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The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 35
Issue 4 December

Article 6

2008

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Brown, R. Khari (2008) "Racial/Ethnic Differences in Religious Congregation-based Social Service Delivery Efforts," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 35 : Iss. 4 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol35/iss4/6>

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Racial/Ethnic Differences in Religious Congregation-based Social Service Delivery Efforts

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The current study utilizes Swidler's (1986) cultural toolkit theory to explain racial/ethnic differences in American religious congregations' provision of social service programs. This study suggests that black Americans' reliance upon structural tools to assess poverty contributes to their congregations being more heavily involved than majority white congregations in the provision of social services that attempt to make a longer-term impact on community life (i.e. academic tutoring and job training). In contrast, white Americans' greater reliance upon individualistic tools to understand poverty arguably contributes to their congregations being more heavily involved in the provision of programs that have a shorter-term impact on community life (i.e. food, thrift, and shelter). While majority Latino congregations are less likely than are black congregations to provide longer-term impacting programs only, majority Asian congregations tend to be less heavily involved in the provision of both longer and shorter term impacting programs.

Key words: *race, religion, social service delivery*

Introduction

The current study assesses racial/ethnic differences in the social service programs that American religious congregations provide. Since this country's founding, American congregations have involved themselves in community work. In the absence of a federal welfare safety net up until the New Deal

Era, houses of worship and other religious organizations were key to the provision of emergency services, housing assistance, and other forms of social service (Hall, 1994; Holifield, 1983; Jeavons, 1994). At the same time, blacks were often denied service from white religious organizations in many Northern and Southern cities up until the civil rights era (Phillipott, 1991). This led many black congregations, as under-resourced as they were, to act as informal social service agencies in many black communities (Mays & Nicholson, 1933; Myrdal, 1944; Frazier, 1963; Philpott, 1991). While blacks are no longer excluded from private or public social services, they remain far more likely than whites to live in impoverished communities in which churches are often one of few non-governmental organizations committed to community development (Billingsley, 1999; Gronbjerg, 1990; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). This study contends that the disparate social economic experiences of blacks and whites have contributed to their congregations adopting differing cultural approaches in understanding and subsequently responding to poverty.

By religious culture, this study is referring to a set of norms, values and beliefs agreed upon by church members that voluntarily join or associate with a specific religious group (Emerson & Smith, 2001; Swidler, 1986). This is not to deny the possibility of contested points of view or beliefs within a given religious group. Overall, however, there is a commitment to a predominate schema of social reality. Consistent with the cultural toolkit thesis, symbols, stories, beliefs, and rituals are utilized by members to gain an understanding of social reality (Swidler, 1986). In essence, culture allows group members to develop a common understanding of social reality and to develop agreed-upon solutions to concerns.

The fact that white Americans are far more likely than are blacks to live in communities with relatively low levels of poverty, high levels of middle class residents, and local governments that are, more or less, able to adequately fund city services likely contributes to whites maintaining a more individualistic orientation in understanding poverty (Bishaw, 2005; Massey & Denton, 1995). That is, whites are more likely than are blacks to believe that poverty results from individuals not trying hard enough (Kinder & Sanders, 1996). This

freewill individualist orientation is based on the premise that individuals exist independent of structures, institutions, and even history (Stark & Glock, 1969). From this perspective, everyone has natural freedom and autonomy such that each individual has the power to improve his or her status, due, in part, to their creator, which allows humans to develop a free market system and laws that protect individual rights (Emerson & Smith, 2001; Stark & Glock, 1969). This is not to suggest that predominantly white congregations reject their moral obligation to care for the poor. Rather, due to the extent to which such congregations provide social services, it is plausible that they invest more resources than do black congregations in programs that assist individuals recover from poor decisions that lead to temporary misfortune.

In contrast, the historical memory of and continued experiences of racial discrimination along with the disproportionate amount of poverty-related ills within black communities contributes to blacks maintaining a more structural approach in understanding poverty. That is, blacks are more likely than are whites to believe that poverty results from racial discrimination, a lack of livable-wage jobs, and quality education (Kinder & Sanders, 1996). This approach does not suggest that predominantly black congregations deny the role that agency plays in the persistence of poverty. However, black congregations tend to adopt a prophetic theology in which greater weight is placed on the sinful nature of institutions that constrain the choices and life chances of marginalized groups. That being said, it is plausible that predominantly black congregations are more likely than are predominantly white congregations to provide programs that attempt to make structural changes in their communities.

