

# Freedom from Excessive Entanglement?

## Public Accountability Challenges for Local Faith-Based Initiatives

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## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This study seeks to examine the relationship between local government entities (LGEs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) providing publicly funded social services within their jurisdictions. As cities and counties struggle to supply quality social services to residents in light of tightening budgetary constraints, nongovernmental organizations have stepped in to fill the void.<sup>1</sup> By partnering with nonprofits, LGEs benefit from the improved efficiency that specialization and competition promote.<sup>2</sup> Since the mid 1990s, faith-based initiatives have offered an alternative for LGEs looking to expand and diversify those partnerships.<sup>3</sup>

The issue of accountability is fundamental to the practice of formal government contracting, grant-making, as well as informal collaboration.<sup>4</sup> As President Barack Obama continues to promote faith-based initiatives, LGEs responsible for oversight of those initiatives are under increasing pressure to ensure adherence to the Establishment Clause of the US Constitution.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, unique regulations associated with inherently religious aspects of LGE-FBO partnerships may serve as an obstacle to their implementation and development. In light of the uneasy tension created by these countervailing forces, two questions present themselves:

- 1. Have LGEs responsible for overseeing faith-based initiative oversight implemented accountability measures for such initiatives?**
- 2. Have legal accountability concerns limited the prevalence and scope of local faith-based initiatives?**

In seeking answers to these questions, I have selected a single faith-based initiative for in-depth analysis. That initiative is Congregations for Kids (CFK), founded in 2008 by the Youth and Family Services Division (YFS) of the Department of Social Services (DSS) in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Through CFK, YFS partners with thirty-one churches and other community organizations across the greater Charlotte area to identify and educate families interested in providing stable homes for children in the foster care system.

Following a series of CFK partnership meeting observations, interviews with six key participants, and a thorough review of associated documents, it is evident that efforts to maintain or at least appear to maintain CFK accountability with respect to the law have become more prominent over time. The data points to growing concerns on the part of county government that FBO representatives may be overtly religious when acting in an official CFK capacity. In seeking to maintain appropriate church/state boundaries, YFS has consolidated formal oversight of CFK activities despite initially hoping to relinquish control to the congregations, rebranded the partnership as a community rather than faith-based initiative, and is now considering implementing formal training and conduct guidelines for member congregations. While the effect of such measures on the overall health of CFK is beyond the scope of

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon Whitaker and Rosalind Day, "How Local Governments Work with Nonprofit Organizations in North Carolina," *Popular Government* (Winter 2001): 25.

<sup>2</sup> Donald F. Kettl, *The Politics of the Administrative Process*, (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2012): 422-423.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Biebricher, "Faith-Based Initiatives and the Challenges of Governance," *Public Administration* 89, no. 3 (2011): 1003.

<sup>4</sup> Kettl, *The Politics of the Administrative Process*, 426-427; Beth Gazley, "Beyond the Contract: The Scope and Nature of Informal Government-Nonprofit Partnerships," *Public Administration Review* (January 2008): 141.

<sup>5</sup> Frayda S. Bluestien and Anita R. Brown-Graham, "Local Government Contracts with Nonprofit Organizations: Questions and Answers," *Popular Government* (Fall 2001): 34.

this study, interview data suggests that specific YFS policies and regulations stemming from legal accountability concerns may be hampering the ability of the partnership to function independently and retain members.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Faith-based organizations have long provided social services for at-risk communities within the United States. Those services include drug and prison rehabilitation programs, teen pregnancy counseling, and homeless shelters, among others.<sup>6</sup> The early 1990s saw major reform in federal welfare policy and the rise of “third-party government,” which called for direct contracting with private and non-profit organizations.<sup>7</sup> Since that time, FBOs have been increasingly tasked with delivering tax-payer funded public assistance at all levels of government. Such “faith-based initiatives”, as they were christened by former president George W. Bush, grew out of a series of federal and state policies aimed at encouraging FBO access to public grants by eliminating barriers to collaboration and leveling the playing field occupied by largely secular non-profit organizations.<sup>8</sup>

