Part I

The Capacity of Faith-Based Organizations to Impact the Life Chances and High Risk Behavior of Youth

By Fred D. Smith Ph.D

Hypothesis: *Fatalism and nihilism in youth is correlated to high-risk behavior. These are primarily spiritual issues with religious and faith implications. Faith Based Organizations have the spiritual capacity to impact high-risk behavior in youth via addressing their religious, spiritual and faith needs as well as social and psychological needs-- by transforming despair into hope.*

Introduction:

This project will examine the underpinnings of potential effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations to minister to the social and spiritual needs of high-risk youth. Work with high-risk youth is demanding, dangerous and often unrewarding. Social concerns such as poverty, drug culture, the criminal justice system, inadequate public schools, unskilled and sometimes seemingly apathetic parents help to create what we call high-risk youth. Youth who face death on a daily basis must address ultimate questions of faith. The music they listen to is full of the theological themes death, dying and after life. Many do not believe they will reach the age of 25 years of age. This *fatalistic* worldview is an important factor leading to participation in high risk behavior seemingly seeking to fulfill their own prophesy. Cornel West speaks of the task of African American youth of coping with hopelessness, meaninglessness and lovelessness that produces a cold blooded angst that becomes a *nihilistic* threat to society. These are profoundly spiritual, religious and faithful issues as much as they are social psychological. This project will examine ethnographically key concepts such as faith, spirituality, and religiosity (especially as they relate to fatalism and nihilism) and high-risk behavior in youth.

Secondly, every child is born with the promise of being loved by God and created in God's image. However, often because of accident of birth they are born in circumstances that impede the fulfillment of Promise. Social isolation, abandonment, neglect and abuse stand in the way of the fulfillment of Promise and put youth at risk by cutting off their path to a hopeful future. Faith Based Organizations (FBO) are being called on by Government agencies and private foundation to meet the social and psychological needs of youth so they may fulfill their promise. However, it is the **hypothesis** (restated) of this project that: *it is the spiritual capacity of FBO to meet not only the social and psychological needs but also the spiritual needs that makes a difference in altering the high risk behavior of youth.* More specifically it is it ability to address the spiritual malaise of nihilism and fatalism that is most crucial. This project will perform an assessment of the Spiritual capacity of Faith-Based Organizations such prayer, blessing, forgiveness, convening, connecting, telling stories, providing sanctuary, accompanying to meet the social, psychological and spiritual needs of high risk youth.

Goals:

1. To ascertain how Faith-Based factors such as faith, spirituality and religiosity (with special emphasis on how they address fatalism and nihilism) impact high-risk behavior of high-risk youth involved in a variety of youth oriented Faith-Based Social/Action Initiatives.

2. To access the Spiritual capacity of Faith-Based Organizations to serve the social, psychological and spiritual needs (especially as they impact fatalism and nihilism) of high–risk youth who are involved in Faith-Based Initiatives.

Purpose:

The purpose of this PILOT study is to test the above hypothesis. This will be done by creating and trying out research protocols, methods and instruments in order to develop understand how collaboration between faith communities, secular funding sources and service partners can work together to improve the life chances of high-risk youth. Specifically the purpose of this pilot study is to get a better understanding of youth perspectives on such key concepts as spirituality, faith and religiosity (with focus on fatalism and nihilism) as these perspectives relate to high-risk behavior. In this way the project will explore the spiritual and social resources of Faith-Based Organization to address various issues (i.e. teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, violence, poor school performance and dropping out) facing high-risk youth by offering caring ministries and hope for the future. These finding will help develop religious educational pedagogies and strategies for instructing youth, and providing faith-based social services for ministering to the needs of youth. The goal of the summer research pilot study is to provide the ground work for much larger study that will address the issue of the spiritual capacity of faith-based organization to address social issues that have religious, spiritual or faith complicating factors.

Significance:

There are few studies available produced by religious scholar/practitioners on high risk youth for use in seminaries, churches, faith-based organizations and those who seek to partner with them. Many studies have shown that church attendance, religious commitment and outreach services by faith-based organizations can have an impact on high-risk behaviors. But they do not explore why they have an impact from the perspective of the faith-based organization utilizing what is unique to faith-based institutions. The theological education of the pastors is an important determining factor on whether or not a church becomes involved in outreach ministries that impact high-risk youth using the church own theological resources. Thus, this study can play a significant role in preparing seminarians, church leaders, and others who work with

youth to effectively reach out to high-risk youth by better understanding the relationship between faith, spirituality, religiosity, and high-risk behavior as well as the capacity of faith-based organization such as congregations and para-church organization to provide social services to high risk youth that are peculiar to their religious and spiritual nature.