The cultural toolkits available to the social service efforts of congregations outside of the black-white landscape are not readily apparent. The fact that Asian and Latino communities maintain a relatively high proportion of first generation immigrants may contribute to their congregations maintaining a greater commitment to helping members assimilate than in providing for the physical communities that surround their congregations. The current study attempts to add clarity to our understanding of the social service efforts of American

congregations by assessing differences in the social service programs that predominantly black, white, Asian, and Latino congregations provide.

Race, Resources and Social Service Strategies

Almost all prior studies on congregation-based social service delivery suggest that black congregations tend to provide more social services than do white congregations (Cavendish, 2000; Chaves & Higgins, 1993; Chaves & Tsistos, 2001). However, it is not clear which programs black congregations are actually more likely to provide. As stated above, this study contends that the more individualistic cultural approach of predominantly white congregations may contribute to them being more likely than black congregation to provide programs that provide temporary relief. In contrast, the more structural orientation of black congregations may contribute to these congregations being more likely than white congregations to provide programs that attempt to address the root causes of poverty, such as educational and job skills training. Tsistos's (2003) national study of congregations is the only one to date that assesses the program types that congregations provide by the proportion of blacks that attend such congregations. Consistent with the racial toolkit thesis, he finds that the more blacks that attend a congregation, the more likely it is to provide the long-term impact educational and mentoring programs and the less likely they are to provide the shorter-term impact programs and clothing. However, by not directly comparing black to white, Asian, and Latino congregations, the relationship between race/ethnicity and the types of programs that congregations provide is not completely clear. This study attempts to build upon Tsisto's (2003) study by doing so.

The above cultural distinctions along racial lines are not to suggest that cultural differences among white or among black Christians' understanding of the persistence of poverty do not exist. Mainline Protestant and Catholic Church leadership tend to maintain a more structural approach to their assessment of poverty than do Evangelical Protestant leaders. The social gospel and justice traditions of Mainline Protestant and Catholic theology respectively tend to emphasize the dignity

of earthly existence, which calls for the eradication of economic and political barriers that limit life chances of marginalized populations (Findlay, 1993; McGreevy, 1996). Since the mid-1960s, both the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the National Council of Churches (NCC) have established offices committed to reducing poverty (USCCB, 2007; NCC, 2007). Similarly, a majority of Mainline and Catholic clergy in this country believe that social justice is the Lord's work (Jelen, 2003; Smidt et al., 2003). And, it is this commitment to social justice that largely drives their civic activism (Jelen, 2003; Smidt et al., 2003).

In contrast, Evangelical Protestants tend to maintain more of an individualistic orientation than do Catholics and Mainline Protestants (Emerson & Smith, 2001; Hinojosa & Park, 2004). That is, white Evangelical Protestants place greater emphasis than do others on the freewill given to individuals by God to make decisions that can aide or hinder their social mobility (Emerson & Smith, 2001). Unlike Mainline Protestants and the USCCB, few Evangelical denominations maintain national or regional offices committed to eradicating poverty. Distinctions among white Christians in their approaches to poverty are apparent in Hinojosa and Park's (2004) study on denominational differences in accounting for black poverty. Their study indicates that white Catholics and Mainline Protestants are more likely than are white Evangelicals to believe that blacks are disproportionately poor because they do not have access to quality educational systems or to racial discrimination. Conversely, white Evangelicals were more likely than were white non-Evangelicals to believe that blacks are poor because they do not try hard enough.

In contrast to white churches, black churches associated with historically black denominations tend to maintain similar cultural orientations in assessing poverty in the U.S. Sandra Barnes's national studies of black churches suggest that virtually no denominational differences exist in the commitment of black congregations affiliated with historically black denominations to a prophetic theology (Barnes, 2004; 2005). McDaniel's (2003) study of black clergy affiliated with the historically black protestant denominations of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) and Church of God in Christ (COGIC) reached similar

conclusions. His study indicates that vast majorities of both AME and COGIC clergy recognized that the pervasiveness of black poverty called for government bodies providing health care for the uninsured, helping poor blacks, and addressing unemployment.

