

Faith in the Voluntary Sector :
A common or distinctive experience of
religious organisations?

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Abstract

Current UK government policy, mirroring developments in the USA increasingly looks to faith communities as potential partners for consultation, local governance and service delivery. Lack of clarity of definitions, unjoined-up policy, and the huge diversity of religious organisations in English inner cities make it difficult to assess what is happening, and whether specific changes in policy and practice are appropriate. In this paper I begin by considering relevant policy discourses in Britain and the USA. Next I shall attempt to draw a conceptual map of the faith sector in England using three different “projections”, models or ideal types by which one might show the relationship between faith sector, the voluntary/community sector and the state. The first projection treats the faith sector fundamentally as a subset of the voluntary/community sector and therefore appropriately under the same policies, regulations and funding regimes as secular charities. The second projection treats the faith sector and the organisations within it as qualitatively distinct from the voluntary/community sector and therefore requiring a separate policy framework. The third projection sees faith as more diffuse, and fundamentally as a property of individuals and networks contributing to civil society through increasing social capital, a model described in the New Testament as the “leaven in the lump”. The paper goes on with an attempt to develop and apply some typologies of faith based organisations, along several different dimensions. It concludes with a rapid survey of the territory, in terms of the involvement of groups from various religious traditions in partnerships with the state in urban settings in England. Seeing this sketch of the landscape will allow us to determine which, if any, of these projections is most useful for policy makers and religious leaders wishing to plan a route through this little known land.

Acknowledgements

This paper is an extended version of a presentation made at the meeting of the Voluntary Sector Studies Network at the University of Manchester on 4th November 2002. It is based on long experience as a practitioner in the field of faith related community work mostly in urban priority areas and draws on two research projects in which the author has been involved. The first was an evaluation of Shaftesbury's church related community worker scheme funded by the DETR through its special programmes grant scheme, in which the author acted as research consultant from 1999 to 2000 while employed by Aston Mansfield Charities. The second was a project funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation entitled "Engaging Faith Communities in Urban Regeneration" carried out under the leadership of Coventry University, and in partnership with the Universities of Bradford, Sheffield Hallam and East London (where the author is still employed). I would like to express thanks to all the funders, agencies, and colleagues involved in these two projects, and especially to thank the many people who freely gave their time to be interviewed, or to serve on the advisory groups. Finally thanks are due to Peter Halfpenny of the University of Manchester for encouraging me to prepare this piece for publication in the series, and to an anonymous referee for valuable critical comments.

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Biographical note

Greg Smith is employed part time as Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Institutional Studies in the University of East London. He lived and worked for over 25 years in the church, community and voluntary sectors in the London borough of Newham until moving recently to Lancashire. He was employed as research officer /consultant for Aston Mansfield Community Involvement Unit from 1991 to 2001. During that period he has helped community groups carry out major surveys on disability, poverty and health, interfaith attitudes, caste discrimination personal support networks, church and voluntary sector networking. In a previous job he worked for the Evangelical Coalition for Urban Mission and wrote extensively about the church in Urban Priority Areas. In the early 1980's he worked on the Linguistic Minorities Project which produced the standard work on "The Other Languages of England". He was until 1997 a Trustee of the Association for Research in the Voluntary and Community Sector (ARVAC) and continues as a member.

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A common or distinctive experience of religious organisations?

Introduction

On both sides of the Atlantic governments are taking a fresh interest in the potential role of churches and other faith based organisations in delivering welfare and regeneration policies. This development poses a variety of questions and triggers a range of debates over sociology of religion, policy and politics, and the management of projects and “voluntary” organisations with a religious foundation and ethos. In sociology of religion it revives the old discussion about secularisation, and questions whether assumptions about secular modernity still hold in a postmodern era typified by consumer choice from a plurality of religions, spiritualities and world views. In policy and politics it raises questions about the secular nature of the state and its relationship with parts of civil society which may not share its values and assumptions in such areas as equal opportunities, democracy, human rights and social justice. For voluntary sector studies it raises the question as to whether faith based organisations have characteristics which distinguish them, or offer any added value, from secular ones. Finally for religious organisations themselves it presents a number of challenges at both the philosophical and practical level, as to the wisdom of entering into partnership with the state, and their capacity to do so effectively. In this paper I shall concentrate attention on the most significant issues for students of the voluntary sector, in particular whether it is best to conceptualise the “faith sector” as a subset of the voluntary sector or as a distinct entity. In considering this it will be necessary to look at the diversity of faith based voluntary action from a variety of perspectives and develop a number of typologies to help us understand the dynamics of a complex situation.

The first part of the paper will consider the policy context for partnership between the state and faith based groups in the UK and make comparisons with the policies of charitable choice and faith based welfare in the USA. The middle section will discuss a range of models and typologies by which one can attempt to understand the relationship between faith communities and the state, and the structure and functions of different types of faith based organisations. Using case study examples I will then examine how organisations may be placed on a continuum according to the salience of religious concerns in their ethos and practice following a typology developed in North America for the Finding Common Ground Report (Working Group on Human Needs, Faith-Based et al. 2002). Finally I will offer a brief survey of the diverse religions now found in British cities and hazard some guesses as to their future trajectories. In a concluding discussion I will return to the question of whether there is anything distinctive about the role of faith within the voluntary and community sector.

Throughout this paper discussion of the situation in the UK will be based mainly on community development, social welfare and regeneration projects in urban areas. This is not because there is any lack of faith based voluntary action in rural areas where

traditional Christian churches often retain a vital role in community welfare. Rather it is because multicultural inner cities are the field best known to the writer, as both practitioner and academic. Secondly the reader should note that the paper concentrates almost exclusively on urban settings in England. This limitation arises out of an awareness that the religious culture and legislative framework in Wales, Scotland and (especially) Northern Ireland is considerably different. For example Catholic / Protestant sectarianism, though not entirely absent in some English cities does not play as large a role in England as in Northern Ireland and the West of Scotland. In the former case laws against religious discrimination, unique in the UK, apply. Nor is the Welsh language issue and legislation around it, of relevance outside the Principality.

1. The Policy Context

Section one is an attempt to set out the developing policy framework which surrounds governmental attempts to build partnerships with, or as some would have it co-opt, religious organisations in the field of social welfare and community development. After examining the policies and some of the discourse of the Blair government in the UK, the paper makes some comparisons with the policy of "faith based welfare" in a contrasting cultural setting in the USA. I would argue that this international perspective is important, because of the information and policy flows that are carried across the Atlantic in the Gulf Stream of a supposed common culture and language, and the potential for disaster if policy packages are applied without an understanding of the very different cultural contexts.

UK Government Policy

UK government interest in the field first became evident with the creation of the Inner Cities Religious Council in the Department of Environment (subsequently DETR, DLTR and currently ODPM) under the Major government in the early 1990's. This in itself can be traced as a direct response to the concerns articulated in the Faith in the City report commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury following urban "riots" in the early 1980s ((ACUPA 1985) Jenny Taylor's doctoral research (Taylor 2000) has traced the emergence of a new policy discourse recognising and favouring faith based involvement in the context of the Inner City Religious and attributes much of this change to the influence of particular individuals with strong faith commitments in the civil service, and of particular members of the New Labour government. The D(E/L)TR has certainly supported faith based initiatives in research and capacity building (Shaftesbury and DETR 2000; Smith 2002) and in other special projects such as the partnership between the Church Urban Fund and government which led to the publication in 2002 of the report about faith based community buildings "Building on Faith" (Finneron and Dinham 2002) .

The political philosophy underlying the New Labour approach has been described as the "third way" and owes much to the political philosophy of communitarianism recently promoted on both sides of the Atlantic by Etzioni (1994) and others and criticised by feminists among others (Frazer 1999). Communitarians talk about the need for a balance of individual rights and responsibilities, of the need for public participation and the strengthening of civil society. Other emphases have been subsidiarity and devolution of decision making, social inclusion through education and participation in the workforce. There has been much rhetoric about community participation and partnership which has proven more difficult to put into practice in an

individualised consumerist society, and in a context where recent public policy has also been shaped by a countervailing managerial emphasis on performance monitoring and measurable outcomes within precise time-scales. It is not surprising that the religious sector which as well as being community oriented by nature, remains remarkably influential and well organised, fits easily into the terms of the debate.

The key themes in current government policy in this area emerge as:

- Partnership with voluntary and community sector in delivering welfare and social inclusion programmes
- Wider participation in urban governance and regeneration
- Active citizenship, active communities
- Social cohesion, crime reduction and the management of ethnic conflict

Various Government departments have recognised that there could be a specific policy significance of faith groups beyond the agendas of community and voluntary action.. In education we have seen the encouragement of existing faith based schools, and the openings of opportunities for new ones sponsored by minority faith groups. The government supports diversity in education provision and seems to believe that faith based schools have a distinctive ethos which will help to raise educational standards. The Home Office has also commissioned research on religious discrimination, (Derby 2001), and attempted but failed to introduce legislation against religious harassment and violence in the anti terrorism act which followed the attacks on the USA.. Finally the inclusion for the first time of a religious question in the 2001 Census, following intense lobbying by religious interest groups suggests a recognition that social identity and mobilisation based of religion is becoming more salient, and may have policy implications..