Methodology:

1. **Formulate Research protocols:**

   a) Formulate processes and approaches for capturing adolescents conceptualizations and meanings around key concepts -- religious faith, spirituality, etc;
   b) Formulate questions and hypotheses about relationships among key factors -- religious faith, spirituality, religiosity, and high-risk behavior;
   c) Revise and adjust research design at pre-determined stages based on input from informants (youth)
   d) Identify and define appropriate recording and sampling method and behaviors to capture key phenomena associated with or corresponding to key
   concepts /factors specially fatalism and nihilism.
   e) Observations: capture and collect ethnographic data, recording sequences of events and frequency of occurrence of key concepts, actions, and interactions of subjects
   f) Develop social service capacity assessment survey for faith-based organizations based on eight capacities of congregations[1].
   g) Formulate questions and hypotheses about relationships among key factors--- organizational capacity, financial accountability, needed expertise, ability to collaborate with secular and interfaith institution etc...
   h) Analyze collected data
   i) Interpret and disseminate collected data

Proposed Timeline:

June 23 – July 20, 2003– After spending two days in at the **NIDA Institute for Biblical Research** for training on NIDA behavior research methods. After which the principal investigator will begin visiting 4 sites by following protocols: videotape focus groups, depth-interview participants (youth and youth workers) and observe faith-based organization, gather information and assess programs.

- Atlanta, Georgia: Visit The **Interfaith Health Program (IHP)** Consult with Gary Gunderson and Mimi Kiser to review and refine faith based organization survey on Spiritual Capacity based on Gary Gunderson's Deeply Woven Roots and coordinate Strong Partner research and assessment. Conduct research with Capital

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[1] Deeply Woven Roots and the Interfaith Health program.

View UMC /Atlanta Health Ministries, Youth Development Project sponsored by IHP.

- Nashville, Tennessee- Visit **Tennessee State University (TSU)** and Fisk University- Consult Jovita Wells Associate Director of Sponsored Research on publications and grant writing. Consult with Hilda Davis Research Chaplain Vanderbilt Hospital Research Chaplain on research methods of fatalism and high risk behavior. Conduct research Faith-Based sites in Nashville sponsored by TSU.

- Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area: Research bases **Metropolitan Urban Institute (MUI)** Research **Faith-Based Health Initiative** and **Fellowship United Methodist Church (FUMC)**--Center For Hope (Bishops Initiative on Children and Poverty.) Consult with Dr .Ron Peters and Staff on research design. Conduct research with MUI Faith Based Health Initiative and FUMC Center for Hope.

- Hayward, California- Conduct research with **Hayward Interfaith Network Health Initiative** sponsored by **IHP**- Ralph Morales/ Bill Matthews

Principal Investigator will spend 3 to 4 days in each city (over a four week period) with time for reflection and writing up notes after each visit. In each site he will conduct depth interviews a number of youth and youth workers at the above-mentioned sites, using formulated interview protocols to investigate youth participant's perceived correlation between religious faith, spirituality and religiosity, and high-risk behavior. Second, he surveys each Faith-based Organizations for their capacities to deliver faith-based social service needs of youth in collaboration with others. Third, he will conduct video taped focus groups of high risk youth. Principle investigator will be the primary participant observer, interviewer and focus group facilitator when and possible and gather written materials and histories on faith-based operations.

2. **July 21 - July 23** Travel to New York City for analysis of video interviews, participant observations and focus groups to obtain ethnographic snapshots in order to develop exploration and reflection on the relationship between faith, spirituality, religiosity and high risk behavior of each site. The analysis will take place at **American Bible Society Nida Institute for Biblical Research:** "the Research Unit of Nida Institute for Biblical Research (ABS) will support principle Investigator in the systematic analysis of behavioral research around adolescents at high-risk. NIDA Research Unit makes use of the latest behavioral research technology to observe and analyze human interactions in structured time series of coded events. Use of NIDA's software technology will allow:
* exploratory methods to provide a clear sequential listing of data in
 a time-event sequence
* ability to render a variety of descriptive statistical analyses
* micro- and macro-analysis of subjects and behavioral elements, and
* inter and/or intra-observer reliability by comparing corresponding
 data files"

Joseph Crockett, Director of Research American Bible Society will assist in data interpretation and Jovita Wells Director of Sponsors Research at TSU in Nashville will collaborate as editor and writing consultant to shape publication.