While intra-group distinctions among white Protestant Churches exist in their cultural approaches to understanding poverty, strong inter-racial differences also persist. That is, Hinojosa and Park (2004) found that even when blacks and whites affiliate with similar denominational bodies, blacks were more likely to believe that blacks are disproportionately poor due to structural forms of inequality, such as racially unequal access to a quality education. Conversely, when accounting for denominational affiliation, whites were more likely than were blacks to believe that black poverty is a result of blacks not trying hard enough. While the above study is confined to assessments of black poverty, blacks are more likely than any other ethnic group to be poor and to live in poor communities (Bishaw, 2005). Moreover, their study points to alternate cultural approaches to assessing the causes of concentrated and inter-generational poverty among the most social-economically disadvantaged ethnic group in the U.S. It is conceivable that the differing cultural approaches in understanding poverty along racial lines inform the social service programs that black and white congregations provide.

The Social Service Efforts of Asian and Latino Churches

It is not at all clear how individual versus structural cultural toolkits influence the social service delivery efforts of majority Asian and majority Latino congregations. The immigrant status of Latinos and Asians is a key factor that distinguishes their congregations from those of black and white Americans. To be clear, Asian and Latino Americans are both ethnically diverse. In the 2000 Census, Asian Americans identified with twenty-five different Asian ethnic groups and Latinos identified with twenty-three different Latino ethnic groups. Nonetheless, a plurality of Asians and Latinos are first generation immigrants to the U.S.: forty percent of Latinos and sixty-nine percent of Asians are first generation immigrants (Lien, Pei-te, Conway,

& Wong, 2004; Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2003). As communities of immigrants, predominantly Latino and predominantly Asian congregations are likely serve as assimilation centers in some capacity where newcomers can join friendship networks with those who share their native culture and language (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000). Such networks have the potential to provide individuals with both emotional support and practical information, such as recommendations for jobs, accessing English as a second language classes, information about housing, and other quality of life information (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000; Espinosa, Elizondo, & Miranda, 2003; Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999; Conway & Wong, 2004). It is plausible that these informal forms of church-based social support take precedence to providing formal programs for the broader physical community that surrounds their congregations (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000). As such, majority Latino and majority Asian congregations may be less likely than majority black congregations to provide broader social services. This leads to the following hypotheses:

1. White congregations are less likely than are black congregations to provide social services with a longer-term impact on quality of life (i.e. education and job-skills training).
2. White congregations are more likely than are black congregations to provide programs that have a shorter-term impact on quality of life (i.e. food, thrift, and cash assistance).
3. Asian and Latino congregations are less likely than are black congregations to provide both longer- and shorter-term impact social services.

Sample

Carl S. Dudley and David A. Roozen of the Hartford Institute coordinated *The Faith Communities Today Survey* in 1999 and 2000. The project represents a joint venture of researchers and forty-two denominations and faith groups. Each religious group was responsible for surveying a representative sample of their congregations using a common core questionnaire. Once the findings from these surveys were

combined into a single dataset, it contained information on a total of 14,301 congregations via surveys of the senior clergy. In total, the survey maintained a 57 percent response rate. For the purpose of this study, however, only predominantly black (e.g. 51% or more of the congregation is of this racial group), white, Asian, and Latino congregations are included in the sample. In total, there are 12,904 congregations in this study of which 78.5% are white, 17.85% are black, 1.99% are Latino, and 1.67% are Asian. Because of the all-group-aggregate data, weights have been applied to the data set to adjust for the otherwise disproportionate-to-denomination/group-strata size.

Measures

Dependent Variables

Long-term benefit Congregation-based Social Service. Congregation-based provision of long-term programs are assessed by two dichotomous questions. The questions ask senior clergy whether or not their congregations have directly provided or assisted in the provision of; tutoring/literacy programs for children and teens and employment counseling/placement/ training programs in the past twelve months.

Short-term benefit Congregation-based Social Service. Congregation-based provision of short-term programs are assessed by three dichotomous questions. The questions ask senior clergy whether or not their congregations have directly provided or assisted in the provision of the following: thrift store/thrift store donations, food pantry or soup kitchen, cash assistance to families or individuals programs.

Independent Variables

Congregational Racial Composition. The racial composition of congregations is a nominal measure of predominantly black, white, Asian, and Latino congregations. Black congregations serve as the comparison category.

