

WHY THE BLACK CHURCH?

*The Case for Partnership
Between Black Churches
& Organized Philanthropy*

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THE SOUTHERN EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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- collaborative efforts that draw on the best of diverse institutions and communities in support of educational excellence
- creative problem solving
- integrity, accountability and transparency
- adaptability, flexibility and future-oriented approaches, and
- honest and intelligent advocacy to achieve results

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Robert Franklin

WHY THE BLACK CHURCH?

FOREWORD

Authored by Robert Franklin, a distinguished member of the faculty at the Candler Theological Seminary and former president of the Interdenominational Theological Center and Ford Foundation executive, this report tells the story in journalistic style of a unique effort: the Philanthropy and the Black Church Project. The project sought to bridge the knowledge, communication and collaboration gap between African American churches and organized institutions of philanthropy. Spanning almost a decade, it helped to raise the visibility of Black churches as resources on which philanthropic institutions could and should draw for advice, important work in the community and leadership. It also helped Black church leaders understand how foundations work and encouraged them to seek support from foundations for worthy programmatic endeavors.


Looking back, it is clear that the project helped to put a spotlight, at least temporarily, on the need for asset-driven models of work in Black communities. The project also catalyzed fresh energy among church leaders themselves to work with foundations. It ushered in a new era of engagement by organized philanthropy with Black churches and through them with underserved Black communities across the nation. It put faith-based or faith-generated program activities such as community development, education, pregnancy prevention and parenting, health promotion, and services to the elderly on the agendas of foundations, long before the government began to emphasize and politicize “faith-based” initiatives.

Unfortunately, the project did not have either the resources or longevity to prompt a private philanthropic response commensurate with the power, potential and importance of Black churches as leadership and change agents for underserved communities. Although the project has now ended, by issuing this report, it is our fondest hope that new attention may yet be focused upon forging sturdy bonds of collaboration between Black churches and organized philanthropy. Whether a donor embraces a faith-based rubric for funding

purposes or seeks only to support secular activities, the Black church can be looked to as a partner with good values, access to more hearts and minds than any institution in the Black community, assets – human and financial – and a commitment to service.

On a personal note, I wish to acknowledge the leadership of Franklin A. Thomas and Susan V. Berresford, Ford Foundation executives at the time the project was initiated. Without their support and that of Ford Foundation Trustees, my long engagement with this work would not have been possible. I thank Robert Long of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and George Penick of the Foundation for the Mid South for the support that allowed the Southern Education Foundation to develop and disseminate this report.

There is no doubt that the Black church has been and remains our community's most authentic institution, providing guidance, leadership and hope for the future. Why the Black church? Because it is a resource too important and powerful to ignore.



Lynn Huntley
President
The Southern Education Foundation
Fall 2005

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INTRODUCTION

“Foundations need to take with far greater seriousness the role of American religious institutions in our society.”¹

Robert Lynn

THE LILLY ENDOWMENT

Not long ago, an important and exciting experiment occurred in the nonprofit sector. Although some social experiments fall far short of their intended aims, this one enjoyed numerous successes and produced valuable lessons for the entire sector. Moreover, it appeared to have enormous promise for continued success. Which experiment was this? And, what became of it? I refer to the experiment that joined the creativity and resourcefulness of American foundations with the community service and development capacity of America’s Black churches. But before we get ahead of the story, a bit of background may be in order.

BACKGROUND

For over two and a half centuries, America’s Black churches have contributed to the vitality of democracy by challenging barriers to minority full participation in American life, and by empowering African Americans to build strong institutions and communities. As we witnessed during the civil rights movement, these churches played a pivotal role in mobilizing Black and other citizens to take action aimed at promoting their political, economic, social and spiritual uplift. Indeed, that movement helped to inspire human rights campaigns throughout the world.

