Accountability in Faith-Based Organizations and the Future of Charitable Choice

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All history reveals the church as an institution which is continually educating, developing, and changing society, and changing with the changes it produces. In its very nature it must grow with society and in adaptation to its wants, times, intelligence, and circumstances, and in so far as it fails in this it detracts from its social identity and social life and begins to decay.

-- Carl Zollmann, American Church Law (1933, 245-246)

Governments’ growing willingness to use faith-based organizations to provide social services pose knotty and urgent questions about the accountability of religious entities – which have traditionally been largely free of public monitoring and oversight (Minow 2000; Gilman 2002).

Most fundamentally, these involve tensions between expectations that institutional recipients of public funds be accountable in terms of fiduciary duties, standards of service, and regard for the right of clients and legal and constitutional protections of religious groups’ autonomy. The resolution of these tensions has been complicated not only by an on-going transformation in the legal treatment of nonprofits generally, which has led legislators, jurists, and the public to expect higher degrees of transparency, but also a continuing elaboration of "line blurring organizational forms," especially the quasi-private and mixed public-private entities that have "taken center stage in the era of privatization" (Panel Discussion 2001, 1357). Shifts in religious demography have further complicated questions of accountability, as number of religions, the diversity of their beliefs, practices, and organizational characteristics, and the variety of ways they engage in public life have grown.

Background
There is nothing new about direct and indirect public subsidy of religiously-tied service providers (on this, see Monsma 1996, 63-108; Hall 2002): tax exemption and
deductibility of donations, as well as grants, contracts, and vouchers have long been used by governments to defray the costs of caring for the dependent and disabled by entities owned, controlled, or significantly related to religious bodies. In recent years, however, not only has the proportion of government subsidized services provided by faith-based organizations grown, but the range of services and types of organizations through which they are provided has grown more varied and diverse.

Historically, educational and social services provided by religious bodies and faith-based organizations focused on traditional objects of charity – the young, the poor, the sick, and the disabled. Since the 1960s, they have expanded to include job training, community and economic development, housing, substance abuse programs, refugee placement, and many other activities.

Again, while services were historically provided either directly by religious bodies and their members or by secular corporations controlled by them, today faith-based organizations can range from paradenominational organizations like Habitat for Humanity, a secular corporation run by people of faith but with no formal ties to any religious body (Baggett 2001) and secular youth services agencies run by members of religious orders governed by lay boards of directors and funded largely by government, through day schools and community development corporations controlled formally or informally by religious bodies.

As the scope, scale, and range of services provided by faith-based organizations has expanded and their dependence on government funding has increased, the need for resolution of unanswered questions about their accountability has intensified. On the one hand, the growing scale of government subvention has inevitably brought with it higher standards of fiduciary responsibility and financial management, along with mandates for performance evaluation and public reporting. On the other hand, to the extent that they continue to depend significantly on private support, religious bodies and faith-based organizations have become entangled in the general crisis of accountability that has affected corporate management and governance – for-profit and nonprofit alike: today, questions about financial improprieties, self-dealing, conflicts of interest, and public disclosure are as likely to be raised about religious organizations as about secular ones. In addition, the expanding range of service industries in which faith-based providers operate renders them subject to a wide variety of industry specific regulatory regimes involving licensing, standards of care, public health and safety, land
use, and the legal rights of clients. Finally, in an era of class action aggressive tort litigation that began in the 1960s, stakeholders – community groups, client groups, rights advocates, and other organized interests affected by the activities of faith-based organizations – have become steadily more vocal and influential in demanding accountability (e.g., the role of lay groups like Voice of the Faithful in the Catholic Church’s sex abuse scandals).

External Accountability: the Constitutional and Statutory Framework

Until fairly recently, religious bodies and faith-based organizations were free of many of the burdens of accountability (on this, see Gilman 2002). As legal scholar Perry Dane notes, the Constitution, statutes, and the common law give religious institutions a striking degree of autonomy. Churches are immune from various aspects of laws governing, for example, civil rights and labor relations. In their relations with their members, they are immune from many obligations that tort, contract, and other bodies of law impose upon other institutions. They are subject to much less stringent reporting rules than other nonprofits under the tax code. Many state corporation laws deal separately with religious corporations and other nonprofits. And provisions for religious corporations are usually less restrictive, or more tailored to the needs of particular religious communities (1998, 51).

