist Episcopal pastors' unified support of the denomination contrasts sharply with Baptist pastors, most of whom disavowed their denominational bodies as dinosaurs. In fact, the very founding of the AME with an emphasis upon social justice drew one pastor to the denomination as an adult and eventually, to full-time ministry as a pastor. Every AME pastor in the sample bespoke the relevance of theology to daily life and to practical politics. While over half of Baptist and COGIC pastors mentioned liberation themes and even cited Jesus' injunction in his first sermon to reach "the least, the last, and the lost", this vision is inexorably pursued in the AME milieu.

Given the AME imperative to pursue social justice, there is no opprobrium about the separation between church and state. Rather, AME pastors are activist because of, not in spite of, their religious worldview. Being the conscience of the state requires

engaging the state and public affairs. And beyond a mere adversarial relationship between Pharaoh and the black church prophet, the AME calls for collaboration between church and state. According to AME supporters, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative enables precisely this kind of synergistic relationship.

Supporters and detractors of the Initiative were equally likely to discuss the politics of it all. It was readily apparent to most AME pastors that President Bush administration hoped to benefit from his new-found black church friends. Nevertheless, none feared that the Republican party could pull off a coup d'état and topple the tidy relationship between black voters and the Democratic party. Beyond Democratic capture (Frymer 1999), even J.C. Watts, a black Republican who supported the Initiative on behalf of black churches, got caught up in the presidential politics of it all when Bush and the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives failed to support his Faith-Based Summit. Interestingly, one pastor from California chided the Black Caucus for ignoring black peoples' interests and praised Bush for taking them into account via the Initiative.

One thing was clear from the AME sample: the policy venue of black liberation overwhelmingly agreed that the black church is a policy venue without equal. There existed some disagreement, however, about whether the Faith-Based and Community Initiative would allow the black church as policy venue to engage *extant* as well as *emerging* needs. The devil is in the details and many AME pastors, not unlike their Baptist counterparts, see trouble ahead in the implementation of the Initiative. But the possible pratfalls are not enough to deter over half of AME pastors from embracing the

Initiative—as one pastor said in pragmatic fashion—“from the business standpoint...programs need to be funded.”

For AME supporters of the Initiative, rather than selling out to the man in Malcolm X’s (1964) famous words, the Faith-Based and Community allows the black church to retain its racialized identity (Emerson and Smith 2001). One pastor rebuked the Congressional Black Caucus for failing to embrace the Faith-Based and Community Initiative on behalf of the black church. This agenda omission by the CBC was viewed as an affront to black communalism. Indeed, this pastor stated that if the Caucus “enlisted the (black) church” they would be more effective in leveraging their power in Congress. For this pastor, President Bush’s proffering of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative represented black interests better than the Congressional Black Caucus.

Although the Faith-Based and Community Initiative represents an important opportunity for many AME pastors to deliver social services in a racialized venue, it also represents a potential problem for the prophetic voice. Church-state separation is not a significant issue for AME pastors precisely because they want the freedom to enter the public square and speak truth to power. John Rawls (1993) injunction that public reason not be informed by religious worldview⁵² is anathema to AME notions of the prophetic voice. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative poses a problem for the 43 percent of AME pastors in this sample who oppose it because it could silence the mouths of black church prophets who rely on Pharaoh for money to fund church programs. In the final analysis, this concern is not enough to keep the majority of AME pastors from pursuing the Initiative.

⁵² Rawls does make an exception for particular times in history—slavery and civil rights among them—to allow prophetic voices to compel social change. What is unclear is how to evaluate where issues rank on Rawls hierarchy of heightened importance.

Conclusion

A Bundle of Black Church Contradictions?

Two of the premier historians of the black church maintain that the church embodies a “constant series of tensions” (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990, 11). This is consonant with the assertion of this research that black pastors are prophetic pragmatists. Given its cultural and historical embeddedness, the black church has been adapting since slavery. From the AME’s first black mutual aid societies to COGIC’s virtual invention of Pentecostalism to the Baptist production of the quintessential black prophet, Martin Luther King Jr., the black church is less a bundle of contradictions and more an astute adapter to historical contingencies.

This attention to the times does not mean that the black church produces ambiguous politics. The black church is not a monolith, thus, the black church will not be united on every issue of political import. The current study of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative proves this point. One thing that is clear, however, is that black pastors encourage politics in various ways—from promoting basic awareness to civiness to policy support to political action to candidate endorsement—and this does not equate to ambiguity or other-worldliness. As one pastor stated, he teaches his congregants to be attuned to the winds of politics. A conservative COGIC pastor asserted a this-worldly orientation as he seeks “heaven here on earth” and is thus concerned for the welfare of all citizens, not merely his congregants.

