

Lancaster Theological Seminary

Once Upon an Agency: Faith Led the Way

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by

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Once Upon an Agency: Faith Led the Way

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Abstract

This qualitative research project uses a narrative approach to study how seven Faith-based organizations in a ten-county area of southern New Jersey have maintained, adapted, expanded or abandoned their original mission since their founding. What is the story of each respective organization from its beginning until the present? What are the challenges and struggles inherent in maintaining a focus on an original organizational mission statement? How do operational pressures such as changes in funding, shifts in cultural expectations, and unforeseen events, for example a natural disaster or a pandemic affect the living out of the mission? Interviews with participating agencies are analyzed to search for commonalties among the agencies in the study, and to discern lessons to be learned from all of the agencies together. Recommendations are made for faith-based organizations seeking to be faithful to their founding mission in the face of the various changes and challenges they encounter.

Dedicated to my parents, Raymond and Patricia Goga Prendergast
who taught me the importance of serving others and continue
to guide me from Heaven.
my brother Tom Prendergast and sister-in-law extraordinaire
Terry McDonough Prendergast whose loving support, hospitality and
encouragement kept me going.
Rev. Paul C. Wise, Nancy Fell, dhM, and Jane Hill, SSJ
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over the years who have blessed and enriched my life
with their stories and sharing as well as their love, teaching me
that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". Phil 4:13

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Chapter One: Introduction

Faith based organizations have done vital work in their communities, but are under pressure to come to terms with shifts in regulations, funding, community dynamics, culture and other factors. This study will focus on how faith based organizations have maintained, adapted, expanded or abandoned their original mission and vision over time. What is the story of each faith based organization and does the original mission remain the same since the initial inception of the organization? What factors have shaped the trajectory of each organization's mission and vision over time? This study will survey seven organizations that identify as faith-based. My assumption is that there are generalized lessons to be learned by comparing stories across organizations. I want to learn what similarities, if any, there are among the agencies surveyed in any expansion or adaptation of the original mission. In comparing the stories I want to learn if there are similarities in the continuing and living out of the mission of faith-based organizations.

The information for this study is from individual interviews of key leaders in the organizations interviewed. The reasons for any change from the original purpose and mission are compared, as are the reasons, if any, for maintaining the original purpose of the organization from the beginnings. Representatives of seven agencies, Christian and non-Christian were interviewed. Organizations that participated in the interviews

consider themselves faith-based. The organizations participating are scattered among ten counties of southern New Jersey. The oldest was founded 137 years ago and the newest was founded 18 years ago. Some have two full time staff and some have over eighty full time staff members. All use volunteers and depend on financial donations and private grants while more than half of the agencies also rely on government grants.

I have been involved with faith-based organizations directly and indirectly for over forty years and have seen changes in each of them with some moving away from their original purpose and others expanding the vision of the original mission. Along the way, I have had contact with agencies that are not faith-based through the years and there seemed to be a difference in how the agency mission was viewed. Was being a faith-based organization important for the agency to fully live out the mission? If the agency was not faith-based would it function the same or differently compared to agencies that claim a faith base?

I am director of a small faith-based agency in southern New Jersey that began as a drop-in center for homeless women in 2002, and within a year, we were serving at-risk women, which expanded our founding purpose, which was to serve homeless women with mental illness who were vulnerable on the street. A local shelter made referrals and initially, the agency was a place for the women to come to be safe from the street and the primary purpose was to provide hospitality. Snacks were served and arts and crafts were available as well as magazines if the women were interested in using them. Within a year, women who were homeless but did not report mental health conditions and had no place to go during the day began to arrive. We began in a church basement and were there for five years and for the last, thirteen have been in our own building.

There was a need for case management for many of the women to assist in mental health and medical services as well as housing assistance and procuring benefits such as disability and social security. We developed relationships with agencies in the area to begin to offer case management for those who were interested. As different needs arose, we expanded to offer information and referral services and to provide clothing and other needed items. Eventually, volunteers offered various activities such as knitting, painting and pottery. In the morning, breakfast is served and lunch is also provided as well as the opportunity to do laundry and use of a telephone is provided. The neighborhood where we are located has several rooming houses and some of the women who rent rooms in these buildings come to our agency. Though they are not homeless, they are at risk of becoming homeless.

Since our inception, both clients and visitors as well as staff from other agencies have remarked about our hospitality and welcoming atmosphere. Is it that being faith-based encourages this? Would we operate differently if we were not faith-based? I wondered about that. Though our primary mission is to offer hospitality and provide a safe environment to homeless women, we have gradually reached out in the community either by our own effort or from other agencies reaching out to us. An agency that works with trafficked youth asked us to provide a safe place for some of their females during the day as their facility has an open-door policy; until they acquired another facility, there was no place in their building to guarantee the clients would not be seen by perpetrators. We had an unofficial partnership to do this for three years until they acquired a new facility. A local potter came to us to inquire about starting a pottery initiative for disenfranchised women in our facility. Her non-profit was begun five years

ago, working with our women, one day a week until she was able to acquire space for her own studio, which was opened three years ago, one block away from our location. Our partnership has continued with the studio and the core group of four women from our faith-based organization are still with the studio and teach pottery to our women one day a week in our building. We in turn provide morning coffee and a snack and lunch to all of the women who work in the studio, not just the core group, in our facility.

We continue to grow as a faith-based organization as we have developed a relationship with the local community police who bring homeless women to us for our services and we in turn provide them with socks and other items to bring to the homeless on the street, men and women, as well as sandwiches and snacks. While our mission is to homeless women without children in their custody, we continue to expand our outreach to the community in responding to whatever current needs develop. As we continue to be faithful to our original mission and have expanded our ministry by partnering and collaborating with other entities in our local area, I wanted to learn if other faith-based organizations have developed partnerships and collaborated in their local communities to respond to and address the current needs in their communities. I interviewed other faith-based organizations to learn of their experience of being faith-based and if any of these organizations expanded their original, mission or drifted away from it and to learn if that does or does not affect the way they operate and do business. Diane Butler Bass's narrative approach used in her study of Christian Churches from six different denominations across the country in *Christianity for the Rest of Us*¹ is the basis for my interviews in obtaining the stories of the agencies who are a part of this study.

¹ Bass, Diane Butler. *Christianity for the Rest of Us. How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith*. New York, NY. Harper One. An Imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers. 2006

Butler Bass tells the story of each congregation interviewed told to her through the eyes of the leadership and congregants. She considered herself on a pilgrimage with each congregation that she visited. As she describes “it is the narrative of a pilgrimage. At the beginning, I did not intend to go on a journey with these churches...This book is therefore, a kind of report from the field, a story of insights I gained from going on a pilgrimage with the people in some remarkable Christian communities”². Her use of a narrative in telling the stories of these congregations resonated with me to learn of the history of faith-based organizations by learning the individual story of each agency from the beginning until now. Like Butler Bass, I wanted to learn about the founding of the agencies and like her I more than heard a story and discovered the commitment of the leaders of these agencies from the beginning until the present to continue the mission and meet the needs of the communities in which each one is located. Butler Bass writes about the congregations she visited and interviewed: “They are unique places, with their own personalities and histories”³. I wanted to find out if this was true about faith-based organizations in researching the stories of these organizations and as Butler Bass states “We cannot know ourselves apart from our stories—stories in which we are both author and actor”⁴. I wanted to discover if these faith-based organizations would be able to learn of who they are from their individual stories.

² Bass, Diane Butler. *Christianity for the Rest of Us. How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith*. New York. Harper One. An Imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers. 2006. p. 7-8

³ Bass, p. 43

⁴ Bass, p. 138

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Central Terms

The following terms are assumed throughout the project:

Call is used to describe human services work in faith-based organizations that is seen as “God’s will for your life”.⁵

Ethical Cultural, according to Riivari and Lamsa,

has been defined as an organization’s ability to encourage its members to act ethically and avoid committing unethical acts... It includes the conditions, traditions, and practices of organizational behavior that either promote an organization’s members’ morally sustainable behavior or hinder it.⁶

Faith-based refers to those organizations defined as those, which receive inspiration for their programs from the principles of a faith or denomination.⁷

Marginalized refers to those excluded from society and takes many forms including economic. Families and individuals “fall victim to a downward cycle of poverty generated by economic forces they are powerless to influence. The poor, the disables and the unemployed too often are simply left behind”⁸ and on the fringes of society.

Mission refers to who and what an organization is and does.⁹

⁵ Trulear, Harold Dean “The Seamless Garment: Christian Identity and Professionalism in an Era of Collaboration”. *Social Work & Christianity*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2007), p.318-319 ATLA accessed 5/16/19 ISSN:07375778

⁶Riivari, Elina, Anna-Maija Lamsa. “Organizational Ethical Virtues of Innovativeness”, *Journal of Business Ethics*. Mar 2019 Vol. 155 Issue 1 p. 225 ATLA accessed 05/22/19

⁷ Lin, Peirong. “The Case for Practical Theological Interpretations in Faith-Based Organizations. *Evangelical Review of Theology*”. Oct. 2018, Vol 42 p.320. ATLA accessed 5/24/19

⁸ O’Brien, David J. and Thomas A. Shannon, editors. *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*. Maryknoll, New York. Orbis Books. 1992 p. 597

⁹ Enright, William G. *Kitchen Table Giving: Reimagining How Congregations Connect With Their Donors*. Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2017. p 23

Organizational Culture of an organization includes “shared values, beliefs, and assumptions”¹⁰ that are part of the living of the mission.

Organizational Health according to Lencioni is when

an organization has integrity--is healthy—when it is whole, consistent, and complete, that is, when its management, operations, strategy, and culture fit together and make sense.¹¹

Organizational Identity refers to the experiences of an organization and obtaining meaning through its stories and how these stories are lived out.¹²

Purpose refers to the contribution and direction that gives meaning to the activities in the life of the organization.¹³

Reciprocal Ethnography refers to exchanging the information received in an interview with the person interviewed for feedback.¹⁴

Value[s] Values are part of the mission or purpose of a faith-based organization. Pilch and Malina give a definition that reflects a connection of values within human behavior in society.

The word value describes some general quality and direction of life that human beings are expected to embody in their behavior.
A value is a general, normative orientation of action in a social system.¹⁵

¹⁰ Ruiz-Palomino, Pablo. Ricardo Martinez-Canas. “Ethical Culture, Ethical Intent, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: The Moderating and Mediating Role of Person-Organizational Fit”, *Journal of Business and Ethics*, 2014. 120 (1) p 96 ATLA accessed 5/24/19

¹¹ Lencioni, Patrick A. *The Advantage*. San Francisco. Jossey-Bass. 2012. p. 5

¹² Lin, Peirong. “The Case for Practical Theological Interpretations in Faith-Based Organizations. *Evangelical Review of Theology*”. Oct. 2018, Vol 42 p.321. ATLA accessed 5/24/19

¹³ Heifetz, Ronald, Alexander Grashow, Marty Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership, Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Boston, Massachusetts. Harvard Business Press. 2009 p307

¹⁴ Lawless, Elaine J. *Holy Women, Wholly Women: Sharing Ministries of Wholeness Through Life Stories and Reciprocal Ethnography*. Philadelphia. University of Pennsylvania Press. 1993. p.77

¹⁵ Pilch, John J. and Bruce Malina. *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, Third Edition. Eugene, Oregon, Cascade Books. 2016. p. xix

Vision projects the plans the organization has for its future.¹⁶

The Identity of Faith-Based Organization

A faith-based organization has an identity with a faith tradition, be it Christian or non-Christian. According to Peirong Lin in her article “The Case for Practical Theological Interpretation in Faith-Based Organizations”, the term faith-based for an organization usually refers to those which “have been defined as ‘any organization that derives inspiration and guidance for all its activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or from the school of thought within that faith’”¹⁷

The identity of a faith-based organization can be blurred according to Peter Greer, Chris Horst and Anna Haggard in their book *Mission Drift* and they state that mission drift “carries organizations away from their core purpose and identity”¹⁸, but Lin states that “...mission drift is influenced by an organization’s environment”¹⁹ This can be because of many factors including the changes of societal need; demographics of the community served; lack of original funding sources, and other factors different for each faith-based organization. Acknowledging that faith-based organizations can struggle with being faithful to the original mission, throughout her article Lin discusses

¹⁶ Schmitz, Paul. *Everyone Leads. Building Leadership from the Community Up*. San Francisco. Jossey-Bass. A Wiley Imprint. 2012. p. 79

¹⁷ Lin, Peirong. “The Case for Practical Theological Interpretations in Faith-Based Organizations”. *Evangelical Review of Theology*. Oct. 2018, Vol 42, p.320 ATLA accessed 5/24/19. ISSN: 0144-8153

¹⁸ Greer, Peter, Chris Horst with Anna Haggard. *Mission Drift: The Unspoken Crisis Facing Leaders, Charities and Churches*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. Bethany House Publishers. 2014. p.18

¹⁹ Lin, Peirong, “The Case for Practical Theological Interpretations in Faith-Based Organizations”. *Evangelical Review of Theology*. Oct. 2018, Vol. 42, Issue 4 p. 319 ATLA accessed 5/3/19. ISSN: 0144-8153

the importance of faith-based organizations to have a strong identity to help avoid drifting²⁰ and to acknowledge their faith identity²¹ as this is what contributes to the influence they have in society through their ministry of service²². By their very nature of being faith-based, there is a perception of these organizations being driven by their faith. For example, when one hears of Lutheran Social Services, Catholic Charities, Jewish Children and Family Services, Mennonite Disaster Service, to name a few, the perception is that because of their faith affiliation they are geared to compassion and caring for humanity in all situations. Lin emphasizes the importance of each faith-based organization's individual story to understand where it fits in the community and its role in that community.²³ In forming their identities, faith-based organizations need to evaluate how they live out their values in the living out of the mission through the services provided.²⁴

The Role of Government in Social Services and the Development of Faith-Based Organizations.

While faith-based organizations have existed, the term faith-based was not always used. The services provided were considered to be what religious organizations did, to take care of the needy as James T. Spivey outlines in his article

²⁰ Lin, Peirong. "The Case for Practical Theological Interpretations in Faith-Based Organizations". *Evangelical Review of Theology*. Oct. 2018, Vol. 42, Issue 4 p. 319-320. ATLA accessed 5/3/19 ISSN: 0144-8153

²¹ Lin, p. 329

²² Lin, p. 320

²³ Lin, p. 321-322

²⁴ Lin, p. 331

“Charitable by Choice: A Biblical View of Faith-Based Initiatives”²⁵ that presents an overview of the development of faith-based organizations. In the United States, local governments did not provide social services however, that began to change with the Great Depression.²⁶ “From early colonial days, churches were the main providers of social services. Early nineteenth-century ‘societies’ were started to support denominational causes”²⁷. From the Great Depression through “the 1960s government began funding more social programs through private charities...little money went to religious entities.”²⁸ In 1996, “The Welfare Reform Act included a ‘charitable choice’ provision allowing faith-based organizations (FBOs) to compete for federal support on the same basis as secular entities without infringing on their religious identity or freedom.”²⁹ The Community Solutions Act five years later helped faith-based organizations further define themselves by “permitting faith-based organizations to integrate values in their programs and to maintain their own beliefs, practice and governance as long as no direct funds are used for religious instruction, worship or proselytizing”.³⁰ This would allow faith-based organizations further autonomy to operate according to their individual mission and belief systems. This law would allow, “support of value-based organizations engaged in ‘faith-based initiatives’ to alleviate some of the burden on the state to provide social services...effectively by using grass roots

²⁵ Spivey, James T. “Charitable by Choice: A Biblical View of Faith-Based Initiatives”. Baptist History and Heritage, 48 no 1 Spr 2013, p 48-66. ATLA accessed 11/2/19

²⁶ Spivey, p. 51

²⁷ Spivey, p. 51

²⁸ Spivey p. 51

²⁹ Spivey p. 52

³⁰ Spivey p. 52

organizations”³¹. Being grass roots, these organizations are presumably a part of the local community and more knowledgeable than programs run on a state level. Through these initiatives, faith-based organizations “qualify to receive tax money and in many instances use those funds for programs already part of their ministry”³². Thus, a ministry that provided a food pantry in a community could continue with assistance from the government or an after school program run by a local church could receive funding because of being a faith-based organization. Because faith-based organizations “operate at the grassroots level, close to the need”³³ of the people and community, they are able to “provide(s) effective solutions to practical problems”³⁴ without having to go through the bureaucracy of government agencies. Spivey lists reasons for churches and faith-based organizations to receive federal and state funding, among them:

- Church-based [faith-based] ministries reduce social burdens on the government
- Local agencies work more efficiently
- Spiritual programs more effectively transform lives and reduce chronic dependence on the state
- State funding enables churches [faith-based organizations] to reach more people³⁵

Faith-based organizations are able to “target local needs and deliver value-added services effectively”³⁶ because of operating in local communities and therefore know the issues and problems faced by the communities in which they are located. I believe that large government entities might be more concerned with a larger focus rather than a

³¹ Spivey, James T. “Charitable by Choice: A Biblical View of Faith-Based Initiatives”. Baptist History and Heritage, 48 no 1 Spr 2013 p 52 ATLA accessed 11/2/19

³²Spivey, p 48

³³Spivey p 50

³⁴ Spivey p. 50

³⁵ Spivey p. 52-53

³⁶ Spivey p. 50

local one. Being eligible for government funding has allowed faith-based organizations to further serve the communities in which they are located and contribute to the overall well-being of their local communities. Faith-based organizations must provide services to whoever comes to them and may not discriminate, even because of religious tenets or creed³⁷ and therefore serve those outside their own faith, increasing the number of individuals who can be served.