### *The Politics of Faith-Based Initiatives*

Public Affairs scholars Wolfgang Bielefeld, William Suhs Cleveland, and others have detailed the rationale behind the political legitimacy of faith-based initiatives. They note a slow evolution towards a reliance on civil society and a supposed ability of FBOs to provide better, more cost-effective service given their large volunteer base, internal flexibility, and superior knowledge of local needs.<sup>9</sup> Since their introduction, however, faith-based initiatives have been met with considerable controversy within the fields of Law and Public Administration. For David Saperstein, the often informal nature of FBOs raises questions regarding the level of professional competency required when tackling sensitive social issues such as drug abuse and sexual health.<sup>10</sup> Thomas Biebricher and Bob Wineburg write of the conservative values-driven ideological atmosphere from which support for faith-based initiatives emerged, emphasizing the symbolic role of such policies in Republican Party political strategy. Nevertheless, public concern over separation between church and state is the most common source of criticism for faith-based initiatives. Evidence of under-enforcement of the Establishment Clause in cases brought before the courts leave many questionable activities legally unregulated.<sup>11</sup>

### *Public Accountability for Faith-Based Initiatives*

Non-governmental entities that receive public support must reconcile their own objectives with the legal rules and regulations that prescribe the appropriate use of public resources.<sup>12</sup> Frayda Bluestein and

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<sup>6</sup>Wolfgang Bielefeld, William S. Cleveland, "Faith-Based Organizations as Service Providers and Their Relationship to Government," *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (June 2013): 468.

<sup>7</sup>Biebricher, 1003; Carlson-Thies, "Implementing the Faith-Based Initiative," *Public Interest* 155 (September 2004): 61-63.

<sup>8</sup>Stanley W Carlson-Thies, 59.

<sup>9</sup>Bielefeld and Cleveland, "Faith-Based Organizations as Service Providers," 477; Biebricher, "Faith-based Initiatives and Challenges of Governance," 1006; Young Joon Hong, "Best Practices in Managing Faith-Based Organizations through Charitable Choice and Faith-Based Initiatives," *Journal of Social Service Research* 38, no. 2 (2012): 131.

<sup>10</sup>David Saperstein, "Public Accountability and Faith-Based Organizations: A Problem Best Avoided," *Harvard Law Review* 116, no. 5 (March 2003): 1363.

<sup>11</sup>Bielefeld and Cleveland, "Faith-Based Organizations as Service Providers," 478; Richard Schragger, "The Relative Irrelevance of the Establishment Clause," *University of Virginia School of Law* (March 2011): 583-651.

<sup>12</sup>Barbara S. Romzek and Melvin J. Dubnick, "Accountability in the Public Sector: Lessons from the Challenger Tragedy," *Public Administration Review* (May/June 1987): 228.

Anita Brown-Graham discuss the unique legal restrictions for governments contracting with faith-based organizations.<sup>13</sup> Underpinning each requirement is the tension between faith as a guiding force for service provision and constitutional laws forbidding an “excessive government entanglement” with religion.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, the possibility of government-funded evangelism is a persistent concern, as researchers have noted that passive proselytization is often integrated into social programs run by FBOs.<sup>15</sup> Pointing to such constitutional as well as policy and moral constraints, Saperstein argues that faith-based initiatives are incompatible with the notion of public accountability.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, the literature suggests that FBOs are themselves wary of government accountability measures such as financial audits and evaluations, sometimes preferring to forego government support to ensure continued autonomy.<sup>17</sup>

At the state and local level, public accountability for faith-based initiatives is even more threatened. According to research conducted by Stephen Monsma, government has long funded expressly faith-based organizations that display religious pictures, engage in prayer, and encourage discussion of religious principles based on the notion that such a relationship can be declared illegitimate and in violation of constitutional doctrine at any time.<sup>18</sup> This analysis implies that a working knowledge of the law and implementation of targeted accountability measures are needed to ensure sufficient government oversight of faith-based initiatives. In a fifty-state review, however, Rebecca Sager details a surprising lack of federal regulations or guidelines to specifically direct the actions of state faith-based initiative offices or the FBOs they work with.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Wineburg notes that policy-makers and administrators responsible for managing local faith-based social service partnerships are often quite uninformed as to what activities are permitted according to the law.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Publicly Funded Faith-Based Social Services in North Carolina*

The practice of LGEs partnering with private nonprofit organizations for social service delivery is common throughout North Carolina.<sup>21</sup> Such partnerships frequently feature a formal contract or the awarding of a grant to be used for a specific purpose, although they may also be the result of more informal collaboration.<sup>22</sup> Faith-based initiatives for social service provision in North Carolina operate much the same way. Though a Faith-Based and Community Initiative liaison was appointed within the Governor’s office in 2005, much of the interaction between government and FBOs in North Carolina occurs at the county level.<sup>23</sup> As of 2004, at least nineteen counties in North Carolina employed faith community coordinators responsible for organizing, managing, and offering technical support for

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<sup>13</sup> Bluestein and Brown-Graham, “Local Government Contracts,” 34.

