



Contents

INTRODUCING CITIES ON A HILL	1
MAYORS/MINISTERS TOGETHER	1
THE JEREMIAH PROJECT	2
SCIENTISTS PRAISE RELIGION	2
MINISTERS SHARE THEIR STORIES	3
REV. FLOYD H. FLAKE	4

Mayors and Ministers
Can Work Together:
Indianapolis' Front Porch
Alliance

Excerpts from Conference Comments
by Mayor Stephen Goldsmith

In Indianapolis, through an effort called the Front Porch Alliance, more than 300 faith-based organizations are involved in approximately 800 partnerships with city government. One example of these types of partnerships is the privatization of park maintenance. Today, twenty-nine parks in the city are being managed by churches. People who vandalize the parks now understand that their actions damage the neighborhood and the church, not just some abstract mayor or government.

Our partnerships try to solve problems identified by communities. Neighborhood activists go house to house, church to church, to determine how they can best help. These efforts have resulted in crack dealers being evicted, vacant lots being donated for transformation into playgrounds, and day care centers being started.

Faith-based efforts have also had productive outcomes as alternatives to detention for juvenile delinquents. We recruited inner-city pastors to accept young adults for counseling and volunteer work. The testimonials from these young people are impressive — the way they express themselves, their hopes for the future and fundamentally how their belief in God has altered their conduct.

The third area of faith-based involvement is education. In Indianapolis' inner city many neighborhoods are being held together by Catholic schools. They are the public schools of choice. They are more racially diverse than

Introducing *Cities on a Hill*

A Message from CCI Chairman Mayor Stephen Goldsmith

After decades of well-documented woes, America's cities are staging an impressive comeback. This revival is no accident: the innovative efforts of committed neighborhood residents, community leaders, and elected officials have helped transform urban areas from blight to bustle.

Strengthening this trend has been a new approach to urban governance based on pragmatic solutions that transcend traditional party lines. Mayors such as Democrats Ed Rendell of Philadelphia and John Norquist of Milwaukee have joined Republicans like Rudy Giuliani in New York and Susan Golding in San Diego to change fundamentally the way the nation thinks about welfare, crime, education and urban living.

The Center for Civic Innovation's mission includes documenting these changes, increasing awareness of groundbreaking, effective urban policy strategies and providing keen analysis of why certain approaches to urban challenges work while others fail. In keeping with this mission, CCI is proud to provide *Cities on a Hill* as a resource for people committed to the cutting edge in urban policy thought and practice.

This first edition of *Cities on a Hill* focuses on CCI's newest initiative, the Jeremiah Project. Directed by renowned criminologist John DiIulio, the Jeremiah Project explores the role of faith-based institutions in revitalizing America's inner cities. The articles appearing on these pages are summarized

from remarks delivered at a recent CCI conference held in New York City entitled, "Can Churches Save the Inner City? A Look at Faith-Based Community Programs."



CCI's Chairman, Stephen Goldsmith.

On behalf of the Center for Civic Innovation, I invite you to participate in our efforts to promote new and effective approaches to urban policy. If you are interested in submitting commentary or have questions or comments, I encourage you to call CCI's Executive Director, Henry Olsen, at (212) 599-7000.

Thank you for your continued interest in and commitment to good government.



(cont'd from page 1)

public schools, and their results are significant. I find nothing inconsistent with my duties when I help raise voucher money for private and Catholic schools.

It is easy to get people off welfare, but it is more complicated to get them into work. Neighborhood and faith-based delivery systems have exhibited dramatic abilities to reach out and assist people who are not working. In the wake of welfare reform, many services have been picked up by neighborhood and faith-based organizations.

The Jeremiah Project Spreads the Good News

Excerpts from Conference Comments by John DiIulio

Crime rates are down. People who have been dependent on welfare and public assistance are finding jobs. Teen pregnancy rates have dropped. But despite falling crime rates, millions of children in America are still “growing up scared.” At-risk youth are growing up without responsible adults in their lives. They are subjected to all kinds of difficulties and violence, and many — even after several years of schooling — are not literate.

For these children the question is, who’s going to help? Some government programs are helping. Voluntary youth service and smaller grassroots organizations are making a difference. However, which groups are reaching out, being there after school, working

Finally, churches also are standard bearers in the fight to reduce teen pregnancy. There is general consensus that having teenagers have babies and no fathers in the household are reasonably calculated to lead to bad results for the children and for the moms. The congruence of faith initiatives and government policies delivers a powerful message for delaying parenting and encouraging marriage.