Biblical Roots of Faith-Based Organizations

In both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, there are mandates for social ministry. Not only were the Hebrew people to do social justice, with laws for providing for the care of their own people but also for those who were foreigners.³⁸ Throughout both testaments are references to caring for the widow, the orphan and the oppressed, particularly in Isaiah 61:1-5 and in Luke 4:1-8 that quote from Isaiah 61:1-5. Spivey speaks of Jesus bringing “both spiritual salvation and social justice – proclaiming the gospel to the poor, releasing the captives, giving sight to the blind, freeing the oppressed [Luke: 1-8]...He cared for soul and body”.³⁹ Non-Christian and Christian faith-based organizations have their social ministries rooted in both testaments. According to Lin “their understanding of their faith in their [faith-based organizations] expression of the common good”⁴⁰ guides how they minister to the needs of the

³⁷ Spivey, James T. “Charitable by Choice: A Biblical View of Faith-Based Initiatives”. Baptist History and Heritage, 48 no 1 Spr 2013, p. 52 ATLA accessed 11/2/19

³⁸Spivey p. 49

³⁹ Spivey p. 49

⁴⁰ Lin, Peirong, “The Case for Practical Theological Interpretations in Faith-Based Organizations”. Evangelical Review of Theology. Oct. 2018, Vol 42, Issue 4 p320. ATLA accessed 5/3/19. ISSN : 0144-8153

community and Trulear in his article “The Seamless Garment: Christian Identity and Professionalism in an Era of Collaboration” writes of “The Christian ethical mandates concerning citizenship and the biblical emphasis on justice point toward a common good...the enfranchisement of the marginalized, the empowerment of the weak, the just and fair access to human services...”⁴¹. This for faith-based organizations can include serving the members in the local community according to an organization’s area of expertise, which can include soup kitchens, food pantries, after school programs, providing clothing, assistance with utilities, shelter to homeless individuals and whatever other issues need to be addressed in their respective geographic areas. Spivey states that “The scriptural mandate for churches to do social ministry in the secular community is undeniable”⁴² and writes of social ministry as always being important to the “mission of Christian churches”⁴³. Kaine and Green in their article “Outing the Silent Partner: Espousing the Economic Values that Operate in Not-For-Profit Organizations”⁴⁴ write about the church early on “engaging in the provision of community services [which] was the practical expression of Christian beliefs”⁴⁵ and this fits in with Spivey’s comment about social ministry being important to the church.⁴⁶ Kaine and Green also state the role of compassion and social justice being essential in why staff in non-profits [faith-based organizations] choose to work in these type of agencies⁴⁷ and that “The mission

⁴¹ Trulear, Harold Dean. “The Seamless Garment: Christian Identity and Professionalism in an Era of Collaboration”. *Social Work & Christianity*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2007), p.322 ATLA accessed 5/16/19 ISSN:07375778

⁴² Spivey, James T. “Charitable by Choice: A Biblical View of Faith-Based Initiatives”. *Baptist History and Heritage*, 48 no 1 Spr 2013, p 50. ATLA accessed 11/2/19

⁴³ Spivey, p. 52

⁴⁴ Kaine, Sarah, Jenny Green, “Outing the Silent Partner: Espousing the Economic Values that Operate in Not-For-Profit Organizations”. *Journal of Business Ethics*. Nov 2013, Vol. 118, Issue 1 ATLA accessed 5/4/19

⁴⁵ Kaine and Green. p. 218

⁴⁶ Spivey, James T. “Charitable by Choice: A Biblical View of Faith-Based Initiatives”. *Baptist History and Heritage*, 48 no 1 Spr 2013, p 52 ATLA accessed 11/2/19

⁴⁷ Kaine, Sarah, Jenny Green, “Outing the Silent Partner: Espousing the Economic Values that Operate in Not-for-Profit Organizations”. *Journal of Business Ethics*, Nov 2013, Vol. 118, Issue 1 p. 217 ATLA accessed 5/4/19

of a not-for-profit [faith-based organization] embodies and reflects its values”⁴⁸. Along with this, Askeland writes in “Leaders Should be the Carriers of Institutional Values” about the importance of leaders to work with others in the faith-based organization to define the mission of the organization and form the values.⁴⁹ He also emphasizes the importance of the leader [of the faith-based organization] to identify “with the faith-tradition” because that leader plays a pivotal role in defining the current and future purpose and goals.⁵⁰ Lin has a similar view regarding leadership in an organization involving more than just the executive director and the management team over sight. She mentions the importance of not only establishing the path and focus of the organization but also allying the staff with this, motivate, and encourage them to be a part of the process.⁵¹ These three articles all emphasize the importance of the faith identity, mission and values of faith-based organizations for all staff, not just the leaders, to accomplish the mission and purpose of the organization in the community.

In *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice* by Mary Clark Moschella⁵² and *The Power of Stories, A Guide for Leading Multi-Racial and Multi-Cultural Organizations* by Jacqueline Lewis⁵³ both authors speak of the importance of storytelling as Butler Bass

⁴⁸ Kaine, Sarah, Jenny Green “Outing the Silent Partner: Espousing the Economic Values that Operate in Not-for-Profit Organizations”. *Journal of Business Ethics*, Nov 2013, Vol. 118, Issue 1 p. 216 ATLA accessed 5/4/19

⁴⁹ Askeland, Harold. “Leaders Should be the Carriers of Institutional Values”. *Diaconia*, p. 150 5 no 2, 2014. ATLA accessed 5/23/19

⁵⁰ Askeland, Harold p.152

⁵¹ Lin, Peirong, “The Case for Practical Theological Interpretations in Faith-Based Organizations”. *Evangelical Review of Theology*. Oct. 2018, Vol 42, Issue 4 p 331. ATLA accessed 5/3/19. ISSN: 0144-8153

⁵² Moschella, Mary Clark. *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice*. Cleveland. The Cleveland Press. 2008

⁵³ Lewis, Jacqueline. *The Power of Stories, A Guide for Leading Multi-Racial and Multi-Cultural Organizations*. Nashville. Abingdon Press. 2008

does with Bass further stating, besides what is quoted above, that “Contemporary thinkers have noted the change—and the new role that storytelling plays in our lives”.⁵⁴ Moschella states that “Narrative models recognize the importance of storytelling as a hallmark of human experience”⁵⁵ that emphasizes the storytelling role as stated above by Butler Bass. In writing about ethnography, which Moschella defines as being involved with a group to understand and learn about them⁵⁶ which requires listening to their stories, for as she states, “Most people long to be heard”⁵⁷ and want to tell their story. Lewis speaks of every story having “a beginning, a middle and an end”⁵⁸ which have gaps that those telling the story fill and bring together with their lived experience⁵⁹. “Positioning oneself and being positioned in the ‘community’ an essay on Jewish ethnography as a ‘Jew-ish’ ethnographer” by Ben Kasstan⁶⁰ tells of the difficulty the ethnographer [interviewer] can encounter when obtaining the story from the same group with which the ethnographer identifies. He relates how his Jewish identity “would present both obstacles to and opportunities for the research”⁶¹ as the group he was researching did not see him as part of the same sect as they were.⁶² This provides a

⁵⁴ Butler Bass, Diane. *Christianity for the Rest of Us. How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith*. New York, NY. Harper One. An Imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers. 2006. p.138

⁵⁵ Moschella, Mary Clark. *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice*. Cleveland. The Cleveland Press. 2008. p. 5

⁵⁶ Moschella, p. 4

⁵⁷ Moschella, p. 141

⁵⁸ Lewis, Jacqueline. *The Power of Stories, A Guide for Leading Multi-Racial and Multi-Cultural Organizations*. Nashville. Abingdon Press. 2008 p. 137

⁵⁹ Lewis p. 137

⁶⁰ Kastaan Ben. “Positioning oneself and being positioned in the ‘community’ An essay on Jewish ethnography as a ‘Jew-ish’ ethnographer”. *Jewish Studies in the Nordic Communities Today*. Scripta Insitute Donnerai Aboensis, 27 No 1 Mar 2017 ATLA accessed 10/28/19

⁶¹ Kastaan p. 267

⁶² Kastaan p. 267-268

⁶¹ Kastaan, Ben. “Positioning oneself and being positioned in the ‘community’ An essay on Jewish ethnography as a ‘Jew-ish’ ethnographer”. *Jewish Studies in the Nordic Communities Today*. Scripta Insitute Donnerai Aboensis, 27 No 1 Mar 2017, p264-283. ATLA accessed 10/28/19 p. 267

⁶² Kastaan, p. 267-268

valuable lesson for the researcher to be aware of any biases and prejudices that can exist if one is not a member of the organization or community, which one is interviewing or studying.

Holy Women, Wholly Women: Sharing Ministries of Wholeness Through Life Stories and Reciprocal Ethnography by Elaine J. Lawless⁶³ speaks of the importance of dialogue with the researcher and the one telling the story with the material which allows for “a reciprocal give and take” that involves both in the research⁶⁴ and allows for sharing and developing information from this mutual examining of the material.⁶⁵

In the literature I read, values, organizational identity, organizational culture and ethical culture are included in discussions of leaders and leadership. Ayandokun⁶⁶ and Hutchinson⁶⁷ both speak of “servant leaders” which is biblically based. Leadership according to Ayandokun is a position to be used to serve and not to promote one’s self⁶⁸ and emphasizes biblical leadership as servant is in both the Old and New testaments.⁶⁹ She also emphasizes the need for leaders who are servants to be aware of the needs of those they serve and meet these needs⁷⁰ and Hutchinson speaks of servant leaders being “committed to meeting the needs of others”⁷¹ and that servant leaders must also

⁶³ Lawless, Elaine J. *Holy Women, Wholly Women: Sharing Ministries of Wholeness Through Life Stories and Reciprocal Ethnography*. Philadelphia. University of Pennsylvania Press. 1993

⁶⁴ Lawless p. 61

⁶⁵ Lawless p. 61

⁶⁶ Ayandokun, Revd. Dr. Mrs. Esther O. “Servanthood: The Biblical Model of Leadership” Practical Theology (Baptist College of Theology, Lagos), 2 2009 ATLA accessed 5/16/19

⁶⁷ Hutchinson, John C. “Servanthood: Jesus’ Countercultural Call to Christian Leaders”. Bibliotheca Sacra 166 no 661 Jan-Mar 2009 ATLA accessed 5/6/19

⁶⁸ Ayandokun, Revd. Dr. Mrs. Esther O. “Servanthood: The Biblical Model of Leadership”. Practical Theology (Baptist College of Theology, Lagos), 2 2009 p. 17 ATLA accessed 5/16/19

⁶⁹ Ayandokun, p. 13

⁷⁰ Ayandokun, p.10

⁷¹ Hutchinson, John C. “Servanthood: Jesus’ Countercultural Call to Christian Leaders”. Bibliotheca Sacra 166 no 661 Jan-Mar 2009, p. 69 ATLA accessed 5/6/19

sacrifice for those they serve⁷² as presented in Mark 10:40-45. David R. Sawyer in *Hope in Conflict, Discovering Wisdom in Congregational Turmoil* defines leaders as those who act from a stance of integrity and can respectfully be in relationship with others to assist the congregation's [organization's] story to go forward for the future.⁷³ Sawyer speaks of leaders as being able to accept responsibility for their actions, to control their reactions when dealing with conflict situations, and to maintain a sense of hope in their leadership.⁷⁴ The organization's story is part of leadership and Trine Susanne Johansen in her article "Me, We and Them: Complexity in Employee and Organizational Identity Narration" explains how employees identify with the organization in the telling of the narrative.⁷⁵ She explains that the active storytellers of the narrative are the employees who can bring to the organization life for organizational identity is more than telling the story of the organization, but is an intertwining of many stories, some complicated and some contradictory.⁷⁶ Johansen includes not just the leaders but the employees as being a part of the story, the narrative, for the organization because employees are also a part of what makes up an organization. According to Harold Askeland in "Leaders Should be the Carriers of the Institutional Values", it is vital for leaders of faith-based agencies to see that the founding mission is upheld as well as their faith-based identity.⁷⁷ He defines leadership as " 'the process of influencing others

⁷² Hutchinson John C. "Servanthood: Jesus' Countercultural Call to Christian Leaders". *Bibliotheca Sacra* 166 no 661 Jan-Mar 2009 p. 64 ATLA accessed 5/6/19

⁷³ Sawyer, David R. *Hope in Conflict, Discovering Wisdom in Congregational Turmoil*. Cleveland. The Pilgrim Press. 2007. p. 8

⁷⁴ Sawyer, p. 136

⁷⁵ Johansen, Trine Susanne. "Me, We and Them: Complexity in Employee and Organizational Identity Narration" *Tamara-Journal for Critical Organizational Inquiry*. March-June 2017 Vol 15, Issue 1/2, p.176 ISSN 1532-5555 ATLA accessed 6/12/19

⁷⁶ Johansen, p. 176

⁷⁷ Askeland, Harold. "Leaders Should be the Carriers of Institutional Values". *Diaconia*, 5 no 2, 2014. P. 152 ATLA accessed 5/23/19

to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish objectives' (Yuki 2010, p. 26)⁷⁸ which also would include not just management but all staff in the living of the mission.

Regarding the mission of a faith-based organization which refers to what an agency does⁷⁹, Patrick A. Lencioni in *The Advantage*⁸⁰ says that the reason an organization exists can be called the core purpose⁸¹ and that organizations that are successful and enduring keep to a set of values that guide the organization and uphold the purpose [mission] of the organization as well as define who an organization is.⁸² Lencioni believes that the core values are the center of the identity of an organization and remain part of the organization throughout its existence.⁸³ He writes of the importance of putting the needs of the overall organization above any individual or department to have an organization that is healthy.⁸⁴ The leadership in an organization must be able to put the organizational mission first to carry and live out its purpose. This fits in with the idea of leader as a servant as previously discussed. Healthy organizations have leaders who are able to analyze the organization and are

⁷⁸ Askeland, Harold. "Leaders Should be the Carriers of Institutional Values". *Diaconia*, 5 no 2, 2014. p.152
ATLA accessed 5/23/19

⁷⁹ Enright, William. *Kitchen Table Giving: Reimagining How Congregations Connect with Their Donors*. Create Space Independent Publishing Platform. 2017. p. 23

⁸⁰ Lencioni, Patrick A. *The Advantage*. San Francisco. Jossey-Bass. 2012.