Most civic-oriented foundations are committed to strengthening democracy by building strong institutions capable of empowering people to grow and act for the common good. Since foundations and government agencies cannot deliver directly the many forms of community assistance that are needed, they pursue these goals through partnerships with effective community-based organizations (CBOs). Indeed, this strategy informs current debates concerning “faith-based” community services. Although in recent years the federal and state governments have begun to expand the funding and collaborative avenues for faith-based organizations (FBOs), most foundations have not paid adequate attention to the Black community’s most influential and asset-rich institutions.

This report conveys just a small portion of a much larger story about the strategic cooperation and mutual learning that has occurred between two important segments of civil society. Many believe that it is a story that merits another look in our time.

AN INNOVATIVE AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

“This is a time for innovation and breakthrough in philanthropy on many fronts, and I anticipate that among the new centers of creativity will be an array of partnerships between grant makers and Black churches. New alliances will surely be necessary if we are ever to arrive at that moment when “justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”²

James A. Joseph

COUNCIL ON FOUNDATIONS

During the 1980s and 1990s, leaders in organized philanthropy, along with scholars and African American clergy, launched just such a “breakthrough in philanthropy,” one that built on the central role of Black churches in their communities. Lynn Jones Huntley, President of the Southern Education Foundation (then an officer of the Ford Foundation), urged leaders from both sectors to focus on the common ground shared by foundations and churches, namely a deep commitment to serving and empowering people living in poor, distressed neighborhoods. Working collaboratively with the Lilly Endowment through its Senior Program Officer, Jacqui Burton (now the Executive Director of the Institute for Church Administration and Management), both foundation executives began to formulate and articulate the case for collaboration. Both foundations had extensive programs for support of the work of Black churches and leaders in service to the community and were concerned about the dearth of donors cognizant of the role and import of Black churches.

Their presence in two of the nation’s largest and most influential foundations added to the momentum and appeal of the new project. Working in concert with scholars, distinguished clergy and other sympathetic foundation leaders, Huntley and Burton persuaded the President of the Washington, D.C.-based Council on Foundations, Reverend Dr. James Joseph, to adopt and incubate this nascent initiative as a special project worthy of Council sponsorship and his advocacy and support. Rather than avoiding churches because of their sectarian religious activities, the two leaders suggested that foundations focus

primarily on the “secular social service dimension of Black church activity,” an arena where foundations and churches could cooperate productively without violating the spirit of the separation between church and state that has been a pillar of our pluralist political culture. The decision to isolate and highlight church-sponsored programs aimed at enhancing the common good by improving the lot of our least advantaged citizens was critical to enlisting the participation of many interested foundations. Indeed, many were and are committed to enhancing the life prospects of people in poverty but were reluctant to do so for fear of appearing to show favoritism towards one church in relation to its peers. Many foundations readily embraced what Lilly Endowment executive Jacqui Burton referred to as a “compelling case for linking the community development resources of American foundations and Black churches.”

THE CASE FOR COLLABORATION

“The church to Black people over time has been political party, social club, strategy and planning meeting, a place to be somebody, a community inside the community, the rebuilder of dashed hopes, homebase for the freedom movement, leadership development seminar, promoter of education, stimulator of economic development and the advocate of a philosophy of self-help and self-determination.”³

John Hurst Adams

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Among the reasons cited for focusing on this overlooked set of community institutions were the following:

- ▶ Black churches are the only national network of institutions indigenous to the Black community with human and financial resources to deploy in the service of the disadvantaged.
 - ▶ Black churches have a demonstrated track record of achievement in a multiplicity of areas and credibility in their communities.
 - ▶ Black churches have a critical mass of supporters, which enables them to mobilize sentiment and people in the community and gives them a power base for various activities.
 - ▶ Black churches have committed leaders who have often been instrumental in providing services to the poor.⁴
-