 July 24-25 Travel to Atlanta for consultation with **Interfaith Health Program** for analysis of capacity surveys and ethnographic assessment of capacity of Faith Based Organization to deliver faith based social services in collaboration with secular funding sources and other community based organizations. Gary Gunderson Director and Mimi Kiser to analysize results and shape for publication.

July 28 – August 8 Nashville, Tennessee- Scarritt-Bennett Center. <u>**Writing Retreat**</u> Writing consultant and editor and Principal Investigor will write article(s) for publication; or a chapter of potential book and book proposal (s) and seek publisher; and/or develop a syllabus for new class.

Later or spring of 2004 or fall 2005 <u>Research Convocation</u> Consultant, Jovita Wells, Research Consultant Joseph Crockett, Research Chaplain Hilda Davis PhD, IHP Director Gary Gunderson, Ron Peters Director Metropolitan Urban Institute, IHP Associate Director Mimi Kiser and Principal Investigator Fred Smith and selected youth and youth workers from research sites and others will be invited to participate in a Research Convocation where preliminary research finding and research instruments will be shared and discussed. The convocation participant will also suggest future directions for the research and publication

<u>**Collaborating Organizations:**</u>

<u>**Pittsburgh Theological Seminary**</u> – Metropolitan Urban Institute's Faith-Based Health Initiative

<u>**Emory University Rollins School of Public Health**</u>—Interfaith Health Program's Strong Partner Program

<u>**Tennessee State University**</u> – Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Faith-Based One Stop Centers

<u>**American Bible Society**</u>---NIDA Research Center

<u>**The United Methodist Church- The Council of Bishop's**</u> – Initiative on Children and Poverty—Fellowship United Methodist Church's Center for Hope

<u>**Principal Investigator**</u>

Dr Fred D. Smith Ph.D, Associate Professor of Urban Ministry at Wesley Theological Seminary and Pastor of the Fellowship United Methodist Church, Consultant to The United Methodist Church Council of Bishop Initiative on Children and Poverty, Senior Scholar and Consultant to the Interfaith Health Program—

<u>**Primary Collaborators:**</u>

Dr. Joseph Crockett Ed.D Director of Research, The American Bible Society

Jovita Wells JD Associate Director of Sponsored Research, Tennessee State University

Dr. Hilda Davis Ph.D Research Chaplain, Vanderbilt Hospital

Dr. Gary Gunderson D.Min. Director, Interfaith Health Program, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University

Mimi Kiser MPH Associate Director, Interfaith Health Program, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University

Dr. Ronald Peters Ed.D, Director of Metropolitan Urban Institute and Professor of Church and Society, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Barbara Rogers ED.S, Director of the Christian Life Skill

Part II
Interview Protocol:

Hypothesis: *Fatalism and nihilism in youth is correlated to high-risk behavior. These are primarily spiritual issues with religious and faith implications. Faith Based Organizations have the spiritual capacity to impact high-risk behavior in youth via addressing their religious, spiritual and faith needs as well as social and psychological needs-- by transforming despair into hope.*

<u>**Goals:**</u>

3. To ascertain how Faith-Based factors such as faith, spirituality and religiosity (with special emphasis on how they address fatalism and nihilism) impact high-risk behavior of high-risk youth involved in a variety of youth oriented Faith-Based Social/Action Initiatives.

4. To access the Spiritual capacity of Faith-Based Organizations to serve the social, psychological and spiritual needs (especially as they impact fatalism and nihilism) of high–risk youth who are involved in Faith-Based Initiatives.

Fatalism: By fatalism, I don't mean a doctrine that all everything in our lives are predetermined by fate. By fatalism I mean despair as an existential condition of a profoundly depressed state being with or without a specific object. It is a sense of an inability to affect change in the course or direction of ones life for the better. It is powerlessness over events, persons or conditions that impact ones life's chances it is a sense of hopelessness, meaninglessness and powerlessness.

What do you see in your future? Is the future good or bad? Do you have a future?

Do you and your friends ever talk about the future? What do you talk about?