UK Government policy over engaging faith communities is well summed up in a series of official speeches and publications among which five recent ones stand out.

1. The "Active Communities" report (Home Office 1999) was published during the first term of the New Labour government, under the ministerial eyes of Jack Straw (a member of the Christian Socialist Movement) and Paul Boateng (a committed Christian and Methodist Lay Preacher and also a CSM member). The Report focuses on the desire to involve community, voluntary and religious groups in strengthening participation in civil society. It is probably significant that the report uses terms such as "faith groups", and "faith organisations" rather than the less well defined term "faith communities" as if the faith sector can be seen as a subset of the voluntary sector, with ready made structures and organisations who can engage in partnerships with and deliver services for the state.

2. In the lead up to the 2001 General Election, both major parties promoted conferences, delivered leader's speeches and made references in their manifestos about the valuable social role of religion and faith based charities. The North American discourse of compassionate conservatism and faith based welfare was influential in the thinking of the British Conservative Party and direct links were evident in the invitation to Marvin Olasky, the architect of

Governor George W. Bush's programme in Texas, to address a meeting in Britain (CCF 2001) More significantly in a speech to the Christian Socialist movement in March 2001 Tony Blair (Blair 2001) articulated three key ideas about contemporary faith and politics. Firstly his version of Christianity is an open and inclusive one, committed to diversity and social inclusion. Secondly he expresses an almost naïve optimism that the diversity of religion in the UK will foster social cohesion rather than conflict. Finally he credits faith in general as a key driver of altruism, and therefore the source of valuable voluntary community and charitable action. Throughout the speech he employs the language of community and a undeveloped notion of “faith community”.

3. A speech by David Blunkett (Blunkett 2001) was delivered immediately after the 2001 election and his appointment as Home Secretary and in the aftermath of serious disturbances involving police, far right politicians and disaffected young men from poor white and Muslim neighbourhoods in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley. It is possible to read the speech as a synthesis and development of the first two documents. There are clear resonances with Blair's naïve optimism about faith communities alongside the pragmatic need to find allies to manage and serve the “dangerous places” of the inner cities. Two new elements emerge, the specific commitment to an interfaith approach marked by the award of large scale funding to the Inter Faith network, and the assumption that “faith communities” have a large army of “community leaders”

4. The publication early in 2002 of a guidance document for local authorities (LGA 2002) needing to engage in consultation and/or partnership with faith communities marks the next more practical step in rolling out government policy. The document has the imprimatur of the Inner Cities Religious Council in the DLTR and of the Inter Faith Network whose influence is obvious in a whole chapter on Inter faith organisations. While the text admits that there are many occasions where the LA's dealings will be with on “a community by community or even congregation basis on specific issues”, it stresses the supposed benefits of inter-faith working, and the role of existing “Councils of Faith” especially in promoting social cohesion. There are also whole chapters on issues of funding and on planning issues. The overall philosophy and tone of the document continues the benevolent communitarian tone of the Blair and Blunkett speeches, and the appeal for faith based groups to buy in to the government's agenda of promoting social inclusion, social cohesion and urban regeneration.

5. The fifth official document (Cantle 2001) published in the autumn of 2001 takes a radically different stance. The Home Office report on Community Cohesion is the work of an independent review team chaired by Ted Cantle and is a response to a wave of urban disturbances in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley, cities in the North of England which have large Muslim communities, mainly with origins in rural Pakistan and Kashmir, and which have been recognised for many years as having high indices of residential segregation and urban deprivation. Published in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks on the USA the report has all the signs of a “moral

panic” response. The key issue for Cattle is that all is not as integrated and cosy as previous celebrations of diversity have believed, and that conflict between faiths is one element in a volatile and potentially dangerous polarisation. Sections of the Cattle report suggest that the government should reconsider the wisdom of celebrating religious and ethnic diversity, devote resources to programmes promoting social cohesion and mingling of communities and in particular reconsider it’s support for religious schools lest they become ghettos of inequality.

These documents show that the government has recognised at least at the rhetoric level that faith communities and religious organisations could play a significant part in achieving these objectives and has welcomed such a contribution. It is less clear that there is a detailed policy or funding mechanisms that will make such involvement realistic and effective. There also appears to be more than a little ambiguity over the notion of faith community and its relation to the social constructions of ethnic minority communities (Smith forthcoming). It is not always clear for example whether mainline Christian congregations are to be treated as faith communities in the same way as Hindu, Sikh or Muslim ones. Some faith communities for example Sikhs and Jews have a near 100% identity with an ethnic group and have recognised legal protection against discrimination under the Race relations acts, while others such as Christianity and Islam include people from a wide range of majority and minority ethnic backgrounds and have no legal protection. Also, as we shall see later, contradictions often emerge between secular concepts and practices of equal opportunities and identities and values based on religious traditions. But it is clear that the state believes that through faith based networks it can "reach" and involve sections of the urban and excluded part of the population that statutory agencies and secular voluntary organisations are unable to reach. A more sceptical reading of this approach is that government is desperate to identify and co-opt leaders and organisations with whom they can "do business" in order to offer legitimacy and propaganda for the "war against terrorism", manage anti social behaviour and social unrest in the nation's dangerous places, to deliver votes, and to mute critical dissent. Sceptics also suggest that saving government expenditure is also a strong motivating factor.

The UK Government currently uses a variety of mechanisms to relate to faith based groups. Centrally besides the role of the Inner Cities Religious Council more informal and symbolic contacts such as tea at No.10 Downing Street for Faith Leaders, and royal jubilee visit to mosques and gurdwaras are now commonplace. The established church of England has long had formal representation through bishops in the House of Lords, the quid pro quo being the role of the Prime Minister in appointing bishops. Recent diversification in British religion has led to more informal mechanisms to ensure representatives of other churches and world faiths are raised to the peerage, and invitations to national celebration services are wider than they once were. There remains a difficulty over the selection of representatives and the nature of their claims to community leadership. Chaplaincy services which are supported by public money, for example in British prisons (Beckford and Gilliat 1998) have recognised the need to become multi-faith, although the established church still often acts as broker and gatekeeper.

At the regional and local level new mechanisms for engaging faith communities are currently emerging through a process of enabling legislation and local lobbying and negotiation. As new governance bodies and new local government structures have been put into place cross sector partnerships have come into being and the "faith sector" has been recognised as significant enough to deserve a voice. At the regional level the Development Agencies and Assemblies such as Yorkshire Forward and Advantage West Midlands have reserved places or co-opted representatives from the churches and/or faith communities. At the city wide level bodies such as the London Civic Forum or Sheffield First have done likewise. Local Authorities have initiated Local Strategic Partnerships to work on Neighbourhood Renewal agendas, and there are myriad local community forums and consultative committees linked to regeneration schemes like the New Deal for Communities, Single Regeneration Budget Partnerships, Sure Start programmes, Health, Education and Employment Action zones and local Compacts with the voluntary sector. In many localities, especially where religious diversity is noticeable or the Christian churches retain a strong civic presence, faith based groups have been invited to, or found their way to, a seat at the policy making table. Again if there is a recurring issue that is often reported, it is the difficulty of nominating or recruiting truly representative people to such bodies. The situation is certainly not eased by the practice in some regional or urban district bodies of reserving a single voting place on committees to represent the "faith communities" in all their diversity.

The engagement of faith communities with secular programmes needs to be on the basis of a good understanding of the very considerable work that is often undertaken already by faith organisations and their individual members which can fairly be regarded as 'regeneration' or community involvement.. This activity may challenge official understandings of the scope of 'regeneration', community development or the voluntary sector. In the UK there is a long tradition of church involvement in welfare services and community work in urban areas, and the establishment of faith based settlements, charities and faith based voluntary organisations which continue to carry out this type of work. In the final third of the 20th Century such organisations frequently received grants from local authorities via various urban programmes and grant regimes to carry out such work. In more recent years the contract culture, service level agreements, the new managerialism, and lottery funding has changed the nature of the relationship. However the point remains that in many areas Christian and Jewish organisations are very familiar with operating in partnership with the local state, and gradually some of the newer minority faiths are also entering the field.

In the UK the research literature on faith based projects is relatively scanty although there are numerous more popular accounts of church related projects. (Simmons 2000) and a published survey of the Jewish Voluntary sector (Harris and Institute for Jewish Policy Research 1997) . Academic studies of the management issues arising in faith based organisations have been carried out at the LSE by Margaret Harris (Harris 1995; Harris 1998) and her student Helen Cameron (Cameron 1998) who subsequently examines the role of volunteers... (Cameron 1999). An Australian study (Bedford 1999) identifies many similar issues and management dilemmas to those found by Harris and which are echoed in California by (Orr 2000). Evaluations of Church Urban Fund projects are also available (Farnell, Else et al. 1994). In 1999 the DETR commissioned Shaftesbury, a Christian voluntary social care organisation to evaluate its own programme of attaching community development workers to local

churches in a comparative study with projects from other faith based organisations working in urban regeneration contexts. The author was involved in this research which is reported in (Shaftesbury and DETR 2000) and in the production of good practice materials arising from the research. At around the same time the Church Urban Fund and Church Action on Poverty commissioned some research on the possibility of faith based involvement in the New Deal for Communities Programme. (Musgrave 1999). Most recently the Baptist Union have published a research report with theological discussion and recommendations to churches about involvement in community regeneration. (Jump 2001).