This black church dynamism is propelled by black pastors. Yet, some scholars cast pastors as non-elites even while admitting that black pastors and the black church shape the way activists frame strategies (Harris 1999). The policy images of black

pastors on the Faith-Based and Community paint a compelling picture. They illustrate fissures in the black agenda and suggest that the religious messages of black pastors have import for black agenda politics. As opposed to black politicians in Congress, many black pastors in this sample view welfare as a co-responsibility of churches and the government (Trulear 1999). While most pastors disavow any Republican efforts to end welfare by dumping it on black churches, few believe that this is tenable and most doubt that this was the intent. Black religion is immensely practical and black pastors are prophetic pragmatists.

Chapter Six

Street-Level Saints Go Marching In

This study highlights the value of both qualitative and quantitative inquiry as a means of understanding how policy images shape the implementation of public policies that rely on civil societal institutions like the black church. The case of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative illustrates how these narratives inform *black agenda politics* specifically and policy implementation generally. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative also demonstrates how the *black consensus agenda* is resistant to amendment by either incrementalism or punctuated equilibrium. If the keepers of the black agenda are located within the confines of the Washington D.C. beltway, black agenda politics extends to and is played out at the local level. President Bush's role in setting the Faith-Based agenda cannot be underestimated and the insights of policy officials about the national politics of implementation are insightful. But what is most remarkable is how black pastors have framed the Initiative as about local implementation more than about national politics. While they are certainly subject to the vagaries of congressional funding and the pesky peculiarities of the grants and oversight process, the black church is a natural policy venue precisely because it is *local*. If representation depends on policy congruence with constituencies, the local implementation of Faith-Based Initiatives has the potential to set multiple specialized agendas (Cobb and Elder 1972) at the national level. Black pastors are persistent in presenting their own version of the Initiative consonant with local realities and theological commitments. Thus, the local implementation of these street-level "saints" alters the national agenda. This dissertation suggests a need for policy scholars to integrate agenda setting and implementation

literature. Street-level implementers, even religious ones, have their own agendas independent of the federal government.

This dissertation suggests a need for policy scholars to pay heed to different levels of agenda setting. In the black milieu, there is “common consent”—a black consensus agenda that most African Americans ascribe to and there is “local dissent”—the persistence of black agenda politics that emphasize those concerns that are not central to the consensus agenda, but that are important to black issue publics nonetheless. Interestingly, some of these issues reach consensus levels of support in the black community, but remain sidelined from formal black agendas of the Congressional Black Caucus and the NAACP.

The Black Consensus Agenda

President Bush’s turn at presidential agenda setting of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative has afforded an opportunity to explore the content and contours of the black consensus agenda. For not only did Bush set the national agenda, he set in motion black agenda politics by framing black pastors into the political equation. This represents a major coup given that very few black pastors regarded Bush as their legitimate representative in light of the 2000 presidential election.

The Congressional Black Caucus had their own framing of the issue and a stake in maintaining the consensus black agenda in its dominant form. Indeed, the Congressional Black Caucus’ existence, and legislative success if there is any to be had by the group, is contingent on a high level of preference homogeneity (Cox and McCubbins 1993) within the group. Thus, a major lesson of this research is that the starting point for black politics

is not formal roll call votes, but rather, the consensus black agenda. Black politics is agenda politics.

The Caucus has a vested interest in relegating the consensus black agenda to “safe issues” (Bachrach and Baratz 1962). Granting the Initiative a place for active debate could only serve one purpose—the erosion of the Black Caucus via the expansion of the scope of conflict (Schattschneider 1960) and the activation of attentive black publics. The value of a coalition like the CBC is in keeping issues with active and potentially heterogeneous publics off of the agenda altogether. Thus, even if 81 percent of African Americans and the majority of black pastors (Joint Center 2006) across the breadth of black denominations support Faith-Based Initiatives, the Initiative was not, in the view of most CBC members, an issue worthy of serious consideration.

In the first place, the Congressional Black Caucus largely ignored the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as an issue of import to the black community. For the Caucus, this very act of defiance is a form of agenda setting (Hammond et al. 1985). In the second place, the CBC acknowledged the Initiative and constructed causal stories of discrimination with the motivation of agenda denial (Cobb and Ross 1997). This agenda denial enabled the Caucus to position take affirm allegiance to the consensus black creed.

Since the consensus black agenda is framed according to protest and civil rights language (whether economic or social issue planks), the Caucus was unwilling to buy Bush’s policy image of the Initiative as about combating discrimination by leveling the playing field for all governmental grantees, including black churches. The Caucus declared that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative dead on arrival because it allowed churches to “discriminate” by refusing to hire adherents of other religions in the

name of preserving the religious character of their social service and/or treatment programs. Thus, the CBC decreed the Initiative inherently inconsistent with the consensus black agenda.