Do you believe in the American Dream? Define the American dream? What do you think it is? Or is it a nightmare?

Do you think the education you are receiving or have received is preparing you the future you envision (see)? How? Why/or Why not?

I have heard some of the teens say that they did not believe they would reach their 21st birthday. Have you ever felt that way or know someone who has? Why?

Why do black people kill one another so much? Especially, young black men?

Who has had some one to die over the last year? What happens after someone die?

What do you happens to you after you die?

Do you believe in heaven? Do you believe in hell?

What is the most important think in life? In your life

What do you have to live for and why?

What makes life worth living?

What do you most want out of life?

What is your purpose in life or reason for living?

What gives you life meaning?

What is the most important thing in life?

Nihilism: By nihilism I mean an existential condition that refutes distinctions in moral values a sort of utilitarian relativism grounded in a deep angst. This is cause by a constant

struggle to cope with meaninglessness, hopeless and lovelessness. With Cornel West, I view this nihilism as a threat because the chief moral value that is rejected is the value of human life itself. Materialism becomes the ultimate and determining value, but value that is without moral or rational rooted ness that leads finally to a spiritual nothingness.

How to you distinguish right from wrong? On what basis?

Who determines what is right?

Who do you look up to as an Authority figure?

What do you think about the System or Government?

Do you believe that laws were made to protect you or control you?

Have you ever been trouble with the law?

What is your opinion about Police? Do you know one?

What do you think about Judges and Lawyers? Do you know one?

What do you think about Teachers? Do you know one?

What do you think about Preachers? Do you know one?

What do you think about Politicians? Do you know one?

What do you think about Doctors? Do you know one?

What do you think about Parents? Tell about Mothers and Fathers? Yours?

Who has the right to tell you what to do or not to do?

Who do you respect most?

Who do you fear?

Who keep you from doing wrong?

Who makes want to do right?

Who is the most important person in your life?
Why?

What do you think about the War on Iraq?

What do you think about the War on Terrorism?

What do you think about the War on Drugs?

Do you think there is or should be a War on Poverty?

What do you think about War?

Faith-Based Organizations: By faith-based I mean an organization that is based within or related to a religious institution (s). It may also refer to an organization that operates by religious or spiritual principles or grounded and rooted in a religious and spiritual tradition.

What does this organization do for you?

What does faith mean to you?

What does the word faith-based mean to you?

What faith-based organization (define faith-based) or congregation do you work with or works with you? What do you think about it?

When you hear the term faith-based what does that mean to you?

How has this faith-based organization used prayer to help you cope, or overcome difficulties?

PRAYER

What is prayer? Do you pray? When? Where? How?

Do you pray? How often?

What has prayer meant to you? How has it been Helpful? How do you know?

How often do you pray? When do you pray?

Are you aware of anyone ever having prayed for you?

Do the organization, congregation, and youth group pray for you?

Do you pray at home?

Scripture:

How has this organization encourage you to use scripture?

What do you believe about the bible? How has this organization influence your use and believe about the Bible?

What is your favorite Bible story or character?

Religiosity Attendance:

Has anyone in the organization invited you to church or Sunday School?

Tell me about any rituals or ceremonies in which you have participated?

How has this organization impacted your study of the bible or your prayer life, church going or spiritual journey?

How many funerals have you attended over the last year?
What impact did it have on you?

How often do you attend church besides funerals? (Marriages or baptisms)

How do you feel or think about church, Sunday school, prayer and the bible?

What do you think about the Church?

How often do you go to Church?

Accompanying (incarnation ministry):

How has this organization supported you in difficult times (hospital, trouble at school, court or jail)?

Why do you think the people in this organization do what they do for you? (Besides money)

How has this organization help you meet other people who can help you?

How do you feel your behavior has changed since you became involved in this organization?

Framing Meaning (telling stories):

What kind of stories do you're youth workers tell?

How do you tell story of you life? What would the title be? What Chapters be titled? Besides yourself who would be the leading Characters?

To Bless or forgive:

Have you ever want to be forgiven for something?

Have ever been forgiven?

What do you believe about God?

Sanctuary:

Where do you feel the safest?

Do you feel safe in the Church?

Do you feel safe in the Church or among church people?