Protected by the Free Exercise and Establishment clauses of the U.S. Constitution and by its state counterparts, religious groups and organizations have been treated legally as nearly sovereign entities by courts and legislative bodies, deferring to the authority of internal tribunals to decide disputes. State laws have been especially respectful of religion’s autonomy and diversity. As Dane notes, New York’s religious corporations law just goes through each major religious group in the state, and mandates a different form of organization for each. Roman Catholic parishes get organized in one way, Presbyterian congregations a different way, synagogues yet another way. Some faiths require a given number of elected trustees, of whom a majority must be non-clerics. Other faiths require a different number of trustees. Yet other faiths have interlocking local and diocesan corporations under clerical control. All of this would look like a flagrant violation of the constitution’s norms of equality and free exercise, except that these various forms are so obviously trying to give secular legal form to the varied needs and religious doctrines of different religions. What might look like
intense regulation is an effort at creating a set of distinct legal spaces for the encounter of church and state (1998, 52-53).

The intensifying engagement of religious bodies and faith-based organizations in providing an ever-increasing range of services has eroded their exemption from the kinds of accountability to which secular corporations were subject has diminished -- statutory and administrative regimes intended to prevent abuse and neglect of clients, to monitor the performance of providers based on clearly articulated outcomes, and to enforce quality standards (Gilman 2002, 805).

This rising threshold of accountability for religiously-tied organizations has been driven by a number of factors. Since the 1970s, class action suits brought on behalf of clients produced court rulings that have extended constitutional protection to the dependent and disabled (on this, see Rothman & Rothman 1984, 45-65). In mandating the treatment of the mentally disabled in the least restrictive settings a right, the courts not only made treatment a right, but also assumed the power to set forth the kinds of care that fulfilled constitutional requirements. These rulings, which deinstitutionalized the retarded and mentally ill, created the conditions that gave rise to a vast largely nonprofit group home industry -- and industry which people of faith and religious organizations played a major role in creating (on this, see Rothman & Rothman 1984, 151-176).

A second driving factor has been a by-product of the rationalization of American charities laws over the past half century, a period in which federal and state tax and regulatory regimes have become increasingly complex and intrusive and the statutes under which nonprofit corporations, including religious bodies, are created and regulated increasingly uniform (on this, see Hone 1988). By the 1980s, most states, either by statute or through the courts, had eliminated charitable immunity from tort liability. Some states, in revising their nonstock corporation statutes, eliminated religious corporations as a separate category, treating religious corporations as a mere subset of the larger domain of public benefit corporations (Hone 1989, 760-761; Gilman 2002, 837-837)

Organized religion responded to this by pressing for the passage of legislation restoring its privileged position – the Religious Free Restoration Act of 1993 (RFRA). This statute was a response to a 1990 U.S. Supreme Court’s 1990 decision holding that
religious belief does not excuse individuals or organizations from otherwise valid laws prohibiting conduct that government is free to regulate. Permitting exceptions to every law or regulation affecting religion, the court ruled, “open the prospect of constitutionally required exemptions from civic obligations of almost every conceivable kind,” including, compulsory military, service, payment of taxes, vaccination requirements, and child-neglect laws (Employment Division v. Smith 1990). This was regarded as a significant departure from earlier decisions (notably Sherbert v. Verner 1963 and Wisconsin v. Yoder 1972), in which the court had ruled that governments had to demonstrate a compelling public interest as a condition for abrogating religious practices.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act sought to restore the compelling interest test as a mechanism for “striking sensible balances between religious liberty and competing prior governmental interests.” The heart of the bill declared that

(a) In General: Government shall not substantially burden a person’s exercise of religion even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability, except as provided in subsection (b).

(b) Exception: Government may substantially burden a person’s exercise of religion only if it demonstrates that application of the burden to the person--

(1) is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest; and
(2) is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest.

(c) Judicial Relief: A person whose religious exercise has been burdened in violation of this section may assert that violation as a claim or defense in a judicial proceeding and obtain appropriate relief against a government. Standing to assert a claim or defense under this section shall be governed by the general rules of standing under article III of the Constitution (Religious Freedom Restoration Act 1993).

