



**FAITH
IN PUBLIC
LIFE**

**A RESOURCE CENTER
FOR JUSTICE AND THE
COMMON GOOD**

MAPPING FAITH: THE STRENGTH,

**Diversity and Growth of Faith Groups
Seeking Justice and the Common Good**

W W W . F A I T H I N P U B L I C L I F E . O R G

INTRODUCTION

Over the past twenty years, it became conventional wisdom that religious social justice groups are in terminal decline, with no grassroots support to back up national advocates. As Dr. Mark Silk of Trinity College asked on CBS News in July 2006, “Thus far the Christian left mainly has an air game: they want to throw positions, they want to talk to the media, but do they have the networks in place on the ground?”

Mapping Faith puts this claim to the test. While many faith networks (both denominational and independent activist organizations) lost some of their organization and influence in the 80s and 90s, the community has seen a resurgence of activity since the new millennium.

The Mapping Faith database provides quantitative documentation that a new generation of religious organizations dedicated to justice, compassion and the common good is active and growing throughout the U.S. From immigrant aid societies in Arizona to advocates for creation care in Oregon, from civil rights groups in South Carolina to living wage proponents in Ohio, these groups reflect the moral priorities of people of faith in this country, and play a vital role in America’s spiritual and public life.

In all, Faith in Public Life researchers compiled approximately 3,000 faith leaders and organizations into the Mapping Faith database. Users can sort these groups by geography and policy priority at <http://www.faithinpubliclife.org/map/index.html>. While certainly not comprehensive, the database includes the leading religious voices advocating for justice and the common good from each state. This public resource was created to increase the visibility and connectivity of these organizations, and to serve as a clear demonstration of the diversity, strength, and growth of the justice-centered faith community in America today.

Through thirty years of diligent infrastructure-building, sophisticated media outreach, and a willingness to engage in partisan politics, the religious right has exerted great control over debates about religion in American public life. Unfortunately, these debates have tended to ignore the real moral priorities of religious Americans.¹ In contrast to media personalities stoking the culture war, Mapping Faith identifies grassroots faith leaders doing the hard work of building just communities that embrace the common good.

¹ Polling from a variety of sources in the past two years has documented that Americans see issues like the war in Iraq, poverty and hunger, and greed/corruption as the greatest moral crises facing America. Post-2006 Zogby polling found that 57.5% of voters saw either poverty or corruption as the most urgent moral crisis in American culture, while 45.8% responded that the War in Iraq was the moral issue that most influenced their vote. See polling from Zogby International, the Center for American Values in Public Life, and the Center for American Progress.

INTRODUCTION *Continued*

It is our hope that America has reached a moment of realignment regarding faith and public life. Revitalized social justice coalitions and expanding alliances on issues like creation care and human rights protection indicate that religion will be less easily manipulated for partisan political gain. Mapping Faith presents nearly 3,000 reasons to believe this to be true.



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Mapping Faith

National Directory of Faith Groups for Justice and the Common Good



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SEARCH:

Name: Zip: State: Policy Focus: **Go!**

Search only national groups

VOTE YOUR VALUES
Register to vote

1323 results were found (first 150 displayed - [next](#)):

PROJECT GOALS

1. DOCUMENT THE COMMON GOOD FAITH MOVEMENT

The Mapping Faith database provides quantitative documentation that religious organizations advocating for justice and the common good are active and growing throughout the U.S. As the database demonstrates, the faith community is active at the national and local level, within Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, interfaith, and other settings, in both red and blue states. Faith in Public Life's research showed that traditional sectors of strength, like living wage organizing, are growing, while newer coalitions around climate change are bringing youth and diversity to the faith community.

2. INCREASE CONNECTIVITY AMONG FAITH LEADERS

With the weakening of many religious coalitions through the 80s and 90s, and the emergence of many new potential partners for public action, connections within America's faith leadership need development and restoration. Given these internal challenges, outsiders in secular advocacy groups and media outlets have found it more difficult to engage these faith leaders.

Mapping Faith is designed to build connectivity that the faith community lacks. The easily searchable online database allows clergy to find new allies within their states, advocates to identify faith groups with whom to partner in building broad coalitions, and media outlets to identify national and local faith leaders who can speak to the moral priorities of their communities. By increasing connectivity, America's faith leadership can effectively channel the current energy within the faith community into lasting movements that can reshape American public life.