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Part III
<u>Interim Report on a Pilot on Hope and Despair</u>

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1. **Description of Activity**

A. **<u>Consultations</u>**

The first stage of the study took place with consultations with colleagues on research goals and methods. This part of the project was funded by ATS Lilly Research Expense Grant. The first consultation was in April 21-23 with the Interfaith Health Program (IHP). Met with the Director Dr. Gary Gunderson to discuss faith-based organizations specific capacity related to faith and spirituality. I utilized Emory's Human Subjects Research protocols to develop my Informed Consent Forms.

On April 24-25, I visited Nashville to consult with Dr. Hilda Davis Research Chaplain at Vanderbilt Medical Center. I discussed her research on fatalism and cancer treatments in African American Women. She helped me to begin to shape my definitions of fatalism and nihilism.

On May 11 and 12, I visited New York City   to consult with Dr. Joseph Crockett Director of the NIDA Research Center of the American Bible Society (ABS). We discussed various ethnographic research methodologies as they related to the stated aims of the Pilot Study. In addition, he shared with me ABS own research on the Bible Study habits of African American youth.

On May 26-29, I visited Hayward California Interfaith Health Coalition. Ralph Morales helped me to helped me to understand the role of faith-based organization in community capacity building from and environmental perspective. It also became clear that they were not ready to be a research site because of transitions taking place with youth leadership.

B. Logistical Work

Nashville

Black Child Advocates

Juanita Beasley, Director Black Child Advocates Nashville step in to help organize focus groups at the last minute after Jovita Wells new job transferred out of the city. She made several failed attempts to set up churches and interview with parents. However, she was not well informed enough make a convincing presentations..

Gordon Memorial UMC

Gwen Felder-Brown, Assistant Minister Gordon United Methodist Church Nashville organized a focus group of 10 boys and girls age ranging from 14-16 who were primarily inner city youth who could be considered youth at-risk. Some of youth are members of the church but others are unchurched and from the neighborhood.

Atlanta

The Youth of Truth

Sederick Gardener, assistant minister Hillside Truth Center arranged the focus group the males ages 14- 16 group "The Youth of Truth". The Youth of Truth are made up of the youth of the church they are primarily middle class youth who not live in the community surrounding Hillside Truth Center. They provide an alternate worship experience utilizing Hip-Hop rap music and Preaching. Sederick also acted as a consultant in developing contact with several other at-risk youth serving organizations that will be willing to participate in the future.

Boy's Club/ Atlanta Health Ministries

Bernard Strong,- Director of Atlanta Health Ministries which sponsors the Boy's Club Athletics Ministries organized a focus group of 5 largely unchurched youth except for their participation in the church based ministry. The youth of the Boy's Club are hardcore inner city young males 16-19 who were largely unchurched.

Pittsburgh

Christian Life Skills

Barbara Rogers, Director of Christian Life Skills arranged two Focus groups. One focus group of 12 hardcore at-risk male youth ranging in age from 13- 20 who were drawn from several church based ministries. Some of these youth did not attend church at all, others were raised in the church and still others were unchurched but now are excited

about participating in a youth ministry that expresses a real and tangible concern for them. The second focus group was made up of parents of the youth that had experienced the Christian life skills ministries. Some of them were parents of youth who participated in the first focus group.

Wesley Center

Lee Walls, Youth Minister of Wesley African Methodist Zion Church arranged two focus groups. The first focus group included young boys 11-13 years mostly members of the church and few unchurched boys from the neighborhood who participate in the activities. The second focus group consisted of young men 15 to 18 years of age who are drawn from various backgrounds and degrees of religiosity, who work in Wesley's summer youth program as counselors.

Methodology

      A. At each site I spent a day or two observing the site for its physical and spiritual environment. I conducted casual interview with those who worked in and around the ministry and collect literature when possible.

      B. I conducted and in-depth and taped interview with my primary informant for each site where possible.

      C. Utilitize focus group protocol developed (see attached) to conduct and video focus group.

      D. On two occasions used Informant to conduct focus group while I observed

      E. Provided $25.00 incentive to each participant and refreshments.

      F. Review tapes to identify potential candidates for follow-up indepth interview

Goals:

1. To ascertain how Faith-Based factors such as faith, spirituality and religiosity (with special emphasis on fatalism and nihilism) impact high-risk behavior of high-risk youth involved in a variety of Youth Oriented Faith-Based Social/Action Initiatives.
2. To access the Spiritual capacity of Faith-Based Organization to serve the social, psychological and spiritual needs (especially as they impact fatalism and nihilism) of high-risk who are involved in Faith-Based Initiative.