Comparison with USA experience:

In a globalising world where the military, economic and cultural hegemony of the USA is hard to resist, there is an obvious need to consider policy developments in America and the influence they may have in the islands off the coast of Europe. . It is important however to point out from the outset some major cultural differences between Europe and North America, especially in the relationship between religion and the state. And in this field the UK tends to follow the pattern of Europe rather than that of the USA.

Firstly in the USA in comparison with Europe religion as conventionally measured is comparatively thriving. Active church membership and reported attendance at worship is perhaps four or five times higher in the USA than in Britain. (Gill, Hadaway et al. 1998). Religious diversity and vitality has long been a feature, and arguably is a consequence of the nation being founded by immigrant communities with a strong spirit of free enterprise and voluntary association as argued by De Toceville (Tocqueville and Stone 1980). Certainly the variety of Christian denominations still correlate with ethnic roots; for example hyphenated Irish, Italians and Polish Americans link to the Catholic church, Scandinavians to Lutheran churches, Anglo and African Americans to free church denominations such as Methodists and Baptists (which retain fairly high degrees of racial segregation), while Pentecostalism is strong among Latinos and African Americans. A large Jewish community has been a significant force for a century or so while a widening pattern of global migration has brought all the other world faiths to the USA and there has been significant growth of Islam, Eastern Religions, various New Religious movements and New Age Spiritualities in certain sections of the mainstream society. An evident outcome of the relative popularity of religion is a culture which seems more patriotically religious than that of Britain and Europe. For example it is hard to imagine a British politician (even Tony Blair) employing the type of language used in the conclusion of remarks by the President via Satellite to the Southern Baptist Convention 2002 Annual Meeting

I want to thank you all for your good works. You're believers, and you're patriots, faithful followers of God and good citizens of America. And one day, I believe that it will be said of you, "Well done, good and faithful servants." ...May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless America. (Bush 2002)

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020611-5.html> (accessed 1st April 2003).

Strangely the environment in which religion thrives is one where there is a strict constitutional separation of Church from state. The founding fathers of the USA made it clear that Congress should make no provision for the establishment of religion and that there should be freedom of religion and toleration of every expression of belief. Contemporary controversies over the implications of the constitution continue to rage between secularists and believers, for example over the legitimacy of prayer in public schools and the reference to God in the pledge of allegiance to the American flag. The "believers" camp in many ways is dominated by conservative strands within Christianity that have been mobilised at various times over the last few decades as the "moral majority" and "Christian Coalition". Although evangelical fundamentalism has been the theological bedrock of these movements, alliances with Conservative Roman Catholics, and even Jews and Muslims have been possible over some issues such as the "pro-life" campaigns against abortion. While the stereotype of polarisation between conservative, patriotic Republican voting, fundamentalist churches and liberal, internationalist Democrat voting, progressive churches bears some relationship to the truth, there are numerous dissenting voices where conservative Biblical theology co-exists with radical politics and social action, for example in many of the Black majority churches and in the Sojourners community in Washington D.C. There are also many church leaders who seek to bridge the divide, and plenty of deeply committed social action programmes based in conservative churches, whose theology and discourse appears contradictory.

From at least 1980 a bipartisan policy to undo the policies of Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty has been in place under the euphemistic label of "welfare reform". While in Britain in the 1980s the majority of church leaders, following a theological tradition based on the approach of William Temple (Temple 1942), tried to defend the welfare state against the forces of Thatcherism, the loudest voices in the American churches fell in with the attack on the underclass, and in particular on lone mothers on welfare of such writes as Charles Murray... (Lister, Murray et al. 1996) Many commentators offered explicit religious legitimisation. For example the Acton Institute's Father Robert A. Sirico (1995) wrote:

The theory of today's welfare state is that people need material provision. But material provision apart from spiritual values is destructive when not tied to certain reciprocal obligations, moral and spiritual..If private donors supervise programs, there will be less toleration for those wanting a free ride; more love will be shown toward the genuinely needy.

<http://www.free-market.net/spotlight/faithbased/> (accessed 1st April 2003)

The leading ideologue of the Christian support for faith based welfare has been Marvin Olasky. In two major books in the 1990s "The Tragedy of American Compassion" (Olasky 1992) and "Renewing American Compassion" (Olasky 1996) he has put forward a justification for "compassionate conservatism" which has been particularly influential on Republican politicians, most obviously George W. Bush.

Some moderating influences of communitarian and social capital theorists such as Putnam can also be detected in the emerging policy discourse. Under the Clinton presidency, but with a Congress dominated by Republicans the "Charitable Choice" legislation was enacted in 1996 (see Carlson-Thies (1997) and funding programmes involved numerous religious groups in a variety of welfare activities. The main thrust

of the Charitable Choice policy has been to offer State and Federal government funding in the form of contracts with faith based organisations to deliver welfare services such as food and housing aid, drugs and prisoner rehabilitation services and educational mentoring. Legislation is framed to ensure that there are clear guidelines about such issues as demanding religious participation by users (not allowed), removal of religious symbols from buildings (not required) and funding which ensures consumer choice between alternative faith based and secular services in each locality. A good summary of the situation across the states of the union is found in Jarchow (2002)

The "election" of George W. Bush to the presidency at the end of the year 2000 brought with it an extended commitment to involving faith based organisations in public policy. During George W.'s governorship of Texas in the late 1990s his State had pioneered faith based welfare as part of a programme of "compassionate conservatism", which also included record levels of the imposition of the death penalty. As President one of his first acts was the creation of a new agency within the executive to promote this approach. According to the first director of the agency, John Dilulio (a leading academic in the field and a Democrat)

"Our goal is to energize civil society and rebuild social capital, particularly by uplifting small non-profit organisations, congregations and other faith-based institutions that are lonely outposts of energy, service, and vision in poor and declining neighbourhoods and rural enclaves." (Dilulio 2001)

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/reports/faithbased.html> (accessed 1st April 2003)

Dilulio argued that there was a broad consensus for the policy and a huge public confidence in the existing and potential role of some 300,000 religious organisations serving the communities of the USA. However before long controversy arose and the agency appeared to be in turmoil. Dilulio had just resigned when the political debates about religion and national identity were transformed by the attacks of September 2001. A wave of patriotic (and unconstitutional?) renditions of the song "God bless America" and the priority of understanding or combating (or even in the President's ill chosen words "crusading against") Islam suddenly came to dominate debates on religion and politics. The passage of relevant faith based welfare legislation in Congress was far from straightforward as the secular lobby enlisted much support from Democratic legislators. However in January 2002 the funding provisions became law as and a \$30 million Compassion Capital fund came into operation.

The North American research literature in this field is extensive and the presentation here can only be indicative. Studies, covering congregational studies, policy issues and evaluations of programmes are well summarised in the collection edited by Dionne E.J. and DiIulio (1999). Sherman (2000) gives an upbeat assessment of the charitable choice programme base on evaluation of 84 new partnerships focused on moving welfare recipients into jobs. Cnaan (1999) describes the work of faith based organisations as the USA's hidden safety net. Chaves (1999) suggests that the most likely groups to enter into partnerships are very large congregations and African American congregations while "Catholic and theologically liberal or moderate Protestant congregations are significantly more likely to apply for government funds

in support of social service activities than are theologically conservative congregations" Orr's (2000) study of the capacity of the California religious community to engage with the provisions of the Charitable Choice legislation suggests that numerous constraints and hesitations on both statutory and faith based sides of the equation, have prevented the vast majority of religious groups from tendering or receiving welfare to work contracts. Many of the respondents suggested the 1996 legislation had made little difference either way. Orr suggests that small congregations on the whole do not, and probably should not get involved, while there is a role for large networks and faith based not for profit organisations, although many of the more liberal groups resist policies which they see as dismantling the welfare safety net. Indeed the religious sector as a whole could never have the capacity needed to support all of California's poor if the government refuses to do so.

The most recent study by Green and Sherman (2002) based on a survey of nearly 400 leaders from faith-based organizations (FBOs) holding government contracts for social service programs indicates that 92 percent of faith-based contractors providing social services with public funds are satisfied in their relationship with government. This research

found that over half of the groups receiving public funding were new to government contracting, having only begun such collaboration since charitable choice was adopted by Congress in 1996. A surprising 42 percent of the contractors were Evangelical, and minority churches were more active than white churches in contracting.

Perhaps one surprising feature of some of the American literature is that evaluators and social scientists are often willing to seek answers to questions about the added value of the religious dimension of programmes for example in terms of motivation for diverting young people from lifestyles involving drugs or crime. Some serious writers are even willing to ask if there is any evidence that a Higher power may have been at work. In contrast the more secular tradition in Europe would normally treat such spiritual issues as illegitimate and unanswerable.

2. Models and Typologies of the role of Faith in Civil Society

Section two of the paper discusses a number of ways in which the relationship between religion and the state can be handled, and focuses down on three distinct models of the relationship between faith based social action and voluntary action as a whole. In summary these can be described as incorporation, separation or permeation.