3. EXPAND THE FAITH COMMUNITY'S CAPACITY FOR NEW ORGANIZING

Mapping Faith is intentionally designed as a publicly available, user-edited, web-based tool. The Internet has begun to change the face of political organizing, with blogs, viral campaigns, YouTube clips, and various forms of e-advocacy allowing grassroots campaigns to achieve remarkable success. While these trends are becoming standard procedure within the broader progressive community, they are only beginning to take root within the religious community.

By using Google Maps technology and allowing public editing of information, Mapping Faith is an initial step in the process of harnessing new technologies to serve the faith community. In the open source spirit that inspires all of Faith in Public Life's work, faith groups across the country may continue to add new groups to the Mapping Faith database, thereby improving the entire community's capacity for new organizing.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Throughout the research process, Faith in Public Life gathered a variety of data on the organizations included in the Mapping Faith database. This information, including group location, faith affiliation, and policy priorities, presents a rich resource for documenting trends in the national faith community working for justice and the common good. After examination of data for all 3000 organizations included in this project, two overriding themes emerged:

1. America's faith community is vastly diverse.
2. America's faith community has a broad values agenda.

Taken together, these themes provide a snapshot of the faith community's current strengths and give some insight into why the American values debate has begun to shift beyond the culture wars.

Exemplary groups from the map are featured throughout the report. This set of spotlighted groups is notable both for its diversity and for the fact that most have emerged since the year 2000. This relatively recent resurgence was one of the dominant themes that Faith in Public Life observed in the research process.

A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Faith leaders working for justice and the common good are a diverse lot. This in and of itself comes as no great surprise. American history is full of interfaith coalitions working together for social change. The unique protection of religious freedom in this country has long allowed diverse faith communities to flourish and maintain their vitality. Groups identified for Mapping Faith reflect this diversity of faiths, and also the racial diversity that remains crucial to the vitality of social justice movements.

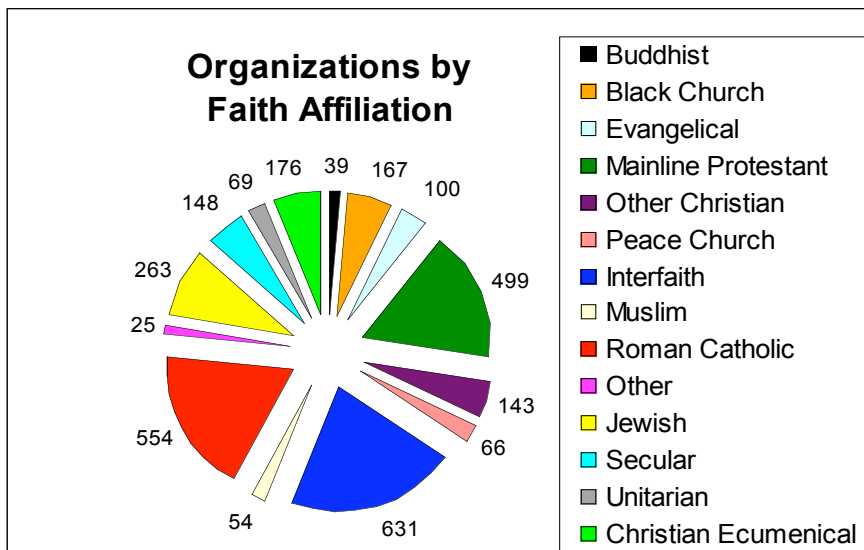
What is most striking about the groups gathered in the Mapping Faith database, however, is their wide range of diversity geographically and in particular, across regional lines of the supposed culture war.

Faith Affiliation

When documenting groups providing leadership on social justice, researchers found that broad faith diversity still characterizes this community. The largest single faith classification of groups within the database is interfaith, with more than 20% of the total organizations. These interfaith groups include leadership from the full spectrum of the American faith community. In total, more than a third of the

organizations in Mapping Faith are either interfaith or represent traditions other than Christianity, including Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and others. Most of these are local organizations dedicated to both social justice and gathering diverse coalitions. They help build strong, inclusive communities and combat intolerance.

Traditional sectors of social justice strength like the Black Church, the Jewish community, the Mainline Protestant community, and the Catholic Church remain strongly represented in organizations across the country. Additionally, the evangelical community has become increasingly mobilized around social justice issues. This segment of American faith activism is growing rapidly; tracking this growth and the institutions that accompany it will be an important step in the years ahead.