These are the two overarching goals for the Research project. The Objectives of the summer pilot project was allot less ambitious. The real goal for this summer was to lay the ground work for a larger study. The ground work included several key points:

1. To improve my basic understanding of African American young men conception of key concepts such as spirituality, faith and religiosity.
2. To obtain a rudimentary understanding of how faith-based organizations impact the spiritual lives of these boys.

3. To develop and test research instruments.
4. To learn enough about the subject to design a larger study.

In my opinion, all the above goals were met satisfactorily. I conducted six focus groups with youth both male and female ranging in age 11-20, from different social economic strata and differing regions of the country. Yet, while there were some differences in opinions they were surprising similar. I had and opportunity to consult with national authorities on faith organizations and to observe a half dozen of them in operation. I developed Informed Consent forms and procedures; focus group questions protocol, and other forms.

Preliminary Results:

Fatalism: *By fatalism, I don't mean a doctrine that all everything in our lives are predetermined by fate. By fatalism I mean despair as an existential condition of a profoundly depressed state being with or without a specific object. It is a sense of an inability to affect change in the course or direction of ones life for the better. It is powerlessness over events, persons or conditions that impact ones life's chances it is a sense of hopelessness, meaninglessness and powerlessness.*

I found that when questioned about their futures the youth were very positive although close to 80% had a career as a profession football or basketball player. Yet most had fall back plan. When question about the likely hood them achieving their goal the mood turned somber. For more than 90% of those who responded questions about what might stand their way violence, the prospect of an early death and run ins with the law made their dreams seem unlikely. The also had very mixed experience with teachers mostly negative. Many feel it doesn't matter how smart they are their talent will not be recognized because they had been pigeonhole from very early on in their educational career.

However, majority of those involved with a faith-based organization had a coping strategy that they to varying degrees believe would make them the exception. Where there appeared to be high degree of bonding with Youth Minister or Pastor the youth were very resilient. Eventhough, they recognized the obstacles (which were great) they had confidence born of faith that they could and would overcome. For those who had only marginal relationships with the ministries and youth workers they was mostly escapism.

The greatest escape ultimately, was pro sports. While many express other options like lawyer, electrician, mechanic or business owner, pro sport was by far the career of choice. I would like very interested to understand this phenomenon because it crosses age, social economic and geographical boundaries.

Nihilism: *By nihilism I mean an existential condition that refutes distinctions in moral values a sort of utilitarian relativism grounded in a deep angst. This is cause by a constant struggle to cope with meaninglessness, hopeless and lovelessness. With Cornel West, I view this nihilism as a threat because the chief moral value that is rejected is the value of human life itself. Materialism becomes the ultimate and determining value, but value that is without moral or rational rooted ness that leads finally to a spiritual nothingness.*

The majority of the youth were largely alienated for the political life of the community. They had no respect for the government in general. The description of its policies international, national and local, was "its stupid." Most felt that law was not there to protect them but instead to control them. Outside, of their mother and grandmother there was no one they respected They were at war with police. The young men told story after story of racism, brutality, criminal behavior of police that they or relatives or close friends has experienced.

There was a profound since of loss for their missing fathers. Many had never met their fathers or had no use for the ones they did know. This was not universally the case however; a number of them had good relationships with their fathers. But overall a male influence was missing in their lives. Often the youth worker (minister) plays a important role in feeling that gap. In fact many referred to their youth worker as their father.

While for the younger youth and the few females in the study relationship were an important value in life, the overwhelming majority of the older boy cash money was the ultimate value. The greatest fear was of poverty. To be with means was demeaning. So earn money by any means necessary was important. A job was preferred by most. For the most part these young men were very materialistic.

It was evident that most important aspect of all the faith organization is the role of a male role model and mentor. The missing father is an important factor that requires further study. The Faith-based organization comes closes to formerly socializing the youth in to the culture and providing a legitimate authority figure.

Faith-Based Organizations: *By faith-based I mean an organization that is based within or related to a religious institution (s). It may also refer to an organization that operates by religious or spiritual principles or grounded and rooted in a religious and spiritual tradition.*

The participants in the study were made up both church and unchurched youth. Some of the youth only participate in the ministries and never went to church. The youth in general had a good understand of faith. Faith them is what it would take for them to get over the obstacles that lay in their way. It is believing in yourself even when all the odd are again you. It is believing that," God will come through for you even if you do something bad."