⁸¹ Lencioni p.82

⁸² Lencioni, p.91

⁸³ Lencioni, p.93

⁸⁴ Lencion, p.69

comfortable with admitting weaknesses in the operation and willingly seek solutions to improve and continue to carry out the mission.⁸⁵

Pablo Ruiz-Palomino and Ricardo Martinez-Canas in “Ethical Culture, Ethical Intent, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: The Moderating Mediating Role of Person-Organization Fit”⁸⁶ describes organizational culture as being defined “in terms of shared values, beliefs and assumptions”⁸⁷. This provides a mutuality in the philosophy and ideals of the organization and how it functions. Elina Riivara and Anna-Maija Lamsa in their article “Organizational Ethical Virtues of Innovativeness” speak of organizational culture having an impact on the level of commitment and efficiency by the staff within the organization.⁸⁸ Ruiz-Palomino and Martinez-Canas consider ethical culture as a subsection of organizational culture, which intertwines, with the values of the organization geared to assist with ethical conduct of employees.⁸⁹ It can be defined as the ability of the organization to encourage ethical behavior by its members according to Riivari and Lamsa⁹⁰ who also speak of the importance of ethical culture to increase innovativeness and an openness that will increase staff positive identification

⁸⁵ Lencioni, Patrick A. *The Advantage*. San Francisco. Jossey-Bass. 2012. p. 9

⁸⁶ Ruiz-Palomino, Pablo, Ricardo Martinez-Canas “Ethical Culture, Ethical Intent, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: The Moderating Mediating Role of Person-Organization Fit”. *Journal of Business Ethics* (2014) 120 (1): 95-108. DOI 10. 1007/s10551-013-1650-1 ISSN: 01674544, 15730697. ATLA accessed 5/24/19

⁸⁷ Ruiz-Palomino, Martinez-Canas p. 96

⁸⁸ Riivari, Elina and Anna-Maija Lamsa. “Organizational Ethical Virtues of Innovativeness”. *Journal of Business Ethics*; Mar2019, Vol. 155 Issue 1, Chart ISSN : 0167-4544 p.224 ATLA accessed 5/22/19

⁸⁹ Ruiz-Palomino, Pablo, Ricardo Martinez-Canas “Ethical Culture, Ethical Intent, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: The Moderating Mediating Role of Person-Fit Organization Fit”. *Journal of Business Ethics*, (2014) 120 (1) DOI 10.1997/s100551-010-1650 ISSN: 01674544, 15730697. p. 96 ATLA accessed 5/24/19

⁹⁰ Riivari, Elina and Anna-Maija Lamasa, “Organizational Ethical Virtues of Innovativeness”. *Journal of Business Ethics*; Mar2019, Vol. 155 Issue 1, Chart ISSN : 0167-4544 ATLA accessed 5/22/19 p. 225

with the organization⁹¹ which as Johansen has discussed as being important in the telling of the narrative of the organization.⁹²

It is assumed that all faith-based agencies face challenges. David R. Sawyer in *Hope in Conflict: Discovering Wisdom in Congregational Turmoil*⁹³ states that “Our experience of life is one of constant change and challenge”⁹⁴. Challenge is not only something that faith-based agencies face, but is if part of the experience of life for everyone as well as agencies. Tim Shapiro attests to this in stating that congregations [faith-based organizations] are faced with different tests and challenges in *How Your Congregation Learns: The Learning Journey from Challenge to Achievement*⁹⁵ He further reiterates that congregations [faith-based organizations] are organizations that are always learning⁹⁶ and that challenges and naming that challenge is a part of the learning journey.⁹⁷ Shapiro poses five questions for to ask concerning challenges:

1. What is the challenge? Keep this question alive.
2. What have we done? ...Where you have been will guide your path ahead.
3. What are we learning? Asking what you are learning keeps in front of people that every worthwhile endeavor is a learning experience.
4. What’s our next step? ...Consistently ask, “What’s our next step? What’s our next plan?”
5. What help do we need? Mastery comes only when addressing a challenge

⁹¹Riivari, Elina and Anna-Maija Lamasa, “Organizational Ethical Virtues of Innovativeness”. *Journal of Business Ethics*; Mar2019, Vol. 155 Issue 1, Chart ISSN : 0167-4544 ATLA accessed 5/22/19 p. 224

⁹²Johansen, Trine Susanne. “Me, We and Them: Complexity in Employee and Organizational Identity Narration” *Tamara-Journal for Critical Organizational Inquiry*. March-June 2017 Vol 15, Issue 1/2, p.176 ISSN 1532-5555 ATLA accessed 6/12/19

⁹³ Sawyer, David R. *Hope in Conflict: Discovering Wisdom in Congregational Turmoil*. Cleveland. The Pilgrim Press. 2007

⁹⁴ Sawyer p. 163

⁹⁵ Shapiro, Tim. *How Your Congregation Learn: The Learning Journey from Challenge to Achievement*. Lantham. Rowman & Littlefield, p. ix

⁹⁶ Shapiro p. ix

⁹⁷ Shapiro, p. 40

with both the congregation's ingenuity and an outside resource.⁹⁸

Organizations have to be able to identify the challenge before it can be addressed which Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky refer to as diagnosing the challenge by asking what is the mission⁹⁹ in identifying the challenge and why it is a challenge. Looking to the history of the organization can help bring clarity to the problem at hand. Understanding that any process is a learning process can aide in being open to what can be been learned from the past, both negative and positive to assist in the current learning. In taking a next step, the organization shows a willingness to try something different from what was done in the past. Shapiro's last comment about using an outside source for question number five goes along with Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky who write of knowing when to use someone outside of the organization which might be more successful in addressing the challenge.¹⁰⁰ Sometimes an outsider is able to be objective than those involved and invested in the organization.

In dealing with challenges, Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky write that crisis moments bring the pressure to act quickly¹⁰¹ and Shapiro states that taking a slow approach initially will provide the path for proceeding faster in dealing with the challenge.¹⁰² Once the challenge is addressed, adapting to that challenge is the next

⁹⁸ Shapiro, Tim. *How Your Congregation Learn: The Learning Journey from Challenge to Achievement*. Lantham. Rowman & Littlefield. 2017. P. 148-149

⁹⁹ Heifetz, Ronald, Alexander Grashow, Marty Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership, Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Boston, Massachusetts. Harvard Business Press. 2009. p.74

¹⁰⁰ Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky. p. 44

¹⁰¹ Heifetz, Ronald, Alexander Grashow, Marty Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership, Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Boston, Massachusetts. Harvard Business Press. 2009 p. 44

¹⁰² Shapiro, Tim *How Your Congregation Learn: The Learning Journey from Challenge to Achievement*. Lantham. Rowman & Littlefield. 2017. p. 149

step and according to Heifetz, Lewis and Shapiro, it involves learning. Lewis states that “Adaptive work involves learning new behaviors”¹⁰³ while Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky speak of “learning new ways to interpret what goes on around you and new ways to carry out work [the mission]”¹⁰⁴ and Shapiro states that “Learning is the achievement of new abilities as representations of new thinking, effective behaviors, and the positive regulation of emotions.”¹⁰⁵ Learning for an organization, then requires wanting to learn and the ability to be open to new ways of operating and functioning while still focusing on the original purpose or mission. Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky further explain that an organization that can successfully adapt is one that is open to and has a desire for learning¹⁰⁶. It is important for leaders to keep in mind that organizations consist of many components and as Sawyer states is “an interrelated whole”.¹⁰⁷ These components include staff at all levels and the different departments, if there are any, as well as the different services offered. Paul Schmitz in *Everyone Leads* speaks of leadership being more than a position but being courageous enough to move out of where you are now and go forward having a positive effect and learning from hurdles and mistakes to move into the future.¹⁰⁸ This will require leaders to establish trust among staff recognizing challenges and tensions in the organization which requires the willingness to

¹⁰³ Lewis, Jacqueline J. *The Power of Stories, A Guide for Leading Multi-Racial and Multi-Cultural Organizations*. Nashville. Abingdon Press. 2008. p. 80

¹⁰⁴ Heifetz, Ronald, Alexander Grashow, Marty Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership, Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Boston, Massachusetts. Harvard Business Press. 2009 p. 105

¹⁰⁵ Shapiro, Tim. *How Your Congregation Learns: The Learning Journey from Challenge to Achievement*. Lantham. Rowman & Littlefield. 2017 p. xii

¹⁰⁶ Heifetz, Ronald, Alexander Grashow, Marty Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership, Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Boston, Massachusetts. Harvard Business Press. 2009 p. 105

¹⁰⁷ Sawyer, David R. *Hope I Conflict, Discovering Wisdom in Congregational Turmoil*. Cleveland. The Pilgrim Press. 2007. p. 51

¹⁰⁸ Schmitz, Paul. *Everyone Leads*. San Francisco. Jossey-Bass. 2012. p. 78

compromise for the good of the whole organization while being committed to any change that will benefit the organization in addressing the challenges and tensions.¹⁰⁹

In *On Thinking Institutionally*, Hugh Heclo writes of institutional thinking being about having a commitment to the purpose for which an organization exists instead of the organization itself.¹¹⁰ This type of thinking, he states, requires moving back and forth between the past and the future to understand the present¹¹¹, which corresponds to the last seven authors, cited concerning looking at the past to understand the present and future.

Many individuals who work in faith-based organizations see it as a call or a vocation rather than as a *job*. Trulear states “In our work in human services we do well to recall our initial call”¹¹² to the work. In being faithful to that call to a faith-based work and service, it is important to remember why it being done and the importance as not being seen as just another social service agency.¹¹³ Lewis speaks of call and vocation as discerning that God has a plan for us¹¹⁴ and Trulear adds that this call is God’s will and makes a claim on the whole person to use their gifts and strengths to serve God’s people.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Schmitz, Paul *Everyone Leads*. San Francisco. Jossey-Bass. 2012 p.210

¹¹⁰ Heclo, Hugh. *On Thinking Institutionally*. Boulder. Paradigm Press. 2008. p. 90

¹¹¹ Heclo. p. 109

¹¹² Trulear, Harold Dean. “The Seamless Garment: Christian Identity and Professionalism in an Era of Collaboration”: *Social Work Christianity*: Fall 2007, Vo. 34, Issue 3, p.318-319 ATLA accessed 5/6/19

¹¹³ Trulear, p. 321

¹¹⁴ Lewis, Jacqueline. *The Power of Stories, A Guide for Leading Multi-Racial and Multi-Cultural Organizations*. Nashville. Abingdon Press. 2008. p.138

¹¹⁵ Trulear, Harold Dean. “The Seamless Garment: Christian Identity and Professionalism in an Era of Collaboration”: *Social Work Christianity*: Fall 2007, Vo. 34, Issue 3 p. 319 ATLA accessed 5/6/19

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The methodology used is a qualitative analysis conducting interviews with ethnography as defined by Moschella as being engaged in the life or history of a group¹¹⁶ to obtain the story of why each agency was founded and for what purpose. Moschella also speaks of people being willing to tell the story.¹¹⁷ This was true of the agencies interviewed who were willing to tell the story of their respective agencies, articulating the beginning, the growth, the struggles and any challenges. In knowing the history and purpose of the faith based organization's founding, it is hoped that each agency will be able to see what, if anything brought about changes or adaptations from the purpose for which it was founded.

Common themes were explored as well as purposes in the founding of each faith-based organization that was interviewed and for commonalities in the philosophy of each agency such as terms and themes as well as the purposes in the founding of each faith-based organization. It did not matter what the mission of each agency was in selecting them, only that each was a faith-based organization and that each was located in one of the ten counties of southern New Jersey. After each interview was completed, elements that stood out were examined as far as the growth, struggles and challenges of each agency that took part in the study as well as any adaptation that was done in addressing these. When all of the interviews were completed, transcribed and given back to each interviewee for review, they were compared after each interview to look for any similarities in the growth, struggles and challenges as well as adaptations. The

¹¹⁶ Moschella, Mary Clark. *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice*. Cleveland. The Pilgrim Press. 2008. p 4

¹¹⁷ Moschella, p. 141

data obtained from the interviews was analyzed and from this information, conclusions were drawn concerning any commonalities, similarities or differences in the growth, struggles, challenges and adaptations.

The telling of each agency's story "takes seriously how the organization is situated in its location, its temporality, and its purpose within society"¹¹⁸ and each of the faith-based agencies interviewed were very much aware of the purpose of their founding in relation to their locality and population served. Stories have gaps and it is the people involved in these agencies who provide what is needed to erase the gaps so that the story will be completed¹¹⁹. This includes the experience of those involved in telling of the story which was apparent in each interview in the telling of the founding of each agency; the struggles; and finally where and how they function since the inception of each agency had those elements.

I initially selected nine faith-based organizations from a directory that included both community-based and faith-based organizations in southern New Jersey, which is different from northern New Jersey in regards to demographics, population size, types of industry, size of cities and economic factors such as median income and poverty level. I found a variety of services that were part of each one's mission, including soup kitchens, homeless services, and community outreach to shelters and other agencies as well as one with a social justice focus in the community. Two were non-Christian and seven were Christian. I sent emails to the key leaders identified in the directory of each

¹¹⁸ Lin, Peirong, "The Case for Practical Theological Interpretations in Faith-Based Organizations". *Evangelical Review of Theology*. Oct. 2018, Vol 42, Issue 4 p. 321-322 ATLA accessed 5/3/19 ISSN: 0144-8153

¹¹⁹ Lewis, Jacqueline J. *The Power of Stories, A Guide for Leading Multi-Racial and Multi-Cultural Organizations*. Nashville. Abingdon Press. 2008 p. 137

agency, introducing myself and explaining what the project was about. All responded that they were interested. I then sent the IRB form to be completed and sent back to me. Seven agencies sent back the signed IRB form. One agency director had the administrative assistant send the form back but it was not signed so I sent another email explaining that it had to be signed. I made several attempts at contact via email and telephone with this agency, both to the director and the administrative assistant, but received no reply back from either of them. This agency was a non- Christian agency. I did not receive a reply from the ninth agency contacted, which covers a five county area. I then reached out to a local office of this same agency and suggested to the coordinator that the interview did not have to be with the director but could be someone whom the director wanted to designate. Permission needed to come from the executive director of the entire agency; however, it was never given to the local coordinator.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the interviews would not be able to be conducted onsite at any of the agencies. Each agency participant was given the choice of a phone call or a Zoom session with follow-ups if needed. Five chose to do a phone interview and two chose a Zoom session.

Each agency that agreed to participate was informed ahead of time that the interview would be recorded with a non-electronic device and that after I transcribed the interview, the recorded session would be deleted. All agreed and as each interview was done, I asked the participant if I still had permission to record and each participant gave permission for this to be done. I also informed each participant before I began the interview that as the IRB form stated, at any time they were free to stop the interview or ask me to keep out certain information shared with me. The completion of the interviews

took longer than expected due to issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic with the participants either personally or with their respective agencies. Using the *reciprocal ethnography* as described by Elaine J. Lawless¹²⁰ as involving participants in a “collaborative process”,¹²¹ and as a part of the methodology aided in preventing any inclination to write about the interviews from only my point of view.¹²² After I transcribed each interview, I sent it to each participant to approve the content and stated that I had taken out any information that would identify the agency by changing exact titles of the participants and altering facts such as the demographics and the description of the geographic location of the agency. After some minor rewording asked for by two of the agencies, all of the participating agencies reported that what had been transcribed was accurate and agreed to how the information of job titles, demographics and geographic location was altered. Lawless’ process allowed for the interviewees to not only be a part of the study but to be a co-author of it¹²³ in allowing for dialogue between interviewer and interviewee about the interview itself.¹²⁴ Lewis speaks of “empathic imagination; to feel the story of another as one’s own”¹²⁵ which I believe the dialogue between the researcher and participant allows.

¹²⁰ Lawless, Elaine J. *Holy Women, Wholly Women: Sharing Ministries of Wholeness Through Life Stories and Reciprocal Ethnography*. Philadelphia. University of Pennsylvania Press. 1993.

¹²¹ Lawless, p. 80

¹²² Lawless, p. 283

¹²³ Lawless, p. 285

¹²⁴ Lawless, p. 5

¹²⁵ Lewis, Jacqueline J. *The Power of Stories, A Guide for Leading Multi-Racial and Multi-Cultural Organizations*. Nashville. Abingdon Press. 2008 p.59

Agency Interviews

The following questions were asked in each interview:

- I. Tell me the story of the founding of your organization.
 - a. When was your organization founded?
 - b. By whom was it founded?
 - c. What was its original function/purpose? Are the original mission and vision statements available?

- II. What makes your organization faith-based?
 - a. Tell me how being a faith-based organization contributes to the living out of your mission. How would the focus of the mission change if you were not a faith-based organization?
 - b. If the organization has shifted from its original function, what have been the pressures and forces that have influenced that change?

What has your organization done to address those pressures and forces?

What has worked? What has not worked?

- III. Tell me of how you envision the future of your organization.

- IV. How will being faith-based shape your organization's mission and vision for the future?

Agency A (1883)

I interviewed the current director of Agency A who has been there for three years. He has been with the parent organization for twenty years, serving at different locations in New Jersey.

a.) Founding of the Organization

Agency A is a Christian faith-based organization founded in a local community 137 years ago in a small storefront in a resort town. The original founding of the organization was in England by two Protestant ministers who felt called to work among the poor and destitute. They branched out to the United States and Agency A is one of the oldest foundations in the United States. It moved to its current location in the same town forty-four years ago and its original mission remains the same today to “Preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination”. The human needs are whatever is needed at any point in time. Initially, those human needs were feeding alcoholics and working with prostitutes and providing food and clothing for women and children who had been abandoned by the male wage earner of the family. The current director whom I interviewed related that though the primary purpose was to lead men, women and children to Christ, it was important to tell people about Christ and to act as Christ in feeding the men, women and children who come to the agency. The staff attempt to help these individuals experience the love of Christ by providing the food and clothing that they request.

No one is ever refused food or clothing. If funds are available, Agency A will put a family up for a night in a motel. They do not expect those served to attend any services. They will tell them the times of the services but attending is not required to receive

assistance. Everyone else is welcome regardless of skin color, culture, language or sexual orientation. They believe that everything they do and every service provided is an opportunity to give testimony to Jesus Christ and for the glory of Jesus Christ, even if those people are non-believers.

b.) How the Organization is Faith-Based

Being faith-based is very important because it is because of faith that they operate and have purpose. If they were not faith-based, the director said there would be no reason to exist because the main purpose is to preach the gospel of Jesus which is by taking care of the needs of others as stated in Matthew 25 which talks about giving help to the hungry and clothing those who need clothes. Agency A has not shifted from the original mission but has broadened the population served as people from different cultures and nationalities have moved into the city which now has a population of 40,000 with about half being from minorities. It has adapted to the problems presented by those they serve. In the past, work with alcoholics involved feeding these individuals and presently they offer opportunities to attend recovery programs free which the agency sponsors around the country. The work with prostitutes involves working with human trafficking victims and giving them a place to be safe during the day to be away from the traffickers and connect them to agencies geared to assist that population.