ON THE MAP: DIVERSE FAITH AFFILIATION

Interfaith Power and Light
National Chapter Network
Founded: 2001

Interfaith Power and Light unites religious traditions around their shared concern for creation care. In 2006, over 500,000 people saw An Inconvenient Truth at IPL sponsored screenings in congregations across the country.

RESEARCH FINDINGS *Continued*

Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference
Chicago, Illinois
Founded: 2003

SDPC gathers 1,000 leading Black Church voices at its annual conference to strengthen the capacity and network of the African American faith community and empower its leaders to address the needs of those it serves.

Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good
Washington, DC
Founded: 2004

In 2006, CACG distributed an initial printing of one million voter guides to Catholic networks in all 50 states. The non-partisan guides, titled *Voting the Common Good*, promoted the fullness of the Catholic social tradition in the public square.

Jewish Funds for Justice: Holy Congregations, Just Communities Program
New York, NY
Founded: 2002

This national initiative encourages and supports synagogues across the country as they deepen their social justice efforts through congregation-based community organizing. Their 2007 conference gathered 300 congregational leaders for in-depth training.

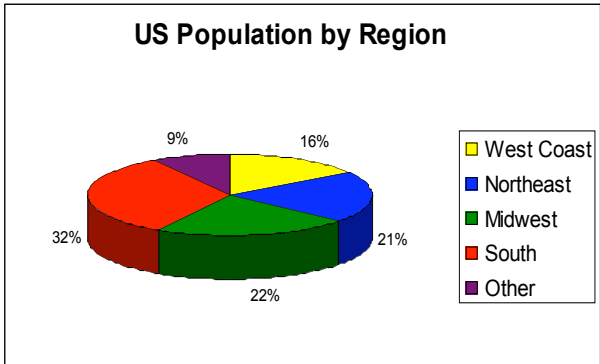
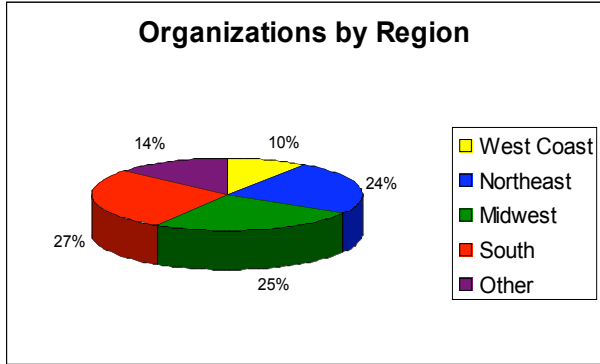
Restoring Eden
La Center, WA
Founded: 2001

Restoring Eden's Evangelical Youth Climate Initiative reached thousands of students on fifty Christian colleges with the message that Christians must speak out to love, serve, and protect God's creation.

Regional Diversity

Whether viewed state-by-state or according to region, Mapping Faith demonstrates that faith leaders are working for social justice in every corner of the country.

The Mapping Faith database challenges the commonly held regional stereotype about religion and politics in American public life: the assumption that the secular coasts of America have abandoned religion. Faith groups advocating for social justice continue to thrive on both the West Coast and in the Northeast, in general proportion to the percentage of the U.S. population in those states.



ON THE MAP: REGIONAL DIVERSITY

We Believe Ohio
Statewide

Founded: December 2005

This clergy-led network of over 300 from across the state shifted Ohio’s values debate in 2006 and secured dozens of media hits with its message of unity and advocacy for the poor, the children, and those who are voiceless and un represented in our times.

Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice
Los Angeles, California

Founded: 1996

CLUE brings together over 600 religious leaders throughout Los Angeles County to respond to the crisis of the working poor. Their advocacy has resulted in victories on behalf of hotel employees, security guards, nursing home staff.

Alabama Arise!
Alabama Statewide

Founded: 1988

Arise is a coalition of nearly 150 religious, community, and civic groups that promote state policies to improve the lives of low-income people. Their comprehensive legislative advocacy has resulted in victories on tax reform, welfare and health care.