<sup>14</sup> *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602 (1971).

<sup>15</sup> Bielefeld and Cleveland, “Faith-Based Organizations as Service Providers,” 438; R. J. Sider and H. R. Unruh, “Evangelism and church-state partnerships,” *Journal of Church and State* 43 (2001): 267-295.

<sup>16</sup> Saperstein, “Public Accountability and Faith-Based Organizations,” 1353-1354.

<sup>17</sup> Biebricher, “Faith-Based Initiatives and Challenges of Government,” 1009.

<sup>18</sup> Carlson-Thies, “Implementing the Faith-Based Initiative,” 60; Stephen Monsma, *When Sacred and Secular Mix*, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996).

<sup>19</sup> Rebecca Sager, *Faith, Politics, and Power: The Politics of Faith-Based Initiatives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012): 11.

<sup>20</sup> Biebricher, “Faith-Based Initiatives and Challenges of Government,” 1008; Wineburg, *Faith-Based Inefficiency*, 82.

<sup>21</sup> Nick Byrne, “Assessing Accountability Measures Governing Nonprofit Grant Funding at the County Level in North Carolina,” (Graduate Research Paper, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2013): 3.

<sup>22</sup> Whitaker and Day, “How Local Governments Work,” 27-30.

<sup>23</sup> Jay F. Hein, “The President’s Faith-Based and Community Initiative in 50 States,” *White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives* (February 2008).

churches and religious groups looking to partner with government to provide social services.<sup>24</sup> Mecklenburg County, which contains the city of Charlotte, staffs a Community Resources Division within its Department of Social Services that is dedicated to partnering with FBOs and providing support to other divisions that wish to do the same.<sup>25</sup>

Public accountability for government-nonprofit partnerships at the local level may take many different forms, including the provision of guidelines, funding application requirements, formal contracts, periodic reports, financial audits, site visits, or client interviews.<sup>26</sup> A 2012 survey measuring accountability in nonprofit funding decisions in counties across North Carolina found significant variation in the tools and procedures used.<sup>27</sup> Currently, there are no studies that document the prevalence of accountability measures specifically for faith-based organizations in North Carolina or any other state. As concern over the legal ramifications of faith-based initiatives remains, it is important to assess the ways in which LGEs ensure public accountability for such partnerships.

## METHODS AND DATA

The goal of this paper is to analyze North Carolina LGE-FBO partnerships within a legal accountability framework. This paper seeks to capture the complexities of the accountability relationship through an in-depth analysis of a single local faith-based initiative. A case study design was chosen to facilitate a greater understanding of the actions and motivations of the players involved as well as the ways in which relevant participant attitudes may have changed over time.<sup>28</sup> Case-studies are the preferred strategy for conducting assessments of management tools and government programs, because they allow the researcher to focus on the details of how and why something took place.<sup>29</sup>

As a densely populated area home to a number of very active religious communities, North Carolina's Mecklenburg County was identified as a suitable locus for study. Most importantly, Mecklenburg's relatively long history of providing social services through faith-based collaboration was considered ideal for conducting a time-series analysis.



Additionally, the existence of multiple full-time staff members responsible for coordinating faith-based initiatives (unique among NC counties) was through to increase the likelihood of timely data collection.<sup>30</sup> A preliminary interview with the director of the Community Resources Division revealed one particular faith-based partnership within the Youth and Family Services Division (YFS) to be ripe for examination. Congregations for Kids (CFK), as it was called at the time this research began, is an ideal case primarily

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<sup>24</sup> John L. Saxon, "Faith-Based Social Services," *Popular Government* 70, no. 1 (Fall 2004): 10.