On the face of it, the RFRA appeared to be doing no more than restoring the status quo ante Smith. In fact, in the context of the devolution and privatization of social services
and the increasing importance of religious agencies in providing those services, it was a Pandora’s Box of non-accountability for organizations that were operating well beyond the traditional precincts of religious worship and charity. Did the law, for example, exempt religious groups which believed in corporal punishment of children, polygamy, or sexual relations with minors as articles of faith from child protection statutes? Could faith-based group homes for the mentally retarded claim exemption from statutes mandating standards of care for clients? Did it exempt church-owned properties from compliance with zoning, fire, safety, and building codes? More to the point, would it permit religious groups and faith-based organizations to practice employment discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, ethnicity, or sexual orientation?

A test of the RFRA was not long in coming. In 1995, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of San Antonio, Texas applied to the City of Bourne for a permit to enlarge a church in an historic district. When the city denied the permit, citing legislation protecting historic properties, the church brought suit, claiming that its action had, in failing to demonstrate a compelling public interest, unduly burdened its free exercise of religion. The federal district court in which the case was first brought ruled against the church on the grounds that Congress in enacting the RFRA had exceeded its constitutional authority. The Court of Appeals reversed the District Court, finding RFRA to be constitutional.

The case came before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1997. In a sharply worded 5-4 opinion, the court ruled the RFRA unconstitutional, based on a careful review of the judicial and legislative history of the Fourteenth Amendment, under the authority of which the Act was applied to the states. Henceforth religious groups and organizations would be subject to generally applicable laws and religious belief and practice, in and of themselves, could not be used to exempt them from the common burdens of corporate citizenship. Some exceptions would later be permitted, as when Congress exempted faith-based service providers from employment discrimination rules when it enacted the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 – an action that has been subsequently upheld by the courts.

Over the past five years, congressional proponents of faith-based initiatives have labored to craft legislation that would restore the legal privileges of religious
organizations and still pass the constitutional test set forth by the court. The current version, the Charitable Choice Act of 2002 (CCA) proposes to broaden the range of programs eligible for government subsidy, permits service providers to proselytize, and exempts faith-based providers from anti-discrimination laws (Michelman 2002). Although likely to be enacted by the Republican-controlled Senate (it has already been passed by the House) and signed by the President, many doubt it would survive a court challenge.

In the absence of congressional action, the effort to address the problem of balancing the autonomy of religious service providers and public accountability have shifted to the states – especially those which embraced the concept of charitable choice. Texas, during George W. Bush’s governorship, went the furthest in turning back the clock. In 1997, its legislature enacted three laws that substantially relieved faith-based social services from regulation: one exempted non-medical faith-based substance abuse treatment programs and their employees from state regulation and licensing, another freed child-care and child placement agencies from the need to be accredited by the state, a third shielded from legal liability donors of medical equipment and supplies to providers of free or low-cost health care (on this, see Frumkin 2000, 212-213). Overall, however, there is tremendous variation from state to state and – barring constitutionally acceptable federal legislation – this situation is not likely to change.

Religion and the Changing Politics of Accountability

In addition to the erosion of the formal legal protections that had insulated religious bodies and faith-based organizations from accountability, it appears that many informal obstacles to accountability are also disappearing. Foremost among these have been the limited resources of government agencies entrusted with the task of overseeing charitable institutions and the reluctance of state attorneys-general to investigate and act on malfeasance in religious organizations.

As elected officials, state attorneys general are political animals -- often with higher ambitions. Traditionally, they have avoided locking horns with powerful organized interests, among which organized religion and its satellites can surely be counted. This reluctance was evident a decade ago, in the Covenant House scandal.
Described by one reporter as "the Donald Trump of American Catholicism," Father Bruce Ritter ran an international charitable empire with a high profile lay board and millions of dollars in revenue from donors responding to aggressive direct mail campaigns and from government grants and contracts (Sennott 1992, 126). Covenant House typified the new kind of faith-based organization that emerged and flourished during the 1980s and 1990s: a secular corporation headed by a member of the Franciscan Order with a board of prominent Catholic laymen, it took advantage of its political connections to the new conservative establishment to land government grants and contracts, while also using its church connections to reach Catholic donors, large and small. As a secular corporation without an official church presence on its governing board, Covenant House had only nominal accountability to the church. Because its board’s prominent members had neither the time nor the inclination to give the organization close attention, internal accountability was also weak. Ritter routinely made important decisions without consulting his board.