The pandemic of Covid-19 has been a force that caused great pressure to change the way in which services are provided. The soup kitchen feeds approximately 200 people daily at noon but with the Covid-19 pandemic, the building was closed to the public per instructions of the state government. Agency A then began providing take-

out service, providing meals in disposable containers out of the lobby window. Most of the people who came to the soup kitchen were homeless or lived in single rooms in boarding houses. With many local businesses closed due to the pandemic, service workers became unemployed and many of those now coming for the takeout meals are families. The need for providing food to households tripled. Before the pandemic, those who came with food requests were mostly on public assistance but now there was a new group of individuals, many of whom had never received any kind of assistance in the past. The director said that though these are challenging times, he believes that being a faith-based organization is a blessing because those who have not been affected financially by loss of employment have reached out to provide financial and other assistance such as providing large quantities of food because they are faith-based. When so many of the restaurants were ordered to close by the state, the food in their freezers and stockrooms was sent to Agency A. While they still purchase food as they always have, they continue to receive large food donations weekly. Recently, a clothing manufacturer in a city seventy miles away offered 40 cartons of fleece tops and sweatshirts if the director could arrange to pick them up which he did with the agency van and the assistance from a local volunteer group. The summer camp for kids had to be cancelled as well as laundry facilities and showers for the homeless population.

Although the building has been closed to the public and some services are suspended due to the pandemic, support of in-kind items has increased approximately 200% from last year. Recently eighteen pallets of food were delivered from the local food bank, which has seen an overabundance from restaurants, which had to close down. So far this year over two hundred thousand meals have been distributed between

the take-out soup kitchen and the food pantry. It is because of their faith in God, he believes, that is providing what they need to give to those hurting and in need at this time. Agency A does not advertise their services or needs, but whatever they need comes in because of their faith and allows them to serve. An example was given of a couple who have a shower ministry and arrived last spring and came weekly throughout the summer months with an RV to provide showers for homeless individuals which solved the issue of not being able to allow anyone onsite to use the agency showers.

Another example was the need to purchase containers and utensils for the take-out meals as well as bags to distribute food from the food pantry. A local organization reached out and offered to provide the funds needed for those items. Again, the director believes it is because of their faith that these needs were able to be met.

c.) Envisioning the Future

For the future of the organization, he believes that adapting to whatever issues or situations present themselves is important to be able to continue to serve human needs in their local area. The agency partners with other agencies in the area so if they come across a family or an individual who has a situation that the agency cannot address, they are able to refer to the agency that is equipped to address the situation. Healthcare is a great need for those served and they are able to link them to a free clinic by having case workers from the clinic meet the individuals at Agency A's site. One of the first services provided at the inception was providing coffee and that is still done in addition to addressing the needs that have developed over the history of the agency.

d.) Shaping the Organization's Mission and Vision being Faith-Based

Being faith-based has shaped the organizations mission and vision for the future because everything is done all for the honor and glory of God. The director said if not for that, there would be no reason to exist. It is because of this, that the agency is able to adapt to needs and through God's goodness, the means are provided through others to care for others. The director sees Agency A as "middle people" for those in the community who want to help others and are able to do so by giving money, food, clothing, gift cards and other items to the Agency to distribute to those who are in need. The director said being faith-based will continue to shape the organization's mission and vision for the future based on Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me"¹²⁶ and plans to have a banner made with this scripture verse in English, Spanish, Chinese and Arabic to reflect the neighborhood in which Agency A is located to let others know to have faith in God and God will provide.

Agency B (1920's; formal incorporation 1976)

I interviewed one of the chief executive Officers of Agency B who has been there for twenty-five years starting as a caseworker in a homeless outreach program and then had various supervisory and program development positions before assuming her current position five years ago. Agency B currently operates in two counties among the ten counties of southern New Jersey.

¹²⁶ New Revised Standard Version of Bible with Apocrypha. Copyright 1989. Division of Christian Education of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. London. Collins Publishers. 1989

a.) Founding of the Organization

Agency B was informally founded by two women in the early 1920's in a small city. There is no record of the date of the original start. These women saw a need in the community to help refugees who had recently come to the area from Eastern Europe as well as the elderly and the poor. The exact location of where the agency started is not known and the Officer of the agency I interviewed told me that as it began as a volunteer organization, it could have been operated out of someone's home or business and that it was somewhere in a part of the city where the refugees from Eastern Europe had settled. It was a volunteer organization and they focused on giving support to older adults by providing what the agency now refers to as "Age in Place" by cooking meals for them and helping them with simple chores. They wanted to create for the refugees a community where they would feel welcome in a strange land and help them integrate into the local ethnic community of their faith. It was a grassroots organization to help people get resettled in the area. No records were kept of the original date of the founding and there is no record of the original mission statement, just that the work was based on the core value of "Tikkun Olam" which refers to healing the world by taking care of the community and reaching out to people in the community. Incorporation was not until 1976, some fifty years after the founding. The Officer interviewed expressed amazement that with no founding records available, that the agency survived all of these years. She and other members of the agency surmise that the children of the founders and their heirs as well as perhaps relatives of those initially served kept the volunteer work going in the spirit of Tikkun Olam with a focus on Jewish refugees and

poverty in the Jewish community. Eventually, the grassroots effort evolved and expanded to include the entire community and serving people in need regardless of race or gender or ethnicity.

Today, Agency B has evolved into a multi-service organization specializing in outreach management to various populations and serves over eight thousand people a year. It has gone from a grassroots effort by two women to help refugees integrate into the community and continues to do that today by offering housing connections and mental health interventions and programs to keep the elderly at home, to keep people connected to the community.

b.) How the Agency is Faith-Based

Agency B is faith-based by living out the core value of Tikkun Olam and with its Jewish identity and all Jewish Board of volunteers. The philosophy and values of the agency in caring for the world and local community and the broad Jewish belief in philanthropy and volunteerism are all very important to the agency. Being faith-based contributes to the living out of the mission through the values which drive it. They are focused and committed to people and to helping some of those hardest hit by social ills such as poverty and homelessness and even mental illness, which continues to carry a stigma today as well as those who face obstacles in obtaining housing because of having no support in the community. The agency serves those with these needs without a lot of notice and many dollars but the Officer feels that often a leap of faith is taken to provide a needed service for an individual and will worry later about how to pay for it, whether that is for rent or food or prescriptions or something else. Tikkun Olam

requires them to do what can be done to bring about healing and/or change to make things better for the individual. They are not fiscally irresponsible but they know that in taking a leap of faith when needed the support from the community will allow them to serve in the spirit of Tikkun Olam. The core value also means advocacy as well as service to the community, to advocate and change systems is seen as being important in living the core value.

Though the agency considers itself faith-based because of its core value, which is an important one in Jewish life, some entities do not see them as faith-based and some entities will not give grants to agencies that are faith-based. In seeking some funding, they have to be very careful in how they phrase their purpose and mission because some grantors and funders presume if an agency is faith-based it is religious and associated with a formal religion and that it proselytizes. The agency sometimes has to emphasize how community-based they are for some funding sources and this is done because some of these sources are needed to allow the agency to continue to serve those who are very poor and have no voice to advocate for them. Though they might have to appear community-based rather than faith-based, the agency still continues to be true to the mission to bring Tikkun Olam, healing and service to the community.

If the agency was not faith-based, the Officer feels that the focus of the mission would be different because of the core value, which is based on the Jewish faith. Tikkun Olam is the connection from the founding that continues today to serving others in the community at large and it would be hard to separate that from the mission of Agency B.

When asked if the agency had shifted from its original mission, the Officer believes that the shift has been in expanding the original function of resettlement of refugees and caring for the elderly. The agency was formally incorporated with a 501(c)(3) in 1976 to better serve the expanding needs and to be able to qualify for more funding. As for forces that would lead to this expansion, she reports that the de-institutionalization of mentally ill individuals from psychiatric hospitals in the United States in 1976 when many of those individuals who had been in institutions for many years were suddenly released. Many local communities were not equipped to provide for these individuals and there were no formal discharge plans. Many were now homeless or living in inadequate housing with no case management. Conditions were continuing to change with the war on drugs increasing incarceration and the life expectancy for individuals increased. Thus, the need for case management for: the mentally ill homeless population; addiction and recovery services; and services for the older adult population to help them stay in their homes.

To address these pressures and forces, the agency not only began to expand the type of programming with direct service, but also to advocate for change on the local, state and federal level to bring about positive change for the community at large. Some programs were eliminated over time if funding was no longer available or the need was not seen to be as great. The agency has always tried to stay within the mission of serving the broader community and much of the growth has been outgrowths of the original mission and response to whatever forces have surfaced in the local community. While the initial organization was set up to respond to conditions of the needy Jewish population in the 1920's, it continues to evolve and respond to the needs as they occur.

While Agency B collaborates with other agencies, there have been a few times when they had to back away from the collaboration because the other agency's philosophy clashed with that of Agency B. They adapt to whatever situation needs to be responded to, with Super storm Sandy in 2012 being an example of responding to assist with getting people back to their homes and with a grant from the federal government for vocational training to help individuals impacted by the opioid crisis.

A very big pressure, which she reported, was the pandemic of Covid-19 and the effect it has had on how Agency B does business. Though they have continued to have a full commitment to the mission there has been a change in how the mission is carried out. Whereas they had been out in the community, hands-on with direct service one-on-one, the pandemic has not allowed that. They have recruited more volunteers than ever before to make phone calls to the elderly who have not been able to participate in any social programs and feel isolated. They have increased the volume of food given out through their pantry by collecting food in bins around the area and have had volunteers who were socially distanced prepare bags of non-perishables to be picked-up curbside from the agency. The program that works with homeless individuals has not been able to work face to face but has gone to areas where homeless individuals congregate and dropped off needed items. They partnered with the local medical center and shelter to have homeless individuals tested for Covid-19 and also with a city in making arrangements for food to be brought to those homeless individuals who test positive for Covid-19 and have been placed in a local motel, to have them retested in fourteen days. A big concern was keeping staff safe and not being exposed to Covid-19. It has been a challenge to keep them safe while they are out in the community. She

believes that it is because of being faith-based is why they did not stop any of their programs during the pandemic of Covid-19 but found a way to operate in a different manner, and still be able to serve the community.

c.) Envisioning the Future

For the future, the Officer interviewed believes besides addressing current needs, more could be done in community organizing and to help to bring about change in systems to help eliminate some of the social problems to have better local communities, to eradicate some of the issues such as homelessness and unemployment which could help to eliminate extreme poverty. She expressed that so often in helping people in crisis, the immediate need is taken care of but often that just provides a buffer and might prevent the change needed to eradicate the crisis from reoccurring again. She envisions the agency becoming involved in community building programs. She also sees the need to assist in preparing for natural disasters, which often can cause social problems like homelessness and an increase in substance abuse resulting in an increase in addictions. The Officer expressed the need of being prepared for another pandemic in order to be able to continue not just the programs of Agency B but to be able to serve the community overall with so many people unemployed and without resources for day to day living during a pandemic or natural disaster.

d.) Shaping of the Organization's Mission and Vision being Faith-Based

The officer shared that what will influence them into the future is Jewish philosophy and values, which through time have helped the Jewish people be survivors because they have stayed, connected and committed with a sense of community. With the current realities of the pandemic and economic situation, staying connected and committed will help Agency B keep to their mission, which is about the people and the community, and faith does that, it helps the agency live out its mission. To look at the homeless and the supportive housing work they do is an example of being about welcoming people into the community and settling down just as the two women who started a volunteer organization in the early 1920's did to welcome refugees and help them settle in the community. What was begun then has continued because of the emphasis on community and will continue to be part of the mission and vision for the future as it has for almost one hundred or so years. The board members are all Jewish but represent a cross section of the community and the Officer believes that Agency B needs to always respond to the broader community and needs in keeping with and continuing to shape the agency by their faith-based value of Tikkun Olam.

Agency C (1964)

I interviewed two current employees from Agency C, both of whom have been employed there for thirty years. One is in management, was first hired to work with families in 1988 as the overnight staff member for the family center, and then became director of the family center. Currently, she is the agency liaison and works with other agencies and local government entities. The other employee interviewed began as a

caseworker with the family center and is now director of the family center and the single women's shelter.

a.) Founding of the Agency C

Agency C began in a one-room storefront in the summer of 1964 in a section of a local city occupied by alcoholics and drug addicts by a pastor who was a recovering alcoholic. He was from the local area of a resort city that had a population of 48,000 at the time and much of the employment was seasonal. Due to unemployment in the off season, he noticed many men who were alcoholics hanging around the streets and drinking from small bottles of alcohol. He felt a call to minister to these men and rented a one-room storefront in a part of the city that was in an area where many of these men hung out. The original purpose was to "preach the Gospel and meet the spiritual and physical needs of food, shelter and clothing". Initially, he fed them and then when he realized most had no place to stay after they were fed he put cots in the back of the room at night so they would have a place to sleep. This was unofficial and he kept it quiet from the community that he was offering shelter at night. Some other pastors from Pennsylvania whom he knew came and helped him get building materials donated so the one room was made into a chapel, dining room, dormitory and a small office. In September of 1964, he held his first chapel service and began to evangelize in the neighborhood to invite men who had addiction issues with alcohol to attend services and receive a meal. In 1965, with financial support from local churches he purchased a two-story brick building with no electricity or plumbing from a local bank for \$150. The group of pastors with the founding pastor planned on getting volunteers to fix the

electric and plumbing. An unexpected donation of \$5,000 was given and the building was then renovated with the assistance of volunteer tradesmen into a youth center to work with the poor youth of the city. A youth pastor arrived in 1968 who had a vision for more services and the founding pastor saw this as a sign that this man would be his successor and he would be free to move on to another ministry in another state. In 1969 the youth pastor became the new director. With support from many individuals and several independent churches, Agency C acquired a property about one-quarter of a mile from their current location. They continued to operate out of the storefront and in 1970 with assistance from volunteers; a new facility was built which could provide shelter for 27 men. With more space available, the director felt that there was a real need to help men with alcohol and drug addictions and initiated a 90 day biblically based recovery program for men. While the shelter was only for men, women began to come for the nightly meal and the director noticed that many of them had addiction issues with alcohol and drugs. He began sharing with people in the community of a need for a place to minister to women who were homeless and addicted. Agency C received a grant from a local family foundation to begin a program for women with addictions. A building was purchased at a different location from the men's shelter. This biblically based recovery program for women operated for five years until 1980 when the building was acquired by eminent domain due to redevelopment plans for the city. While the newer property continued to serve an evening meal to men and women from the community, only men in the addictions program were housed. When a new industry came to the city it also brought many changes including an increase in homelessness as people flocked to a city whose streets they thought were paved with

gold or to seek employment of jobs for which they had no training and became stranded with insufficient funds to return to where they had come from in another city or state. There was also an increase in families on public assistance who would come for meals. Not wanting to turn anyone away, 200 meals were served in shifts and over 100 men would seek shelter and were placed on the chapel and dining room floors at night. In 1988, a shelter for women and their children was opened in a church one mile from the shelter. The need for expansion was obvious and with a \$2 million construction loan, the agency broke ground on the current property next to what had now become an inadequate facility to handle the volume of men and women seeking assistance. The director felt called to a new ministry and recommended his current assistant who had a background in finance to become his successor as the new director. In the summer of 1989 the new facility opened the dining room which could feed 200 at a time and included men, women and children and the men's dormitory which could sleep 250 men, including a section for 20 men in the recovery program. In March of 1990, a family center for mothers and children was opened on a floor separate from the men. Single women, that is women without children could come three times a week to get a shower and clean clothing. In 1991 a single women's dormitory with 32 beds was added to shelter the women on the same floor as the family center.

As more and more individuals with mental illness began to seek help, Agency C began to partner with local government and private agencies to have caseworkers come on a regular basis to work with this population. A new industry came to the area and as it began to grow, the director sought out partnerships for employment programs citing that many of the residents of the facility had come to the area for employment in the

industry but did not have the training needed for various positions of this industry. Some did not require great skill while others did. A work readiness program was started with clients initially having chores in the Agency and then transitioned over to employment training at the various properties throughout the city in the partnership. While earning income, 75% was given to the Agency to hold in the form of money orders and when the client and Agency felt the client was ready, they were given their “savings” to get established in their own housing and continue in their employment.

b.) How Agency C is Faith-Based

The current director of the family center whom I interviewed at Agency C has been there for thirty years. She feels that the Mission Statement is what makes the agency faith-based. It speaks of “being set apart by the Spirit of God” as directed in the Bible in Luke 4:18 “The Spirit of God is upon me...to bring good news to the poor”¹²⁷

The work can be very challenging but being faith-based and being biblically based they are able to do what they do. All employees must be Christian and the agency believes strongly in the mandate from Christ in Matthew 25:40 “just as you did it to one of these least...you did it for me”.¹²⁸ The Gospel tells of the poor always being around, therefore as an agency there will always be God’s work to do. She spoke of the bible telling to serve those less fortunate, those who are broken, and those who are bruised. Agency C is faith-based because in serving others, they are able to serve Christ in

¹²⁷ New Revised Standard Version of the Bible with Apocrypha. Copyright 1989. Division of Christian Education of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. London. Collins Publishers. 1989

¹²⁸ New Revised Standard Version of the Bible with Apocrypha. Copyright 1989. Division of Christian Education of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. London. Collins Publishers. 1989

those who come through the doors and she feels that is what is so important in serving the clients.