These facts challenged foundations to learn more, at the very least, about the capacity and culture of Black congregations. But beyond learning more, Huntley and Burton hoped that some would take the next step of implementing partnerships with effective community serving churches. Research and publications undertaken at the time by eminent sociologists and historians such as Dr. Lawrence N. Jones (Howard University School of Divinity), Dr. C. Eric Lincoln (Duke University) and Dr. Andrew Billingsley (University of Maryland) provided empirical support and abundant examples of the Black church's community service track record.⁵ In addition, some of the nation's most accomplished clergy, such as Bishop John Hurst Adams (African Methodist Episcopal Church), Dr. Calvin Pressley (formerly of the New York Mission Society) and Dr. Gardner C. Taylor (Concord Baptist Church), contributed wisdom and energy to advancing this novel partnership.

Augmenting this growing body of empirical data was an innovative perspective on Black church culture that had gone unacknowledged previously in the world of organized philanthropy, namely, that Black churches could be regarded as the Black community's central indigenous philanthropic institutions. In the words of philanthropy scholar and Minneapolis Community Foundation President Emmett D. Carson:

The beginnings of organized Black philanthropy can be traced to the early Black churches, mutual aid societies and fraternal lodges. Data confirms that the majority of Blacks continue to be vigorously engaged in nearly every aspect of philanthropic activity ranging from cash contributions to donations of goods to voluntarism. In addition, Black churches mobilized the public power of philanthropic activity to challenge social injustice during the civil rights movement.⁶

This insight represented a significant shift in the way Black churches and clergy might be perceived. No longer should they be stereotyped as mendicant institutions perpetually seeking funds from others. Now, they could be viewed properly as "indigenous community foundations" under the guidance of local CEOs who were and are more accountable, in many instances, to the local communities they serve than their secular counterparts. And, clearly, their capacity to mobilize the "public power of philanthropic activity" could be regarded as an enormous asset in guiding America's journey toward becoming a fairer and more inclusive society.

James Joseph accepted the logic of the case and soon the project took up residence at the Council on Foundations as the "Philanthropy and the Black Church Project." In later years, the project was renamed, "The National Office on Philanthropy and the Black Church." It was led by a small but dedicated staff and developed a national advisory committee

comprised of luminaries in philanthropy, the academy and ministry. With support from a growing number of national donors such as the Ford Foundation, the Lilly Endowment, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, along with the cachet of the Council's auspices, the project began to build momentum.

THE PROJECT

“The grantmaking enterprise functions best when it is interactive. Foundations need to have partners who are independent enough to challenge their thinking and approaches to working in the African American community. Only the Black church fits this bill.”⁷

Jacqui Burton

INSTITUTE FOR CHURCH ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

The project's first meeting was convened at the Shiloh Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., and was attended primarily by donors. The meeting broke the ice between donors and church leaders, exposed donors to program models for work with churches, and explored the opportunity that Black churches represent. The Shiloh congregation had been celebrated for leading the field in building a “family life center” to serve the entire community surrounding the church. The meeting provided all present with an opportunity to gauge the growing interest in the foundation community and appreciation of the need to be more aggressive in inviting Black clergy to collaborate. Indeed, lessons learned from this and other early meetings in Detroit, Jackson, San Diego and New York City helped to inform and stimulate the very successful regional programs that later emerged.

Among the project's highly regarded activities were substantive education programs (Grantmaker-to-Grantmaker Sharing Forum Breakfasts) held at the Council's annual meeting. These sessions sought to educate foundation executives and board members about the history, variety, values, organizational structure, capacity, leadership and accomplishments of Black churches. The annual sessions also addressed a wide variety of themes such as public health, economic development and youth development to illustrate church service delivery capacities. Often, local clergy were invited to participate in informative panels, and local choirs provided a small sample of the rich artistic and spiritual culture of Black churches. At some sessions, foundation staff who had implemented foundation-church partnerships shared their wisdom and suggestions. These sessions soon came to be among

the most popular and highly subscribed Sunday morning programs at the Council's annual meeting.