Faith organizations go the extra mile that many of these youth. For many of them, someone who would go out of their way to help them was unheard of by these youth. Christian Life skills sent a worker from Pittsburgh to Ohio when one youth got arrested. Coach did not give up on him even thought he kept acting bad. These faith based organizations provided an alternate language of faith that challenges the despair all around them.

Evaluation

A.) Goals Achievement Assessment

Below are the goals stated in the proposal.

Goals:

1. To ascertain how Faith-Based factors such as faith, spirituality and religiosity (with special emphasis on fatalism and nihilism) impact high-risk behavior of high-risk youth involved in a variety of Youth Oriented Faith-Based Social/Action Initiatives.

2. To assess the spiritual capacity of Faith-Based Organizations (FBO) to serve the social, psychological and spiritual needs (especially as they impact fatalism and nihilism) of high-risk youth who are involved in faith-based initiatives.

Goal One: Faith-Based Factors

I have begun to ascertain how faith-based factors such as faith, spirituality and religiosity impact high-risk behavior of youth involved in a variety of youth-oriented, faith-based social/action initiatives and church-based ministries. During the seven focus group and in-depth interviews with youth workers I asked a battery of focused questions to explore this question. Although this was not asked as a specific question, the substance of its content was approached from many varying angles of inquiry by the interview protocol. I took every opportunity to follow any trajectory in the conversation that would have led to a better understanding of the role that faith-based factors played. It was very evident that positive relationships existed for Boys of the Christian Life Skills, Gordon UMC and the Youth of Truth focus groups and interviews also established the relationship between these faith factors and behavior. A negative relationship between these factors existed for the Older Boys focus group at Wesley Centers. However, it was evident the group cohesion that exerted a positive peer pressure was the determining factor. My preliminary findings suggest that these factors operate to impact behavior in a bonded communal context rather than as individualist virtues. It was evident that church-based ministries were much more effective in creating these bonded communal contexts. This was especially evident for Christian Life Skills. When it was church-based it was much more effective than a community-based or stand alone program.

Again this was a pilot study whose primary aim was to test the feasibility of such a study and begin the development of the instruments necessary to gather relevant data. The

above findings can hardly be considered conclusive or even scientifically valid. However, they suggest some possible directions for further research.

Goal Two: Spiritual Capacity

Each organization that I had an opportunity to investigate had considerable spiritual capacity. However, what I found was that capacity exists in two areas. The first and primary area of spiritual capacity is in the area of leadership. The in-depth interviews of the youth workers and the unsolicited and solicited response of the youth made it quite apparent that spiritual depth of the leader was a crucial factor in the spiritual development of the youth. Even more importantly, interviewees explained how their spiritual development impacted their hope for the future and respect for authority in general (fatalism and nihilism). The capacity that seems to matter was the ability to manifest love for the youth in terms of long suffering. These youth, often abandoned by their families and society, often tested their leaders. If they were able to stick with them, they were able to understand the nature of faith and trust. This is because, someone demonstrated faith and trust to them in the most real way possible. I heard this sentiment expressed over and over again in the interviews and focus groups. The leaders must also have the capacities to manifest tough love when necessary. Boundaries are something that these youth do not experience often because either people are afraid of them or simply do not care. They often do not have fathers present and have been given up on by the system. The must have a measure of discernment to know when boundaries are necessary. The leader must be a good teacher. However, only after much long suffering and tough love will they have earned the right to teach the faith-based factors as intellectual concepts that the youth will appropriate as their own. Again I found these qualities in leaders they called by such names of endearment as Coach, Deacon, Rev. and so on.

The second area of spiritual capacity is the ability to surround the youth with a spiritual community. The Faith-Based Organization (FBO) must be capable of providing rituals that communicate the faith to youth. This was especially true for the Youth of Truth who are developing a Hip-Hop worship service, but it was also true of the Capitalview Boy's Club. In the Boy's Club focus group, an unchurched youth from the community describes going to church after a long absence from the ministry: "Rev. Pickett called me up before congregation and took off his robe and put it on, then he took off his class ring and put it on my finger, then took off his shoes and put them on me. I was standing in front of all those people. I felt silly but I felt kind of good too." He will never forget the story of the Prodigal Son. The FBO has to have the capacity to provide a community of role models and encouragers. The spiritual capacity most important was the gift of hospitality. In the Christian Life Skill focus group you had ex-gang members who loved going to church because of the people who knew how to show them love, while you had others who were totally bewildered by this attitude on the part of others in the group.