The consensus black agenda represents the boundaries of blackness (Cohen 1999) in the United States. Communal interests are enshrined on the consensus agenda and those outside of the ambit of these interests are also outside the black identity. This is not to negate a plethora of black visions (Dawson 2001; Harris-Lacewell 2004) from black conservatism to black feminism. But the quintessential planks of the black consensus agenda presume a political unity predicated on a sufficient sense of black commonality.

The consensus black agenda consistently reflects those issue components of concern to African Americans such as education, healthcare, economy, welfare, civil rights, and affirmative action. The overarching goal of all of the components of the consensus black agenda is black well-being and black collective good. The black utility heuristic is a group one, not an individualistic one. This group heuristic is what enables us to speak of a “black agenda”, even though some components overlap with other governmental agendas. The black agenda is substantive to the extent that it represents black interests and also symbolic to the extent that it epitomizes black communalism and represents an opportunity for black politicians to frame issues in racialized (black specific) frames so as to emphasize their legitimacy as black representatives.

By excluding issues from the consensus black agenda that garner high levels of black support such as the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and school vouchers, the CBC and the NAACP define the “boundaries of blackness” (Cohen 1999). The Initiative, for example, was included on a CBC Conference agenda program only to oppose it, but

there was not an authentic debate about the merits of the issue or the potential benefits to black churches and communities. In the post-civil rights era, efforts to maintain a black consensus agenda persist in the aspirations of Jesse Jackson for the 1988 presidency, in the New Black People's Unity Convention of March 2006 which sought to forge a unity black agenda with economic empowerment at its center, and with the bi-annual publication of Tavis Smiley's *Covenant with Black America* books, designed to lay out the issues facing black America. Each of these efforts is at its heart committed to disabusing the notion that there are no black interests in the post-civil rights era.

Black Agenda Politics

Issues and constituent demands define the political environment (Hammond et al. 1985, 603). In the political system, these demands reflect cultural values. The transformation of a demand into an issue is not axiomatic. For example, issues of core concern to black communities may receive legislative support by being transmogrified by the CBC or the NAACP into an agenda item. If not, black attentive publics and policy entrepreneurs look elsewhere for support. In terms of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, the CBC in maintaining the consensus black agenda, constructed veto points in advance of the normal veto points in Congress.

In the light of American political development, the black agenda is janus-faced, with a formal consensus side and an informal side where there is contention. The civil rights movement was not a unified affair—it was SCLC versus SNCC and the NAACP versus the Alabama Human Rights Coalition. The public front was one of unity, but in private there was great dissension about how to achieve civil rights goals. The consensus agenda is formal, somewhat predictable, and proffered by the Congressional Black

Caucus. The informal agenda is ironed out in black counterpublics like the black church and is unpredictable, open to the change blowing in the wind and ultimately, to what works for the black community.

Black agenda politics are forged in the shadow of the black consensus agenda. Black agenda politics push the CBC to embrace the conservative concerns of certain black religionists and to embrace the more liberal concerns of black feminists and black separatists. Regardless of the districts they represent, black members of Congress are perceived as, and act as, the legitimate racial representatives of the national black constituency. Furthermore, black members of congress are considered spokespersons for the racial group by the national media which aids efforts to set, maintain, or block agenda items. So, while a white representative may be a stellar proxy for her community, it is not the case that she will be viewed as a representative for the national black constituency.

To the extent that black agenda politics play out in the shadow of the dominant agendas of the CBC and the NAACP, it does not matter whether a black person has her own black representative or is a card-carrying member of the NAACP. Indeed, black representation has no demonstrable effects on political efficacy (Tate 2003). Black political efficacy stems as much (or more) from dynamic grassroots actors as from race representatives in Congress. This is illustrated by the Faith-Based and Community Initiative where the agenda denial of the issue by CBC is matched by local agendas of black pastors and others. All politics is local and black pastors are key street-level bureaucrats.

However the Initiative is defined politically, black agenda politics is inclusive of more conservative components than the consensus black agenda, which tends to reflect liberal concerns. Black public opinion has become more conservative since 1984, even on welfare (Tate 2003). This trend is evident in black agenda politics. Indeed, black policy preferences show a level of populism that transcends traditional ideological boundaries. While African Americans electoral fortunes may be confined to a Democratic party with little incentive to cater to black concerns (Frymer 1999), the black utility heuristic dictates a panoply of policies that comport with black collective good. While black elite maintain a role in framing policy options, the policy mix of black agenda politics transcends the consensus black agenda to include school voucher support and homosexual marriage opposition. The fastidiousness of the black public is perhaps more remarkable in light of the fact that black members of Congress are more liberal than their white counterparts in the Democratic party. Black agenda politics pushes the national agenda and sets local agendas.