<sup>25</sup> Mecklenburg County, "Community Resources Division," accessed March 29, 2014.  
<http://charmeck.org/mecklenburg/county/dss/admin/Pages/CommunityResourcesDivision.aspx>

<sup>26</sup> Margaret Henderson, Gordon Whitaker, and Lydian Altman-Sauer, "Establishing Mutual Accountability in Nonprofit-Government Relationships," *Popular Government* (Fall 2003): 25.

<sup>27</sup> Byrne, "Assessing Accountability Measures," 5.

<sup>28</sup> Robert Yin, "A (Very) Brief Refresher on the Case Study Method," in *Case Study Methods*, ed. Jaques Hamel et al. (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1993), 3-20.

<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth O'Sullivan, Gary R. Rassel, and Maureen Berner, *Research Methods for Public Administrators*, (New York: Pearson, 2010): 40.

<sup>30</sup> Saxon, "Faith-Based Social Services," 10.

because of its size and history. Not only does CFK boast a membership pool of thirty-one individual congregations (the better to gather diverse viewpoints), it has been established for more than half a decade (necessary to evaluate whether those viewpoints have changed with time). For a summary of CFK's mission and activities, see *Appendix A*.

Information was gathered from a variety of sources to enhance triangulation, which is the key to robust findings.<sup>31</sup> After developing semi-structured interview protocols for both county and FBO representatives, six formal interviews were conducted: two with YFS employees and four with congregational liaisons (see *Appendix B*). Participants were asked about how the CFK collaboration was developed, ways in which county oversight was maintained, as well as if there were challenges associated with those two processes (see *Appendix C*).

During a site visit to YFS headquarters, an observation of two separate one-hour meetings took place. The first was a monthly CFK steering committee meeting attended by both YFS social workers and congregational liaisons, and the second was an internal YFS meeting where CFK matters were discussed. Lastly, a small number of archival documents and physical artifacts were collected for subsequent analysis, including meeting agendas, formal communications from YFS to area congregations, CFK promotional brochures, and logo mock-ups used in CFK's rebranding process.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to the data, Congregations for Kids has struggled with public accountability issues relating to balancing religious beliefs and government requirements. These issues can be grouped into two main categories: too much overt religion and too little overt religion.

One incident that illustrates the tension of "too much religion" took place at a Christmas adoption event a few years after CFK was founded. The event was hosted in the sanctuary of New Bethel Church (a CFK member), and according to multiple eyewitnesses, the church's pastor encouraged older children in attendance to lead a prayer in the pulpit. The reaction of YFS social workers present at the event was swift yet arguably subdued—they took the pastor and congregational liaison aside for a "serious conversation about boundaries".<sup>32</sup> The YFS Social Services Manager knew CFK "Could not put [DSS] children in a position where they were required to participate in religious activity," but she had a lot of sympathy for the congregation's position.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, at YFS's annual adoption conference last year, CFK pastors were invited to give speeches and show videos relating to their adoption ministry work. Many of the evaluations collected from conference attendees complained of the event being "too churchy".<sup>34</sup>

Unsurprisingly, dissatisfaction over CFK allowing "too little religion" is primarily voiced by member congregations. In response to being told they could not ask children to pray in their own sanctuary, New Bethel Church decided it would no longer host events for YFS. In explaining that decision, the liaison for New Bethel remarked, "We sometimes wonder if we aren't spinning our wheels by not being able to preach the gospel at these events."<sup>35</sup> Another member congregation left CFK altogether because it felt

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<sup>31</sup> Yin, "A (Very) Brief Refresher on the Case Study Method," 13.

<sup>32</sup> New Bethel Church Congregational Liaison, Interview by Maia Landey, February 20, 2014, notes.

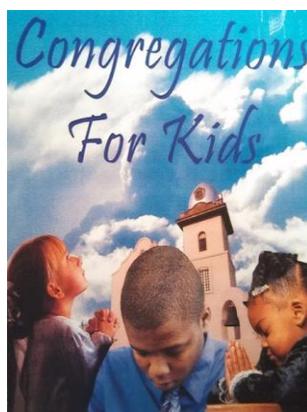
<sup>33</sup> YFS Social Services Manager, Interview by Maia Landey, February 20, 2014, notes.

<sup>34</sup> YFS Social Services Manager, Interview.

<sup>35</sup> New Bethel Church Congregational Liaison, Interview.