Before presenting these conceptual models of the relationship between faith and the voluntary sector it is worth looking briefly at the variety of relationships between secular politics and organised religion that have emerged in history. Inevitably this presentation is couched in terms of the familiar secularisation story, which is more than a little constrained by its context as a narrative within Western Christendom. However, *mutatis mutandis*, and in the context of globalisation, most of the key points are likely to be applicable to the societies that have emerged in the context of other world faith traditions. At one pole is the totalitarian state with examples as diverse as Imperial Rome and Soviet Russia where government insists on absolute

loyalty and subordinates religion to its purposes. This can be done by deifying the civil power and demanding universal worship of the civil power or its leader, or by making religion more or less illegal and promoting atheism. In both settings history tends to show that religion eventually emerges as a subversive force.

A second model, popular in Western society since the conversion of Constantine and the publication of Augustine's City of God in the fourth century is for the state to baptise religion for its own purposes while leaving it a certain degree of autonomy in specific spheres designated as religious. Church and state coexist as two "cities" in sometimes uneasy tension, for example in medieval England with the murder of Thomas Becket and in the conflicts of the Reformation era. Exhaustion with the wars of religion of Christendom was the context in which an alternative enlightenment model of the secular state emerged. There are several variations on this theme. The French republican model stresses "laicite" where the state is to all intents and purposes atheist but allows citizens freedom of belief, although often regulating forms of association. The Deistic Model of the USA suggests religious faith is beneficial for all, but makes no recommendation about the content of faith and leaves citizens to choose within a free market of competing religions. A third variant on the secular state is that of the Indian constitution of 1947, which recognises the pluralism of faiths and religious institutions, (even to an extent of legal systems), and offers protection for religious minorities, including preventing them from conversion to other faiths. It has to be noted of course that recent communal conflicts and the emergence of fundamentalist Hinduism has brought this model into question.

A final model of church state relationships is that of theocracy, or in practice government by the saints. This has been attempted by numerous millenarian and sectarian movements, often fleeing persecution, such as the Pilgrim Fathers, or Anabaptist sects such as the Amish, and by various generations of Islamic reformers, the most recent of whom were the Taliban. The problem has always been even where a new society in a new land is formed, that the fundamental beliefs tend only to be held by a minority, that in subsequent generations diversity of belief emerges, and conflict between the community and external states is bound to arise.

For people and communities of faith there is also a spectrum of positions about the relationship of the believing community to the wider society. Five positions on this spectrum, which have specific relevance towards social action, community involvement and the relationship with the voluntary sector, are listed below beginning with the most "fundamentalist" view.

- Only we believers have the truth, we must bring the law and the state under our control, and outlaw false religion.
- Only we believers have the truth, we must have freedom to persuade others about the spiritual sphere, and try to influence the state to follow our values
- Only we believers have the truth, the world is so corrupt we want nothing to do with the state
- We believe we have a good spiritual product and will recommend it to others as we seek to serve the whole community.
- We will follow our religious traditions and values but really it doesn't matter what we believe as long as we do good for the whole community

One is now in a position to present common approaches to constructing the relationship between faith and the voluntary sector: The evidence base for the analysis is drawn from recent research in which the author and colleagues have been involved, including interviews with faith community leaders and statutory actors carried out as part of the JRF funded project "faith in urban regeneration". See Farnell et al. (2003) for details of the evidence.

Model A: Faith sector as a subset of the Voluntary Sector

The first model I shall consider is one where the distinctive characteristics of religious organisation are assumed to be insignificant for policy purposes. Interviews for our research suggest that this is the dominant model in practice, in that a high proportion of the local government officers, councillors and regeneration professionals spoken with, talked of policy and funding regimes, and regulatory powers which they believed were to be applied fairly across all sections of their local community. Faith leaders usually recognised this was the situation they found themselves in, and although a minority of them said they were perfectly happy to compete on such terms with secular groups, there were rather more who were frustrated at lack of recognition and what they perceived to be discrimination against all religion or their particular religion, or organisation.

Clearly both local and national Government prefers to operate with this model because it can apply one set of secular rules, to all types of third sector organisations with which it has to deal. In contracts, partnerships, consultations and imposing regulations it can work with familiar legal formats and standardised bureaucratic procedures. Funding from the public purse can be allocated and monitored using standard and openly accountable criteria. Under "best value" regimes religious groups compete on an equal playing field with provider agencies from all sectors. Government can expect funded groups to deliver their services, and treat staff according to standard equal opportunities policies, and can monitor standards of care in terms of child protection and Health & Safety regulations.

However there are a number of problems with this first model, especially when seen from the point of view of the religious organisation. Many people of faith would perceive that such an approach imposes secular organisational forms and values on the faith based organisation that seeks to work with the state. While it is true that much charity law and good practice has been developed on the basis of organisational forms with origins in the mainstream Christian churches of previous centuries, these do not always fit well with contemporary expectations of Christian social activists, let alone with cultures, traditions and values that are rooted overseas or in a different faith tradition. Newly founded religious organisations may get into difficulties by wishing to combine charitable purposes such as the promotion of religion and the relief of poverty with vigorous campaigns for social or international justice, or may have difficulties finding within the faith unpaid trustees, who are different people from the value driven social entrepreneurs who need to earn a living from the organisation. Occasionally there are direct clashes of values and practice, for example where equal opportunities policy may specify recruitment and service delivery shall be offered "regardless of gender or sexuality", while the faith tradition may advocate segregation (and sub-ordination) of women, or find homosexual practices an abomination.

In this context it is not surprising that funding bodies who tend to be risk averse, have hesitation in supporting religious groups. The nearest thing to a policy that emerged from the research was a statement from one authority that "we will fund religious organisations, but not religious activity". There have been many accusations that politics and prejudice have been directly applied to prevent specific religious groups from being funded. There is a more widespread feeling that failure by the authorities to recognise the distinctive features of a religious ethos have led to indirect discrimination, whereby religious groups have been asked to "jump through hoops" that compromise their principles in order to be funded.

Finally with this model there are organisational incompatibilities and differences in priorities between many religious groups and those of the state funded voluntary sector. As Cameron (1999) has pointed out many congregation members don't see themselves as formal volunteers or their churches as formal organisations. The local grass roots membership of inner city congregations, gurdwaras, temples and mosques are likely to have very different perspectives and priorities than those of decision makers for the area. In the first place they are more likely to be local residents who suffer at the sharp end from, poverty, bad housing, unemployment, racism and crime. Secondly their priorities are likely to be personal and or spiritual rather than political or social. They may be concerned mainly with securing decent housing or health care for themselves and their own family, and quite possibly exploring avenues to move out of the neighbourhood. Or their priorities may be about the religious education of their children, finding a building where they can pray or worship on their own terms, or in propagating their faith to their neighbours. Even if they are convinced that their God is concerned with, and at work for, the welfare of everyone in the neighbourhood, and may be themselves be praying and working to secure it, it is highly unlikely that their evaluations of progress in the intangible and spiritual realms can be captured in measurable performance indicators as stipulated by the local regeneration partnership. One result of this is that any project funding channelled through a local religious organisation tends towards the professional, and thereby to distance the work, and any project employees from congregation members. Finally a common complaint from congregations (and other small community groups) working in funded partnerships with the state (on both sides of the Atlantic (Green and Sherman 2002)) is of over regulation, and the burden of bureaucracy in accountability regimes tailored to the culture of larger established organisations. One oft repeated anecdote (possibly an urban myth) from a church concerned small scale care work with young children funded by a London borough. While the church appreciated the need for sound child protection policies, criminal record checks on volunteers and the like, they gave up the struggle for support when confronted with the demand from the social services department that the church install special child size toilets at their own expense, and at a cost which exceeded the value of the grant applied for.

Model B: Faith sector as a distinct Sector recognised by state

The first alternative model to incorporation into the wider voluntary sector is to recognise that religious organisations and faith based groups have distinctive characteristics and should be treated under special provisions or legislation. The

American charitable choice legislation, and the rhetoric of the UK government represents a partial step towards this model. It is evident also that religious groups are likely to favour such an approach because it raises their status by recognising their existence and to a greater or lesser extent their autonomy. Ring fencing specific pots of money, or providing seats on governing bodies gives privileged access to power and resources to the religious sector. If there is competition between different faith groups it is at least between teams in the same league. For many struggling congregations funding, partnerships and contracts offer the chance of survival, of keeping a building maintained, and of raising a profile in the locality. Symbolically and perhaps in terms of recruitment such a policy counters the overwhelming tide of secularisation which is a major fear of believers from many faith traditions.