If Agency C were not faith-based, she believes the focus of the organization would change because the care would not be the same, with caring for each individual as special to God because people are important to God and therefore should be important to staff. Being faith-based helps to always keep the focus on the importance of the person as a human being made by God. If they were not faith-based, emphasis would probably be on providing a service and not as serving and being servant because one is a human being. It would just be a job with set hours and staff would not be willing to go the extra mile for the agency or the individuals.

Like the current family center director, the liaison whom I interviewed feels that being faith-based gives the freedom to share the Gospel and give encouragement and offer prayer to anyone who comes into the building and affects the way the staff encounter the clients. They want clients to know that they are loved by God and offer them hope. They want to bring them healing and faith so that they can have a sense of self-worth. Being faith-based, they can share that the Gospel gives them freedom in Christ to know of His forgiveness and love for them no matter what they have done or been through. She feels that this makes Agency C different and that clients have reported feeling cared for by staff and it wasn't just a job for them. She feels that in being faith-based they can be a shining light of who God is and of God's love to help bring change to a person's life so that they can know in Christ "everything old has passed away; see everything has become new" 2Cor 5:17.¹²⁹ If they weren't faith-

¹²⁹ New Revised Standard Version of the Bible with Apocrypha. Copyright 1989. Division of Christian Education of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. London. Collins Publishers. 1989

based they would be restricted to what services could be provided such as certain criteria of qualifying for general assistance and emergency assistance which entails many applications to be completed and the individual has to have a certain income level for housing assistance. Some programs will not assist individuals unless they have an income and most of the clients served have none. Less than 2% of the individuals, which Agency C serves, qualify for emergency assistance and do not qualify for immediate need because Agency C provides the immediate need as soon as the individual walks in the door. They are a ministry first and the ministry is the call. Someone is either called to it or not. The work is to serve whoever comes through the doors.

Both the family center director and the liaison said that the shift from the original mission is more of an updating to present needs and adapting to those needs. Initially, Agency C was founded to help men only, then eventually fed women and children and now they serve men, women and children as well as provide a Christian based recovery program for men. The pressures and forces have been societal ones with more women homeless and more single mothers who have no support and more people with mental illnesses who are homeless and need shelter and help in getting treatment for the illness. Referring to other agencies and letting other agencies, come to the facility is a big change because in the beginning, if a group did not have a church affiliation the first two directors would not have permitted them inside. Some of the challenges have been opposition from non-Christian funding sources who oppose the fact that there are chapel services held in the building and that Bible studies are offered, however, the

clients are not required to participate. There is no concern if a grant will not be given because of this for there is always a church or another Christian organization who will come through. She reported that this definitely requires deep faith and trust in God and a leap in faith daily to know that because God's work is being done, God will provide.

The liaison told of a pressure that has effected the agency financially is that they are considered an after-hours location for the local area and an all day and night location on Holidays and weekends but do not receive adequate financial compensation for this. Agency C receives \$15 per night when in reality it costs them \$45 per night to shelter and feed an individual. As a result, they are feeding and sheltering individuals who have not been included in their annual budget, but they continue to serve them because they refuse no one. They are the only overnight shelter in the area so that is why local governments utilize them. In addition, neighboring counties send clients to Agency C without having them fill out proper paperwork for assistance so the clients are not eligible for any government benefits and the agency does not get compensated. Because they are a ministry, they will not turn anyone away even if not compensated by local government entities for the food and shelter that is provided to the individuals who are referred to them.

A recent pressure which both the liaison and family center director spoke of that has changed the way service is provided has been the Covid-19 pandemic when approximately 400 people would be fed nightly, only those who are staying in the shelter are fed onsite and only two to a table which normally would seat ten. Anyone who is not staying at the shelter is given a meal curbside in takeout containers. On any given night, up to 350 individuals could be provided with beds each night, at present only 100

individuals are able to be given shelter due to state government restrictions. Families are kept separated from the rest of the population and the children do not go out to school, as all learning is virtual. This presents a challenge because some of the mothers are not able to help the children with the virtual learning as they are not computer literate and in trying to distance, it is difficult for staff to be with every child who is learning virtually. In addition, the children's breaks from their classes are at different times so staff try and work breakfast and lunch for the mothers and children around that. In the past if a mother came with a child or children and there was no empty family rooms available, they could always sleep on the couch and have sleeping bags for the children, but that cannot be done now because of distancing and government regulations so for the first time ever, people have had to be turned away. This applies also to the men and the single women. They can only take in new people if someone leaves and a bed becomes available but first the individual must have a Covid-19 test and be negative before they can stay. Both reflect how this is uncharted territory in adapting to the pandemic because they do have children and elderly individuals who are served and are the most vulnerable of the population to be on the street. They have had to develop protocols just for Covid-19, which has been not only a challenge but also a stress on staff as well as clients. They reported that more people have been coming for meals because of the high numbers of local residents being unemployed with so many businesses having to close. Many of those who have come for food at their pantry had low-paying jobs so are in great need for financial as well as food assistance. People could come in and pick out clothing but because no one

can come in the facility, they are asked what clothing is needed and then it is given to them already selected.

While Agency C has had to address this most recent challenge, what has worked is that they continue to serve. What has not worked well is that they have had to decrease the number of individuals who can be served onsite not only for food and clothing but the job training partnerships which they had with local businesses has had to stop temporarily because of so many places limited with the number of people allowed inside the business or the business has closed completely. Both wonder if they will ever be able to have as many in the job training program as pre-pandemic.

c.) Envisioning the Future

The liaison envisions the future would be one in which they will continue to serve the needs of all who come to them, whether for food, shelter, clothing, spiritual guidance and whatever else is a need and to continue to be open to how they can provide for the needs, in new and better ways than what has been done in the past. They will continue to look for ways to adapt to whatever challenges develop, including another pandemic. The director of the family center also spoke of that and of expanding the number of families that could be served.

d.) Shaping the Vision and Mission of the Organization in the Future

The director of the family center said because of their faith, they are always hopeful, that despite the challenges, they believe that they will be able to overcome any obstacles and trust that God will continue to be faithful to them and provide what they

need. God has a way to have all matters work out for good like He has through the years, helping them expand the ministry and even in this pandemic to be able to continue to provide services even if that is in a different way than in the past. In being faith-based, they will be able to continue to shape their mission and vision to do God's work, and continue to find ways to adapt to the needs of the present and of the future.

The liaison believes that the mission and vision will be shaped by being open to adapting to the situations that arise for not only the clients they serve but also for the factors that cause these, such as providing more mental health programs, addictions services and job training through collaboration with other entities in the area. Both agree that the original mission statement, which is still followed today, is inclusive of adaptation and expansion of new ministries.

Agency D (1988)

Agency D was founded in a resort shore city in southern New Jersey in 1988. Initially, Agency D was a very grassroots program and was started as a van outreach program to youth. I interviewed the local founder of Agency D who left there in 1990 and a senior manager who has been at Agency D for 23 years and came after the local founder had left.

a.) Founding of the Organization

The local founder had been working at a local community college in a General Equivalency Diploma program designed for 18-21 year olds to obtain their high school diploma and another program geared towards job training skills. Absenteeism was high

and he discovered that many of the young people he was working with had no permanency or place to live but were “couch surfing” with friends or living in abandoned buildings. He learned from some of them that there were many more youth like those he worked with that were just hanging on the streets with no housing, support or job skills.

He began to do research and in 1987 made several visits to a program in a big metropolitan area that had been founded to work with young people up to 22 years of age. He met with management and staff there and returned to the resort area in which he lived and worked. He met with local officials to see if there would be opposition to start a program for young people. The target population would be young people who had no housing or job skills and thus could be at risk of becoming part of the criminal justice system. The organization in the metropolitan area agreed to allow him to begin a local program. While still working at the community college, with only two vans given by the parent organization, he began the local program in 1988 and with a male volunteer rode around the county from 5 p.m. to 5 a.m. feeding the young people he found on the streets in four local cities. There was no physical structure, only the two old vans and only one van worked at a time and the other would be in the shop for repairs. When the weather was bad, he would have some of the young people ride around with him and a volunteer whom he had recently recruited to assist him. They found locations where the youth hid out at night and would drive to those locations to feed these young people. He had looked at several buildings in the area and was able to rent a storefront that had no water or electricity but at least it was a place to keep supplies and donated food, mostly sandwiches and snacks that were given out during the night.

After about one year, they were able to have the water and electricity turned-on. Outreach in the van was still the main way of reaching the young people, though some would find their way to the storefront. There was still no formal shelter available but there was an agreement with a county agency that housed troubled youth under 21 that offered them seven beds at a time. When the need for shelter was greater than seven, he and the volunteer would bring the youth to the storefront unofficially. The founder of Agency D had taken the test for a local police department and in 1990 got the call that there would be a new class for recruits who had taken and passed the test the year he had taken it and he was going to have to leave Agency D. Before he left for the police academy, he wanted to be sure that the program would continue to grow and have good leadership. He reached out to a clergyman who had worked with homeless youth in another area of the state and asked him to consider taking over his position. The clergyman agreed and after meeting with the founder locally, they both went to the corporate headquarters to make things official. The founder had been the only paid employee and worked with volunteers. The corporate headquarters agreed to provide a salary for another employee to work with the clergyman, and the storefront and vans would continue to be the “face” of the organization in the local county. The founder had made many contacts with local schools and with the hospitals as well as local police departments, so young people were aware that the program existed locally.

The senior manager began her tenure with Agency D in 1997, several years after the founder had left, but worked with his successor who had the same passion as the local founder for the mission and is very familiar with the story of the founding of the organization. Her first position was as a caseworker for risk reduction education and she

did that for several years before becoming a senior manager for the last ten years. In 1991, Agency D moved from the initial storefront that was very small to one several blocks away which was rented, that had one big room and two smaller rooms used as an eating area and an office. A local agency provided the evening meals, which were picked-up daily. The young people were housed in a local rooming house for sleeping and would go to the storefront during the day. Breakfast and lunch were at the storefront. In 1997, Agency D constructed and opened its own facility that had sleeping quarters to provide shelter as well having its own kitchen and small dining room. There were also classrooms for GED classes with computers for further training as well as a large day room. In 1994, an old apartment building was purchased to house those who had gone through the initial program in individual apartments while they were employed. That building needed major repairs and was eventually sold and a new facility was built in another area of city that could house up to twenty young people and had more offices for caseworkers and job training programs.

The original purpose of the organization remains the same, as does the mission statement.

b.) How the Organization is Faith-Based

Agency D is faith-based through its mission statement and in serving youth in the spirit of Matthew 25 according to the senior manager. In serving the least, the staff are guided in bringing across to the young people a message of love. The big emphasis in staff trainings is the importance of treating the young people with love and not just as a

client who needs services. Because of this, she believes that the focus would be very different if the agency was not faith-based.

The organization has not drifted from its original purpose to serve homeless and at risk youth and has expanded to include job readiness training as well as GED classes and partnerships with local businesses to hire the young people and work with caseworkers from Agency D. Another issue that is now addressed is human trafficking, which is a problem in the county in which Agency D is located.

. The senior manager believes that if the agency was not faith-based the important message of love, which is at the core of the mission and training, would be lost and Agency D would be sterile and just another social service agency. There has been no shift from the original purpose or function but there has been an expansion with a focus on human trafficking, which has become more known and prevalent than at the agency's inception.

There have been some pressures in the area of funding as some churches feel that they are too inclusive in serving LGBTQ young people and other churches felt that they are not evangelical enough because they do not require the youth to participate in religious services and withdrew their support. There have been some major donors and foundations that either have stopped funding or will not fund Agency D because it is faith-based. Being faith-based has increasingly hindered funding opportunities but the senior manager reports that the current leadership is not going to compromise the mission and philosophy of operating to chase dollars. However, she reports that Agency F is strategic in knowing who the different audiences are and how the agency presents itself to certain funders.

She also reported that the Covid-19 pandemic presented challenges, because they had to quickly figure a way to keep the youth and staff safe and develop protocols and adhere to changing state requirements of distancing and the number of individuals permitted in a space and still be able to serve the young people. Intakes were frozen for a while until they could safely devise a plan to bring new youth into the program. They continued to stay open when the pandemic began, serving the young people who were already in program. In order to keep safe social distancing guidelines they have capped the intake capacity at twenty for now. Weekly testing for Covid-19 of all young people receiving services, as well as all front line staff is now done through a program offered by the state health department.

c.) Envisioning the Future

“Brand Refresh” is a process that is to begin at the corporate level from the logo to the language of the mission statement and the founding documents. The senior manager is concerned that this might cause too much of a breaking away from the mission rather than the focus for whom and why they were founded. The leadership of the local organization has always maintained a strong identity as being faith-based. There was a youth minister on staff for many years but there no longer is one, but God is openly talked about and there are various ecumenical services throughout the year. There is a concern that the emphasis on being faith-based might be lost with the “brand refresh”. The current leadership that has been involved with Agency D for many years tries to instill in new workers a strong culture of being faith-based and the importance of that for the mission to maintain it in the future.

d.) Shaping the Organization's Mission and Vision in being Faith-Based

The senior manager hopes that they will be able to maintain the spirit of love and acceptance that has been the driving force behind what they do, to seek the loving thing to do rather than the right thing to do according to policy; to go from heads to hearts. Being faith-based will continue to shape the mission and vision of absolute love and respect for the young people, to continue to ask what is the loving thing to do. Faith will continue to inform the work and the policies and decisions that will be made so that they may grow, continuing to do the loving thing for staff as well as the youth.

Agency E (1993)

I interviewed a pastor who has been involved with Agency E, which is a soup kitchen, since its formal founding and is now the director of the soup kitchen.

a.) Founding of the Organization

A woman who had been a professional cook began a soup kitchen in her home in 1993. The pastor, who is now the director, had just taken a pastorate in one of the ten southern counties in New Jersey and received a call from another pastor one hour away who was coming to the area with his church to bring food to a woman who was feeding people out of her home. He was asked if he and his new congregation would want to get involved. He and a retired pastor went and brought a few trays of food. As they were going up the steps of the woman's home, they passed a line of men waiting to be fed and entered the apartment, which was in a two-story building that looked like it

should be condemned. As they opened, the screen door and entered the tiny kitchen there was a woman approximately four foot six inches in height who was cooking up a storm and the pastor who had invited him told him to take off his shoes because they were walking on holy ground. He reported that everything he had heard about her from people in his congregation was true. The woman used all of her energy and resources and time to feed her neighbors. She would tell people if they were hungry to come over and to bring anyone they knew who was hungry. He and his congregation became involved, started to bring her food, and asked what else she needed. She owed the electric and gas companies thousands of dollars because she used the money for the bills to buy food and paper plates and utensils. She had been a cook in a local restaurant but was on disability for a heart condition and did not buy the medicine she needed as she had used the money for the medicine to buy food. He and the other pastor convinced her that if she let them help her and she took care of her health, she could feed more people. They began to build an organization around her because the city was getting complaints about all of the people lined up to go into her home and eating from containers outside. The city threatened to condemn the building because she was in a residential neighborhood, though a very poor neighborhood with many dilapidated and abandoned buildings around. She had no insurance for her house and did not think that was an issue because she just wanted to feed her neighbors. The initial group with the pastor decided that they should get her feeding program incorporated so that they would be able to seek funding for a different location and for operating costs such as food and insurance. The church from seventy miles away had one of their members who was a lawyer do the paperwork for the incorporation. In

March of 1995, the incorporation was obtained and the local pastor became the director and the group now called this feeding project XYZ Soup Kitchen. The city was now ready to condemn the building she was living in as it was in an area where a redevelopment project was planned and eminent domain was going to be used for several buildings in the area.

The new board of Agency E went to the city government and asked for a property in which the woman could live and in which they could install a commercial kitchen. The city gave them a building and, with the help of a housing non-profit for the labor and a federal housing loan to pay for materials they were set to go. The people in the new neighborhood opposed the zoning for a commercial kitchen and the agency was refused a certificate of occupancy. This diminutive woman went right back to her old building, tore the plywood off the door and began cooking again in the building that had been condemned and started feeding people. A local church near where Agency E was originally going to move invited them to come and use their fellowship hall. The board of Agency E put out a plea to other groups and churches and with nearly one half million dollars of volunteer labor and donated supplies and a grant, Agency E was able to renovate the existing kitchen and in September 1997 Agency E opened as a soup kitchen.