There exists evidence that black attentive publics (Dawson 1994) are highly educated and/or highly religious. It is clear that some facets of this conservatism, such as opposition to homosexual marriage, have roots in the black church. Other issues, like support for school vouchers, could be a boon to black churches that run private schools. President Bush managed to invoke a sense of racial identity in the Initiative sufficient to activate black attentive publics and to garner high levels of black support for the Initiative. For attentive black publics, Bush's focus on the efficacy of black institutions reinforced racial solidarity and identification with the group. In fact, the strong communal orientation of black Protestantism as opposed to white Protestantism may be

the difference between black church support and white evangelical reticence. Perhaps racialized and communal framing on the Initiative turned off white evangelicals, particularly Southern Baptists, but turned on black pastors.

Racialized framing of CBC and agenda denial does not seem to affect implementation because pastoral pragmatism prevailed. Black pastors vis-à-vis the Faith-Based and Community Initiative have taken the bull by the horns. They are wary of being manipulated by the state and have thus taken to framing the Faith-Based agenda in their own terms. Since the preponderance of black representatives in Congress did not give them an Initiative, they led. Black politics is agenda politics—and in the case of the Initiative, the agenda equation has sometimes equaled implementation.

Implementation in the Spirit Filled Polis by Street-Level Saints

In the case of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, the opposition of most black political principals and race representatives did not seem to matter. The locus of the policy was the potential and actual implementers: black pastors. While policy literature paints bureaucrats as self-interested and driven by efficiency, black pastors are advocates of others and driven to help. The devil remains in the details, but the spirit-infused polis reveals other motivations in the polis, likely shared by non-black pastors and religionists. In a new age of implementation, black pastors refine our understanding of street-level bureaucrats as motivated by values beyond those of the state.

Black pastors implement policy as agents of God, not of government. While they recognize that faith-based money flows from D.C., in the main, they do not view themselves as implementing a national program. Instead, black pastors alter the national agenda by implementing indigenous programs according to local needs. Whereas street-

level bureaucrats do not fit policy to constituents, for street-level “saints”, their constituents drive implementation. This type of pragmatic implementation is powerful as it feeds back into national policy loops and alters the national agenda. While this research cannot indicate whether non-black pastors evince pragmatism, it is assumed that on the Initiative, local needs and values will drive implementation and thus, set agendas. Implementation is agenda setting.

Black Church and Black Politics

Churches are central actors in civil society, but this is particularly true in the black community. At the local level, black ministers often operate apart from the consensus agenda to support issues of a more conservative nature. While they do not disavow the importance of black consensus issues, they sometimes find black representatives lacking. As independent political actors who have their own local agenda, black pastors do not need the Congressional Black Caucus to make headway in the black community and in black agenda politics.

Black pastors realize that policy congruence between black concerns and black members of Congress is not axiomatic. This drives black agenda politics. Black pastors are not monolithic in terms of their political orientation, but as evidenced in this study, most depart from the ideological position of national black politicians on gay marriage. On this issue, black pastors lead black agenda politics as evidenced by Proposition 8 in California. Ironically, on certain issues, Republicans and conservative white Democrats represent African Americans better than the Congressional Black Caucus, the race representatives. In fact, a black Republican, J.C. Watts, represented black people better than the Caucus on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. This type of enhanced

representation may be an argument for expanding the reach of the CBC to include black Republicans—of course, this could threaten to topple the consensus black agenda.

Contrary to claims that black pastors produce only ambiguous politics, this dissertation includes instances of sophisticated policy images of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and the relationship between religious implementers and the secular state. Black pastors as local street-level implementers of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives alter the national policy agenda and thereby influence black agenda politics.

Religious Rhetoric Remains

The black consensus agenda and black agenda politics are permeated with religious references.⁵³ In the black counterpublic, protest takes on religious significance. The black struggle is epitomized by spirituals, taken up by religious as well as secular freedom advocates. The Black National Anthem is modeled on Negro Spirituals. The language of civil rights is not lost on members of the Congressional Black Caucus as many offered their own civil rights framing of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative: it was government-sanctioned discrimination. The language of black politics remains steeped in civil rights era rhetoric and thereby, in black religion.

Some scholars acknowledge the importance of civil rights framing to the black agenda, indicating that the ability to frame issues in protest terms boosts support for issues in the black counterpublic (Tate 2003, 166). This research affirms the centrality of religious rhetoric and protest language to black agenda politics and the consensus black agenda. Thus, even if members of the Congressional Black Caucus view issues mingle church and state as too controversial for the consensus black agenda, the language

⁵³ See Chapter Three.

of black religion and protest lingers in their rhetoric against environmental racism and other injustices.