A parallel current debate is that over Faith Schools. Recent Ministers of Education for England have noticed that Church schools have achieved high places in the league tables of performance for GCSEs and SATs and are popular with parents who are able to express a degree of choice in their children's schooling. A growing commitment to diversity in education has allowed government to positively encourage faith based schools. For many years there have been large numbers of Roman Catholic and Anglican schools in England, and a much smaller number of Jewish schools enjoying voluntary aided status where the state provides a high proportion of funding and the "church" retains control over the religious education offered. In Scotland and Northern Ireland Roman Catholic schools are also numerous and distinct from state schools which tend to be overwhelmingly "protestant" in intake. Since 1997 in England these provisions have been extended in the name of fairness to other faith communities and a small number of Islamic schools have gained voluntary aided status. However the policy of supporting faith based school has been strongly contested, by secularists who fear religious indoctrination of children, by egalitarians who note that the choice of Church schools exercised by middle class parents (some of whom may even be Muslim or Hindu) has little to do with faith and everything to do with selection by and for academic success, and most recently by those concerned for social cohesion. It has been noted that in many Northern towns in particular that residential segregation is mirrored in school registers with the effect that some state schools are already overwhelmingly (Pakistani / Bangladeshi) Muslim and others overwhelmingly white ("Christian"). It is feared that further encouragement of religious schools may make the levels of segregation and inter school hostility even worse. At the same time it should be noted there has been an increase in the numbers of independent privately funded religious schools, set up by evangelical Christians, Adventists, Muslims, orthodox Jews and Sikhs.

In the case of voluntary action and social welfare, even from the point of view of religious organisations there are real problems with constructing a separate "faith sector". In an increasingly plural society demonstrating that all groups within it can be shown to have more in common with each other than with groups outside it is just about impossible. Statutory bodies and their staff are sadly unaware of the wide diversity of organisations that might be included in any "faith sector". Yet in bodies such as the new local strategic partnerships they are often required to find a board member to represent the interests of the faith communities. Our JRF research found a serious lack of knowledge in the statutory sector about religion in general and about local religious organisations in particular, and especially of the rich variety of newer less visible minority faiths. The variety of organisation size, management structure,

type, culture, values and ethos is possibly just as wide as in secular voluntary / community sector. An assumed commonality tends to push them into inter-faith collaboration, when in fact religious groups are more likely to regard close competitors than totally secular bodies as children of the devil. In the English context where lukewarm religion is often regarded more favourably than the "hot gospel" tradition regarded as typically American, it is hard to see how any policy can be devised that can accommodate theologies of sectarianism or give space for proclaiming faith and persuading people to convert. Although promoting social cohesion is in the air, any support of, or perceived favouritism for particular faith groups risks provoking conflict.

Two other fears have been expressed by some of the more radical urban religious groups. The first which concerns power differentials and is based on the proverb "who pays the piper calls the tune" sees funding as co-option by the state into the state's agenda. The worry is that this of necessity silences any voice of protest against social injustice. Interestingly a recent survey of US charitable choice providers (Green and Sherman 2002) found this not to be a significant issue. The second fear is that funding religious groups, exploits their altruism, uses and depletes their resources such as buildings, funds and volunteers. In doing so it is likely to divert them from their traditional priorities and risks providing low quality services on the cheap. The only gainers in this reading are the tax payers, and the politicians they elect because of lower taxation. Of course there are many religious groups and charities, in urban areas as well as their usual habitat of middle England, who are not so politically aware, or may passively or even actively support the agendas of the powers that be.

Model C: Faith as diffuse influence...

A third model which is often talked about by Christian social activists, suggests that individuals should undertake their social action immersed in the structures of the wider society. It draws unashamedly on metaphors from the New Testament where Jesus speaks of the Kingdom of God as leaven in the lump, and compares his followers with salt (flavouring, preserving and disinfecting) and light in a fallen and sinful world. Such a model allows and encourages individuals to play roles as active citizens in a range of secular settings according to their calling and vocation. Its strength is to allow for internal difference in faith communities and give space for radical voices to be heard or individual social entrepreneurs to promote their innovative projects. It allows for voluntary and community organisations to have an explicit or implicit religious foundation and values but be open to the wider community, and for individual believers to work in or alongside partnerships with other agencies. This model resonates well with a location in post-modernity where networking is seen as both a description of what is, and a strategy for effective working.

While such thinking is well represented in urban Britain among radical Christians especially of an evangelical persuasion, the practice of such an approach is possibly best illustrated in the work of religious orders and communities such as the Anglican Society of St. Francis, the Iona community and the numerous orders of Roman Catholic Sisters who have relocated in urban Council estates in numerous English cities. Bob Holman's vocation to downward mobility and neighbourhood family work

in Bath and then Easterhouse is perhaps the best documented example. (Holman 1999).

However, there are several obvious weaknesses where it fails to recognise contemporary social reality and the legacy of history. Being rooted, as is most evangelical theology in a culture of individualism and Christian distinctiveness (holiness), or in Catholic theology of personal vocation to the religious life, it fails to recognise the established contribution of faith based organisations such as the extensive networks of Christian, Jewish and other faith based organisations that would place themselves within the voluntary sector. Nor does it appreciate the communal nature of faiths which are based on ethnicity and where religious affiliation is ascribed at birth rather than a personal lifestyle choice. Finally there is the question of the comfort zone for believers' activism. The vast majority of members of local congregations are reluctant, or have little capacity to become involved in social action or volunteering, and they are certainly not keen to do so outside the warm supportive circles of their own religious community. Expecting isolated individual believers to transform the world through activity in secular agencies is a strategy unlikely to bear much fruit.

As we have seen from the discussion above none of the three models of the relationship between faith and voluntary action is without problems for policy makers and religious organisations. This should not really surprise us as the models themselves are mere ideal types which help elucidate the possibilities but are unlikely to coincide with a complex and messy reality. From a policy makers viewpoint what is needed is a framework which is pragmatic, politically sustainable, reasonably clear and simple and achieves policy goals effectively without imposing burdens on religious groups which may prove unbearable and counter productive. US Charitable choice legislation may be distasteful in its ideology, subject to challenge in the law courts, and hard to transfer across the Atlantic to a culture where religion is understood and practised very differently. However one is entitled to ask if the American law takes the only rational policy option, in that it tries to combine the best of models A&B by offering a legal framework defining the spheres of religion and the state, and the conditions under which funding can flow from one to the other. In comparison the situation in the UK looks messy indeed.

3. Organisational Typologies

Before attempting to develop a policy for the faith based voluntary sector it would be helpful to gain some understanding of the range of organisations and activities that should be included under this heading. Therefore in section three the focus is to suggest some ways of imposing order on the huge diversity of faith related voluntary action. This is done by examining a range of classification systems used to describe the legal status, social function, and organisational structure of charitable and not for profit bodies. In order to cover some distinctive issues of faith based groups a two dimensional typology covering organisational issues, and the role of faith in the group's life is proposed.

UK charity law currently recognises as charitable purposes four main categories :

- the relief of the poor, handicapped and the aged;
- the advancement of education;

- the advancement of religion;
- other charitable purposes which help and benefit the community.

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/registration/faqpage.asp#qawho> (accessed April 1st 2003)

Clearly under the current system religious groups, including faith based social action organisations, are recognised and may be registered as charities. At the time of writing there has been wide consultation and a vigorous debate about the likely revision of charity law See <http://www.icsa.org.uk/news/consults/con0110.php>. (accessed April 1st 2003). One issue under discussion has been the role of religion as a charitable purpose.

In attempting typologies of organisations one needs to be aware of existing attempts to develop classifications of voluntary sector groups. Discussion on the mailing list of the Voluntary Sector studies network in November-December 2002 pointed out a range of existing classification systems. I will discuss only two well known systems here; those of the UK Charity Commission and ICNPO and mention one other in passing.

According to Karl Wilding of the NCVO in a message posted to the VSSN list in November 2002...

1. The Charity Commission's classification system ...uses three dimensions: function (how do you do your work); beneficiary (who you do it for); and topic (your sub-sector or industry). This last dimension is most similar to other one-dimensional classification systems.

<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/wa.exe?A2=ind0212&L=vol-sector-studies-network&P=R1369&I=-1> (accessed April 1st 2003)

This has, however, recently been updated by the Charity Commission
Their web site informs us

The new system will allow us to classify each individual charity in three ways using a code. The codes will identify:

- ***beneficiary - for example individuals, institutions, animals***
- ***activity - for example service provider, grant maker, counselling or advocacy***
- ***topic or field of industry the charity operates in.***

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/tcc/ccnews6.asp#New> (accessed April 1st 2003)

It is worth noting therefore that while the Charity Commission recognises promotion of religion as a charitable purpose its typological analysis is centred on function and services provided.

2. ICNPO

The International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations— from the Johns Hopkins website (<http://www.jhu.edu/~ccss/pubs/pdf/icnpo.pdf> accessed 3rd april

2003) develops a system of based on fields of activity such as Health, Culture, environment. Religion is one major category, defined thus.

10 100 Religious Congregations and Associations

Congregations. Churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, shrines, monasteries, seminaries, and similar organizations promoting religious beliefs and administering religious services and rituals.

Associations of congregations. Associations and auxiliaries of religious congregations and organizations supporting and promoting religious beliefs, services and rituals.

Jeremy Kendall & Martin Knapp first (funded by CAF and Rowntree, Home Office too) applied ICNPO to UK see (Kendall and Knapp 1996). However they preferred not to include religious organisations within their assessment of the contribution of the Voluntary sector to society and the economy .

3. Marilyn Taylor and Danny Burns did a classification of organisations which attempted to unpack distinctions between the voluntary sector, the community sector, informal activity and self-help, based on degree of professionalisation, legal status, type of governance, form of organisation. This is in (Burns and Taylor 1998)

On reflection one can see that none of these classifications deals adequately with the interaction between religion and charitable activity or voluntary action. In the CC typology it might be possible to develop a multidimensional grid with the variable of charitable purpose, thus applying the variables of beneficiary, activity and topic to the subset of charities whose purposes include advancement of religion. However many churches and faith inspired groups have multiple charitable purposes. The ICNPO classification on the other hand appears based on a fairly narrow interpretation of the field of religion, and any attempt to apply it as a single variable to faith based organisations risks ignoring the multiple activities and religious inspiration and ethos of many faith based organisations.

Towards a multi- dimensional typology of faith based groups

In an attempt to overcome some of the limitations of existing classifications of faith based organisations I propose here a system with two dimensions. The "row" variable in the grid would cover structure and function of the organisation, while the "column" variable would measure the salience of the faith dimension in its activities. A potential third dimension is the faith tradition on which the organisation is based.

a) by Function and Structure

The classification by function and structure would need to list categories such as:

1. Congregation: a local group of believers following a particular faith tradition who meet for worship or prayer on a regular basis in a public venue.
2. Denomination: an organisation or body that brings together congregations within particular faith tradition for purposes of representation beyond the local level, management and/or mutual support

3. Place of worship / pilgrimage / retreat: A location or building which people attend on an occasional basis for purposes defined as spiritual
4. Local spiritual activity group (e.g. prayer cell, religious education class, womens auxilliary)
5. Local social activity group: A community linked with a congregation or faith based organisation and drawing on its resources. (lunch club, parent and toddler group, badminton in the temple hall)
6. Settlement / community centre: A multi-purpose, multi-user building open for a range of public activities, managed or sponsored by a religious organisation
7. Faith based specialist social service organisation : A charity, voluntary organisation or project inspired by faith and/or linked to a congregation or denomination. (e.g. CofE Children's society, N. London Muslim Housing Association)
8. Umbrella body or network: A formal or informal group bringing together individuals and/or organisations linked with more than one congregation of denomination for support in achieving a common purpose. (e.g. Evangelical Coalition for Urban Mission, Inter Faith Network)
9. Mission band: A group committed to proclaiming and promoting its religious beliefs and lifestyle, or its caring activities (e.g. Scripture Union, Columban Fathers, Youth with a Mission)
10. Intentional/Residential Community: Usually a monastery, convent, or commune but might also include seminaries, hospices, or guest houses.
11. Community Development / capacity building or training agency
12. Campaigning Group: (e.g. Jubilee 2000, TELCO, CARE for the Family)

These twelve categories are unlikely to exhaust the whole range of conceivable faith based organisations, and the classification is not mutually exclusive as one is likely to encounter many groups which might belong under several headings. However it is a useful device for helping us understand the range of groups which may be found in the faith sector broadly defined.

b) Salience of religion : applying An American Typology

The recognition that issues of spirituality and explicit religious belief have a varying importance in the ethos of different faith based organisations has led North American scholars in the field of faith based welfare to develop a typology based on a variable measuring the salience of religious concerns. Sherman for example speaks of a continuum ranging from the "fully expressive" to the "non expressive" organisation. In the former worship, prayer and religious conversation is "in your face" while in the latter beliefs are rarely made explicit.

An alternative typology developed in the USA by the Working Group on Human Needs and Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (Working Group on Human Needs, Faith-Based et al. 2002) puts forward 5 categories of faith based organisation, with totally secular groups as a sixth.. They form a scale thus:

1. faith-saturated;
2. faith-centered;
3. faith-background;

4. faith-related;
5. faith-secular partnership;

In "faith-saturated" organizations, "religious faith is very important at all levels, most staff share the organization's faith commitments, programs involve explicit, extensive, and mandatory religious content integrated throughout the program". British examples in the author's experience might include an evangelical Christian settlement, where all staff are expected to be committed Christians, and attend prayers during working hours, where almost all activities include prayer and/or a short talk based on the Bible, and the key measure of success is seen as the number of local people making a commitment to attend Sunday worship in the chapel. A second example would be a local Islamic centre where the key element of the mission is to promote a particular version of the faith through Islamic education for children and adults, and the sale of books and videos through the religious bookshop in the premises. In both cases any social service activities tend to come across as "fishing expeditions" where the agenda of recruitment is never far from the surface.

"Faith-centred" organisations " were founded for a religious purpose, and the governing board and almost all staff are required to share the organisation's faith commitments. Faith-centred programs include explicit religious messages and activities but are designed so that participants can readily opt out of these activities and still expect positive outcomes". Examples from inner London would include a Baptist evangelical community centre (based in a Council owned building) which offers a varied programme of activities and hosts activities run by outside groups. All key staff and most volunteers are committed Christians, the décor includes posters with Bible texts and people are invited to Sunday worship and home groups, and may engage in conversations about religious matters in the coffee bar. A second example would be a Hindu Centre in a Northern city where community activities, sports, play schemes, IT training and external user group's programmes take place in rooms alongside a temple area which is used each day by worshippers, and at weekends and festivals for congregational gatherings.

"Faith-related" organisations were founded by religious people and may display religious symbols but they do not require staff to affirm any religious belief or practice, with the possible exception of executive leadership. Faith-related programs have no explicitly religious messages or activities although religious dialogue may be available to participants who seek it out. Examples would include a community development agency in East London which was founded by local clergy, and still draws its management committee from local churches. The CEOs have always been Christian clergy although other staff are recruited from various faith backgrounds and none. Project work is often linked to local churches, but worship opportunities involving the agency are restricted to a small number of annual celebrations. A second London example is a housing association founded on Islamic principles and serving mainly Muslim communities. Again the trustees are believers as are many but not all of the staff.

Faith-background" organisations tend to look and act secular, even though they may have a historical tie to a faith tradition. "Faith-background" programs have no explicit religious content or materials. Examples in London would include a large charitable trust founded a century ago as a Unitarian settlement, which manages a

number of community centres and a capacity building team. The CEO and a number of staff happen to be committed believers from various tradition but are appointed on an equal opportunities basis. Some work with faith communities is undertaken, and various religious groups use the community centres, and in one case the Church of England has a partnership / lease arrangement over part of the building. Only one of the trustees (the bishop) has a formal link with any religious group . A second example is a neighbouring community centre, set up by and mainly serving the local Hindu communities, including several worshipping groups. However, the building is owned and managed by the local authority and the staff are employed on their payroll. Most programmes and projects run at the centre are advertised as available to all sections of the local community.

"Faith-secular partnerships have no explicit reference to religious content. Religious change is not necessary for outcomes, but it is expected that the faith of participants from religious partners will add value to the program". Examples in the UK are probably harder to find and in the authors experience the only one that fits in this category has emerged almost by accident. It is a SRB Community forum in London Docklands where perhaps the majority of the local community activists who attend, and organisations that get project funding, have strong connections with local churches, three Anglican, one Roman Catholic, one Methodist and one Baptist.

Again this typology is nothing more than a series of ideal types, arranged along a continuum from the most explicitly religious to the most secular. Organisations can be found that may be hard to place at a single point on the spectrum. However it is helpful to appreciate the range of possibilities and to understand that very different organisational forms from worshipping congregations to campaign and lobbying groups can be found at almost all points on the spectrum. It can be argued that the value of such a typology moves us beyond some of the unidimensional views of religious organisations found in the competing disciplines. For example Kendall & Knapp (1996) find it difficult to see faith as relevant to the description of voluntary action, while Harris (1998) tends to subsume the life of congregations, their subgroups and projects as a special case of the organisational sociology and management practices of voluntary groups. On the other hand in the disciplines of sociology of religion (e.g. Bruce 2002) and religious studies the focus has tended to be on the link between macro-sociological variables and religious beliefs, practices and phenomena, rather on the influence of believing and belonging on people's participation in everyday social life, and the community building and welfare functions of their institutions.

4.. Individual Faith Communities in the UK..A sketch map.

In section four the aim is to present a brief overview of the potential of the major faith communities in England at the start of the millennium to contribute to the formation and development of voluntary action and to civil society as a whole. As we shall see groups within the different faith traditions have a varied level of capacity for formal involvement in the charitable or voluntary sector as currently defined, and differing social locations and political cultures which will affect the terms of any involvement.

The Census data for 2001 for the first time in England contained a question on religious affiliation. The question, which was unlike all other questions voluntary, has a number of limitations such as the crudity of the main categories used and the huge potential gap between an adult in the household simply ticking a box for religious affiliation and convinced orthodox belief backed up by regular practice. Despite this for the first time there is a large data set on the detailed geographical distribution of faith communities. While over 70% of the people are in some minimal sense "Christian", there are some 1.5 million Muslims, half a million Hindus, a third of a million Sikhs and a quarter of a million Jews living in England. Most of these minority faiths are concentrated in inner urban areas in Greater London, the Midlands, West Yorkshire and the North West.