What began in the late 1960s as a post-Vatican II Franciscan’s street ministry to runaway and sexually exploited teenagers was transformed in the resource-rich and under-regulated setting of the Republican Revolution of the 1980s. "Ritter's work fit neatly into the conservative agenda," Charles Sennott writes. Covenant House was a private-enterprise charity that on the surface seemed remarkably more efficient than the bloated social-service bureaucracies that relied primarily on government funds. With charities like this one, the Republicans were asking, who needed government spending? Bruce Ritter’s business sense was so keen that The Wall Street Journal profiled him on its front page, Conservative columnists all around the country asked, "Why can’t more people run programs like Father Bruce Ritter’s?" (Sennott 1992, 22).

Money and power inevitably pushed Covenant House's mission away from its earlier spiritual focus. "Father Bruce and his cohort Macauley were like corporate raiders," Sennott writes, "ready to move their business of compassion into every available market and crush anyone who stood in their way. . . . If Covenant House was a business, then the bottom line was 'intake figures' (128).

When information about Father Ritter's sexual escapades and financial misdeeds began to surface in the late 1980s -- in the form of stories told to the press by a former lover --, he was stoutly defended by the church hierarchy, which charged the press with
anti-Catholic bias. Wealthy and influential board members brought pressure on the news executives and newspaper owners to squelch the story. While Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau became involved in the matter early on, the state's Attorney General waited for months before initiating an investigation -- doubtless due to the Governor's outspoken public defense of Father Ritter.

While Ritter was eventually forced to resign, no charges were ever brought against him for his financial improprieties, nor did the church discharge him from his ministry. In the end, the political power of the church proved to be too much for New York's politically-sensitive charities regulators.

Over the years, however, a succession of scandals involving clergy, religious bodies, and faith-based organizations -- the PTL/Televangelist financial follies of Jim and Tammy Fay Bakker, sexual and financial excesses at Covenant House, the New Era Ponzi scheme, embezzlements of Episcopal Church funds, the Baptist Foundation of Arizona bankruptcy and the long-unfolding priest/child molestation fray -- have worn away both the aura of high purpose and the reality of political clout that had for so long protected religious entities from accountability. As the Boston Globe reportorial team that covered the priest sex abuse scandal noted,

There had been a discernable change in the political culture of Massachusetts: the cardinal was fair game. And increasingly so were cardinals and bishops in other places where, as in Boston, the Church had enjoyed a long tradition of polite courtesy from secular authorities (Investigative Staff 2002, 137).

In New York, when the scandal broke, Westchester County District Attorney Jeanine Pirro promptly convened the seven other D.A.’s whose jurisdictions covered the New York diocese. Rejecting the archbishop’s announcement that it would turn evidence over to prosecutors only if its officials concluded there was probable cause, the group threatened to subpoena records (137-138). The church’s long and deplorable record of shielding abusive priests had evidently deprived it of any credibility as an institution that could police itself. Henceforth, at least in the area of child sexual abuse, it would no longer enjoy either immunity from civil suits nor the capacity to protect its priests from criminal liability.

The Baptist Foundation of Arizona scandal – which produced the largest nonprofit bankruptcy in American history -- evoked a similarly rapid and undeferential
response from legal authorities. The foundation had been established in 1948 to raise funds for Southern Baptist-related charities by selling financial services to co-religionists (on BFA’s history, see Fager 1999; Baptist Foundation 2001; Arizona Attorney General 2001). It was, in effect, a faith-based mutual fund, managed by laymen overseen by a governing board composed of prominent Southern Baptists pastors and seminary presidents.

The Foundation generated hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue, most of which was invested in ventures controlled by its managers – who also richly rewarded themselves with lavish salaries, loans, and other perks. Over the course of a half century, BFA contributed only $1.3 million to the church and its charities – though in 1996 it sold more than $500 million worth of securities and paid its staff more than $16 million in salaries.