Again, I would hardly conclude that the above findings have scientific validity, but they are once again suggestive. More importantly, I believe that the focus group format provides a useful tool for gathering relevant data on institutional capacity.

B.)Outcomes Evaluation

The outcomes I listed in my proposal are as follows:

1. One juried article to a journal (such as Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion)
2. One chapter and book proposal (Abington, Alban Institute, Fortress Press, or Eerdmans)
3. A Grant Proposal for larger study
4. A course on Spiritual Journey of High-Risk Youth

None of the above goals have been accomplished at this time. However, each will be accomplished within the next year. Yet, they are not the actual outcomes of the study but rather the results or fruits of the study. More realistic outcomes would have been the following:

1. To improve my basic understanding of African American young men's conceptions of key concepts such as spirituality, faith and religiosity.
2. To obtain a rudimentary understanding of how Faith-Based Organizations impact the spiritual lives of these boys.
3. To develop and test research instruments.
4. Develop a workable definition nihilism and fatalism
5. To learn enough about the subject to design a larger study.

Therefore, I offer evaluative reflections on the above outcomes.

1. Basic understanding of African American boys' conceptions of key concepts, such as spirituality, faith and religiosity. I asked all the youth for their understanding of the word faith. I got a number of varying responses depending on the boy's religiosity. Those who go to church regularly and attend Sunday School, offered standard church definitions of trust in God, including Hebrews 11:1 "…faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." They talked about belief in themselves to accomplish something. Spirituality was much more difficult to approach. I asked youth about death and life, heaven and hell, and about prayer and the meaning of life. These questions provide a keen insight to the youth understanding of spirituality. They are for the most part very spiritual because of the constant reality of death in their lives. They are like the terminally ill that must constantly face ultimate questions of life. The only difference is the

ability to articulate their question. Those who are churched or have strong Faith-Based Organizations with the capacities I described above could find a language for their spirituality; those who were unchurched and experienced Faith-Based Organizations which had not demonstrated the above capacities were at a lost for words. I believe that I was able to achieve this goal.

2. The impact of Faith-Based Organizations on these youth was obvious and profound. However, it was not so much the organizations, but the people of faith who work through these organizations. Each of these organizations had different approaches, but their ability to put people of faith in relationship to young people is key. I believe I was able to achieve this goal.

3. I was not satisfied with my ability to develop and test research instruments. This was a much more complicated and involved process than I first thought. I had intended to develop an assessment with the help of Gary Gunderson, author of "Deeply Woven Roots," and Director of the Interfaith Health Program. I had two consultations with him but was unable to finalize an instrument. We agreed that more conversations are necessary. However, the seven strengths outline in "Deeply Woven Roots" is reflected in the Protocol. I also anticipated developing sophisticated video research instruments with the NIDA Research Center of the American Bible Society. This was not achieved. Again much more deliberation is necessary, however each focus group and interview was videoed in anticipation of the development of a video analysis process. A pilot Protocol was developed and tested with seven focus group and five in-depth interviews. It will be revised, when the data it produced has been analyzed.

4. Again discussions with Dr. Hilda Davis on fatalism took place. Preliminary definitions of fatalism and nihilism have been developed and are included in the Research Protocol.

5. I believe as stated above, I have a number of hopeful directions for further research. I also believe I have the beginning of a methodology to build on for the more protracted study.

Next Steps

The next steps will include:

1. Transcribe video tapes into a written transcript.
2. Analyze tapes and transcripts to formulate hypotheses about relationships among key factors -- religious faith, spirituality, religiosity, and high-risk behavior;
3. Revise and adjust research design based on input from youth;

4. Catalog ethnographic data-- record sequences of events and frequency of occurrence of key concepts, actions, and interactions of subjects
5. Develop social service capacity assessment survey for faith-based organizations based on eight capacities of congregations[2].
6. Formulate questions and hypotheses about relationships among key factors---organizational capacity, financial accountability, needed expertise, ability to collaborate with secular and interfaith institution etc...
7. Develop write an article on preliminary result.
8. Develop a grant proposal for the next phase of research.

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[2] Deeply Woven Roots and the Interfaith Health program.