YFS was not doing enough to place children with Christian families. That church was frustrated that they couldn't be given the freedom to operate independently of government policy to use CFK funds and resources as they saw fit. Still other churches have withdrawn direct financial support from CFK upon finding out that YFS places children with same-sex adoptive and foster couples. Explaining that decision, one congregational liaison said, "YFS has an open-door policy when it comes to homosexual adoption that our pastor simply doesn't agree with."<sup>36</sup> As a very religious person herself, the YFS Social Services Manager is sympathetic to such views, but insists that CFK can't be seen discriminating among adoptive parents.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, when planning for an upcoming adoption conference to be held in conjunction with CFK, YFS social workers unanimously chose to downplay any official references to same-sex adoption. Though one speaker invited to the conference had recently co-authored a book titled *Adoption by Lesbians and Gay Men: A New Dimension in Family Diversity*, all mention of it was deliberately removed from his biography in the published program.<sup>38</sup> When asked about this decision, YFS employees admitted that they were worried about antagonizing CFK members.

With respect to implementing concrete measures to address some the concerns listed above, CFK is currently undergoing intense change. Spring 2014 saw the start of a complete rebranding process in which Congregations for Kids became Community Partners for Kids. The acronym will remain CFK, but the organization's old promotional image of children praying in front of a church has been replaced with a logo of children climbing in a tree. These changes are being made for three reasons: 1) to broaden the scope of the program to appeal to non-religious community organizations, 2) as a response to negative feedback from adoptive and foster



Old CFK Promotional Image



New CFK Logo

families concerning the overtly religious nature of CFK, and 3) due to concern that the new county management will see the program as a liability if it does not at least appear secular. Likewise, there seems to be a growing sense that formal guidelines should be adopted by CFK as part of the rebranding process in order to delineate church/state boundaries and outline inappropriate displays of religion. Although it is difficult to say how strong this notion was prior to it being introduced as an obvious line of inquiry for the purposes of this study, the YFS Social Services Manager mentioned repeatedly that she viewed guidelines as "important" and that the possibility of their adoption would be addressed in future CFK meetings. The manager noted that as a devout Christian herself, she had not "see[n] the need to formally communicate legal restrictions" when the program first began, but that the church prayer incident and community feedback has convinced her to reexamine the issue.<sup>39</sup>

Though difficult to quantify, the combined effect of the limited accountability measures implemented by YFS has seemingly been detrimental to the morale of CFK congregations. Some congregations with conflicting missions were bound to take their departure from CFK, but what about the health of the organization beyond that? One thing is clear: CFK as it was initially envisioned by YFS has yet to come to

<sup>36</sup> Christ Covenant Church Congregational Liaison, Interview by Maia Landey, February 20, 2014, notes.

<sup>37</sup> YFS Social Services Manager, Interview.

<sup>38</sup> YFS Adoption Conference planning meeting, observation by Maia Landey, February 20, 2014.

<sup>39</sup> YFS Social Services Manager, Interview.

fruition. Originally intended to be “run directly by the congregations,” CFK is still squarely within the control of YFS social workers who recruit members, plan and facilitate meetings, and have the last word on what activities are undertaken for the year.<sup>40</sup> According to one congregational liaison, “[YFS] thinks they want the churches to take [CFK] over, but they are hesitant about blurring the church-state divide.”<sup>41</sup> Others pointed to the difficulty of sharing public resources with FBOs, saying that limitation might be another reason why churches did not control CFK. Moving forward, meanwhile, it appears that CFK might be in for a tough ride. The new organizational name and logo have many members questioning YFS’s commitment to a true faith-based partnership. The YFS Social Services Manager, meanwhile, worries that publishing formal behavioral guidelines for CFK will have a negative effect on church participation in CFK.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis above strongly suggests that, for CFK at least, the answer to both research questions outlined in the introduction is “yes.” As accountability concerns grow, YFS has held fast to its secular mission and responded to external pressure by introducing administrative and symbolic changes. These actions threaten to destabilize an already tenuous partnership, which could potentially limit the growth and expansion of CFK.