In addition, the project developed a variety of publications and video resources designed to spread the message and answer due diligence questions. Among the most popular and important documents commissioned were, "*Questions and Answers: Grant Making to Churches and Religious Organizations*," and "*Legal Considerations Affecting Public and Private Grant Making to Religious Organizations: A Memorandum*" (1993). It was important and encouraging for foundation leaders to read words like the following:

Contrary to what private foundations, public agencies and other grant makers may suspect, the law generally affords both private and government funders broad latitude in supporting churches and other religious organizations. Even where they are subject to restrictions, their boards usually have the authority to remove them from their governing documents so that the grant maker can support these vital and effective religious groups.⁸

Project staff also cultivated and helped to sustain the interest of new potential partners, presented the model to groups and institutions that appeared to be "ripe" for organizing formal collaborations (many of which continue today), and attempted to raise adequate funds in order to expand and sustain this important experiment. Foundations involved in work with churches reached out to their counterparts to forge partnerships, inspire collaboration and spark innovation among peer institutions. The project also became a clearinghouse for those who wanted more information.

One of the best examples of the church as a community trust and foundation is the Christ Fund sponsored by the Concord Baptist Church of Christ. For over three decades, Dr. Gardner C. Taylor, the "dean" of Black preachers, pastored this mega-church in Brooklyn, New York. Years ago, the church decided to establish a more formal grantmaking program designed to support local neighborhood development efforts and start-up non-profit organizations. The church raised over one million dollars in one year from its parishioners to capitalize the Christ Fund. Later, the Ford Foundation also contributed to the Fund. Annually, the Fund makes small grants to more than two dozen neighborhood entities. Almost in a class by itself, the Concord Church has successfully formalized the role of the church as a neighborhood foundation. Indeed, one could say that the Concord Church decided to shift from the concept of "charitable philanthropy" or making grants to others to "strategic philanthropy." Concord Church succeeded in building the capacity of the church as a community foundation to support development activities of grant recipi-

ents. For most other congregations, community philanthropy occurs in a more informal and episodic manner. Lifting up examples such as the Concord Church to demonstrate the potential, diversity and importance of Black churches was a key way in which the project widened the horizons and understanding of foundations about the opportunity to do good through support of Black churches, their potential and merit.

FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

In Denver, the Piton Foundation launched an initiative in 1992 to revitalize metro-Denver's inner-city neighborhoods. Today the Metro Denver Black Church Initiative is led by a talented and dynamic former Piton Foundation executive and community leader, Grant Jones. It provides church-based project support grants, training for implementing after-school programs, and technical assistance to churches interested in establishing new community service projects. In 1997, the initiative reorganized as an independent church association for community service. Since then, it has focused on community health, youth in the juvenile system, and building the information technology infrastructure of churches engaged in community service. The initiative has an attractive website and continues to be a national leader in faith-based community service (www.denverblackchurch.org).

In 1987, the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan implemented a grants program aimed at assisting and strengthening low-income families in the city of Detroit. One of the foundation's core values is "building community capital." Its objectives included: building a permanent volunteer network of church leadership addressing family needs, demonstrating the viability of using inner-city churches as long-term vehicles to improve neighborhoods, demonstrating the potential of foundations and corporations making grants to churches to meet pressing community needs, and building a permanent financial resource to support community-based outreach activities. Today, one of the foundation's flagship programs is known as the "Bank One Family Development Program for Congregations." It makes grants to churches, synagogues and mosques engaged in financial literacy (www.cfsem.org).

Beginning in 1991, the Boston-based Hyams Foundation began supporting the work of several Black churches in the community. The Hyams Foundation's mission is to "increase economic and social justice and power within low-income communities in Boston..." The Hyams Foundation's interest emerged at a time when local Black churches were aggressively organizing and working to reduce the incidence of gang violence among young people, a successful initiative that received national attention as the "Boston Miracle." At its height, the Boston Miracle involved dozens of Black clergy and churches working in collaboration

with the Mayor's office, the Catholic Archdiocese, Jewish non-profit organizations and other donors to reduce teenage homicides.