Religion in England 2001 Census

Religion	%	Number of people
Christian	71.7%	35,251,244
Buddhist	0.3%	139,046
Hindu	1.1%	546,982
Jewish	0.5%	257,671
Muslim	3.1%	1,524,887
Sikh	0.7%	327,343
Other	0.3%	143,811
No religion	14.6%	7,171,332
Religion not Stated	7.7%	3,776,515

While there is no comprehensive listing or database of religious organisations in England, Religious Trends 1998/99 (Brierley 1999) estimated there were over 20,000 Christian Churches, over 600 Muslim groups, over 200 Sikh groups, around 200 Buddhist groups, over 150 Hindu groups and over 350 Jewish groups. The interpretation of such figures has provoked much debate for example between Bruce (2002) whose view is that all forms of religion are inexorable decline, and Davie who sees evidence of the persistence of a historic memory of religion involving "believing without belonging" (1994) and the emergence of important new personal options for spirituality, faith based identity and community which she describes as transition "from religion as obligation to religion as consumption" (2002).

The "mainline" historic Christian churches are undoubtedly in the dominant position in the field, with the Church of England by law established in an especially privileged position. Between them five large denominations, (in order of size the CofE, the Roman Catholic Church, the Baptists, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church) and a few smaller groups such as the Salvation Army and Moravians, control a large majority of the country's religious resources. According to an answer to a parliamentary question in November 2002 the Church Commissioners' assets have in the last five years increased from £3 billion to £4.5 billion. The churches maintain a presence in almost all localities and own many buildings which can be of use to local communities for activities which develop social capital. They are responsible for a wide range of local projects, and many specialist social care organisations, working with children and families, elderly people and those in housing need. They continue to employ large numbers of professionally trained clergy, who operate strong

networks within the churches and out into wider society. There is a long tradition of charitable work and a fairly well developed theology of social involvement. The establishment of the Church of England provides strong links with the political establishment, which is cemented by the continuing role of members of the Royal family as patrons of Christian charities and missions, for example Princess Diana association with the Leprosy Mission, and the HIV/Aids work at Mildmay Hospital. Links with the privileged establishment also carry a certain amount of dead weight, which militates against innovation and radical social action. For example the church remains committed to providing chaplaincies for the scarcely charitable purposes of some of the independent private schools, the military, and the numerous churches in the City of London. Nonetheless in the hundred years or so leading up to the post war Labour government the churches played a key role pioneering voluntary sector service provision which was then taken over by the Welfare State. However the "mainline" churches in the 21st Century have a serious Achilles heel in that their membership base continues to decline and age at an alarming rate, leading to predictions that certain denominations like the Methodists will become extinct within a generation.

The Roman Catholic church, deserves special consideration because of the long history in which Catholicism has been seen as an alien presence in the Protestant British state. This has been compounded over at least two centuries by large scale Irish immigration to Great Britain and the strong correlation between Irish ethnicity and membership of the Catholic church. Mary Hickman (1995; 1998) traces the response to the Irish in Britain in terms of legal incorporation, prejudice and discrimination and invisibility in terms of ethnic identity politics. In some urban areas such as Merseyside and the West of Scotland sectarianism persists and Catholic communities maintain a large more or less complete set of institutions, churches, schools, drinking clubs and welfare associations. In others such as London and Birmingham there are large numbers of Irish Catholic residents, but in recent years it is possible to detect a growth in organisations which tend to major on Irish ethnicity and culture (e.g. dancing and Gaelic classes) rather than faith. This may reflect the growing trends of collectivities and voluntary sector organisation based on ethnic identity, and the decline in loyalty to and attendance at Roman Catholic churches both in Britain and Ireland. It should also be noted that Catholic churches in urban areas of England were never entirely Irish and are becoming globally diverse as waves of migration from Poland, Italy, the Caribbean, Africa, Latin America and the Philippines have brought a truly catholic variety of cultures and languages into the church. Many parishes in East London for example now have majority black congregations, and the Irish and those with Irish family origins have become a small minority, and Catholic schools have become very multiracial, and in some cases multi faith in their intake.

Evangelical and Charismatic Christianity (in which one should include many Church of England parishes, Baptist Congregations and White Majority Pentecostal churches) in contrast is seeing slight growth, and building a membership which is relatively young and concentrated in the white suburban middle classes. This context provides the possibility of a degree of dynamic enterprise and such churches tend to operate with a flexible mission movement model, although they also control a number of large charitable organisations. Traditionally such churches have a strongly individualist and spiritually focussed theology, which leads to the accusation that they may be so heavenly minded that they are no earthly use. However theology has been changing

over recent years and an increasingly holistic approach means that social action in terms of project development and campaigning is no longer the anathema it once was. There is an emerging socio-political agenda in such churches, which has mixed and even contradictory emphases such as racial and international justice alongside pro life and pro traditional family values.

Black Majority Christian churches for the most part share the theology and concerns of the evangelicals, although global influences especially from North America and Africa combine to form a distinct cultural style. Such churches, especially those centred in African as opposed to Caribbean communities appear to be growing in numbers, and experiencing increasing prosperity at the individual and group level. For some this prosperity is clearly seen as a divine blessing, and linked with a theology of prosperity, which has a strong emphasis on faith or "name it and claim it". However, they are still generally set in poor neighbourhoods, struggling to establish a presence in bricks and mortar and in many cases wedded to a traditional separatist and highly spiritual theology. A minority of Black Majority Churches are confronting some of the social justice issues faced by their members and gradually becoming involved in social action projects. Where this is taking place a social enterprise / business model of voluntary action seems to be preferred over traditional charitable forms.

The Jewish voluntary sector in the UK has been well researched and described (Harris, Rochester et al. 2001). There are many long established voluntary sector organisations many of which provide social care in contracting arrangements with the state. As a long settled and relatively well educated and prosperous minority community Jews in Britain have relatively high capacity for sustaining and managing voluntary organisations and an annual income estimated at over £500 million (Halfpenny and Reid 2000). However there are some critical questions to address. Firstly can or should Jewish organisations offer services outside the confines of their ethnic group? Secondly there are some serious divisions within the community most obviously between the orthodox who are highly expressive in their religion and likely to want to work through faith saturated organisations and the liberal and Reformed synagogues who are less expressive, sometimes secular, and more open to dialogue and partnership beyond their own community. A key question for the latter group is whether in the context of secularisation they can preserve the faith based ethos of their voluntary associations, or indeed even their ethnic identity.

The Sikh community as one of the most prosperous groups in the South Asian diaspora is arguably following a similar trajectory to the Jews in terms of the development of voluntary action. Sikhism has a long tradition and theology of voluntary service (*sewa*) and egalitarian community life modelled in the freely shared meals of the "langar". There is also a tradition of socio-political involvement captured in the concept of "miri-piri" a rhyming phrase which combines the role of political and military leadership with the lifestyle of the saint. In most neighbourhoods where Sikhs have settled gurdwaras have now been established for several decades, and in many cases have been renovated or rebuilt from scratch with a strong emphasis on provision of secular community activities. Most Gurdwaras now run a range of sports, youth, advice, education activities. Some Sikhs express frustration that UK charity law has imposed management structures which conflict with traditional cultural forms of leadership and that the election of management committees at AGM's often leads to conflicts and personality politics. Sikhs have high profile in the

“Asian” voluntary and cultural sector including women's organisations. Overall it is possible to detect a developing Sikh “ethnic” voluntary sector, where the strictly religious emphases are becoming more of a minority interest mainly for older women. It should also be noted that there are significant sectarian and even caste divisions within the "Sikh community" and that there are significant numbers of Punjabi families who do not operate a strict boundary between Sikh and Hindu religious affiliation and practices.

Hindus in Britain, some 30 years after the peak of migration at the time of expulsions from Uganda, are also achieving relative prosperity and success in the education system. One significant effect of this is widespread relocation from the original inner city settlements to more suburban neighbourhoods. However religious and community facilities continue to be located in inner urban areas, and congregations are more likely to commute. Within Hinduism there is a wide diversity of regional / linguistic communities and castes who with a few notable exceptions operate temples exclusively for their own people. There is also a plethora of spiritual movements and missions, some of which seek to make an impact in the wider community in the UK. However for most temples the priority agenda is for cultural maintenance in the younger generation, and heritage language teaching, Indian music, dance and cookery classes for young people form a large part of programmes of activities. Older people tend to fear, probably with some justification the impact of secular materialism on younger people in the community. Worship patterns are less focussed than in many faith traditions on congregational gatherings, except at festival times, or when there are visits from pandits and gurus from India. The growth of Hindu nationalist movements in India and tension between India and Pakistan has also focussed identity formation for Hindus in Britain. The concept of *sewa* (voluntary service) is also well established amongst Hindus (see <http://www.nhsf.org.uk/sewa/sewa.htm> (accessed April 1st 2003) but organised charitable activities seem to be concentrated in local temples or caste associations, or in appeals for relief of crises in India. However a number of local temples are developing as community centres open to the wider community and engaging in partnership deals with statutory agencies and other faith communities .