The original mission and vision is the same to feed the people. The founder's original vision was that she was to feed the people. She felt that God wanted her to feed the people and not ask those questions but just invite them to eat.

b.) How the Organization is Faith-based

The director believes that being faith-based rises out of “a call” and the founder had a definite feeling of a call. She had fed a couple of people on the street then fasted and prayed for three days and had a sense of God telling her to feed the people. Agency E is faith-based because it was founded on a call, a vocation. Being faith-based contributes to the living out of the mission because they walk by faith. The director told of times when they wanted to give up and quit trying but because they operate by faith and when operating by faith, there is trust in God. There is no way to know what is coming but trust in God is what sustains, no matter what obstacles there are. He believes it is also faith-based because so many churches support them, both denominational and non-denominational as well as two synagogues who have sent volunteers daily through the years to cook and serve the food and feed the people. A fourth of all donations come from churches. The organization has had to adapt to a different way to feed the people than serving a cooked meal in a facility for in February of 2019 a huge corporation in the city was able to pressure the city to condemn the church building out of which Agency E had operated for twenty-two years and they were abruptly closed the day after the church building was condemned, having fed four hundred people. They had purchased a former church property nearby in 2017 and were working on funding for renovations. The city put a squelch on those two days after closing Agency E in 2019. After a change in local government leadership, Agency E was able to begin plans to renovate the former church property but then the Covid-19 pandemic put a stop to any hope of serving cooked meals so now Agency E is operating a food pantry two days a week staffed by volunteers from the new location.

The director hopes to get a food truck on the property in the near future. He reports that trust in God is what has helped them weather the storm of being closed and the Covid-19 pandemic.

c.) Envisioning the Future

The executive director reported that they had never thought they would have ended up purchasing the former church property, which they did in 2017 but believes that this property will allow Agency E to expand the mission to be more than just feeding people a cooked meal. He envisions not only congregate feeding but also to practice radical hospitality which he defines as acknowledging that all resources belong to God and are meant to be shared. This would include training people for jobs in food service, which is what the founder did naturally with her guests whom she taught to prepare the food to help her.

They now have the space to renovate and develop the new property to be a gateway where other agencies can come and provide services, especially for homeless individuals and people who are marginalized. The guests would receive assistance to access the system, as these individuals are tired of having to go to so many locations to get help. The director also envisions a spiritual community being developed where people with needs could meet people with resources. That way, all would be fed, by the Spirit and by the community based upon radical hospitality, which is that all resources belong to God. Those with resources share with those who have no resources and a spiritual community is shared where not only are people fed but where all share not only material needs but also wisdom and joy.

d.) Shaping the Organization's Mission and Vision

The director reported that being faith-based is what shapes the mission and vision of Agency E. At different times, they, the organization, considered going off in different directions but board members reminded each other that their primary mission was to feed people and anything else would be contrary to the primary mission of the founder. He feels that feeding the people can also be interpreted broadly and include feeding with educational and training opportunities and whatever else the people need to “feed” them, to enable the guests that come to Agency E to have a better life.

Agency F (1998)

Agency F is in a city in southern New Jersey and was founded in 1998. I interviewed the director who has been there for thirteen years starting as a grassroots experience associate and then eventually becoming executive director.

a.) Founding of the Organization

The director said that Agency F was started by the former pastor of an inner city church who had grown up in the in the same area of the city as the church. It has been considered an inner city during the last forty or fifty years, with poverty and high unemployment. When the pastor was growing up it had been an industrial city with several factories that employed up to ten thousand people. Those jobs brought life and prosperity to the city and the people and the factories were the main employers for the

city. The local factories left and moved out of state and the people lost their jobs overnight. Then people started to leave the city because they were looking for jobs. The pastor had witnessed all those changes growing up in the city. When he returned as a pastor to the same church in which he grew up and near the same school that he attended, after being away for many years, he found a very different city and different church from his youth. There were many needs due to the great poverty that had taken over the city in every neighborhood. He had a vision of the church to respond to the needs of the people whether they belonged to the church or not. He felt that this was the only way to truly live the faith in a way that responds to those needs, saw beyond church boundaries, and was a true believer in transforming society by transforming hearts.

His first priority as pastor was to look at the social injustices in the city and the needs of the community, and he saw that housing was one of those issues. In the late 1980's, he opened up an empty church building and placed several immigrant families there to live. Over time, approximately thirty families were housed for a couple of years to assist them in getting acclimated to the area.

One of these families who had moved out after two years came to the pastor and stated that they needed a house in which to live. They were a family of eight and had only one room. At that time, there were many abandoned houses in the neighborhood so the pastor decided to buy a house, fix it up, and sell it to the family for a small sum. The family paid for the house. He had connections in the suburbs and asked for help to buy more abandoned houses and fix them up to sell to the families with an interest free loan. A gentleman who worked on Wall Street came to him and said though he was

wealthy he wasn't making a difference for anybody else and could retire with a good pension so he began a program to rehabilitate abandoned houses in the city which became a ministry of the church.

After the man who worked on Wall Street came to see the pastor, he envisioned creating something that would allow people from the suburbs to see that they could make a difference and that it would transform them. That is when Agency F began, in 1998 in the old church building that had housed immigrants to a place where people could come, experience the inner city and meet, and work with its residents and eventually be transformed.

The director considers the pastor to be a visionary, someone who believed that a Christian's responsibility was not to a church but was beyond. He saw Agency F as providing an opportunity for people, especially young people, to come to the inner city, not only to see and experience the challenges and problems of the city, and to learn about social injustice, which he saw as the great sin of our society, a social sin. There would be an opportunity to look at social structures that oppress, exclude and hurt other people. Agency F was established to help young people understand that each one of us plays a role in the social injustice that plagues society. He wanted people to come to Agency F and the city as a place to see injustices, to not only see that this exists but be a means to teach young people that the way society is structured is unjust for some through no fault of their own. What is needed rather than laws to change social ills, for example racism, hearts must be changed to end racism, not just enacting laws. Agency F was founded to help people understand that social justice issues must be addressed from a personal responsibility, a personal point of view.

That was the original purpose, of Agency F, to have a place where young people and eventually all people, but especially young people, could come to experience the inner city and work with its people and it still is. Many colleges and high schools want students to engage in service to the community and Agency F is able to offer the opportunity to not only serve but reflect on the service and why the service is needed. It was one of the first programs in New Jersey to not only offer the service component but also an educational one. The students do service by volunteering in soup kitchens, homeless shelters, elderly programs and daycare centers and when they come back from that experience the opportunity is provided to reflect and share with the others about what they experienced and why they think that the service is needed and what is each one's responsibility in providing the different services to the community. They are asked to consider how they can each respond to the needs and how they can each contribute to improving society, even in their local areas. The social justice education part of the program is what has made Agency F popular as a service project.

b.) How the Organization is Faith-Based

The director of Agency F reported that the agency is faith-based because everything they do is based on social justice teaching and the base of all of the programs is that part of a Christian's baptismal call is to be prophetic and bring the good news of the Gospel to people by living out these teachings. The agency stresses not only a personal relationship with God but social responsibility is implied by being sent into the community to speak about injustices that are in the community. It is an important focus of the mission that the program teaches and it stresses the importance

of living this out. The exact words of prophet and living out the baptismal call are not used but are implied.

If Agency F was not faith-based, the director believes that they would not exist anymore because the whole mission is based on faith. She stated that the focus has not shifted from their original function and purpose but there have been many pressures to change, to have the agency move from a church building for funding reasons. There are organizations that would give them funding if they relocated from the church property. She mentioned two ministries that relocated away from the church property and one received more funding and survived while the other one not only relocated but also gave into pressure from donors and changed the focus of their mission to something very different from the original purpose. Agency F believes what makes them the agency that they are is being faithful to the original purpose and mission and to do anything else would be to deny whom they are. To shift from the original purpose and mission because of funding reasons would no longer give them a reason to exist. The risk of losing donors is not an option because they receive the funding through donations and a few small grants from Christian organizations that cover the essential expenses. She feel this is because of faith in God and of sharing the Gospel message of justice and being faithful to the mission. In continuing with the original mission and not giving in to the pressures to change location and focus, Agency F has continued to find donors, though not from big corporations.

Another pressure that has affected operations this year has been the pandemic of Coivid-19. They are not able to have groups come and stay in their facility or have any weekly programming onsite. They had partnered with an organization based in

South America that does work similar to Agency F and have long term volunteers work at the local church level and become immersed in the community. Agency F has sent students from the United States to work with the volunteers for one or two weeks at a time. As international travel and volunteering are not being allowed right now, that part of their program is on hold.

Their main program is one where high schools and colleges and church groups from around the country, come and stay for a week, going out during the day, serving with different organizations that assist people in the community who are in need. The educational piece of social justice teaching is used as a guide for reflections and discussions. Not being able to host the groups has resulted in a complete change in operating. Agency F has continued parts of the program with Zoom to talk about social issues because of not being able to have the groups there physically, it is not the same. Being in the presence of people whose lives and stories are different from ours is very powerful as are the discussions and reflections, which take place each evening. The fees from those programs, while very little, provide eighty percent of the funding which the director said presents another problem; though the pandemic has changed the way Agency F functions it has not changed the mission.

c.) Envisioning the Future

The executive director of Agency F stated that she envisions the future of the agency to be one where they will continue creating partnerships with other churches and schools in the area and from other states to encourage transformation. She can

see broadening partnerships to expand the ministry and to support other ministries, which can help Agency F to grow.

d.) Shaping the Organization's Mission and Vision by being Faith-Based

The director reported that social justice teaching is at the heart of what Agency F does and it will continue to be the heart of what they do. Every program created, every service that they have, are all embedded in it. Social justice teaching is a part of everything they do. She believes that it will continue to be in the future because it is their core. They will continue to look at the current issues that are affecting society and will create programs and educational components that will provide opportunities for individuals to reflect, respond, and hopefully, be transformed personally so that they may contribute to transformation on their local level.

Faith and the social justice teaching principles on which the mission is based will continue to shape Agency F into the future.

Agency G (2002)

The director of Agency G was interviewed who is also the founder of the agency, which is a day center for homeless women.

a.) Founding of the Agency

Agency G began in 2002 in a church basement in a city in one of the ten counties of southern New Jersey by the current director who had worked with individuals who were mentally ill and homeless in the area for over twenty-five years. There was a need for a

place for mentally ill and vulnerable homeless women to go during the day when local shelters closed at nine in the morning and the women could not return until four in the afternoon. Many of the women were elderly, had various disabilities, and had a difficult time in connecting with services that might help them because of their disability or they were unfamiliar with the social service system. With the de- institutionalization in the 1970's and 1980's, many of these women had been in institutions for as long as forty years and were unfamiliar with how to seek shelter or where to find it. Some of the younger women had been victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence, became homeless from escaping their situations, and needed to be safe from perpetrators. Agency G originally began with four women who were driven in a van to the original location by a local shelter staff member. A donated coffee pot, coffee, and doughnuts from another faith-based agency provided the initial service of coffee and doughnuts. Eventually, a crock-pot was also donated and a local food bank provided canned soup and peanut butter and jelly as well as bread. Lunch was either peanut butter and jelly sandwiches or soup heated in the crockpot. The Sunday school teachers at the church where Agency G started provided some arts and craft supplies and one of them would come once a week to teach crocheting with yarn collected from her knitting group.

The need for a program to assist homeless women without children was because if a woman has a child with her there are services available because of the child. If a woman is by herself, there are not the same services available. A woman with a child or children who staying at local shelters is permitted to remain in the shelter during the day.

b.) How the Organization is Faith-Based

Agency G is faith-based with its philosophy, which is based on Hebrews 13:2 “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.”¹³⁰ That is the premise on which the agency operates. The women are viewed the same as staff and volunteers as those who have needs because of situations that have changed the way their lives have been lived. These situations are for many reasons, most being because of experiences of trauma, abuse, mental illness, physical disabilities or addictions.

Agency G sees itself as a ministry, not just a social service agency and tries to see the dignity and value of each woman, even those who are difficult and see each of them as being made in the image of the Creator. If Agency G were not faith-based there would be no extra effort made in serving the women from the items given to them or meals prepared for them. The agency strives to make the women feel good about themselves and who they are.

The director reports that there has not been a shift from the original mission but an expansion of the population served. The original focus was mentally ill homeless women and eventually homeless women in general began to come to the agency. When the agency moved into its own facility, it was located in a neighborhood with many rooming houses where there was a population of at risk women living there, at risk for many reasons. In some of the buildings where the women rent rooms, there is a lot of drug activity, such as drug use and the selling of drugs and drug paraphernalia. The agency can offer a safe place for these at risk women to come during the day to get

¹³⁰ New Revised Standard Version of Bible with Apocrypha. Copyright 1989. Division of Christian Education of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. London. Collins Publishers. 1989

a respite from being bothered by drug dealers. Some are at risk because of being in recovery and are provided stability in having a place to come each day. Others are at risk of being found by current and past abusers who have remained in the area. Agency G has adapted to expand the mission to not only accept women who are homeless but also women who are at risk of homelessness and abuse. The agency has also reached out to people in the neighborhood by providing food. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought a change in how the agency operates. The facility is a rancher type house and social distancing as required by the state is not possible. The women have not been able to enter the building since the middle of March 2020 when the state declared a public health emergency and limited the number of people in a building. The agency has been serving the women by giving them what they need out the deck windows. This includes meals in takeout containers, clothing, toiletries, masks and whatever else is needed. Another challenge was that the first Annual Appeal was planned and then the pandemic hit. With so many people unemployed, the agency felt it was not the time to ask for financial contributions.

c.) Envisioning the Future

The director reported that they would like to have an addition to the existing building on an adjacent property that was purchased three years ago. The addition would be two floors, one room on each floor. The second floor would be for storage and computer/graphic classes for the women and the first floor would be an arts and crafts room for pottery and art classes as well as a place for caseworkers from other agencies to meet with individual women and to conduct groups for the women, separate from the

main room. This would provide more space for those who do not want to participate in-group activities which is not the case now as there is just one big room.

Agency G collaborates with the Community Police who bring homeless women to them and the agency also provides occasional meals for the Community Police to also provide to homeless men on the streets. The director hopes to expand collaboration with other faith-based and community-based organizations in the community to improve services for not only homeless individuals but others who are disenfranchised in the community.

d.) Shaping the Organization's Mission and Vision being Faith-Based

In being faith-based, Agency G sees itself as not only a ministry but as a calling to do the best that can be done for the women who come each day. It is what drives the agency to serve no matter what obstacles come along. Being a faith-based organization will continue to guide the agency as it attempts to meet the needs of the women served and the challenges that the future will bring. Faith is what drives Agency G to continue and persevere; no matter what will come along either for the agency or the population served there is trust that God will lead them in the right direction to continue the mission into the future.

Chapter Four: Analysis

In the interviews conducted for this study there were several common themes among the agencies: adaptation; call/vocation; expansion; faith; feeding; future preparedness; hope; service; struggles with the pandemic; trust; and welcoming.

Adaptation

The one theme that every agency spoke of was adaptation and the importance of being able to adapt in living the mission as the neighborhoods and situations change in the areas, which these agencies serve. From the smallest agency to the largest, all reported that it was important to adapt to be able to continue with the mission and the purpose of the agency. The Covid-19 pandemic required immediate adaptation for each agency as none of the agencies had ever planned for such an event. State mandates that restricted having people inside public and social service buildings initially stopped any form of services for these agencies. However, each one was able to develop a way to continue to operate the agency by adapting to the situation for the demands were still there and individuals still required the assistance offered by these agencies. While some agencies were able to continue their outreach into the community, they still were not able to transport clients in vehicles so these agencies began to provide financial assistance for public transportation for clients to get to medical appointments and to access food pantries. Several of the agencies began to provide food, clothing, and other requested items through either a window or door while others distributed curbside. Those that feed people inside were providing meals in takeout containers. While each of the agencies were able to adapt the way they provided their services, some reported a

struggle economically because of cancelled fundraising events and a decrease in financial contributions, especially with unemployment increasing due to the closure of many businesses or reduced hours in some industries. The lack of employment and the closing of businesses brought an increase in the demand for services in several of the agencies and as a result, this put a strain on the finances with an upsurge in the number of people seeking assistance.

Expansion

Each agency that was interviewed told of the expansion of services since the founding due to the increase in social problems such as homelessness, increase in addictions, and the need for mental health services to name a few. None of the agencies felt that they had drifted from the original mission and purpose but had enhanced it with the expansion of services that have taken place to meet the needs of the time. The Covid-19 pandemic not only required adaptation, but also augmented expansion of services for many of these agencies. The local food bank was overwhelmed with food donations from restaurants that had to close due to the state mandate that they asked some of the agencies if they would consider having their own food pantry to distribute the many pallets of food, which had been donated. One agency in particular, a soup kitchen could not be open, so they began a food pantry to distribute food and another agency, which had a small food pantry only for their clients, opened their pantry to the public at large. One agency that could not have clients in their building for services began to prepare hot meals for other agencies to provide to clients and for community police to distribute to homeless individuals on the street.