Control Variables

Because of the importance of congregational resources to congregation-based civic activism (Billingsley, 1999; Chang et al., 1994; Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999; Light, 2001;

Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Tsitsos, 2003), this study controls for a number of commonly established congregational resources. These include the following: number of congregants, educational status of congregants, paid staff, the financial health of congregations, the full time status of clergy, and the educational status of clergy. Past studies have also found a connection between the theological orientation of churches and their social service behavior (Barnes, 2005; Dudley & Roozen, 2001). To that end, the social justice orientation of congregations is also taken into account. Social justice is measured by a ten point index that encapsulates clergy beliefs on how well social justice characterizes their congregation and how often clergy preach on social justice. An odds ratio of over one indicates the positive impact a congregation's social justice orientation has on their social service delivery efforts. In order to reduce the impact of social-environmental contexts on the analyses, this study also controls for urbanicity, employment and educational rate and the racial/ethnic representation within the census block on which the congregation is located. This study also controls for region.

While denomination affiliation provides an important indication of the agenda and mission of churches, it has been excluded from these analyses because of its high level of multicollinearity with the racial characteristics of local congregations. The denomination and race variables have an average variance inflation factor of 4.69. Additionally, congregations affiliated with Black Protestant denominations and predominantly black congregations maintain a .911 factor loading on the same factor. Finally, no predominantly white, Asian, or Latino congregations affiliate with historically black denominations. As such, including both race and denominational background in the analyses compromises the validity of the results. For this reason, denominational affiliation has been excluded.

Missing values for all variables were replaced with an imputed regression score. Newly constructed variables were recoded to reflect the distribution of the original variables. The analyses presented below were not significantly or substantively altered by this technique.

Results

Bivariate Analyses

Race and Social Service Delivery. In support of the first hypothesis, the bivariate analyses presented in Table 1 suggest that black congregations are, on average, more likely than are white congregations to provide the longer-term impact programs of tutoring and job training. There is some support for the second hypothesis, as white congregations are, on average, more likely to provide the shorter-term impact thrift and food assistance programs. Finally, there is qualified support for the third hypothesis of Asian and Latino congregations being less likely than black congregations to provide social services in general. Asian congregations are less likely than black congregations to provide tutoring, job-training, food and cash programs. And, Latino congregations are less likely than black congregations to provide tutoring, job-training, and thrift programs.

Table 1. Relationship between Race/Ethnicity of Congregation and Provision of Social Service Programs: Chi-Square Analyses

	Educational Tutoring	Job Training	Thrift	Food	Cash
Total	27.34%	22.50%	57.36%	83.99%	83.67%
Black	61.70	44.03	52.32	75.64	85.11
White	19.63**	17.40**	58.99**	86.66**	83.54
Asian	22.33**	24.19**	53.02	59.07**	75.35**
Latino	27.63**	29.57**	42.02**	74.32	82.88
N=	12,904	12,904	12,904	12,904	12,904
*<.05	**<.01				

Note: two-tailed sig. test is comparing black to non-black congregations

Multivariate Analyses

Long-term Social Services: Education and Job-Training. As

Table 2. Relationship between Race/Ethnicity of Congregation and Congregation-based Long-Term Social Service Programs: Odds Ratio Converted from Logit Regression

	Educational Tutoring	Job Training
<i>Race of Congregation</i>		
White Congregation	0.226 (0.019)**	0.287 (0.026)**
Latino Congregation	0.300 (0.052)**	0.430 (0.076)**
Asian Congregation	0.245 (0.047)**	0.442 (0.085)**
Social Justice Orientation	1.262 (0.020)**	1.199 (0.019)**
Clergy Education	1.090 (0.036)**	0.871 (0.029)**
<i>Full Time Status of Clergy#</i>		
Full Time/Works Another Job	1.036 (0.103)	1.373 (0.141)**
Part Time Clergy	1.447 (0.101)**	5.352 (0.365)**
No Full Time Clergy	1.264 (0.085)**	0.819 (0.067)*
Number of Congregants	1.301 (0.028)**	1.440 (0.034)**
Proportion of Poor Congregants	1.066 (0.022)**	1.101 (0.024)**
Financial Health of Congregation	1.002 (0.029)	1.010 (0.033)
Paid Staff	1.320 (0.044)**	1.174 (0.041)**
Urbanicity	1.192 (0.034)**	1.223 (0.038)**
Employment Rate in Census Tract	1.027 (0.057)	1.125 (0.066)*
Educational Status in Census Tract	1.036 (0.026)	1.040 (0.028)
Proportion of Blacks in Census	1.034 (0.012)**	1.034 (0.013)**
Proportion of Hispanics in Census	0.968 (0.022)	0.948 (0.022)*
Proportion of Asians in Census	0.972 (0.068)	0.875 (0.062)
<i>Standard errors in parentheses</i>		
*<.05	**<.01	(two-tailed significance test)

#Full Time Clergy is the comparison category for Full Time Status of Clergy.