In 1992, Hyams Foundation Trustees approved a Black church project led by Associate Director Sylvia Johnson. The initial phase included data gathering from multiple local and national sources in an effort to develop understanding of local Black churches as well as national philanthropic/Black church partnership models. Hyams staff sought information from the Ford Foundation, Lilly Endowment and the Philanthropy and the Black Church Project. This information assisted the Foundation in determining the future role of Hyams' funding and support in this area. Following the data-gathering phase, several goals were set in collaboration with local churches as they sought to reduce gang violence, and provide youth programs for the after-school hours and job training. Since then, the Hyams' effort has evolved into a faith-based after-school initiative which continues to provide support for the work of numerous inner-city Black churches (www.hyamsfoundation.org).

The Donors Forum of South Florida experienced successes because clergy from three counties (Palm Beach, Broward and Dade) and foundation executives worked in close partnership. Jo Ann Bander (Donors Forum of South Florida) and Ed King, Jr. (Jessie Ball DuPont Foundation) played leading roles in helping to mobilize donors to respond to clergy requests for training, technical assistance and project funding for community service. Local funders pooled over \$200,000 for the purpose of supporting workshops for pastors on proposal writing and various project management skills. The president of the State Baptist Convention assisted by providing a denominational mailing list. A major conference was attended by over 400 people held at the Florida International University North Dade campus. Following the conference, follow-up meetings occurred and project grants for job training and secular social service delivery through Black churches were made (www.donorsforumsf.org).

The Foundation for the Mid South initiated a program of capacity building for Black churches in its region and hosted one of the early meetings of donors and churches to exchange information and ideas. Later, building on that effort, the Foundation for the Mid South sought and obtained significant funds from other donors to open a center to build the capacities of congregations. That program continues today. As you can see, the national "experiment" generated both energy and motion at the local level. Local partners developed programs that were appropriate for their contexts, and their imagination, hard work and investments have made a difference in the lives of many people (www.fms.org).

Unfortunately, the momentum and leadership that inspired and guided these examples may be in jeopardy due to the retreat of many foundations from this kind of collaboration. Even worse, following the cessation of project activities, many barriers to increased collaboration have emerged to occupy the vacuum.

BARRIERS TO INCREASED COLLABORATION

As noted earlier, Black churches are indigenous sources of community philanthropy. Collectively, they:

- collect and disburse funds,
- implement programs that revitalize communities,
- enlist and deploy volunteers for worthy causes and, on occasion,
- mobilize their “public power” to encourage the adoption of policies and practices that improve the lives of poor and marginalized people.

The clergy who lead these community organizations are generally very talented and resourceful individuals who could contribute enormous value to national and local foundations. But there is little evidence that Black clergy serve on foundation boards at any level or that they are consulted regularly on program initiatives. This is surprising and unfortunate given the expertise and influence these clergy enjoy and wield in their communities.

Also, at a time of increased prosperity in America, Black churches that are doing the heavy lifting in distressed communities have not yet received their fair share of philanthropic and public monies to sustain community building efforts. Former Southern Christian Leadership Conference President, Dr. Joseph Lowery, regards this dimension of economic justice as part of the “unfinished business of the civil rights movement.”

Meanwhile, in communities marred by multi-generational, concentrated poverty, we are witnessing the rapid erosion of civil society. Families are bending and breaking under the weight of trying to rear healthy children without the economic and social supports critical to their success. Public schools are under-funded and under-staffed and, unsurprisingly, are failing to capture the imagination of young people who find dropping out more attractive and familiar than studying hard and graduating. Few of these communities have an adequate supply of jobs that could provide residents with their first experience of meaningful work and self-sufficiency. And, regrettably, the alternatives to conventional work make too many youth susceptible to the criminal subculture that inevitably leads to prison or premature death.