Sometimes churches have desires that outstrip their capacity; other times, government is too intrusive in the programs. So as we try

to recalibrate this mixture, we need to be particularly careful that we are supportive of faith-based organizations but not intrusive. About 20 years ago government decided that it could have a monopoly on good deeds. When it attempted to secure that monopoly, it pushed out a lot of local capacity. I think, though, that by moving back to the center we can see great opportunities for the future. John Norquist, the mayor of Milwaukee, wrote me a note, and he says, “Steve, there are things that are a lot more dangerous to inner-city youth than religion.”

with local police, probation and social service agencies? Which are leveraging small amounts of financial capital against “spiritual capital” to help these children?

Repeatedly, the answer has been the faith community — churches, synagogues, mosques. These grassroots religious activists have been largely ignored, their work has been trivialized and their contributions under-appreciated. They are making a positive difference, and they need and merit support.

Consequently, the Manhattan Institute has created the Jeremiah Project. Jeremiah has two objectives. The first is to conduct research to determine the conditions under which faith-based youth and community outreach programs focusing on high-risk children and young adults can succeed in helping these populations avoid violence, achieve literacy, find jobs and reach adulthood economically, morally and spiritually whole.



Manhattan Institute Senior Fellow John DiIulio explains the Jeremiah Project, which he founded and directs.

Second, the project is to provide financial and technical assistance to exemplary faith-based and community programs. Churches cannot do it alone without forming partnerships with government, corporations, nonprofits and secular institutions.

Social Scientists Agree: Religious Belief Reduces Crime

Summary of the First Panel Discussion

Panelists for this important discussion included social scientists Dr. John DiIulio, professor of politics and urban affairs at Princeton University; David Larson, M.D., President of the National Institute for Healthcare Research; Dr. Byron Johnson, Director of the Center for Crime and Justice Policy at Vanderbilt University; and Gary Walker, President of Public/Private Ventures. The panel focused on new research, confirm-



From left to right: Midge Decter, John DiIulio, David Larson, Byron Johnson and Gary Walker.

ing the positive effects that religiosity has on turning around the lives of youth at risk.

Dr. Larson laid the foundation for the discussion by summarizing the findings of 400 studies on juvenile delinquency, conducted during the past two decades. He believes that although more research is needed, we can say without a doubt that religion makes a positive contribution. His conclusion: “The better we study religion, the more we find it makes a difference.”

Previewing his own impressive research, Dr. Johnson agreed. He has concluded that church attendance reduces delinquency among boys even when controlling for a number of other factors in-

(cont'd on page 3)

Ministers: Out of the Pulpit, Onto the Streets

Summary of the Second Panel Discussion

The second panel discussion included widely renowned grassroots activists from around the country. Reverend Eugene Rivers is the pastor of the Azusa Christian Community in Boston, where he created the TenPoint Leadership Program. Tom Lewis founded The Fishing School, a successful mentoring and service center in Washington, D.C. Dr. Father Mark Aita, a Jesuit priest and medical doctor, has been working at the Holy Name and Jesuit Urban Service Center in Camden, New Jersey, since 1983, building a full-service urban ministry. Dr. Luis Lugo, director of the Religion Program at Philadelphia's Pew Charitable Trusts, has just undertaken a major project to aid faith-based charities in Philadelphia.

Rev. Rivers detailed the efforts of his TenPoint Foundation which has successfully attacked the roots of juvenile crime in Boston. He uses "Father Flanagan"-type outreach to help youngsters become productive citizens; but Rev. Rivers warns that this is not an easy approach. "Meeting the needs of children is not a 9-to-5 job. It's an all-day, everyday proposition." He stresses that local involvement is essential. Service providers must "live around the corner, know their neighborhood and speak the language."

But TenPoint isn't about just providing services. Rev. Rivers works closely with the Boston police on numerous fronts, finding

that clergy can be "bridge-builders, mediators and brokers between poor communities and law enforcement." He and other clergymen worked with the police department to find summer jobs for 450 high-risk youngsters. Says Rev. Rivers, "We will attempt to prevent violence by giving viable alternatives, and we will maintain law and order."

Tom Lewis is a retired police officer in Washington, D.C., whose work as a family counselor with a Lutheran social services agency led him to refurbish a dilapidated house for use as a family service center. It became The Fishing School.