RESEARCH FINDINGS *Continued*

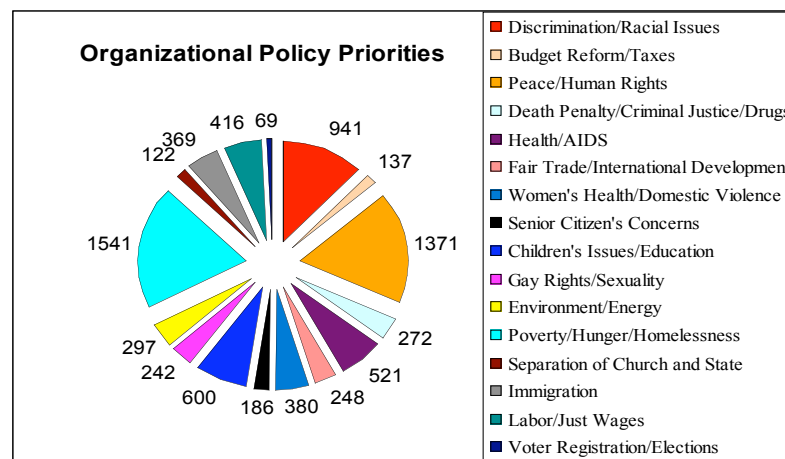
Greater Boston Interfaith Organization
 Boston, Massachusetts
 Founded: 1996

By gathering over 100,000 signatures in favor of state healthcare reform, GBIO made it clear that the faith community would “do what we know to be right, to be just, to be merciful: to bring healthcare access and affordability to each and every member of the Commonwealth.”

OUR EXPANDED VALUES PRIORITIES

To hear religious right leaders (and too many media pundits) tell it, faithful Americans care only about a simple trinity of policy issues, all in the negative: opposition to abortion, opposition to gay marriage, and opposition to stem cell research. While these sentiments are a part of many faith communities, they barely scratch the surface of the real moral priorities of the American people. As the earlier-cited polls indicate, Americans far and away prioritize poverty, greed, and the war in Iraq over the religious right’s agenda.

The groups gathered in this research process live out this broad values agenda. 46% of these organizations place a priority on addressing poverty, hunger or homelessness in their community. Another 40% prioritize work for peace and human rights. Nearly 20% work on health, with a large number directly on the AIDS crisis, while another 10% focus their work on protecting the environment.



ON THE MAP: EXPANDED VALUES PRIORITIES

Let Justice Roll
Nationwide Campaign
Founded: 2004

The Let Justice Roll Living Wage Campaign is a fast-growing nonpartisan coalition of more than ninety faith, community, labor and business organizations committed to raising the minimum wage. Let Justice Roll is organizing actively at the federal level and in twenty states to secure just wages.

National Religious Campaign Against Torture
Nationwide Campaign
Founded: 2006

NRCAT has gathered over 15,000 signatories from across the faith and ideological spectrum, including Rick Warren and Elie Wiesel, for its “Statement of Conscience” against torture. Campaign leaders are currently planning for 1000 congregational screenings of the documentary *Ghosts of Abu Ghraib* in summer and fall of 2007

Balm in Gilead
New York, NY
Founded: 1989

The Balm In Gilead’s pioneering achievements have enabled thousands of African-American churches to become leaders in preventing the transmission of HIV. Its *Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS* reaches an estimated 2.5 million church members each year.

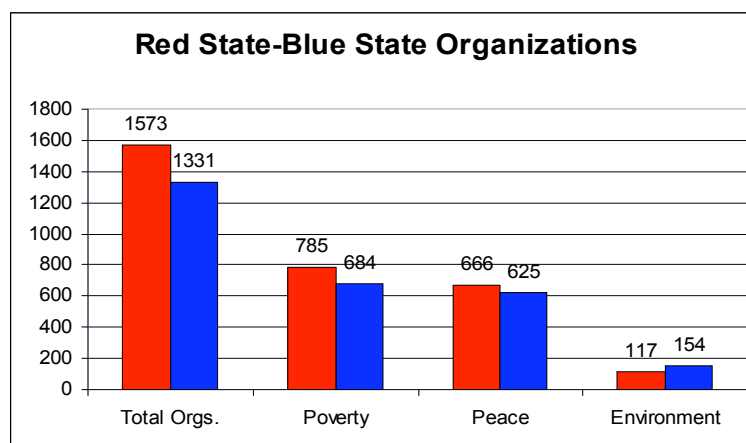
Common Good, Not Culture War

In spite of conventional wisdom about America’s vast cultural divisions, there is great consistency in the moral priorities of faith groups across America. Whether in red or blue states, faith organizations are combating poverty, speaking out for peace, and protecting the environment. Approximately the same proportion of faith groups prioritizes poverty, peace and creation care in red states as in blue states. One is as likely to come across a religious group working for creation care in Oklahoma as Oregon.