One of the agencies had to rely on Zoom for their ministry because it was an onsite program with people physically staying in their building for two weeks and going out into the community to work with local agencies. The pandemic would not allow for this, thus, all presentations became virtual. While the agency was glad to be able to continue, though in a different mode, the fees collected for the onsite stays was no longer available, therefore they have experienced a loss in revenue and will not recoup this loss of revenue as the agency does not actively fundraise but depends on the fees for the onsite experience. The agency believes strongly in its mission and despite the loss of revenue, it will continue, if only virtually for now. The virtual experience is seen as an expansion, which they will continue when the pandemic is over to provide the opportunity for those who cannot physically travel to the location to participate in the program offered by the agency.

An agency that works with youth and has both shelter and onsite services had to limit the number of the resident population, however was able to have clients in the building for day services four at a time to maintain social distancing. Normally, meals were available in the dining area to non-residents, but with the social distancing requirements of the state, meals were given at the door in takeout containers. The outreach on the street became limited as to how many youth could be transported in their vehicles, so they provided bus tickets. The job readiness program, which partnered with local businesses had to be put on hold because of businesses closing or having reduced hours but the agency still managed to offer some one on one instruction regarding resume writing and job skills training. The GED classes were limited in

number in line with state protocols. The agency was in the process of expanding programming with English as a Second Language classes but because of social distancing limiting the number of individuals in a class, this has been put on hold until the limits are lifted.

One agency reported that the expansion that they have done in the last several years would never have happened with the first two directors who would only allow evangelical Christians into the facility. This agency has partnered with local government and private agencies that are both faith-based and community-based. They collaborate with non-Christian faith-based organizations to provide various services to those whom they serve.

A small agency that originally provided food and clothing continues to feed and clothe people as well as provide showers and laundry facilities and has expanded in working with human trafficking victims and assisting individuals in attending free recovery programs for those with drug and alcohol addictions and also has an after school program for the children in the neighborhood

Preparedness for the Future

Three agencies spoke of the importance of preparedness for the future for natural disasters as well as another pandemic. (While several of the agencies had dealt in the past with difficulties brought by hurricanes and floods, none had ever dealt with a pandemic. One director did say that the pandemic of 1918 did not affect the agency in

the United States, it did affect the work in Europe where they were also located.) The preparedness for natural disasters is seen as having a plan in writing of how to operate during types of natural disasters, from evacuation plans to how to distribute supplies and other items that would be needed. It would also involve responding as one organization did to Super Storm Sandy by seeking grants to aid people getting back into their homes. Concerning a pandemic in the future, it was thought that personal protection equipment should be available at all times in the event of an epidemic or in working with individuals who are medically compromised. This was also seen as an expansion of services because it has never been done in the past. Substance abuse has increased with this current pandemic so a plan should also include providing assistance with substance abuse to foster recovery from addictions for all who would be interested in this service.

Feeding

A few agencies spoke of “feeding” being more than providing food, but also means feeding the human soul, the human spirit of the individuals served. Feeding the human spirit involves giving the individual hope for the present and for the future, to know that they are loved for who they are a human being and not because of what they have or have not done with their lives. Two agencies believe that feeding people with the word of God is not preaching to them but sharing with them that God loves them and that they have been made in God’s image. Another agency believes that the people can be feed with providing the opportunities that will help provide them with a better life such as job training and education.

Service

All of the agencies interviewed described what they do, whatever their mission, is to serve others. Service was seen as pivotal in the sense of taking care of others and their needs by *serving*, which is ministering to those who come for assistance as opposed to providing a benefit such as food stamps as a government entity would, with criteria needing to be met to receive benefits. As faith-based organizations, each agency sees itself as a ministry of service to others who utilize their agency and see the work that is done more than just a job.

Calling/Vocation

Most of the agencies spoke of what they do is a calling or a vocation that is more than an occupation or profession but rather something, that is inspired by God to serve God's people. Some of those interviewed stated that if they did not perceive the mission as a call, they would not do it, that in being a call or calling, they are able to do God's work in caring for others and following the Gospel to spread the good news that God is love.

One founder of an agency felt that God had called her to provide a ministry to feed the people and those who have continued the mission state that this is why they continue, in spite of difficulties because it is a call for them to continue the founder's original call. Another agency director considers their work a ministry first and foremost. One is either called or not called to it and the work that is done is a definite call. A staff member from the same agency said it is a call taken seriously because it goes beyond

tasks or being dutiful to an agency, it means being focused on the individuals served and their needs. Though some of those served can be difficult, it is because of the calling to this ministry that they persevere.

Faith, Hope and Trust

Every agency interviewed stressed the importance of faith in living the mission and spoke of “a leap of faith”, “a walk of faith” in being able to continue the mission amidst struggles and challenges to do what at times might seem impossible. Each believes that faith in God and God’s faithfulness has enabled them to carry on the mission and to further serve with the expansions that have been added to the ministry. Each agency told of faith allowing them to hope and trust that God would provide what is needed for the mission to continue and adapt and expand to better serve. Because of faith, one agency, which considers itself evangelical, said that they would not be able to do what they do and it is because of faith that they are able to trust that God will continue to be faithful to them and provide them with what they need to do the mission. Another agency that also considers itself evangelical, said it is only because of faith that they have a purpose and are able to operate. It is because of their faith that they have hope and trust that God will continue to provide what they need to continue their ministry and mission. Not every agency articulated the importance of faith, hope and trust in the same way, but each did mention how important these were to have the perseverance and determination to continue the mission.

Welcoming

Each agency considers being welcoming to all who come to their doors and seek their services as being important. Acceptance is seen as being part of the welcoming, for many whom they serve have been ostracized because of their plight, which could be homelessness, a disabling condition, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, accent, religion and many other reasons. All of the agencies stated that they serve whoever comes to them and it does not matter whether they belong to the same faith tradition of the agency, that being welcoming is what is important because that is how they are able to treat the individuals whom they serve with dignity. Being welcoming is a way to carry out the mission in its fullness, to welcome the individual to receive what they offer and to offer them acceptance for who they are as human beings who deserve to be served and cared for as persons and not because of criteria of: income, disability, age or residency regulations as some government entities require.

Struggles from the Covid-19 Pandemic

All of the agencies in the study indicated how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the way they operate and carry out their individual missions. Each of them reported the need to adapt and one had to change the total operation of its mission because it is an educational hands-on program where volunteers spend one to two weeks living and working among the poor in an urban environment to experience social justice issues and the injustices of society to make them aware of the need for social change. The program involves working with other faith-based organizations but that had to be reworked into a virtual experience with discussions based on readings on social

justice topics. Others have had to become more like an information and referral service to assist people with getting the help they need, such as: knowing how to apply for unemployment benefits; where to get a Covid-19 test; the location of food pantries to name a few. All indicated that the pandemic was not going to shut them down, that they would remain faithful to the mission, even if it meant different ways of implementing it. All were and are committed to their individual mission and purpose and were able to find ways to continue to live their mission.

What I found interesting, is much of the adaption that happened in these agencies was because of the Covid-19 pandemic and some of the agencies have said they will continue with some of the adaptations when the social distancing guidelines are lifted because they found ways to reach persons that they might not have in the way they previously operated. The examples given were to continue outreach to the larger community besides serving those who come to their agencies and to partner with other agencies, both faith-based and community based as well as local governments in providing supplies for those entities to distribute to their clientele. They saw this as an opportunity to be more inclusive and reach beyond their physical location. One agency provided over seven cartons of clothing and toiletries to a small inner city church to distribute which was given to over one hundred individuals. Thus, the agency that normally serves twenty individuals in their facility was able to indirectly serve more individuals.

Every agency interviewed used the Covid-19 pandemic and the struggles it brought as an opportunity to look at the agency mission and purpose to examine how it

could continue with all of the restrictions and limitations placed upon them and be creative in maintaining the mission and their purpose. They, as Shapiro states saw “the need to define a new challenge that wasn’t a part of the plan a year ago”¹³¹ and see a new way to cope with the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic by exploring through the setbacks to develop alternate ways of fulfilling the mission even though the future seems unclear at the moment.¹³²

A few of the agencies reported that the pandemic had an effect on financial donations, but most reported that financial contributions had remained the same or increased a little. One agency director said that she believes this is because some social service organizations have had to close, individuals and church and civic groups are looking for other organizations to which they can donate and her organization has received both financial and in-kind donations from individuals who live out of her agency’s geographic area. The director of another agency reported the same thing, commenting that his organization had an overabundance of in-kind donations and even received a grant that was meant for another social service agency that closed due to the pandemic.

¹³¹ Shapiro, Tim. *How Your Congregations Learns: The Learning Journey from Challenge to Achievement*. Lantham. Rowman & Littlefield. 2017 p. 150

¹³² Shapiro. p. 150

Chapter 5: Summary

As I began this project, I anticipated hearing stories of faith-based organizations having drifted from the original purpose and mission. Greer, Horst and Haggard state, “Without careful attention, faith-based organizations will inevitably drift from their founding...Slowly, silently, and with little fanfare, organizations routinely drift from their original purpose, and *most* [emphasis mine] will never return to their original intent.”¹³³ These authors further state that being aware of the core identity will require change.¹³⁴ I find these two statements to be contradictory as one says organizations will drift if not careful and the other statement implies that change is inevitable. What I discovered in each interview regarding these faith-based organizations is that they have survived and endured because they “understand the fundamental reason they were founded and why they exist and they stay true to that reason”¹³⁵; they have found ways to be faithful to the original purpose for which each was founded. Each person interviewed has been with their respective faith-based organizations for many years, even if not in a particular location because of that faith-based organization’s policy of reassigning leadership in local agencies every four years but are with the agency nevertheless. All spoke of their particular faith-based agency with a dedication for the agency mission and because it is faith-based. Each spoke of a determination to see that the mission will be carried on even after they are gone and as one agency told me they have already begun to do this by telling the story of the agency and its humble beginnings to new staff, stressing the

¹³³ Greer, Peter, Chris Horst with Anna Haggard. *Mission Drift. The Unspoken Crisis Facing Leaders, Charities and Churches*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. Bethany House Publishers. 2014 p.15

¹³⁴ Greer, Horst, Haggard. p. 27

¹³⁵ Lencioni, Patrick. *The Advantage*. San Francisco. Jossey-Bass. 2012. p. 82

importance of the mission and the need to stay faithful to that mission. This same response was also articulated, though in different words, by the other agencies in the study. The longevity of the tenure of staff at all levels in these agencies spoke to me of the commitment that the leaders and other staff have to the mission of each respective agency. The leaders in these agencies spoke of hiring staff who believed in the mission and look for individuals who see being a part of the staff as a calling. As one director told me, she felt that it was important for the staff to know that being employed at her faith-based agency was beyond employment. It was a ministry and not just a job and required a caring heart that wants to serve those who come to them, even those difficult and troublesome because all are God's children just as staff are and need to be treated with dignity and respect. Another director of an agency that depends on volunteers told me that he looks for volunteers to see involvement with the faith-based organization as a calling that requires respecting individuals served and seeing them as brothers and sisters in Christ. One agency director remarked on the importance of staff and volunteers to see the people served just as they are human beings who might have different needs because of the current situations in which they are now living.

Service is an important component for all of those interviewed as it is considered to be the reason that they exist, to serve through the mission of the faith-based organization, considering it an opportunity to enhance people's lives and offer support to the neighborhoods in which each is located by building relationships in those neighborhoods. All of those interviewed take their leadership and role in the local community seriously and believe that relationships can be built by engaging with the

members of the neighborhoods and communities in which they are located. The key leaders of the faith-based organizations interviewed all agreed that this service must start with each of them, that the staff and volunteers should see in them leaders who are servants that act with respect towards others, showing respect and offering hope¹³⁶ to staff, volunteers and of course the individuals served.

While all of the faith-based agencies interviewed told of the importance of treating people with dignity and respect and seeing them as equals in their humanity and not individuals who are troubled, two directors of the agencies interviewed talked about the need to go beyond the immediate crisis an individual or family might be experiencing. This would require providing the change that is needed to prevent the same crises from happening repeatedly, along the lines of Edwin Friedman who states in *Failure of Nerve, Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* that leaders must help those they lead to themselves become responsible, “challenging them to take responsibility for themselves”.¹³⁷ Each explained to me that this does not mean not assisting in crises, but assisting individuals to learn how to navigate systems that often can hinder a person from moving forward in life. One director noted that their core value includes advocating for change in systems. Many of these individuals have no access to computers and many government programs require applications for housing, disability and food stamps to be done on a computer. This is a hindrance for those who meet the criteria and would qualify for these programs but who cannot submit applications online. The

¹³⁶ Ayandokum, Revd. Dr. Mrs. Esther O. “Servanthood: The Biblical Model of Leadership” Practical Theology (Baptist College of Theology, Lagos), 2 2009, p.10 ATLA accessed 5/6/19

¹³⁷ Friedman, Edwin J. *A Failure of Nerve, Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*. 10th Anniversary Revised Edition. New York. Church Publishing. p. 146

director of another agency would like to see his organization be able to have computers available for those they serve and others in the community to not only be able to submit applications for housing and other assistance, but also to offer life skills and job training. He envisions the faith-based organization to make available opportunities for individuals to be able to improve their quality of life. Both described the necessity of giving individuals the tools to improve each one's own life and that of their family. Many of the individuals served by some of the agencies are not aware of what of jobs and training are available and do not know where to access training. Resources need to be made available to aid individuals in being responsible for their own futures.

While each of the organizations interviewed are faith-based, two of the larger ones who have sixty or more staff members, reported that some funders do not want to provide funding to faith-based organizations because they consider a faith-based agency as being allied with a religion and proselytizing. These agencies both stated that they stress that they are community based and one reported the necessity of being familiar with prospective funders and the need to strategize when explaining the organization. Other than these two agencies, the others all believe that their supporters donate to their respective agencies because they are faith-based.

Contemplating on the stories and what I have learned about and from each of these faith-based organizations, I am filled with admiration for the passion, dedication and commitment each of the directors and officers interviewed have for their respective faith-based organizations. Each one sees their position in the agency as a life's work to be used to bring comfort and encouragement to their local communities by serving and

advocating for individuals, many who are on the fringes and seen as problems in their local communities because of life situations that have left them struggling to survive. These faith-based leaders want to support individuals in their communities lead full and sustainable lives with decent housing and food as well as employment. Each one willingly shared the story of their agency and told it with a fervor that was almost contagious because of the strong belief each has in the mission and purpose of the agency and what it has done. The leaders each have confidence in their respective faith-based agency to continue to thrive and help the local communities serve their own people. As each one told me of the different challenges experienced, whether during their tenure at the agency or before, I felt a sense of the determination of the founders in each of them to continue the mission and spread compassion and kindness into the world through the service to the local community. Hearing these stories emphasized to me the importance of faith-based organizations in the local community and the commitment they have to serve individuals whether or not they meet certain criteria. These organizations focus on what the needs are and make every effort to meet them. The impact of faith-based agencies and what they provide to the local communities is invaluable for they assist many of those individuals who do not qualify for services offered by community based and government entities. Being influenced by each one's faith tradition, faith-based organizations are inclusive addressing the needs of members of the localities in which they serve, having the freedom to serve without concern for regulations regarding income, citizenship status, employment or any other parameters that other entities have that prevent people from being assisted in improving their quality of life. Faith-based organizations do what they do without concern if an individual can

pay or reimburse them. They continue to address current needs and address social issues as they surface for the betterment of humanity and the community.

What I have learned for my own ministry is the importance of knowing and remembering the story of the founding and to continue the story to keep focused on the original need and mission. This will be vital to go forward to meet and adapt to any challenges and needs that arise. The stories shared tell of a desire to enhance the lives of individuals and endeavor to strengthen communities in helping individuals, which is a reminder that each faith-based agency is an element in the community, and it is important to understand the unique position that each has for the community and not just my own faith-based organization.

When I shared what I had written about each faith-based agency with the respective directors and officers who were interviewed, each was very enthusiastic about sharing the story of the founding and of the struggles and challenges. Every one of them was glad for the opportunity to share about the importance of faith in the ministry and how it sustains the organization and the mission, encourages them, and gives the strength to continue.

What can be next for these and other faith-based organizations would be to interview the staff to hear their version of the story of the organization, the challenges, which they have faced, and the struggles they have encountered with the mission or in carrying out the mission. How much of the story does each staff member know about the organization? Is the story of the founding important for staff? Is the mission and

purpose of the faith-based organization significant for the staff? Do staff feel that it is important to serve? Are staff aware of the impact that they may have on the individuals the agency serves? Do staff experience a sense of providing better assistance because they are in a faith-based agency? Why did they chose to minister in a faith-based organization? What are the strengths of the agency? What are the weaknesses of the agency? Are any of the strength or weaknesses because of being faith-based? Do these fit in with the story and the staff member's story at the agency?

A next step would be to interview the volunteers of the faith-based organizations and ask them if they know the story. Ask them the same questions staff were asked. Do volunteers value that the organization is faith-based? Is that why they volunteer in a faith-based organization as opposed to a community-based agency? What led them to volunteer in a faith-based organization? Do they sense any strengths or weaknesses in the agency in how the mission is carried out? Speak to individuals who are served by the faith-based agency and ask if this agency is different than any other agency where they have received assistance? Are they aware if the organization is faith-based or if there is a faith affiliation? Ask what the experience has been with the particular faith-based agency. Is it different that other agencies? What are seen as pluses and minuses to come to this agency?