These findings, while useful for understanding the role public accountability issues play in faith-based initiatives, are nevertheless tempered by the study’s extremely narrow scope and the inherent nature of qualitative fieldwork. As is the case with any single case study, the conditions identified in CFK cannot be said to hold true for other LGE-FBO partnerships. Similarly, a research bias towards identifying and assessing challenges to an organization may have served to encourage and overemphasize negative viewpoints.<sup>42</sup> In order to find out whether the move towards enhancing public accountability demonstrated by CFK is a part of a larger pattern across other faith-based initiatives in North Carolina, research into additional cases are required. A survey of faith-based initiative practices in all counties in North Carolina, meanwhile, would aid understanding of the breadth of oversight mechanisms currently in place at this level.

Despite the limitations of this study, three general conclusions might be drawn from the experiences of CFK. Firstly, the evidence presented here further supports the findings of Sager’s fifty-state review, which noted a conspicuous absence of systematic governmental regulation of faith-based initiatives at the local level.<sup>43</sup> For those who question the role of faith-based initiatives, this fact will do little to console them. Second, YFS’s struggle to walk the accountability line suggests that further guidance is needed from both the White House office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships and the courts. If President Obama wishes to increase national support for (and functioning of) faith-based initiatives, he might consider the following strategies:

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<sup>40</sup> Social Work Supervisor, Interview by Maia Landey, January 28, 2014, notes.

<sup>41</sup> New Bethel Church Congregational Liaison, Interview.

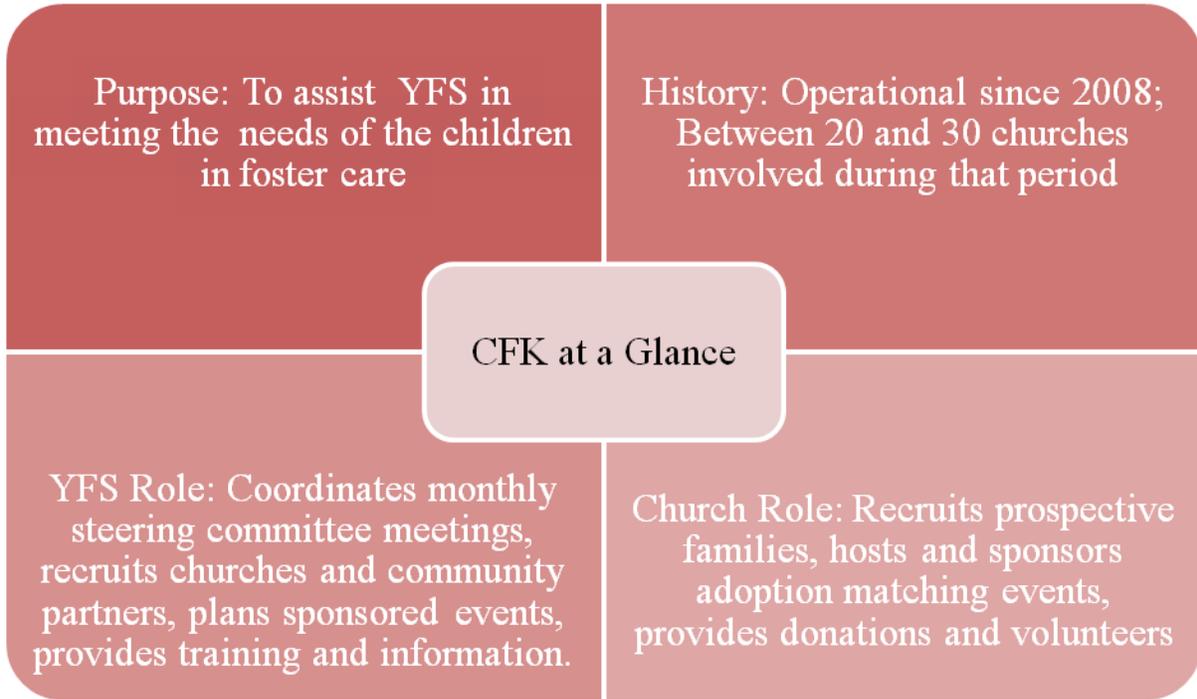
<sup>42</sup> Congregational liaison interviews conducted subsequent to the initial fieldwork and draft versions of this paper have offered some conflicting data regarding latent tension within CFK over accountability issues. I have chosen not to explore this data in my findings for three reasons: 1) space limitations prevent me from properly presenting these viewpoints, 2) the interviews were with liaisons specifically recommended by YFS rather than an assortment of volunteers present at the CFK meeting, and 3) the interviews were conducted by phone rather than in person, making it more difficult for respondents to feel comfortable offering critical opinions.