Rev. Eugene Rivers explains how he reduced juvenile crime in Boston.

The Fishing School's mission is to motivate young people to take charge of their own lives. The school's motto is "You've Got to Want To." Programs are centered on meeting the daily practical needs of the children by providing warm meals and a safe haven, tutoring and helping kids to understand the concept of self-respect. The school has also

formed partnerships with local schools, churches and other organizations and employs four former welfare mothers as caregivers.

Father Aita also directs a church-run medical and family services center which focuses on women's issues and employment counseling. Within the last four months it has trained 30 women to be home health aides; all 30 are now working. The center's legal program employs three full-time lawyers to help congregants with immigration, employment, civil rights and juvenile law issues.

Dr. Lugo reviewed what Pew Charitable Trusts has learned from years of funding service organizations, some successfully and others less so. The new Philadelphia initiative is designed to incorporate those lessons into a long-term model for faith-based social service.

Pew will fund parachurch organizations that will help neighborhood congregations secure small grants and that will provide technical assistance and other material support for some practical needs. The program also mandates the development of measures to assess the extent to which these ministries are contributing, not just to the lives of individuals, but to the revitalization of Philadelphia neighborhoods.

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cluding age, family structure, family size, and welfare status.

Gary Walker has spent 25 years designing, developing and evaluating many of the nation's largest public and philanthropic initiatives for at-risk youth. His experience tells him that faith-based programs are vitally important for two reasons. First, government programs seldom have any lasting positive effect. While they might occupy time, these programs, in the long-term, rarely succeed in bringing about the behavioral changes needed to turn kids away from crime.

Second, faith-based programs are rooted in

building strong adult-youth relationships; and less concerned with training, schooling, and providing services, which don't have the same direct impact on individual behavior. Successful mentoring, Walker added, requires a real commitment from the adults involved – and a willingness to be blunt. The message of effective mentors is simple. "You need to change your life, I'm here to help you do it, or you need to be put away, away from the community." Government, and even secular philanthropic programs, can't impart this kind of straight talk.

Walker is working on a pilot project with Dr. DiIulio and Rev. Eugene Rivers to implement

a faith-based mentoring system in 10 cities around the country. But the project faces some daunting challenges, as Mr. Walker sees it. Can faith-based mentoring, which usually works on a small-scale, informal basis, be successfully bureaucratized, even by private organizations? And can faith-based mentoring overcome resistance from government and philanthropic funders in order to grow and thrive?

How To Rebuild A Community

Excerpts from Reverend Floyd Flake's
Luncheon Address

When I took over my congregation in Queens, it was described as middle class. Yet every news account called it a community in decline because white flight had reduced services as well as the qualitative elements of life. As a result, residents didn't see opportunities, and they didn't invest in their neighborhoods.

My challenge to the congregation was let's be more than a church. Let's go beyond these walls. Let's provide outreach to touch the lives of people in whatever areas of ministry we can and cannot afford ... Using those resources so that through leveraging with financial institutions and government, we could turn this community around.

Historically, financial institutions have overlooked opportunities to invest in areas like

ours. However, when corporations see you putting your own money into your community, you don't have to go to them. They come to you.



Former Congressman Rev. Floyd Flake inspires the crowd with his oratory.

Our congregation has grown from 1,400 to 11,000, making it the largest African-American congregation in New York. More than \$50 million has been invested in real estate, senior citizen housing and schools for children from pre-kindergarten through the 8th grade. Today, Allen AME Church provides

psychiatric services, home care, a center for abused women and children, prenatal and postnatal clinics and as a joint venture with Jamaica Hospital, a medical center.

But our main focus remains on education. We must maintain high expectations for young people. They should be challenged to understand that they live in a competitive society, and they must be educated and well-spoken to compete. There is nothing wrong with learning how to speak the kind of English that the rest of the world seeks as its second language if it is not its first. If children learn the language that the rest of the world wants to communicate in, indeed, they will have the ability to share with the world that which they have as ideas, that which they share as principles, that which they share as part of the American dream.

I've challenged them to understand that they have resources within themselves. God did not make us victims. God did not give us the spirit of fear but He gave us power, love and sound minds.

To order publications from the Center for Civic Innovation, please contact Henry Olsen, Executive Director, at 212-599-7000 or holsen@manhattan-institute.org.