While a culture war makes good fodder for talk shows and good fundraising for religious right groups, it misses the shared values that unite faithful Americans across the red-blue line.

RESEARCH FINDINGS *Continued*

The chart below demonstrates this trend on three crucial issues often assumed to matter only to blue state liberals: poverty, peace, and environmental protection. The data demonstrate clearly that these issue priorities are shared across the red-blue divide. The culture war may exist at the fringes, but at the core of the American faith community there are broadly shared values and a commitment to the common good.



ON THE MAP: COMMON GOOD, NOT CULTURE WAR

Texas Faith Network
Austin, Texas
Founded: 1996

TFN is a network of over 600 religious leaders who share a faith that produces a politics of community and compassion not represented by the religious right. In 2006, TFN's *Respect Our Faith* statement pledged that members' houses of worship would not be manipulated to serve the interests of partisan politics.

MAINstream Coalition of Kansas
Johnson County, Kansas
Founded: 1993

MAINstream Coalition gathered 350 Kansans for a "Take Back Kansas" rally in 2006, and played an important role in state debates about teaching of evolution in schools. They encourage people of diverse faiths and beliefs to voice their opinions through active political participation.

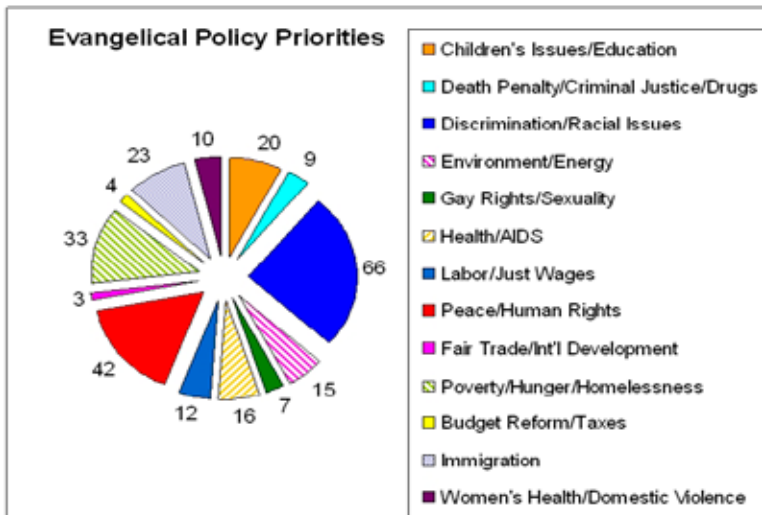
Montana Progressive Clergy Alliance
 Montana statewide
 Founded: 2006

The Montana Progressive Clergy Alliance played a crucial part in the successful Raise Montana! coalition. Their rally at the state Capitol in 2006 was the culmination of faith-based minimum wage activism, and built public support for a more just wage for Montana's workers.

Evangelical Social Witness

The broadening of the evangelical community's social agenda has become a regular feature of media coverage of religion and politics. Energetic coalitions have formed to oppose torture, advocate for creation care, and speak out for human rights in Darfur, North Korea, and other regions of the world. Anecdotal evidence and Faith in Public Life's research indicate that this trend is particularly strong among young evangelicals.

Of the nearly 100 evangelical organizations included in this project, there is further support for the conclusion that the priorities of the evangelical community are expanding. Significant percentages of the groups included work on poverty, peace, and health issues. Children and families are also a common priority of these groups, reflecting the evangelical community's great concern for the young and families. An expansion of Mapping Faith specifically devoted to identifying leadership within evangelicalism would be an important further step to build on this initial research.



RESEARCH FINDINGS *Continued*

ON THE MAP: EVANGELICAL SOCIAL WITNESS

Evangelicals for Human Rights
Nationwide Coalition
Founded: 2006

EHR reaffirms the centrality of human rights as an unshakable biblical obligation fundamental to an evangelical Christian social and moral vision. EHR's statement "An Evangelical Declaration Against Torture" has support from across leaders across the evangelical community, including Leith Anderson, President of the National Association of Evangelicals.

Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform
Nationwide Coalition
Founded: 2006

CCIR, with leadership from Rev. Samuel Rodriguez of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Council and Rev. Jim Wallis of Sojourners, has advocated for compassionate immigration reform that will protect immigrant families and American security. CCIR collected 50,000 letters from the Hispanic evangelical community and presented them at a 2007 Senate press conference.