Table 2. Relationship between Race/Ethnicity of Congregation and Congregation-based Long-Term Social Service Programs: Odds Ratio Converted from Logit Regression (continued from previous page)

	Educational Tutoring	Job Training
<i>Region##</i>		
Northeast	0.968 (0.068)	.872 (0.067)
South	1.236 (0.079)**	0.987 (0.068)
West	1.233 (0.094)**	2.224 (0.170)**
Other Region	0.902 (0.172)	0.966 (0.195)
Observations	12,904	12,904
Standard errors in parentheses		
* < .05	** < .01	(two-tailed significance test)

##Rest of the Country is the comparison category for Region

in Table 1, the multivariate analyses presented in Table 2 provides support for the first hypothesis by suggesting that, all things being equal, white congregations are nearly one-quarter and .29 times as likely as are black congregations to provide tutoring and job-training programs respectively. In support of the fourth hypothesis, Latino congregations are .30 and .43 times as likely as are black congregations to respectively provide such programs. Similarly, Asian congregations are roughly one-quarter and .44 times as likely as are black congregations to provide tutoring and job-training programs. In sum, all non-black congregations are less likely than are black congregations to provide long-term social services. These analyses also indicate that congregational resources, social justice ideology, and the social demographic characteristics of the communities in which congregations are located are positively associated with their provision of academic tutoring and job-training programs.

Multivariate Analyses: Short-term Programs: Thrift Programs, Food, and Cash

In large support of the third hypothesis, white congregations are nearly three and one and a half times more likely

Table 3. Relationship between Race/Ethnicity of Congregation and Congregation-based Short-Term Social Service Programs: Odds Ratio Converted from Logit Regression

	Thrft	Food	Cash
<i>Race of Congregation</i>			
White Congregation	1.519 (0.114)**	2.815 (0.268)**	0.846 (0.086)
Latino Congregation	0.819 (0.124)	1.508 (0.272)*	1.238 (0.250)
Asian Congregation	1.153 (0.186)	0.510 (0.090)**	0.609 (0.122)*
Social Justice Orientation	1.128 (0.015)**	1.123 (0.020)**	1.006 (0.018)
Clergy Education	1.093 (0.028)**	1.249 (0.042)**	0.877 (0.030)**
<i>Full Time Status of Clergy#</i>			
Full Time/Works Another Job	0.907 (0.070)	0.812 (0.075)*	1.152 (0.122)
Part Time Clergy	0.971 (0.054)	0.727 (0.054)**	0.790 (0.058)**
No Full Time Clergy	0.469 (0.025)**	0.471 (0.033)**	0.332 (0.022)**
Number of Congregants	1.230 (0.022)**	1.332 (0.035)**	1.459 (0.038)**
Proportion of Poor Congregants	0.991 (0.017)	0.992 (0.022)	1.020 (0.023)
Financial Health of Congregation	1.051 (0.024)*	0.987 (0.032)	1.184 (0.035)**
Paid Staff	1.037 (0.030)	1.374 (0.055)**	1.222 (0.050)**
Urbanicity	1.028 (0.025)	0.962 (0.033)	0.975 (0.032)
Employment Rate in Census Tract	1.148 (0.051)**	1.030 (0.063)	1.036 (0.063)
Educational Status in Census Tract	1.017 (0.021)	0.972 (0.028)	0.972 (0.027)
Proportion of Blacks in Census	0.981 (0.010)	0.982 (0.013)	0.957 (0.013)**
Proportion of Hispanics in Census	1.008 (0.020)	0.999 (0.025)	0.911 (0.023)**
Proportion of Asians in Census	0.809 (0.051)**	1.057 (0.091)	0.843 (0.067)*
*<.05	**<.01	(two-tailed sig.test)	

(continued next page)

Table 3. Relationship between Race/Ethnicity of Congregation and Congregation-based Short-Term Social Service Programs: Odds Ratio Converted from Logit Regression (continued)