A major lesson of this research is that religious language transforms not only black politics but also the policy process, including implementation. Religionists bring values to the table that are excluded from the rational bureaucratic sphere by design. While a liberal polity must allow for competing conceptions of the good to prosper (Rawls 1993), the polis can benefit from religious values that remind citizens to “love their neighbors as they love themselves”. Thus, unlike a welfare system that phases people out after five years, many black pastors believe that their religious values compels them to serve the needy person whatever the duration of his travail.

The religious rhetoric differs across the black milieu. Theology matters to the extent that most AME pastors evinced deep concern that the Initiative deprives black pastors of the prophetic voice whereas most Baptist pastors embraced the Initiative as recognition of the fact that the church is a natural policy venue for local implementation.

Significance for Public Policy

My research findings suggest for the need to refinements in our understanding of agenda setting. The national agenda -- the focus of agenda setting literature -- may not be relevant for certain policy domains, especially where the government is attempting to enlist civil society in implementation. Clearly black pastors as putative implementers of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative do not see themselves responding to a national agenda but rather using, pragmatically, the resources of various national programs to fit into their own local agenda, which is the one that in a sense matters. Scholars need to pay attention to the level -- national versus local -- in analyzing agenda setting.

The findings suggest the need to integrate implementation theory with agenda setting literature. Since the implementation of Faith-Based programs relies on civil society institutions with their own cultures and agendas quite independent of the federal government, implementation and agenda setting are more woven together than previously. Local implementation depends on local agenda setting.

These findings also suggest some obstacles for the government in attempting to enlist civil society institutions to implementing policy initiatives. For example, some black churches in this study have chosen not to participate in the Initiative given concerns about bureaucratic obstacles and red tape. Other churches have chosen to participate but insist that partnering with government does not subvert the spiritual agenda or vision at the heart of programming.⁵⁴ The federal government can learn from this deviation from their aim of a secular service so long as church attendance or proselytizing is not required for program recipients to receive a government-funded service. A key point is that black churches in this study do not view themselves as implementers of national policy but as local innovators.

The findings suggest the need to pay heed to different levels of agenda setting, because black pastors as key figures in their local communities are setting the local agenda in significant ways, quite independent of national leaders or policy makers.

The findings demonstrate hidden barriers—theological and structural—to participation by churches in partnership with government. Theological barriers such as the concern of many AME pastors with maintaining the prophetic voice may not be easily overcome. Structural barriers might be addressed by capacity building, training, and

⁵⁴ This is not to imply that any of the churches in this sample required recipients to attend religious classes or services in exchange for programs or interventions funded by federal dollars.

public awareness campaigns. These efforts will especially help churches learn how to create non-tax entities, apply for and administer grants as some black pastors expressed that they did not know how to broach the request for proposals process.

Bush's Legacy and Obama's New Policy

There exist two prevailing ways of talking about policy changes. Paradigmatic policy shifts tend to be long-lasting and the stuff of policy monopolies which are difficult to topple except for perturbations in the environment external to the political system. Incremental policy shifts occur over time in piecemeal fashion on the margins of the policy monopoly. The addition of the Department of Homeland Security to the executive cabinet is likely a durable paradigmatic change brought about by 9/11. What can we make of these findings concerning the black church and the Faith-Based and Community Initiative now that the Bush regime has ended?

Thus far, President Obama made minor revisions to the Bush Faith-Based and Community Initiative. While Obama the candidate claimed to share the Black Caucus's critique that the Initiative amounted to discrimination, the Obama administration has essentially skirted the issue by averring that discrimination in hiring will be judged on a case-by-case basis. Obama's decision to keep the Initiative indicates that the policy represents a durable paradigmatic change as opposed to a temporary policy blip in response to a Republican president. Indeed, this study indicates that black pastors opposed to the Initiative under Bush are unlikely to support an Initiative under Obama. While one Baptist pastor in the study who opposed the Bush Initiative said he would have supported a Gore Initiative, most pastors in this study were opposed on principle. Thus, for these pastors, taking federal dollars from a Republican Bush or a Democratic Obama

does little to change their decision calculus. The crux of the matter is the ability of the black church prophet to call Pharaoh to task, whether Pharaoh is a part of the black family or not!

While Obama unveiled the Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnership on February 5, 2009 following his speech at the National Prayer Breakfast, it is not clear that the office represents a domestic priority. Four months after the unveiling of the office and his appointment of a Faith-Based czar, there exists no webpage for the newly created Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. This is puzzling given this administration's cyber savvy and the importance of the black church constituency to Obama's candidacy.