In doing interviews with staff, volunteers and individuals served, faith-based agencies can included all in how they carry out the mission and how they operate. It gives ownership to not only directors and administration, but also to all staff from caseworkers, cooks, janitors, secretaries, bookkeepers, drivers and security personnel

knowing that each of them is an important part of the faith-based organization and their input is important for the agency and its mission. The same would be for volunteers, to know that their assistance and time is valuable and that they too are an important part of the agency. The same would be true for individuals served, to know that their input, opinions and ideas are very valuable not only to the agency but as to how the agency operates.

In the future, I would like to meet with the directors who were interviewed together and see if they would be agreeable to allow me to meet with those staff and volunteers who would be willing to be interviewed. Given the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act regulations regarding client privacy I would ask if staff would be able to interview some of the individuals served. I would provide a workshop for the staff who would be interviewing and give a background of this project and how it came to be by their directors being a part of it.

A future study could might involve a one, three and five year study in each agency of the original interview questions regarding challenges, pressures that have influenced any change in the organization and how these have been addressed. This study could include not only leadership, but also other staff as well as volunteers and those individuals served to make it a total agency study.

All of the agencies commented on how they have communicated more with the other faith-based organizations in their respective geographic areas since the Covid-19 pandemic began, consulting and sharing with the others on how they were managing

and adapting in serving. Each said this was a great source of encouragement and of suggestions for how to continue to serve during such an unusual and never before experienced event in their lifetime. As each expressed this as being something positive and enriching, I will suggest to these agencies if they would want to continue to gather bi-monthly after things are opened up and continue to be a source of support and encouragement for each other. They all reported that they did see other faith-based leaders at meetings, but never had the time to really speak because of being busy with each one's own agency. I will ask if the agencies would each take a turn at hosting a gathering so each could see and learn more about the physical structure and meet staff from the other faith-based agencies.

As I learned so much from the stories of each of these organizations, perhaps they too can learn from each other's stories and help each other handle future challenges and struggles that come with being a faith-based organization. As they have been able to assist one another during the pandemic, they could continue to offer suggestions and share their own experiences with expansion and adaptation and visioning for the future.

These faith-based agencies have much to teach us and their collective wisdom can help the communities in which they serve and the surrounding communities to learn how they are able to provide what they do with small budgets and few resources. The service through their ministries is because of a strong compassion for all men and women, no matter their gender, sexual orientation, creed, nationality, ethnicity, race, language or disability. They are not concerned with many questions being answered

before they feed someone a meal, provide a bag of groceries, and offer a pair of socks or a bus ticket. Faith-based organizations do not care if the individual is unkempt or disheveled or has an odor; they are not going to refuse service if either of these are the case. They do not refer to those they serve as customers, clients or consumers but as individuals. Many faith-based organizations use the term “guest”, “visitor” or “member” to respect their dignity as human beings. The work that faith-based organizations do is focused on the individuals served and not on a quota of how many clients are seen in a given month.

There is not much written about if and how faith-based organizations have better results in working on social issues such as poverty, homelessness, treatment of mental illness, substance abuse and addictions, recovery programs, domestic violence, human trafficking, hunger, immigration, and housing. There is information of how cost effective faith-based organizations are as previously cited by Spivey

- Church-based [faith-based] ministries reduce social burdens on the government
- Local agencies work more efficiently
- Spiritual programs more effectively transform lives and reduce chronic dependence on the state
- State funding enables churches [faith-based organizations] to reach more people¹³⁸

for faith-based organizations do not refuse service if an individual cannot pay or does not have health insurance. Community based organizations are able to receive funding that is not available to faith-based organizations because of having a religious identity or affiliation and often charge for services or require insurance. Government entities have

¹³⁸ Spivey, James T. “Charitable by Choice: A Biblical View of Faith-Based Initiatives”. Baptist History and Heritage, 48 no 1 Spr 2013, p. 52-53 ATLA accessed 11/2/19

criteria for different services that many of those seeking assistance do not meet and therefore that is why they go to a faith-based organization. If research was done on the success or results that faith-based organizations have in addressing with the above mentioned social issues, perhaps more government and other funding would be available if these results can be proven successful. Funders want to see results and if the results show a high success rate than perhaps those funders who are apprehensive of funding faith-based organizations might be inclined to provide funding for these organizations.

There are social issues that historically have been addressed by only faith-based organizations such as human trafficking, domestic violence, soup kitchens, and work with undocumented individuals. Immigration issues often involve those who are undocumented and though hospitals are not concerned if someone is undocumented and will not refuse treatment, government entities are not able to actively provide financial or housing services because of federal immigration laws. [One faith-based leader remarked to me that part of the inscription on the statue of liberty could apply to faith-based organizations because it talks of taking care of the tired, poor and the homeless which is what faith-based organizations do.]

This study was done among faith-based agencies in a ten county area of southern New Jersey. A further study might involve faith-based organizations in the northern part of New Jersey and other states and sections of the country to hear and learn from their stories and if the original mission and purpose remain the same or have

changed or expanded. Are the pressures, forces, challenges and struggles the same for each faith-based organization or are they different in other states, other sections of the country? Do faith-based organizations in other areas of the United States envision having a future and will being a faith-based organization shape the future? Do faith-based agencies in other regions provide similar or different types of service? Does the story of one faith-based organization in a particular state present a depiction of other faith-based organizations in that state or region? This would provide a further understanding of faith-based organizations overall and what they have and continue to contribute to society as a whole.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a great impact on all faith-based agencies interviewed and will continue to affect these faith-based agencies for several years. Over the history of the faith-based organizations interviewed, none has ever experienced the implications from a natural disaster such as hurricanes, floods, derecho, or tornado as from this pandemic. Most disasters such as natural disasters have three phases: the actual event; the response; and the recovery. Steve Crimando from the New Jersey Department of Human Services Disaster & Terrorism Branch reports that “pandemics are predictably unpredictable; in a typical disaster it’s very clear when it starts, it’s very clear when it stops...when events lack that, the result in terms of mental health consequences are much more lasting”.¹³⁹ When asked about the mental health implications from a year of isolation and social distancing due to the Covid-19 pandemic, he reported that though “we have some knowledge and some research,

¹³⁹ Personal Interview with Steve Crimando, MA, CHPP, DRCC. New Jersey Department of Human Services Disaster & Terrorism Branch. March 10, 2021.

about the first few months of isolation; we don't fully know the effects until we are probably months or years away from it".¹⁴⁰ Regarding an increase in diagnosis of mental health diagnoses, he reported that there was an increase of 53% "in the adult population of primarily depression and anxiety which were similar in adolescents and kids. What is disturbing is that there was an increase in suicide rates among adolescents and kids".¹⁴¹ Two of the agencies that also provide mental health services have seen an increase in individuals requesting mental health services from their respective faith-based agencies and anticipate a greater demand in the future. Also, the economy in the geographic locations of these agencies has been negatively affected with many small businesses closed permanently and others only able to operate at a thirty per cent capacity which in turn has a bearing on the residents of those regions and effects their quality of life. This will increase the need for food and financial assistance for rent, mortgage and utilities as residents continue to lose a steady income from pre-Covid-19 days.

The leaders of the faith-based organizations whom I interviewed see the need of the services which they provide not going anywhere. In fact, they believe that each of them will continue to expand services in the areas in which they are located which have been greatly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic with an increase in unemployment, food insecurity, loss of housing, and lack of affordable housing and lack of job availability. Substance abuse is on the rise as well as the number of individuals requiring addiction services. Most recovery and addiction service providers require

¹⁴⁰ Personal Interview with Steve Crimando, MA, CHPP, DRCC. New Jersey Department of Human Services Disaster & Terrorism Branch. March 10, 2021.

¹⁴¹ Personal Interview with Steve Crimando, MA, CHPP, DRCC. New Jersey Department of Human Services Disaster & Terrorism Branch. March 10, 2021.

insurance, which many of those seeking addiction services lack. One of the faith-based organizations that was interviewed provides transportation to free recovery programs around the country, which are sponsored by churches and faith-based organizations. The agencies also reported a rise in inquiries for domestic violence services as the isolation and unemployment has contributed to an increase in domestic violence.

As issues arise, these faith-based agencies address them in creative ways, accepting the challenges and doing what they can to care for those affected by these social issues. They see expansion as being a part of their mission, to address whatever need there is and to try to meet it. Adaptation has been a part of these agencies even before the Covid-19 pandemic according to all of leaders of these agencies. They do whatever has to be done to serve the people. What they have shared reminds me of what Shapiro states “It’s important to know what problem you are trying to solve”¹⁴² and then adapt accordingly. Once they know the challenge or issue that has occurred, these agencies look for ways to adapt to handle the challenge.

Each of these agencies has reported that the story from the beginning of the foundation is a journey that continues today and that as the journey continues so does the story. The story grows with each challenge, adaption, new social issue and each person who comes through the door. They are on the journey with those whom they serve as well as those who are on staff and the volunteers. Everyone is interconnected and part of the chapters of the story.

¹⁴² Shapiro, Tim. *How Your Congregation Learns: The Learning Journey from Challenge to Achievement*. Lanham. Rowman & Littlefield. 2017. p. 148

Who are those who are part of the journey that are met along the way in the founding and continuing of the mission for each faith-based agency?

- the mother whose child needs diapers;
- the teenage girl who was assaulted by her uncle;
- the homeless man who had lost a foot due to hypothermia;
- the immigrant family trying to find a way to sustain themselves with no source of income;
- the mentally ill homeless woman who is harassed on the street by teenagers and does not understand why;
- the children in the after-school program;
- those who come for showers because they have no hot water in the room where a family of eight are sleeping;
- the couple that comes to eat at the soup kitchen because their hours of employment were cut back;
- the young man who left home because of abuse and for the first time felt safe at night sleeping in the youth shelter;
- the teenage girl who is pregnant and her family threw her out because they did not want another mouth to feed and now knows that she and her unborn baby will receive support and care;
- the migrant farm worker who is able to get shoes for himself and his wife;
- the addict who is in need of help but does not know where to turn;
- the fifty year old woman who never learned to read or write and cannot read the letter that tells her she must recertify for her disability benefit;

- the college students who want to make a difference and meet a homeless man for the first time;
- the transgender women who is called derogatory names and told to get out of a store;
- the woman released from prison with nothing but the clothes on her back and no place to stay;
- the advocate for social justice who accompanies a women to landlord tenant court;
- an agency director who transports a man to a recovery program;
- a volunteer who greets each person where she serves with "God bless you";
- the sickly woman who felt called to feed the people and opened her home to offer food;
- the Wall Street executive who gave up his job to rehabilitate houses for the poor and disenfranchised in a large city;
- the couple who bring an RV so an agency can continue to offer showers to the homeless;
- the knitting group who sew face masks each week to be distributed to agencies;
- the homeless child who takes an extra cookie at dinner from the shelter where she is staying and gives it a staff member.

These are the people on the journey and there are many more who will come to continue to be a part of the story and the journey.

Lewis states: "We are all living texts, formed by multiple, interweaving, competing, and, sometimes, conflicting stories that we receive from our culture via our

parents, other adults and our peers.”¹⁴³ All are a part of the text, the story and the journey. Some who have been or are on the journey have been broken by family, life choices, relationships, addiction, abuse and other elements of the human condition. Others on the journey have been or are there to pick-up those who are hurting or struggling. There are those who are on the journey to continue in the footsteps of those who went before them to continue the mission.

The story and the journey is unique for each faith-based agency, yet it is similar because it is a call to live a mission established to bring goodness and hope to individuals and to help make life more bearable for those who are neglected and looked down upon by society. The importance in the telling of the story of each faith-based organization continues in the journey. The story is important for this journey for as Shapiro states “Where you have been will guide your path ahead”¹⁴⁴ and faith-based agencies will continue on their respective journeys to continue the mission for which they were founded.

The agencies interviewed for this study each commented that as they have considered the story of where they have been, they have understood how they have come to be where they are now. Four of the agencies have said they are going to make the written story available for staff and volunteers to know their roots, their origin and why the founders thought it was important for the agency to be started and how it continued. All stressed the importance for staff and volunteers to see themselves as

¹⁴³ Lewis, Jacqueline J. *The Power of Stories, A Guide for Leading Mult-Racial and Multi-Cultural Organizations*. Nashville. Abingdon Press. 2008. p.5

¹⁴⁴ Shapiro, Tim. *How Your Congregation Learns: The Learning Journey from Challenge to Achievement*. Lanham. Rowman & Littlefield. 2017. p. 148

being very much a part of the story and the telling of the story as well as being a companion on the journey.

I asked the faith-based organizations interviewed if they would be interested in an oral history project. It could involve various staff and volunteers to record the story from the founding until the present time and to add to this oral history, yearly or twice a year. Some mentioned having board members being involved as well to add another voice to the experience of the faith-based organization. All seven indicated that they would be interested in an oral history as well as the written history. Five showed interest in pursuing this in the near future. Several of the agencies also thought it would be wonderful for those they serve to be able to “hear” the story rather than read it and that perhaps the oral history would be more valuable for them to know about the mission and how the agency came into being and why it exists. These agencies thought that the written story would benefit current as well as future staff, volunteers and board members and getting all involved in the recording of the oral history would assist all in understanding the original and current mission and history as well as the importance of the agency’s identity as faith-based and what it means to be faith-based.

As I continue to think back on the time spent interviewing each faith-based agency and the follow-up after each one was sent what I had written, I am humbled by the dedication and commitment each has to their respective faith-based organization and has had for so many years and how important the “faith” in faith-based is to them. Their faithfulness to their calling to the faith-based agency and its mission is to be commended. They do not consider challenges of any kind whether financial, lack of space for programing, natural disasters or even a pandemic as obstacles that prevent

them from seeking ways to adapt so that they may continue to serve not only those who come to their doors, but also the neighborhoods and communities in which they are located. One director reminded me afterwards that as she stated in the interview, the mandate to “bring healing to the world” has been part of their faith tradition for close to three thousand years and part of this tradition requires them to reach out to everyone, not just those in their faith tradition. That is what leads them to search for ways to better serve and expand the services to all members of the community. Another director told me that educating people about the injustices in society through experiencing those injustices by working directly with those who are impacted by these injustices would help bring about social justice and social change. For her, educating people to know what those who are impoverished experience will have a ripple effect as those who participate in their program are able to bring back what they have learned and experienced to the geographical location where they reside.

Two of the agencies who are evangelical see the opportunity to share the Gospel and the good news that God is love is what is most important to them; they do not preach with sermons, but with their actions in what they do and how they treat those individuals whom they serve. One of them said, “these folks don’t need to be told that they are sinners, that they are going to hell for we are all sinners and so many of those we serve are in a living hell now”.

As I have already stated, I have been humbled by these directors and only hope that I will have the commitment and fidelity to the mission of my own faith-based agency as each of them. What this study has taught me is of the valuable work that faith-based organizations do not only for the individuals whom they serve, but also for the local

community. These faith-based organizations do work that government entities and other agencies do not do. They serve populations who are disenfranchised from society for whom other organizations do not provide services, not worrying about the actual financial cost or whether or not it is in the budget, These faith-based organizations do what they do because they see it as an opportunity to serve and care for those in need. Their faith gives them the hope to trust that God will somehow assist them in living the mission for which they were founded. Because of this faith, hope and trust, these faith-based agencies will continue their respective missions because at the time of their founding, today and for the future it has been faith that leads the way.

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Appendix

Letter informing interviewees of the purpose of the interview and project

Informed Consent Form

I agree to participate in a research study on “**Faith Based Organizations and Their Stories**” conducted by Patricia Rose Prendergast and supervised by Professor Martin Kuchma, D.Min from the Department of Religion and Society at Lancaster Theological Seminary.

If I volunteer to participate in this study, I will be asked participate in an interview over the phone or with Zoom. The time should not exceed sixty minutes. If I consent to be contacted for more details or clarification, the additional time should not exceed thirty minutes.

My participation is voluntary; I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason and without penalty. I can ask to have all of the information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed. I have the alternative to choose not to participate in this research study.

There is no expected harm or discomfort, either psychological or physical, to the participant. If I am at all uncomfortable or do not wish to answer a question or complete a task I do not have to.

The information I provide will be stored separately from my signed consent form. My information will remain confidential; the researcher will store all materials in a secure location. All files will be kept in a locked desk drawer and only the researcher and her faculty advisor will have access to them.

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be contacted at pprendergast@lancasterseminary.edu or xxx-xxx-xxxx. You may also contact the faculty advisor Rev. Dr. Martin Kuchma at mkuchma@lancasterseminary.edu or xxx-xxx-xxxx.

I understand the procedures described above, and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this study.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Franklin & Marshall College Institutional Review Board. Questions concerning your rights as a participant in this research may also be addressed to Marcus Thomsen, Ph.D., Office of the Provost, 102C, Old Main, marcus.thomsen@fandm.edu, (717) 358-3985.

Patricia Rose Prendergast

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Please sign both copies of this form, keep one, and return one to the researcher.