Nevertheless, the churches are “standing in the gap” and attempting to keep alive some semblance of civil society that includes neighborhood pride, educational excellence, work ethic and healthy family relationships. But, they cannot accomplish this without the support of institutions that have both financial capital and a fund of good will.

Right now, churches in poor communities are doing a heroic job of creating opportunity and instilling hope despite the odds. They are ready and willing to partner with willing foundations. But, according to Lynn Huntley, “for now, organized philanthropy is missing

a big bet, one that could pay tremendous dividends for the people who most need it.”⁹ To the extent that those willing and interested foundations exist, and we believe that they do, there are some lessons that should be harvested to help revive this hope-generating partnership.

LESSONS LEARNED

When the Council on Foundations discontinued sponsorship of the project in 1997, project staff and advisory board members worriedly calculated the potential threats and costs to the vitality of the initiative. During subsequent years of transition, the project had several temporary homes, including the Southern Education Foundation and the co-sponsorship of the Interdenominational Theological Center and the Foundation for the Mid South. Although each home provided unique benefits and challenges, none was able to match the visibility and legitimacy provided by the Council. As the project changed addresses and management, its major donors began to turn away to invest in other programs.

In the meantime, the social crises affecting inner-city communities have not abated. Nor has the public power of philanthropy evident in Black churches waned. What has changed significantly in recent years is the federal government’s strategy for working closely with faith communities to deliver social welfare services.

Since 2001, the White House has aggressively nurtured relationships with faith-based organizations, especially Black churches. These overtures have generated vigorous debate among Black clergy about the propriety of working closely with the government. Concerns have been raised about:

- ▶ the impact of such partnerships on the prophetic public voice of congregations,
- ▶ potential legal and tax troubles with co-mingled funds,
- ▶ employment discrimination against those who do not share the theological views of the host congregation, and
- ▶ the retreat of government from social service delivery that only it possesses adequate resources to sustain.¹⁰

Notwithstanding these concerns, many Black churches and clergy have begun to seek government grants, especially in light of the dearth of support available from organized philanthropy. Without passing judgment on this process, it does seem valuable to identify some of the areas of need that have not been funded by public resources. Perhaps these could be regarded as opportunities for private philanthropy to re-invest in the partnership between foundations and Black churches. And those donors concerned about over-reliance on public funds by non-profit organizations with accompanying strictures may wish to consider the wisdom of leaving this vital area of engagement unsupported by private sources.

The question now is which leaders and which institutions will emerge to help revitalize the successful partnership between Black churches and foundations?

A MENU OF OPPORTUNITIES

“Even in the face of challenges to the Black church, one incontrovertible, inspiring fact remains: some African American congregations are growing by leaps and bounds. These burgeoning congregations exhibit noteworthy common characteristics: vigorous community outreach programs; a wide spectrum of services such as credit unions, business, food pantries, clothing outlets, counseling services, parochial schools, housing rehabilitation and construction, shopping centers, child care centers, employment training, computer training and the like; and a major share of their budgets devoted to projects that empower their communities.”¹¹

Lawrence N. Jones
HOWARD DIVINITY SCHOOL

Here, I’d like to provide a typology of strategies and programs that are serving communities and that would benefit from a new infusion of resources. One might even read this as a menu of possibilities for future funding by interested donors.

RESEARCH Resources are needed to support new research on the community service capacity of Black churches. In preparation for, and in response to the White House Faith-Based and Community Initiative, some research has been undertaken on the efficacy of faith-based organizations as compared with their secular service peers. Some of these studies focus on Black churches. For example, a recent study by Ram A. Cnaan and Stephanie C. Boddie (University of Pennsylvania) titled, “Black Church Outreach: Comparing How Black and Other Congregations Serve Their Needy Neighbors,”¹² indicates that “significantly more Black congregations (65.5%)” respond affirmatively to the question of whether or not they view collaboration (funding) with the government as an option. They also note that on average, the estimated “replacement value” of a congregation in Philadelphia is \$9,584.10 per month or \$115,009.20 per year. For all congregations in Philadelphia, the estimated annual replacement value would be \$230,018,400.