The Faith-Based policy is pragmatic policy. Obama has emphasized that those projects that receive funding will be those that work. He will have to overcome the same obstacles that the Bush administration faced—administrative capacity. Those black pastors who supported the Bush Initiative, but evinced reticence to apply for Faith-Based funds due to bureaucratic obstacles (perceived and real) will no doubt have the same trepidation about the Obama version of the Initiative. The findings of this research indicate that the Bush administration was seeking to overcome those obstacles via conferences and capacity-building workshops. Assuming this program is a domestic priority for President Obama, his administration would be wise to take a similar approach given evidence in this research and in other reports that administrative capacity represents the largest barrier to black church participation in Faith-Based Initiatives. Obama appears to realize the centrality of the black church to the Faith-Based effort given his

appointment of a black Pentecostal minister, Joshua DuBois, as Director of the new White House Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

Given his background in community organizing, President Obama understands that black pastors are not only mouthpieces of racial consciousness and communalism within the black church, they are de facto political elites who assess problems and craft solutions on behalf of their constituencies—their congregants and the broader community. Every black pastor in this study, regardless of her/his opinion on the Initiative, termed the black church a natural policy venue for the delivery of social services. Support of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative boils down to pragmatism for many pastors—the Initiative makes sense given that black churches are locally based, intimately associated with the needs of congregants and community members, and usually equipped with buildings and other resources necessary for service provision. Furthermore, consonant with the black utility heuristic, many black pastors are willing to embrace a program that promises aid for the particular vagaries of black communities. On the flip side, there persist real concerns that the Initiative (now Partnership) poses a threat to the adversarial relationship between the black church prophet and the presidential Pharaoh. To the extent that the Partnership continues to make monetary provision for what black churches already do, however, it makes intuitive sense to many of the prophetic pragmatists interviewed herein. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative and its new offshoot, the Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnership do not impose top-down, cookie cutter programs, but rather reflect pragmatism--what works at the grassroots is what gets the money.

Black Pastors in Civil Society *and* in Black Politics

Religion is a consistent factor in American life, but the arch of religion curves even more sharply in African American life. In the black counterpublic (Dawson 2001), there is a blurring of sacred and secular, yet a distinct space for institutional autonomy. For example, three of the five pastors in the COGIC sample view the black church and government as natural allies, but each seeks to preserve the integrity of the black church as a spiritual venue over and above its function as a programmatic venue.

Black pastors are akin to prophets of the Hebrew scripture who called government to task for injustice and who called citizens to consider the mandates of justice in societal structures and institutions. There are a long line of black prophets in American Political Development, from Nat Turner to Marcus Garvey to Martin Luther King, Jr. to Jesse Jackson. King (1963) typifies prophecy in the following:

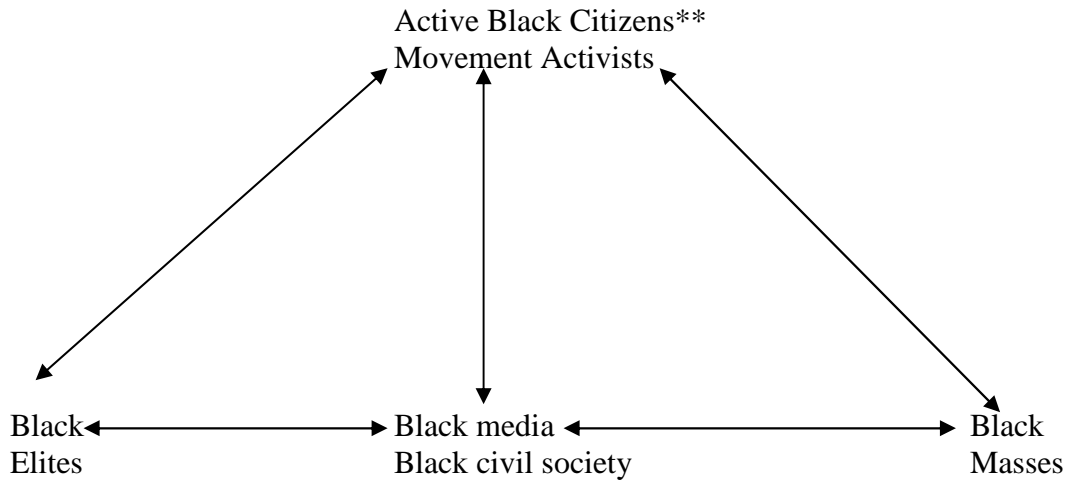
The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool.

If the black church is the conscience of the state, black pastors as prophets are called to interface with government on political issues of moral import.

Figure 6.1 is a depiction of black political and civil society inclusive of black institutions and actors, including the media, masses, elites, and active citizens.

Typologies represent starting points that allow for future testing. They are not definitive but this research allows us to make some suggestions about the place of black pastors in black agenda and implementation politics.