<sup>43</sup> Sager, *Faith, Politics, and Power*, 11.

- 1) Make it a priority to clearly define legal forms of religious expression in government activities.
- 2) Assign more oversight responsibility to state faith-based liaisons.
- 3) Provide tailored, standardized tools such as formal guidelines and financial audit worksheets to aid local governments in creating and administering faith-based partnerships.

With this level of support, LGEs would be able to develop and communicate their expectations for FBO activity more deliberate ways. Lastly, in order for faith-based initiatives to succeed in the long run, administrators must be sensitive to competing missions of religious organizations and government, and strategically minimize the effect any resulting tension may have.

**APPENDIX A**



**APPENDIX B**

<b>Interview Roster</b>	
<i>Position</i>	<i>Organization</i>
Social Services Manager & CFK Founder	Mecklenburg County YFS
Social Work Supervisor	Mecklenburg County YFS
Congregational Liaison & CFK Co-Chair	Christ Covenant Church
Congregational Liaison	New Bethel Church
Congregational Liaison & CFK Board Member	Carmel Baptist Church
Congregational Liaison	Grace Covenant Church

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Congregations for Kids Interview Protocol: Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (DSS) Youth and Family Services Division (YFS)**

#### **Background**

1. What is the purpose of the CFK? Why was it established?
2. When was it established/How long has it been operational?
3. What is YFS's budget for CFK? How many staff people are involved?
4. How are churches selected to participate? How many churches are involved?
5. What is their role? What kinds of activities do they participate in?
6. What are some of the biggest challenges the program has faced?
7. What are some of its successes?
  - a. What role has the program played in increasing the number of adopted/fostered children?
  - b. How many children have been adopted/fostered through the program to date?

#### **Collaborative Relationship**

8. What resources does YFS provide to the congregations (money, staff support, meeting space, supplies)?
9. How are resources distributed?
10. In what ways is the relationship formalized (contracts, trainings, meetings)?
11. How does YFS oversee the program in the individual churches?

#### **Legal Accountability**

12. How does the YFS navigate the church-state divide? Does YFS's relationship with CFK congregations require any specific legal checks to ensure appropriate boundaries are maintained?
13. Does YFS provide guidelines to congregations about what kinds of activities are appropriate and inappropriate with respect to religious activity?
  - a. If so, what activities are restricted?
  - b. Have these guidelines changed over time? How? Why?
14. Are you aware of any hesitation or resistance on behalf of the congregations to participate in CFK because of county guidelines, restrictions, or general concern that their religious activities might somehow be controlled by government?
15. Have there ever been times when congregations in the programs violated legal restrictions or tried to use County resources for religiously inappropriate activities?
  - a. If so, how did YFS handle the issue?
  - b. What was the reaction of the congregation?
  - c. What was the outcome?

## **Congregations for Kids Interview Protocol: Member Congregations**

### **Background**

1. How long has your church been involved in CFK?
2. How did your church make the decision to get involved?
3. What are the benefits to your church?
4. What role does your church play in the program? What kinds of activities does the church do as a part of CFK?
5. What are some of the biggest challenges your church has faced in participating in CFK?
6. What are the biggest successes your church has experienced through CFK?
  - a. How many children have been adopted/fostered through your church?

### **Collaborative Relationship**

7. What is your personal role? What do you do to support CFK?
8. What kind of resources does the County provide to your congregation (money, staff support, meeting space, supplies)?
9. How are resources distributed to your church?
10. How does YFS oversee your activities as a part of CFK?

### **Legal Accountability**

11. Has YFS provided guidelines to your church about what kinds of activities are appropriate and inappropriate with respect to religious activity?
  - a. If so, when?
  - b. What activities are restricted?
12. Has there ever been any hesitation or resistance on behalf of your congregation to participate in CFK because of county guidelines, restrictions, or general concern that religious activity might somehow be controlled by government?
13. Has your congregation ever run into trouble with the county over separation of church and state issues?
  - c. If so, how did YFS handle the issue?
  - d. What was the reaction of the congregation?
  - e. Outcome?

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