Unfortunately, the Philadelphia research that looks at Black churches is not typical. In several recent national studies, Black churches have not figured prominently. Relying on very limited samples of Black churches, these studies are generating data and conclusions that fail to do justice to the Black church contribution to the common good.

One significant possibility lurking here is the extensive network of scholars that comprise the “Society for the Study of Black Religion” currently based at Rice University (Houston). This network could be enlisted to examine various dimensions of Black church culture in a coordinated regional or national study.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT Resources are needed to build the intellectual and leadership capital for Black churches. Dr. Andrew Billingsley has noted that the single best predictor of a church’s public engagement is the education, exposure and experience of the senior minister. Dean Lawrence N. Jones has noted that less than one-third of Black clergy receive formal seminary education, and just under half of seminary-educated Black clergy matriculate at one of the six historically Black seminaries (Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, GA; Howard University School of Divinity, Washington, DC; Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology, Richmond, VA; Payne Theological Seminary, Wilberforce, OH; Hood Theological Seminary, Salisbury, NC; and Shaw Theological Seminary, Raleigh, NC).

Despite the enormous good that they contribute to our common life, these institutions exist on a very fragile base of financial support. All of them face significant deferred maintenance backlogs, inadequate endowments, and the burden of competing with wealthier institutions to attract and retain the best faculty and students. These institutions deserve increased public support for the heroic work they are doing to serve the common good. The Cnaan-Boddie research cited above invites us to contemplate what it would cost to “replace” these institutions.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING There is a small network of capacity-building organizations that are currently supporting the Black churches. These include the Institute for Church Administration and Management, led by Jacqui Burton; the Harvard Divinity School’s Summer Leadership Institute under the direction of Preston N. Williams; and the Faith Center for Community Development, Inc. (New York) led by Fred Lucas. Other regional and local initiatives include the Foundation for the Mid South’s Black Church Initiative led by Stephen Cooper, and the Metro Denver Black Church Initiative led by Grant Jones. Each organization is helping churches to rationalize organizational management practices and improve their capacity to serve their communities.

THEMATIC INITIATIVES There are initiatives organized around specific subject matters, such as the New York based “Balm in Gilead’s” work on HIV/AIDS prevention education in Black churches (www.balmingilead.org). The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has developed a “Public Health and Black Clergy Community Development Initiative” (www.rwjf.org) and the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s “Making Connections” initiative focuses on promoting healthy relationships, marriage, family stability and economic self-sufficiency in over twenty cities (www.aecf.org). The American Association for the Advancement of Science conducted an exceptional Black church project several years ago to expose young people in local congregations to the world of science (www.aaas.org).

In addition to these important model programs, there is a great need for new capacity building to promote school readiness among Black children, economic literacy, promoting healthy relationships, and increasing competency in information technology via Black churches. There is enormous latitude for a foundation or a group of donors to direct funds towards congregations that are prepared to engage in transforming distressed communities.

CURRICULA AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS There is a need to develop new curricula both for the seminary-educated clergy and for informally educated leaders. In the seminary, there is also a need for students to develop expertise that will be helpful in serving inner-city parishes. In the past, the Congress of National Black Churches (CNBC) sponsored a National Fellowship Program for Black Pastors that placed seminary students in various secular agencies for year-long internships and required them to prepare reports about learnings from the experience. The executive summaries of their site reports were compiled and utilized to orient other clergy to the variety of potential institutional partners in such areas as communications and media, housing and community development, public policy, hunger, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, drug abuse prevention and treatment, and Black family development. Unfortunately, CNBC, a coalition of eight historically Black denominations, found it necessary to close its doors in 2002 due to financial challenges.