Figure 6.1 Indigenous Typology of Black Pastors



This model is derived from Taeku Lee's (2002) account of black pastors and other citizen activists during the civil rights movement. Lee terms counterelites those active citizens and movement activists who are neither politicians nor high level government officials, but who are actively involved in politics nonetheless. Whereas in Taeku Lee's account, information does not flow from the masses to either the media or civil society, several recent examinations of the black counterpublic (Dawson 2001; Harris-Lacewell 2005) illustrate the extent to which black politics is affected by the black masses via discourse in black venues, such as barbershops, churches, and the media.

The current research suggests that there is a consensus black agenda with dissension relegated to the realm of black agenda politics. The current research also suggests that both the black politics and the public policy literature should examine how policy ideas emanate from the intersection between religion and politics in the black political milieu. By exploring street-level "saints", we learned that local implementation influences the national agenda. This indigenous model suggests that pastoral policy

images interact directly with both black masses and black political elites. Black pastors agenda politics are not filtered through the media, they are communicated directly to congregants and to relevant political elites.

Black pastors enjoy prestige in the black community, as well as the broader community, by virtue of their position. At times, pastors are intimately involved in the political fray—heading political action committees, leading marches, and the like. At other times, they may remain silent. Whatever the case, black congregants expect pastors, and pastors do, as a matter of course, to remain abreast of political issues that might affect the spiritual community. This typology demonstrates the importance of black pastors as active citizens in the political realm; as members of the black elite; and as the leaders of the bedrock institution of black civil society, the black church. Their intimate connection to the black masses renders them significant initiators and implementers of black agenda politics.

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Appendix A Select Denominations

- ❖ The African Methodist Episcopal Church, Incorporated (AME), organized in 1794, claims a membership of 2 million in 7,000 congregations across the world (www.ame-church.com/about-us/history.php). The church's doctrine and order of worship reflect the broader Methodist tradition with separation predicated on historical necessity rather than on doctrinaire. The mission of the AME reflects the social gospel tradition of its mainline Protestant predecessor.

At every level of the Connection (corporate church) and in every local church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church shall engage in carrying out the spirit of the original Free African Society, out of which the AME Church evolved: that is, to seek out and save the lost, and serve the needy through a continuing program of (1) preaching the gospel, (2) feeding the hungry, (3) clothing the naked, (4) housing the homeless, (5) cheering the fallen, (6) providing jobs for the homeless, (7) administering to the needs of those in prisons, hospitals, nursing homes, asylums and mental institutions, senior citizens' homes; caring for the sick, the shut-in, the mentally and socially disturbed, and (8) encouraging thrift and economic advancement.

(www.ame-church.com/about-us/mission.php)

This focus is unique in its primary emphasis upon social justice.

- ❖ The Church of God in Christ (COGIC) was loosely organized in 1897 and was incorporated in 1907. The church now boasts around 8 million members and represents the second largest Pentecostal group in the United States (www.cogic.org/history.htm). The doctrine of the church reflects the holiness tradition's emphasis upon outward, charismatic manifestations of inner sanctification by the Holy Spirit. While home and foreign missions represent core church functions, the doctrinal emphasis upon individual holiness and the worship experience seemingly relegate social, communal goals à la the AME Church to a second tier status in the hierarchy of church priorities. Nevertheless, one does detect evidence of the church leadership's concern about perceived moral decay in the broader society as it impinges upon the individual holiness of the COGIC believer

...in spite of the progressive normalization of alternative lifestyles and the growing legal acceptance of same-sex unions; we declare our opposition to any deviation from traditional marriages of male and female. Notwithstanding the rulings of the court systems of the land in support of same-sex unions; we resolve that the Church of God in Christ stand resolutely firm and never allow the sanctioning of same-sex marriages by its clergy nor recognize the legitimacy of such unions.

While other policy pronouncements were not available, the conservative morality of the General Assembly of the Church of God in Christ is unmistakable here.

There was evidence of support for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative of the Bush administration at the website of a regional jurisdiction of the Church of God in Christ (www.nemichigan.org/news.htm).

- ❖ The National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., founded in 1886, represents the oldest of the black denominations and boasts the largest membership of all black denominations with 7.5 million members. In the Arminian tradition (free will and non-Calvinist), the doctrine of the church emphasizes universal salvation and is orthodox in other aspects of belief. Unlike the other denominations explored herein, the "Articles of Faith" of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

explicates the denomination's view of the role of government vis-à-vis the Christian faith:

We believe the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth.

Ironically, the convention refused to support the philosophy and tactics of the civil rights movement, leading to a schism whereby Martin Luther King Jr. and other luminaries created a splinter group, the Progressive National Baptist Convention, which boasts an explicit agenda of social reform as well as alliances with black civil societal groups that are committed to the same. If the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. was uncomfortable asserting its voice as social prophet to the government during the civil rights era, its obeisance to the will of the other black Baptist conventions at the joint meeting represents a departure from historical precedent.