Alerted by disgruntled staffers, the Phoenix New Times initiated a prize-winning series of investigative reports in 1997. The church defended the Foundation, calling the newspaper “anti-Christian” and associated its reports with “attacks from Satan” (Fager 1999). The New Times stories sparked stockholder suits and attracted the attention of investigators from the state Attorney General’s office and the Arizona Corporation Commission. In August of 1999, the Commission ordered the BFA and related enterprises, Arizona Southern Baptist New Church Ventures and Christian Financial Partners to cease operations. Two months later, BFA and its subsidiaries filed for bankruptcy – while the Arizona State Board of Accountancy filed a complaint against BFA’s accountant, Arthur Anderson, LLP (better known for its role in the Enron collapse), which had given the foundation a clean bill of financial health. In April of 2001, the five top managers of the BFA were indicted on multiple counts of fraud.

**Internal Accountability?**

Religious organizations are unusual in their variety and complexity. Many religious bodies are free-standing, self-governing gatherings of believers. Some are loosely-coupled members of regional or national bodies of independent congregations that share the same beliefs and practices. Still others are embedded in formal hierarchies.

This hardly exhausts the possibilities: some free-standing bodies may be entirely informal, lacking even ordained clergy; many are formally organized, with by-laws,
governing boards, and professionally-trained religious leaders and administrators. At the other end of the continuum, some hierarchically-structured religious groups, like the Roman Catholics, have relatively straightforward top-down arrangements; in others, like the Protestant Episcopal Church, bishops are ultimately subject to a national convention of elected clerical and lay delegates.

The involvement of religious groups in providing services – charitable, educational, and social – adds additional layers of variety and complexity. Some groups, like the Salvation Army and a number of Catholic religious orders, provide services as a form of devotional activity. Others create secular corporations to which they are tied in a variety of ways ranging from church control through the nominal presence of church officials on governing boards. Some “faith-based organizations” are religious in name only, having no formal ties to religious bodies.

Along with structural variety, we see many different forms of financial dependency. Some faith-based service providers are largely or entirely funded by government. Others are entirely sustained by donated funds and volunteer labor. Still others are self-supporting through sales of goods and services.

The bewildering variety and complexity of religious organizations and faith-based service providers not only makes it nearly impossible to frame generalizations about accountability in these entities, but also impairs government’s capacity to construct public policies to monitor and regulate them.

While government is unconstrained in its ability to regulate internal accountability mechanisms in secular corporations – defining the powers and duties of managers and directors, mandating standards of training for staff, establishing guidelines for the composition of governing boards --, this power does not extend to religious bodies.

Because religious modes of authority, governance, and decision making are so entwined with religious doctrine, courts and legislatures have gone out of their way to avoid the kinds of “excessive entanglement” with matters of doctrine and practice that would lead to violations of Free Exercise Clause of the U.S. and state constitutions. (Gilman 2002, 840-844, 878-882). It is this deference to the nearly sovereign status of religion that led states like New York to craft its religious corporations statute to allow
for a wide range of church polities and the U.S. Supreme Court, in its 1970 decision in 
Walz v. Tax Commission case, to limit the extent to which government could regulate 
religious organizations through generally applicable laws by enunciating the doctrine 
that government regulation of religious groups could become so onerous that the 
regulations could violate the Establishment Clause’s prohibition on excessive 
entanglement between government and religion.

The ultimate result of this situation is a regulatory Gordian Knot: churches and 
faith-based organizations cannot be trusted to police themselves, since they are not 
accountable to any external agency or constituency for the quality or integrity of their 
internal accountability mechanisms. Episcopal parishes provide a good example of the 
peculiarities of governance in religious settings: Parishes are corporations in which 
most decisions are entrusted to vestries – governing boards elected annual by church 
members. The vestry has to the power to hire clergy – but not to fire them. Moreover, 
legally the vestry is not a governing body – in fact, because the parish is a corporation sole in which the rector is the corporation. As Perry Dane explains it, a 
Cleric in his capacity as a corporation sole is not simply the head of his church. He is, in legal contemplation, the church. He holds title to the property, enters 
into contracts, sues, and is sued. . . . The corporation sole is not even a trustee, in 
the precise sense of that word. A trustee holds title to property for the benefit of 
someone else, and owes specific legal duties to that beneficiary. Courts have held 
that a corporation sole owes no such duties. The estate, in legal contemplation, is 
all his (Dane 1998, 55).

This form of organization is not peculiar to Episcopal and Roman Catholic parishes. 
Suzanne Feeney’s case study, “Authority Dilemmas on a Board in a Multi-Tiered 
Governance Structure” (1998), which features a health care organization run by a 
religious order. The health care center’s articles of incorporation state that “this 
Corporation shall have only one member, and the sole member of the corporation shall 
be the Health System of the Holy Order of Caregivers” (18). As a Roman Catholic 
religious order, the Caregivers were not run democratically: in effect, the head of the 
order was a corporation sole exercising authority both over the order and its health 
center. The articles of incorporation also created a board of directors, consisting of three 
individuals “elected” (i.e., appointed) by the Member and empowered “to manage the 
business and affairs of the Corporation.” Like the vestry in an Episcopal parish, it was 
not a governing body, only an advisory one.
Parishes in episcopal polities and congregations in denominational faiths are formally accountable to the larger polities of which they are a part. But, as the Catholic sex abuse scandal suggests, these polities may be more concerned with defending the reputation and legal position of the church as a whole than of calling clergy to account. Generally, it appears that episcopal hierarchies and denominational bodies are more likely to discipline clergy for deviations in doctrine and practice (such as the ordination of homosexuals or the marriage of same sex couples) than for financial or sexual misdeeds.

Significant numbers of American religious bodies do not operate within denominational or episcopal frameworks. These free-standing self-governing congregations are effectively accountable only to themselves – with sometime bizarre results. Over the past twenty years Canadian and American fundamentalist groups have battled child welfare agencies in the courts, defending their practices of corporal punishment on religious groups. One of the most notorious of these cases involved a Texas-based chain of youth homes owned by the Rev. Wiley Cameron, Sr. – establishment where one client was tied to a bed and beaten, while two others were forced to spend the night in a sewage pit (Rosin 2001). In another case, the pastor and four members of an Atlanta congregation were arrested for beating children as part of its regular services. Authorities removed 41 children from the custody of their parents, all of whom were members of the group (Pastor, 5 Followers 2001). In both instances, the practices were defended as scripturally based. Those these claims did not prevail in court, they did serve to further call attention to the naivite inherent in expecting internal accountability mechanisms in freestanding congregations to serve the public interest or protect the interest of clients.

Conclusion

To the extent that religious bodies and faith-based organizations have lost the legal immunities and political deference that had historically exempted them from accountability, clients and the public have undoubtedly benefited. However, it appears that there are very real constitutional limitations to the extent to which generally applicable laws and industry-specific regulations can be applied to religious bodies without either infringing their First Amendment rights or excessively entangling government in ways that would violate the Establishment Clause. Continuing devolution and privatization of social services, combined with charitable choice
legislation that permits direct government funding of congregational service provision, is producing, on the state level, legislative efforts to reinstate these immunities. The result is that accountability – and lack of it – is increasingly likely to be a state and local matter, not a national one.

Until recently, such a descent into policy incoherence would have sparked litigations resulting ultimately in national standards set by Congress or the courts. The rulings of increasingly conservative federal courts seem unlikely to produce such outcomes, as their embrace of the bold doctrine of incorporation -- through which the Warren court applied constitutional civil rights protections to the states via the Fourteenth Amendment -- seems to be weakening. Indeed, the decision in Bourne v. Flores, which overturned the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993, was really an effort to reduce the power of Congress and the courts to overrule state and local enactments. As as such, it represented a judicial retreat from incorporation.

Since the debate over charitable choice began, the major objections to the policy were based either on fears about the sectarianization of politics and government or the ways in which dependence on government funding would displace the religious missions of faith-based service providers. The present situation points to a third set of objections: the likelihood that religious social service providers, operating in a resource rich and under-regulated domain may give rise to scandal, abuse, and mismanagement on such a scale that the public reputation of religion may be permanently damaged.

While most faith-based service providers will probably accept government regulation and oversight, providers, especially in states where theologically and politically conservative groups predominate, may lobby actively for the kinds of immunities and exemptions from oversight and licensing enacted in Texas in 1997. In states where faith-based social service providers have been deregulated, we may see the kinds of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of clients and financial misdeeds and abuses of the public trust that have discredited secular providers in the group home and nursing home industries in recent years.
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