Black churches and congregations are also eager for exposure to best practices in key fields of endeavor and would be responsive to technical assistance and support from secular institutions involved in work in areas of shared interest. Most cities, large and small, have clergy associations that cross the lines of race and denomination; others have denominational associations. These types of entities could provide accessible and cost-effective venues for the dissemination of information and ideas in areas ranging from the benefits of early childhood education and housing development to juvenile justice and drug abuse prevention.

CONCLUSION

“All of us are committed to trying to improve the quality of life for frail communities to the end that the entire society can function better and more equitably. Churches and other philanthropic institutions are natural partners, and by working together, each can benefit. We need to commit to learn from each other and become bigger than ourselves.”¹³

Lynn Jones Huntley

SOUTHERN EDUCATION FOUNDATION

In her 2005 annual address to the Council on Foundations, president Dorothy S. Ridings noted that in 2004 American foundations made grants totaling \$32.4 billion. She noted that the field of philanthropy must continue to serve the public with the “twin goals of generosity and integrity.”¹⁴ Needless to say, philanthropy now contributes a vast amount of money in the service of human betterment. But, in many Black communities, there is little evidence of this generosity.

Our hope is that foundations will rediscover this tried and proven partnership as a strategy for improving America’s most distressed communities. Foundations and Black churches have worked well together in the past. And, they can do so again.

We hope that new leadership, new resources, and a new outpouring of good will and integrity will soon revive this community transforming partnership.

ENDNOTES

1. *Philanthropy and the Black Church*, volume 1, Alicia D. Byrd, ed. (Washington, D.C.: 1990), p. 41.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. vi.
 3. Bishop John Hurst Adams, Council on Foundations Speech, 1985.
 4. *Philanthropy and the Black Church*, volume 1, Alicia D. Byrd, ed. (Washington, D.C.: 1990), p. 32.
 5. Among the most influential texts documenting the social service activities of Black churches are the following: *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), and *Mighty Like a River: The Black Church and Social Reform*, Andrew Billingsley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), *How to Do What You Want to Do When You Don't Know How to Do It: Expanding the Mission Outreach of the Church*, Lawrence N. Jones (Washington, D.C.: Howard University School of Divinity, 1995). See also, *Restoring Broken Places and Rebuilding Communities, A Casebook on African American Community Economic Development* (Washington, D.C., 1992).
 6. *Philanthropy and the Black Church*, I, and a personal interview on April 8, 2004, p. 13.
 7. Interview with Jacqui Burton, May 13, 2005.
 8. *Legal Considerations Affecting Public and Private Grantmaking to Religious Organizations*, Thomas A. Troyer, et al. (Washington, D.C.: Council on Foundations, June 1, 1993), p. 4.
 9. Interview with Lynn Jones Huntley, September 7, 2004.
 10. These issues are fully explored by Heidi Rolland Unruh and Ronald J. Sider in *Saving Souls, Serving Society: Understanding the Faith Factor in Church-Based Social Ministry*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
 11. *Religious Communities as Partners in Community Based Development*, (Indianapolis, IN: The Lilly Endowment, 1994).
 12. "Black Church Outreach: Comparing How Black and Other Congregations Serve Their Needy Neighbors," Ram A. Cnaan and Stephanie C. Boddie, University of Pennsylvania, unpublished manuscript, 2001.
 13. Lynn Jones Huntley. "Implementing a Shared Vision: Philanthropy and the African American Church," Council on Foundations Philanthropy and Black Church Conference, Detroit, MI, February 24, 1994.
 14. President's address to the Council on Foundations Annual Meeting, "Generosity and Integrity: Values for Leadership in Philanthropy," San Diego, CA, April 10, 2005 (www.cof.org).
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If you are interested in learning more about *The Case for Partnership Between Black Churches and Organized Philanthropy*, please contact or write to:

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