Christians for the Mountains
Dunmore, WV
Founded: 2005

Christians for the Mountains is a grassroots network of Christians dedicated to protecting God's Creation, particularly the southern Appalachian Mountains. Their top focus is on preventing the destructive mining practice known as mountaintop removal.

Christian Community Development Association
Chicago, IL
Founded: 1989

CCDA provides training and support to urban Christian ministries around the country that work to rebuild their communities. CCDA reaches thousands of community leaders each year with its annual conference and local training institutes.

HOW TO USE THE ONLINE RESOURCE

FOR COALITION-BUILDING AND GRASSROOTS OUTREACH

Mapping Faith is a potent tool for local, state and national coalition-building and grassroots outreach. By using targeted searches based on geography, faith leaders can find allies across town, across the state, and across the country. People of faith looking for organizations in which to get involved can find a variety of groups that tap into their interests. The web-based resource includes website links, phone numbers, and Google Maps plotting for each group to aid in outreach.

In addition to coalition-building within the faith community, Mapping Faith can help revitalize connections between secular and religious advocacy organizations in America. These connections are strong within some policy areas, but need to be built in others, especially around issues like creation care where the religious community is rapidly expanding its advocacy. Mapping Faith can serve as a useful tool for identifying state and national faith partners who are active on particular issues.

FOR MEDIA AND REPORTERS

Mapping Faith provides two services to reporters working on religion and politics. First, as a background research tool it provides information on a wide variety of organizations across the country. The ability to sort by state and zip code allows local reporters to find organizations in a particular local area, while sorting by policy priority can help media outlets working on a particular issue-based story.

Second, the map, combined with Faith in Public Life's Voicing Faith Media Bureau, provides a wealth of religious groups that may be contacted to provide sources for input on particular stories. With this abundance of sources available, reporters can find local faith leaders who reflect their community's moral priorities on a diverse range of issues.

MAPPING FAITH IN ACTION

NETWORK: A Catholic Social Justice Lobby used Mapping Faith to evaluate potential locations for regional offices. Mapping Faith gave national staff a sense of local faith leadership structures, and indicated which areas may be suitable settings for regional offices in line with NETWORK's mission.

The Ground Truth & The Great Warming, two documentaries that tackled issues of great importance to faithful Americans, made use of Mapping Faith in outreach to the faith community. Staff with each movie used Mapping Faith to identify local partners who would be interested in screenings and religious discussions of the movies.

The Center for American Progress used Mapping Faith to locate interested state and local parties for grassroots trainings through its Faith and Progressive Policy Initiative. This research enabled CAP to identify local partners who would share an interest in CAP's nationally-renowned policy analysis expertise.

METHODOLOGY

WHICH GROUPS ARE INCLUDED?

- Mapping Faith includes the leading national, state and local faith organizations working on causes for justice and the common good. These groups are working on issues that expand the American values debate. They do not all endorse a common policy agenda.
- All groups are either explicitly religious organizations or have significant religious outreach or programming.
- Organizations include advocacy groups, grassroots organizing coalitions, educational institutions, student organizations and social service providers.
- All groups in the database are nonpartisan.
- Mapping Faith is not a congregational directory. Individual congregations are only listed when notably active on religion and public life.
- Researchers actively sought out groups with a dynamic media or web presence.
- Researchers sought out organizations with a history of working in coalitions with other faith and secular leaders at the local and national level.
- Groups reflect America's diverse faith communities. Researchers attempted to gather groups of diverse belief, race, and policy specialization.
- Staff conducted research primarily over a twelve month period from January-December 2006.

HOW DID FAITH IN PUBLIC LIFE GATHER INFORMATION?

- Research through state and local news outlet websites and the Lexis-Nexis database.
- Internet research through search engines (Google, Yahoo, etc), existing online databases, and partner web-links.
- Phone and in-person interviews with national, state, and local faith leaders to identify gaps in initial stage of online research.
- Exposure to national and local organizations gained through Faith in Public Life's other programmatic work as a resource center for the faith community.

Important Note: Organizations included in Mapping Faith are not aligned with Faith in Public Life or with other organizations in the Mapping Faith database. The positions of individual organizations represented in Mapping Faith do not necessarily reflect those held by other groups in the directory or Faith in Public Life.

Faith in Public Life is a communications and organizing resource center for faith leaders sharing a call to pursue justice and the common good. **Faith in Public Life** is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization.