

**FaithWorks:
A Case Study in Nonprofit Planning and Implementation**

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*The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners.*

Isaiah 61:1 NIV

Another Day at the Food Pantry

As “Mary” was being driven by a friend to the food pantry at Christian Ministries in Abilene, Texas on that hot June day in the year 2000, she reflected back on how she ended up going to a food pantry to feed herself and her two children. She attributed her situation to a complex combination of personal mistakes and hopeless constraints. There was no easy escape from this prison without bars. When Mary approached the service counter that day, she was assisted by Joyce Dalzell, a part-time volunteer at Christian Ministries. Mary received enough groceries to feed herself and her children for a few more days.

An Idea is Born

Later that evening, as Joyce reflected on her day at the food pantry, she wondered if more could be done to help people like Mary. While some of the “regulars” at Christian Ministries seemed very comfortable with the idea of seeking help and food, and had done so for years, there was another group of clients who came there and were not at all happy about it. In fact, they hated being there.

The next Sunday evening at church, it so happened that Dr. Charles Small made a presentation concerning a technical/spiritual training school in Kenya that he had helped establish and supported with business and computing training curriculum, computer donations, etc. Dr. Small made the comment that if combined technical/spiritual training could be successfully done in Africa – why not in Abilene? After church services were completed that evening, Joyce mentioned her dream to help the local poor with this type of program, and asked her care group to pray that God would show whether this was in His plans. Six weeks later, Joyce was invited to a meeting at Christian Ministries, and the idea was discussed. However, the meeting did not go well, so she decided that this was not God’s plan after all.

A few weeks later, however, Bill Nash, the community minister at Joyce’s church called her and asked “when are we going to do this”, and invited her to a regular meeting of the church elders. At the meeting, Joyce noticed that she was last on the agenda, and she wondered why she was even there. When the meeting eventually got around to Joyce’s agenda item, the elders told her

they thought such a ministry was a great idea, and asked her to take the lead and develop a detailed plan. Joyce's emotions ran the complete spectrum from surprise, joy, and feeling overwhelmed.

One of the first steps would be to exchange ideas with the existing community service leaders about how the proposed ministry fit into the broader fabric of government and nonprofit services already in place.

Background on Human Services in the U.S.

The nature of human services in the U.S. has been shaped by uniquely American history and attitudes towards government. The complex web of government and nonprofit services evolved in the U.S. because of a deep-seated tradition of individualism, ingrained hostility towards centralized institutions, and resistance to exclusively government solutions to human service needs. The result is what Salamon (1992) calls a 'mixed economy' of social services.

While government's role in human services has significantly increased since the Great Depression, Salamon (1992) points out that private nonprofit organizations continue to play a significant role in American society despite the expanded role of the government. Because of American suspicion of large central government agencies, government has turned to nonprofit providers to actually deliver many publicly funded services.

Government and nonprofit programs directed solely at job training have often not yielded good results. The problems of the poor are too complex and interrelated to simply address job training in isolation from other issues. In his recent book, David Shipler (2004) makes the following observations:

“The interaction between the personal and the public is so intricate that for assistance such as job training to make a difference, for example, it has to be tailored to each individual's needs, which include not only such 'hard skills' as using a computer or running a lathe, but also 'soft skills' such as interacting with peers, following orders willingly, and managing the deep anger that may have developed during years of adversity. Job trainers are discovering that people who have repeatedly failed – in school, in love, in work – cannot succeed until they learn that they are capable of success. To get out of poverty, they have to acquire dexterity with their emotions as well as their hands.” p.7.

“For practically every family, then, the ingredients of poverty are part financial and part psychological, part personal and part societal, part past and part present. Every problem magnifies the impact of the others, and all are so tightly interlocked that one reversal can produce a chain reaction with results far distant from the original cause....If problems are interlocking, than so must solutions be. A job alone is not enough... Reliable transportation, careful family budgeting, effective parenting, effective schooling are not enough when each is achieved in isolation from the rest. There is no single variable that can be altered to help working people move away from the edge of poverty. Only where the full array of factors is attacked can America fulfill its promise.” p.11.

TN as a model of the type of holistic, integrated ministry being proposed. A trip to Memphis confirmed the concept and provided a wealth of specific “how-to” information. Their 3 ring binder became the ‘centerpiece’ of Joyce’s coffee table (and her heart and mind) for the next year as she fleshed out her idea. After reviewing HopeWorks and other working models in various cities around the nation, an operating concept emerged. After thinking about an appropriate name to capture the multi-faceted mission, the name FaithWorks was chosen.

The Concept

The following describes the operating concept and assumptions for FaithWorks as planned:

Requirements for students:

- Requirements include ability to read (in English) at the 6th grade level.
- Candidate students must agree to attend at a 90% level.
- Candidates must be free from drug and alcohol addiction for six months or be active in a support (12 Step) program.
- Candidates must agree to attend individual counseling sessions.
- Candidates must be at least 18 years old.
- Transportation is assumed, although the facility is located near the city bus route.
- Childcare will be provided only in emergencies. Student must apply for CCPO (Child Care Program Operations) which is a child care subsidy in order to be eligible for emergency help from FaithWorks.
- Client students would be referred from a variety of sources, including churches, counselors, social agencies, and family members.

Concept of Operations

- Each class will meet for a 12 week term, with 3 semester terms per year – Spring, Summer, and Fall.
- The facility and staffing will be sized to accommodate 10-12 students per semester.
- The classes will meet Monday – Friday from 9am – 4pm. Wednesday afternoons will be given off to take care of personal obligations. (Taking care of business will be emphasized.) The schedule that each class will follow for this 12 week period is summarized in Figures 2 and 3.
- Topics to be taught and discussed will include:
 - Career selection and development. Help will be provided in preparing resumes, searching for jobs, and interviewing.
 - Christian group and individual counseling
 - Computer lab training. Weekly computer lab time will provide an introduction to computers, MS Office (Word, Powerpoint, Excel, e-mail, keyboarding and numeric keypad)
 - Bible study will cover the book of Matthew over the semester.
 - High School equivalency (GED) test review provided (when) for those who have not graduated from High School.
- During the first 1-3 weeks the students will indicate a preferred career field, then prospective businesses will be found for possible internships matching those areas of

- interest. Then over the last 6 weeks of term, students will work at unpaid internships at local businesses for a half day.
- An assigned mentor will serve as a prayer buddy. The mentor will be requested to have lunch with their student once a week to keep in touch. If the mentor and student are comfortable praying together they will do that. If either is not comfortable with that, the mentor will pray for the student privately, or in their Sunday school group.
 - Weekly group counseling from trained marriage & family counselors will be provided for an hour and a half each week. A major student issue is low self esteem, therefore a major part of the mission is to restore some of that self esteem.
 - The entire teaching program, daily meals (breakfast and lunch), professional clothing for internships and personal care commodities will be provided free of charge to the students.
 - The most direct measure of success will be the percent employed after graduation or else enrolled in a local college or technical school for further education. The longer term measure of success will be their spiritual relationship with God.

Figure 2. Weekly Schedule for First Six Weeks of Semester.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00 – 9:30	Psalm Journal Prayer/Prayer Requests	Psalm Journal Prayer/Prayer Requests	Psalm Journal Prayer/Prayer Requests	Psalm Journal Prayer/Prayer Requests	Psalm Journal Prayer/Prayer Requests
9:30 – 10:45 BREAK	Career Development curriculum - BREAK -	Career Development curriculum - BREAK -	Career Development curriculum - BREAK -	Career Development curriculum - BREAK -	Career Development curriculum - BREAK -
11:00 – 12:00	Career Development curriculum	Career Development curriculum	Career Development curriculum	Career Development curriculum	Career Development curriculum
12:00 – 1:00	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
1:00 – 2:00	Bible	Computer Lab - BREAK -	Examen, Journal, Prayer	1:00 – 2:00 Psalm, Journal Prayer Requests Examen	Curriculum
2:00 – 3:00	Bible - BREAK -	Computer Lab		- BREAK - Group Counseling	Curriculum - BREAK -
3:00 – 4:00	Curriculum Examen, Prayer	Examen, Prayer		Examen, Prayer STAFF MEETING	Examen, Prayer

Figure 3. Weekly Schedule During Period of Internships – Last Six Weeks of Semester.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00 – 9:30	INTERNSHIPS				
9:30 – 10:45					
11:00 – 12:00					
12:00 – 1:00	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
1:00 – 2:00	Bible - BREAK -	Computer Lab - BREAK -	Curriculum	1:00 – 2:00 Psalm Journal Prayer Requests Examen,	Curriculum
2:00 – 3:00	Bible	Computer Lab	Curriculum - BREAK -	- BREAK - Group Counseling	Curriculum - BREAK -
3:00 – 4:00	Psalm Journal Prayer Requests Examen	Psalm Journal Prayer Requests Examen,	Psalm Journal Prayer Requests, Examen	STAFF MEETING	Psalm Journal Prayer Requests Examen

What Now?

As Joyce thought more about all the logistical details of starting such an enterprise, the list of details – some small and some big – made her head hurt. Things such as legal paperwork, facilities and computers, fund raising, and training. It would require all of her business education and experience and a lot of help from the academic, social services, business, and church community.

As Joyce proceeded with the project planning and implementation, she was driven by her passion to really make a difference in the lives of people, and that FaithWorks was a calling from God. With His help, it could be done. It should be done. But how? She needed a project plan.

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Teaching Note

Case Overview:

FaithWorks is a new startup ministry in Abilene, Texas that helps the unemployed and under-employed poor through an integrated program of personal, career, academic, technical, and spiritual development. Planning began in January, 2001, and the first class began meeting January, 2003. In this case, business students are presented with the need that became evident to Joyce Dalzell, who led the implementation and became the operating Director. Students are challenged to think through the issues that need to be addressed and establish a project implementation plan.

The case is intended for use in business courses such as project management or small business entrepreneurship, and draws on concepts from these areas as well as operations management, service management, human resources, and social work. The case is intended to provide an opportunity for Christian business faculty in these subjects to integrate several business subjects, social work topics, and faith in practice.

Learning Objectives:

1. To provide business students the opportunity to learn about applications of management planning in the nonprofit human services sector.
2. To provide Christian business faculty an opportunity to integrate practical faith issues with business concepts.
3. To provide faculty an opportunity to encourage integration across multiple business disciplines: HR, service management, operations management, project management, accounting, and business law.
4. To provide would-be social entrepreneurs with an actual case study and template for planning and implementing a project to help the poor.

Questions:

1. What steps should be taken to establish that such a project *should* be done? Use a quality planning methodology like Quality Function Deployment (QFD) to map client and other stakeholder requirements versus the proposed design of FaithWorks. What other stakeholders' requirements must be addressed other than the students?

Teaching discussion: An example is shown in Figure 4. Discuss with the class about surveying the community for overlaps and gaps in services from government and private nonprofits, finding a ‘sponsor’, assessing client needs and requirements, etc. As McKinsey & Company (2004) point out in their website, you have to ‘define your place in the landscape’.

2. What issues and tasks need to be addressed in the planning, implementation, and operation of Faithworks?

Teaching discussion: Draw upon various genre of literature including nonprofit startup discussions from social work, small business startup from entrepreneurship, product/process design and quality from operations management, staff and volunteer issues from HR, project planning from project management, and legal issues from accounting and business law.

Discussion should include such items as the following:

- Facilities
 - Computer hardware, software, wiring, printers,....
 - Office equipment, furniture
 - Classroom equipment
 - Accounting and tax reporting, application for tax-exempt status
 - Insurance
 - Legal – articles of incorporation, bylaws, ...
 - Policies and procedures
 - Governing board
 - Staff and volunteers – management, teaching, mentoring, counseling, food preparation, case management, computer technical support,...
 - Job descriptions, recruiting, ‘hiring’, training,
 - Marketing and communication
 - Donors, prospective clients
 - Client screening, processing,...
 - Fund Raising – grant writing and development of partnerships with social and religious organizations
 - Laison with local government and nonprofit agencies
 - Support activites – food preparation, ...
 - Curriculum – find, evaluate, purchasing, delivery
3. From your discussion in question 2, develop a work breakdown structure (WBS) for the project. Develop a project schedule, using MicroSoft Project or similar software.
 4. What roles and skills – both staff and volunteers - will be required? What are the pros and cons of using volunteers versus paid staff?
 5. What longer term sustainability issues need to be addressed?

Teaching discussion: Discuss such issues as funding, succession planning to ensure the continuity of the passion/knowledge of the founding director, computer hardware and software technology,...

6. What measures of performance might be appropriate?
7. What additional opportunity and challenges does the faith integration aspect of the mission bring?
8. What policies and procedures need to be developed?