Muslims form the largest religious minority in the British population with over a million adherents. They come from a great diversity of backgrounds with heritage roots in various parts of Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. As a result of a range of global and local inequalities communities are generally found in poor and socially excluded neighbourhoods. Their strong desire to be defined as a faith based rather than a series of ethnic communities has arguably played a major role in re-introducing faith into public discourse with lobbying for a census question on religion and laws against religious discrimination and harassment. Islamophobia is cited as a major problem, doubly so since events in the summer and autumn of 2001. The angry response of Muslim communities to British participation in the illegal and ill judged American invasion of Iraq suggests that trust in the good intentions of any conceivable regime in the UK is unlikely to be great for many years to come. This will compound the difficulty of building social cohesion or partnerships between Islamic groups and statutory agencies. A Guardian article of 28.11.02 suggests

"There are more than 1,000 Islamic charities in the UK, sharing an annual income of more than £42m, as well as thousands of Muslim community groups and centres."

and notes that many have fallen under suspicion in the war on terrorism. A large if not comprehensive list can be found at <http://www.salaam.co.uk/charities/list.php>. (accessed April 1st 2003). A rapid reading of this suggests that the majority are concerned with providing local centres for worship or religious education of Muslim children, with a minority concentrating on the relief of poverty in Muslim communities in the UK or abroad. There is some evidence that local mosques are controlled by an older generation of respected businessmen trustees who employ imams and religious teachers recruited overseas. As a result such mosques tend to be conservative and insular, and concentrate on prayer and religious education. A few have a community action role and have engaged in partnerships with or received funding from local authorities. A recurrent problem has been a religious prohibition on gambling which prevents Muslims from applying for Lottery funding. In many areas Muslim communities have attempted political mobilisation through local Councils of mosques and/or by activity within the Labour party, or Councils for Racial Equality and have complained about discrimination in various fields and in support of their educational needs.

The younger generation in Muslim communities is an arena for new forms of identity politics and youth and student groups major on political consciousness raising. At the same time there is growing recognition of a problem of alienation among male Muslim youth in poor urban communities. There are also difficult gender issues to be faced in traditional patriarchal Muslim communities, although many deny that patriarchy is Islamic in origin. These issues give a particular significance to the developing role of Muslim Women's groups in the voluntary and community sector. On the whole the Islamic voluntary sector is still embryonic, and is probably not yet, with the exception of a small number of large well known progressive organisations, in a position to offer much by way of service to the wider community.

Buddhism is a diverse and growing minority religion, which is recruiting strongly among white middle class Britons. One result of this is that some of the "Western" Buddhist centres have relatively strong capacity to engage with officialdom and attract funding. Some have extensive programmes with alternative therapies and spirituality on offer to the public, and tap into health service and voluntary sector grants and contracts. In contrast minority ethnic Buddhist communities (such as the Indian based Ambedkar Buddhist movement, Sri Lankan groups, and the more diffuse Buddhist affiliations among the Chinese) may have small centres for "worship" and social gatherings, but little capacity to undertake more extensive work.

Finally in our consideration of the diversity of religions in the UK I need to consider the wide range of "sects" and New Religious Movements and the growing number of New Age spiritualities and religious therapies that are "on the market". The older sects rooted in Christianity such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons tend to pursue a narrowly "religious" agenda and lead communal lives which are deliberately separatist from mainstream involvement. New Age spirituality in contrast is more individualistic and for the most part seeks to sell services and therapies wherever there are customers, and to operate through flexible networking strategies. It is no longer

unusual to find alternative therapies and spiritualities on offer within the voluntary sector, or receiving subsidy or involved in partnerships such as healthy living centres. In some ways it is striking that the discussion about the role of faith based organisations which has been vigorously debated and strongly contested in the case of Christian and Islamic groups, has been singularly absent in the case of reflexology and aromatherapy. It could be argued that religion or spirituality as private consumption is simply of no interest in public debates. Perhaps this is an indication of the extent to which British society has become thoroughly dominated by market forces in recent years and how the fundamental ethical questions posed by the major world religions have been eclipsed by the pragmatism of cash values, as the only measure by which all sectors are allowed to present their accounts.

5. Concluding discussion

In this final brief section I return to the key question that has run throughout this paper; Is there anything distinctive about faith based voluntary action?

In the light of the discussion above several things now become clear about the role of faith in civil society and the relation of religion to the voluntary sector. First of all there is in the UK a vast amount of voluntary and community action inspired by or associated with faith that takes place on a day to day basis. The growing religious diversity in the UK means that such action is no longer the preserve of the Christian churches, although they retain the dominant position in terms of resources. Nor should one forget in a society where many people are accustomed to wearing several different hats, that there are many people of faith working for pay, or as volunteers, in the broad context of the "secular" voluntary and community sector, and that their values and the interests of their religion inform (or even subvert) their professional work. The British government has begun to recognise this contribution and has begun to explore how faith groups might be given a voice and access to funding to develop such work for the public good. Surprisingly in an age which assumes secularisation as given faith, has re-emerged as a category in public discourse.

However the government as yet is far from developing a coherent policy for faith based welfare and voluntary action and in this regard lags significantly behind the USA. Any such policy development is likely to be contested by secularists, and should probably be regarded with ideological suspicion by religious organisations. Questions such as whether government motives are mainly about managing ethnic conflict, controlling the autonomy of voluntary and faith groups, seeking votes, or providing services on the cheap will not go away.

There are some clear indications that many of the factors impacting religious organisations are the common experience of the wider voluntary, community or third sector. However, there are many particular circumstances which arise when faith and religious identity are in the foreground. Most of them centre around the issue that "in your face" religion and any attempt to propagate belief systems which cannot be scientifically proven, is perceived as inevitably excluding unbelievers, or other outsiders. In an age when broad social inclusion and distribution of resources on transparent criteria which can be shown to be fair to minorities is a political necessity contradictions are bound to occur. On the other hand the huge diversity of what one might wish to include in the "faith sector" or under a constructed notion of "faith communities" makes it difficult to see any overarching commonalities of experience. In fact it can be argued that the attempt to define a "faith sector" simply betrays a widespread ignorance on the part of policy makers of the diverse world of religious activity, especially in the ethnic diversity of the inner cities. Indeed within this sector there are likely to be a range of views as to whether thinking in terms of such a faith sector is a good idea. Some for example would prefer recognition of distinct "christian" (even Catholic or Evangelical), "Islamic", "Jewish", "Sikh" or "Hindu" sector or argue that religious divisions only serve to fragment a significant "Black and Ethnic Minority" voluntary sector.

Our answer then to the question posed in the title of this paper is that there are some distinctive issues that arise when religious or faith based groups have dealings with statutory agencies and these ought to be recognised. There might be some virtue in following the American pattern of legislation to define the parameters of the relationship between religion and the state, spelling out what may or may not be done with public funding, and how religious organisations can maintain their ethos and promote their beliefs using their own resources. Undoubtedly such laws would be difficult to frame and liable to contestation by groups which felt misunderstood or discriminated against. But at the same time it would be mistaken to essentialise religion or reify the "faith sector" for the purpose of including (or excluding) such organisations from social policy. It may be that this is an area where messiness is a virtue and a small portion of traditional British fudge could sweeten some of the potential bitter conflicts which might arise.

What is needed more urgently than an overall policy to fit all government dealings with religious groups, and/or the voluntary sector as a whole, are policy makers and officers of statutory agencies at the local level who have a much higher degree of religious literacy and sympathy with faith based groups. Other non-statutory agencies such as CVS's, the Lottery Boards, Business in the Community and charitable trusts also need to employ such staff. They would need the time and resources to carry out proactive networking and community development with them, especially with those who are close to hidden, needy and socially excluded groups. Such a cadre of public servants should be given some freedom and flexibility within broad but clear standards of financial accountability and service quality assurance, to negotiate partnership and funding deals with faith based groups, and to build their capacity to work collaboratively and engage with the public, private, and voluntary sector in constructive social action. There would need to be broad criteria to ensure fair distribution of resources in line with levels of demonstrable need in particular faith and ethnic groups. But ultimately decisions on funding and targeting of services would need to be decided pragmatically and contextually by a locally accountable political process. There should of course be an appeal process or multiple independent channels in order to prevent domination or corruption at the hands of unrepresentative elites. In principle this approach should already be possible under recently introduced Neighbourhood Renewal strategies, and mechanisms such as local strategic partnerships. The challenge is to ensure wide, active and meaningful participation in such mechanisms at the local level, by people involved in communities that are perceived by officialdom as hard to reach, including faith communities. Long term disinterested commitment to the processes of local community involvement by statutory officers is highly desirable in this context; getting known and trusted personally may be the key to the most effective work. It is in such small particulars at the grass roots level that there is the best hope of harnessing the goodwill and active citizenship of religious people in pursuit of positive contributions to the common good.

There remains of course the possibility that some faith communities or religious collectivities will wish to distance themselves from the state and from any officially legitimised concept of the voluntary sector or faith sector. In the interests of human rights, freedom of religion and general freedom of association, and for the sake of preserving the autonomy of civil society as a whole, any democratic society will need to allow space for people of faith to organise, operate, and provide welfare from their

own resources as they see fit. With the exception of policing a small range of illegal and anti social activities, from planning regulations, through protection of children and other vulnerable people, to fraud, embezzlement and even terrorism the state should not need to intrude on the religious life of its citizens. The discussion in this paper of government policy towards the faith sector or to religious organisations conceived as part of the voluntary sector should be therefore be read in terms of an offer by the state to enter into a contract or compact of partnership. For their part religious groups of all types should be given good access to all relevant information about the possibilities and processes for getting involved, and make their decisions in full awareness of the benefits, risks and costs involved. For as the New Testament puts it in Luke 14:28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and count the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?"

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