	Thrift	Food	Cash
<i>Region##</i>			
Northeast	0.768 (0.044)**	1.116 (0.096)	0.756 (0.057)**
South	1.149 (0.060)**	0.972 (0.069)	1.660 (0.123)**
West	1.483 (0.096)**	0.964 (0.085)	1.289 (0.114)**
Other Region	0.708 (0.114)*	0.626 (0.111)**	1.113 (0.215)
Observations	12904		12904
Standard errors in parentheses			
*<.05	**<.01		

##Rest of the Country is the comparison category for Region

than are black congregations to provide the food and thrift programs respectively. White congregations, are, however, no more likely than are black congregations to provide cash assistance programs. Nonetheless, these analyses largely suggest that white congregations tend to be more likely than are black congregations to provide shorter-term impact programs. As expected, Asian congregations are half and .6 times as likely as are black congregations to provide food and cash assistance programs respectively. Unexpectedly, Latino congregations are actually one and a half times more likely than are black congregations to provide food programs. These analyses also indicate that congregational resources and social justice ideology are all positively associated with congregations' provision of short-term programs.

Discussion

The current study builds upon prior studies on congregation-based social service delivery by suggesting that the racial toolkits of congregations of varying racial/ethnic groups likely inform the social services they provide. The disproportionate amount of poverty-related concerns within black communities may contribute to black congregants maintaining a more

structuralist orientation than white congregants, such that black congregations are more likely to view poverty as a systemic problem. Such awareness likely contributes to black congregations being more strongly motivated, relative to white congregations, to provide programs that attempt to address the root cause of poverty, such as poor educational and job skills. On the other hand, the greater involvement of white relative to black congregations in shorter term impact programs is plausibly linked to the fact that white congregants are far more likely than are black congregants to live in middle class communities (see Massey & Denton, 1995). This reality may contribute to white congregants being more likely than black congregants to maintain a more individualist toolkit, such that poor families are viewed as isolated cases that have temporarily fallen upon hard times, and are therefore in need of short-term relief.

The disproportionate amount of first generation immigrants within Asian and Latino American communities may account for the lower likelihood of Asian and Latino, relative to black congregations, providing some social services. That is, Asian and Latino congregations likely invest more resources into programs that address the assimilation-related needs of their congregants than in programs that address the concerns of the physical communities surrounding their congregations (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000). However, Latino congregations are actually more likely than are black congregations to provide food assistance programs. Nonetheless, on the whole, the shorter-term impact social service delivery efforts of Latino congregations are closer to that of black congregations than are Asian congregations to black congregations. These similarities may be linked to the similar social-economic experiences of blacks and Latinos. The relatively low social economic status of Hispanics is closer to that of black Americans than to whites and Asians (Bishaw, 2005). In sum, this study suggests that the cultural toolkits that Americans of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds utilize to understand social inequality arguably inform approaches their congregations use to address human needs in their communities.

Conclusion

While black congregations are more heavily involved than are non-black congregations in the provision of social services that have a longer-term impact on quality of life, the social-economic concerns of black communities are too pervasive for black congregations to address by themselves. The Charitable Choice Clause of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 has contributed to intense debate over the prospect of religious congregations receiving public dollars to provide social services. This clause provides legislative authority for governments to contract out federally funded social welfare services to sectarian organizations (H.R. 3734). While black congregants are more supportive than are whites of the notion of congregations receiving public dollars, their congregations are no more likely than others to receive such funding (Pew, 2001). In fact, only 5–7% of all congregations receive public funding (Chaves, 1999; Cnaan & Boddie, 2002). A major reason so few congregations receive public funding is that few have the experience and resources in the form of seed money, space, trained staff, and volunteers to implement publicly financed projects. In addition, debate over violations to the establishment clause of the First Amendment contributes to the unwillingness of many congresspersons to support President Bush's attempt to implement this policy via Executive Orders.

Whether seeking public or private funding or attempting to provide existing services more effectively, the social service efforts of congregations within poor ethnic minority communities would benefit from increased technical assistance. Assistance is needed in conducting community needs assessments, program evaluations, grant writing, and in forming partnerships with other civic institutions that would go far in helping congregations in the poorest communities better address community needs. Despite the willingness of many churches within such communities to address needs, without increased assistance, these churches will remain limited in their ability to do so.

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