Teaching discussion: Students should think of such policy needs as:

- Handling and accounting for money and purchase authority
- HR issues – grievances, discipline, hiring/firing authority...
- Safety and security related – fire, injuries on site, ...
- Handling of client privacy – related issues

9. Using the project management literature, develop a potential risk list and a mitigation plan.
10. Discuss whether traditional HR recruiting and selection practices filter out candidates like the FaithWorks clients and prevent them from obtaining employment. Discuss job application questions concerning previous employment history, arrest records, etc.
11. How could business leaders assist a ministry like FaithWorks in their community?

Teaching discussion: Discuss the need to provide internships, talk about interviewing skills, job skill requirements, mentoring relationships

Epilogue

In January, 2003, the first class of 11 students began. The facility is located in a previously under-utilized church facility in inner-city Abilene, near the city bus route. As of August, 2004 five classes have graduated and registration for the sixth is in progress. The semester enrollments have ranged from 5 to 11 students each. About 92% of the graduates have successfully initially entered the workforce or have enrolled for further education in a local college or technical training school. As of August, 2004, 74% of all 37 students are still employed or enrolled in college or technical school.

A few other facts and experience about the program so far are:

- Besides Joyce Dalzell, the Director, there are 10 volunteers regularly required, plus 7 counselors and 7 mentors.
- The cost for the first year (2003), utilizing an almost entirely volunteer staff, was about \$28,000, of which approximately half was non-recurring startup expenses. It should also be noted that the facility is operated rent-free. Longer term, it is estimated that annual operation costs will be in the \$125,000 per year range, which includes a modest salary/benefits projection for the Director and lead teacher and some growth in student enrollment.
- The cost has been approximately 3000\$ per student per semester, (\$600 curriculum order will cover two to three classes)

- While the computers were donated, ongoing technical support is required.
- Given the significant dependence on volunteer teachers, counselors, mentors, etc. – considerable flexibility in daily/weekly scheduling is required.
- Many weekend personal problems surface on Monday morning. Extra time has been allotted to work through these.
- While there was no plan to provide financial assistance, help has been provided with emergency costs such as utility bills, child care, rent, eye glasses, etc. in some cases.
- Celebration is very important. A full graduation ceremony is held, using borrowed church choir robes. All family and friends are invited.

Joyce Dalzell summarized other lessons learned to date:

- “Our nonprofit ‘neighbors’ were interested in working with us. There is not an environment of competition, as I expected coming in to this, but rather one of camaraderie. Abilene is a great Christian environment for something like FaithWorks to happen. The church community here is great.
- The students who attend FaithWorks are survivors, though they have failed at many things, they are determined to succeed at this. When one stumbles, the others move in to carry the load.
- A major difference between the attitude of FaithWorks students and clients we originally met in the food pantry is that FaithWorks students want to be here. Most pantry clientele do not want to be there.
- There is opportunity for successful partnership with government agencies, nonprofits, and religious organizations, at the national and state level. Our experience has been disappointing with the expected state funding not being what we had hoped for.
- The most complex issues encountered center around matters of the heart. The relationship with the student runs deep and is involved. We spend most of twelve weeks together all day every day? I don’t have the luxury of spending that much awake time with anyone else in my life. The students become family to each other and to us. Their lives are so filled with brokenness and pain.”

Having achieved initial success, the longer term focus is now shifting to maturing of the functioning of the 9 member board and development of stable public and private funding partnerships.

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Figure 4. Example Quality Function Deployment (QFD) Mapping of Program Features Against Customer Needs.

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">"Hows" - Program Elements</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">"Whats" - Customer Needs</div>	Bible Study	Counseling	Group Sharing & Prayer	Remedial reading, math	Computer Skills Training	Career Development, Interviewing, Searching	Internships	Personal Mentoring & Prayer	Free of Charge	Facility Located in Inner City	Food Provided, All help prepare	Chores Assigned	Time off for personal duties	Business Clothes Provided	Formal Graduation Ceremony	Sobriety Required	Strict Attendance Policy
Lack of Physical Assets																	
Money									X		X						
Childcare																	
Transportation										X							
Clothes														X			
Lack of Job "Hard Skills"																	
Computer training					X												
Lack of Job "Soft" Skills																	
Searching						X	X										
Interviewing						X	X										
Conflict resolution		X										X					
Sense of Responsibility											X	X	X			X	X
Attendance													X				X
Job experience							X										
Lack of Academic Skills																	
Reading, Writing, Math				X													
Spiritual Brokenness	X	X	X					X									
Lack of Support Group		X	X					X			X						
Lack of Self Esteem	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X			X	X		
Substance abuse history		X														X	