The four presidents of the black Baptist conventions signed a joint statement with nine points of agreed action including a call for an end to the war in Iraq and withdrawal of military personnel from Iraq and an extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Appendix B

Interview Protocol for Pastors

Background of Pastor

Church and Denomination

- What are the distinctive ministries of _____?
- What is the role of _____ in this community? (Historically and presently)
- Is _____ closely in line with the views of the _____ denomination?

Black Church and Politics

- What do you believe is the appropriate balance between the black church and the government? (Confrontation; cooperation; both?)
- To what extent do you encourage political activism from the pulpit? *How?*

Black Politics

- Are there political, moral, or social issues on which the black church should speak with one voice? *Which issues?*
- Was the mass political activism of the civil rights movement an exceptional moment in history or do there remain issues about which the black community might be or is broadly mobilized? *Which issues?*
- In black politics, is there a common agenda?
- Who do you perceive to be the most effective black political leader?
- What do you perceive to be the most effective black political organization?
- What is your evaluation of the relationship between black preachers and black politicians, especially Democrats in the Congressional Black Caucus?
- Do the positions of your church on issues like gay marriage seem to be reflected in Congress?

Faith-Based and Community Initiative

- What is your perception of President Bush and his attempt to involve the black church, and particularly black pastors, in the Faith-Based and Community Initiative? What is his motive? Do black churches stand to gain or lose from the Faith-Based and Community Initiative?
- Have the insights and needs of black pastors and churches been incorporated into the Initiative? *How? Why or why not?*
- Will _____ seek funding under the Faith-Based and Community Initiative? *Why or why not? Given the unique niche of _____ in this community, would the Faith-Based and Community Initiative enhance your efforts?*
- Have you and/or do you talk about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative from the pulpit or at other church meetings? What do you typically tell your congregants about it? What do they think about it?

- Is there general consensus about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative within your denomination at the national level?
- Are you more, less, or equally supportive of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as compared to Charitable Choice? Why?
- What is your perception of other black pastors who support/oppose the Initiative? Are their reasons largely similar to your own?
- Do you perceive that opinion among black pastors in this area is mixed or uniform with regard to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative?
- How does the Faith-Based and Community Initiative relate to civil rights? Does it limit civil rights, further civil rights, or are civil rights unrelated to this issue?
- In addition to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, President Bush seeks the support of African Americans for school vouchers. He believes vouchers will help improve inner-city schools and minority educational outcomes by allowing parents school choice, including the choice of private schools. What do you think of this plan?

Appendix C

Interview Protocol for Political and Policy Elites

Problem

- In your estimation, what is the crux of the problem that the Faith-Based and Community Initiative seeks to address?
- Is it significant that the progenitor of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, Charitable Choice, in the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act (aka welfare reform)? If so, why?

Policy

- While the Faith-Based and Community Initiative was signed into law with the stroke of a pen and codified in cabinet-level agencies, what do you predict will become of the Faith-Based Initiative in the next administration of whatever ilk?
- In your judgment and/or experience, what constitutes the most formidable obstacle to implementing the Faith-Based and Community Initiative?
- A typical rubric for classifying public policies employs a threefold rubric: distributive policy; redistributive policy; and regulatory policy. How would you classify the Faith-Based Initiative?
- What is the value-added of this Initiative?
- What do you believe is the appropriate balance between the black church and the government?
- The Faith-Based and Community Initiative expands the field of social service delivery. What are the implications for federalism and civil society of religious organizations serving as implementers of public policy?

Politics

- What is your perception of President Bush's attempts to involve the black church, and particularly black pastors, in the Faith-Based and Community Initiative? What is his motive? Do black churches stand to gain or lose from the Faith-Based and Community Initiative?
- What do you make of David Kuo's claims about the politics of the Initiative?
- Have the insights of black pastors and churches been incorporated into the Initiative? How and at what stage(s) of policy development?
- Despite poll results that indicate that African Americans are generally supportive of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative and evidence that 53% of black pastors plan to apply for Faith-Based funding, the Congressional Black Caucus has withheld support. What are your thoughts about this disconnect between mass and elite opinion?
- A report by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies (September 2006) indicates that black pastors have insufficient information about the Initiative, with only 1 in 6 contacted by the government. Is this a barrier given that 25% of those pastors who were contacted applied for a grant?
- Despite the availability of intermediaries in some locales, is the deck stacked against smaller and non-urban black churches given constraints of resource and institutional capacity?

- Why are liberal black churches (primarily in red states) applying for funds more readily than more conservative congregations?