

Practical Post – Secularity

A framework for understanding responses of Christian churches and organisations to the end of the welfare state.

This article is stimulated by the ongoing debate about faith based groups in civil society. How far are they distinctive? What are their common characteristics? Do faith based organisations constitute a (sub)sector in their own right? How do they relate to the notion of faith community – if indeed there is any such entity except as a construct in government policy documents? Does the notion of “post-secularity” have anything useful to contribute to our understanding of the operations of voluntary, community and faith sector bodies in contemporary Britain?

It is written from the viewpoint of a sociologist of religion, with an interest in contextual and urban theology who has had long term involvement over several decades in “faith based organisations (FBOs)” and the wider Third Sector - as employee, volunteer manager, trustee, project volunteer, consultant and active church member. The intended audience is scholars, students and reflective practitioners in the sector, especially those who are not familiar with religious thought and practice.

Since the 1980s economic policy has been dominated by neo-liberalism, the minimal regulation of the global free market and the desire to reduce state spending on welfare which has extended opportunities for providers from the private and Third Sector in ways well appreciated by readers of this journal. There have been useful contributions to the understanding of FBOs by Torry (2012), Deakin (2010) Dinham, (2011) Cameron (1999), NCVO , (2007), Chapman, R. and Lowndes, V. (2008)... and from nearly a decade ago my own paper “Faith in the Voluntary Sector (Smith 2003). Deakin argues that there is little sense in speaking of a “faith sector” as distinct from the wider third sector, while Torry wishes to retain the category, albeit recognizing its hybridity and diversity, and discussing religious organisation mainly in terms of governance.

Here I seek to move the debate forward, by highlighting the diversity of responses to social change in recent years, the sociological debates on secularisation and the emergence of the concept of post-secularity. This of course is set among rapid changes in the relationship between Government and the Third sector with new regimes of contracting in a context of severe financial austerity. Since 2010 the political rhetoric has focused on “localism” and “the Big Society” although it is sometimes difficult to discern clear philosophical or policy changes from that of New Labour’s communitarianism, Third Way, or partnership approaches.

I will limit my discussion to organisations that are mainly or broadly Christian in origin and ethos simply because they are the ones with which I am most familiar, and because

organisations linked with minority faith communities are extremely diverse and emerge from very different cultural milieux and social contexts.

History...

Although almost everyone seems to agree that religion ain't what it used to be the secularisation story is a complex one and has produced contested and competing narratives. One strand suggests that the influence of religion is inexorably in decline, and that as God is Dead the future of all churches and forms of religion is to wither away to nothing (Bruce, 2002). A second strand suggests that while organised religion is experiencing a major decline in western societies, with E. Western Europe in the vanguard, religion tends to mutate, people continue to believe in something spiritual, that satisfies their individual religious longings, a cultural religious memory persists, and people are glad that the church remains to vicariously pray and worship for the wider community (Davie, 2002). A third strand best expounded by David Martin, (2011) accepts the general direction of secularisation but studies it in its relationship with political, national and ethnic identity at in the context of globalisation, and concludes that there will be very different trajectories in different societies. Finally there is the view of rational choice theorists who contend that there will always be a religious market place and that organised religious groups can continue to flourish as long as they are able to supply a product that meets the needs of individual religious consumers. (Stark & Iannacone, 1994) Each of these perspectives has something to offer by way of sociological insights. However, to do justice to the situation of faith based social service and social action organisations in the contemporary world it will be helpful first to unpick some distinct themes in the narratives of secularisation and consider the claim than in recent decades the world has moved on from modernity to post modernity and then to post-secularity.

The first and perhaps most obvious theme which makes up the story is the disenchantment of the world, the weakening of religious belief, and the idea of progress towards the triumph of rationality. As this aspect is fundamentally about the transformation of ideas and beliefs it is perhaps most appropriately labelled **secularism**. The account usually put forward by its advocates begins with a state of primitive superstition and magic, which is displaced in classical times by a philosophically informed belief system, often involving revealed religions, controlled by a religious hierarchy through an organised church or equivalent. In western culture this system was challenged and disrupted by the rediscovery of classical knowledge and scriptural texts at the time of the renaissance and Reformation. Here perhaps are the roots of individualised belief systems and scientific method, which came to fruition with the Enlightenment and Darwinism which presented a serious (and often atheistic) intellectual challenge to traditional faith and the doctrines of Church and Scripture. Alongside this ran economic development of capitalism, which Weber (1905) linked to the Protestant ethic and which culminated after some failed experiments in state socialism with the triumph of the West and the end of the Cold War.. However along the way the cause of rationality experienced some setbacks with a 20th century marked by totalitarianism and global wars, and the persistence of religious practice and belief, often linked with post-colonial identity politics

as in the case of resurgent Islam and Pentecostalism, or with emotional dissatisfaction with materialism, which underlies the growth of alternative spiritualities in apparently rational modern societies. This post secular turn is the context for vigorous contemporary debate marked by the aggressive polemics of the “new Atheism” whose most well known champion is Dawkins.(2006).

The second parallel track is that of **Secularity** by which I mean the changing relationship between the religious and the political. If we follow the Durkheimian (1915) line that social religion is fundamentally about rituals which reinforce the sacred nature of society itself, our starting point will be that political power is almost always linked with the numinous and the sacred. Thus in ancient times kings and emperors claimed to be divine and expected to be worshipped as gods. It was in the time of the Old Testament that the prophetic tradition of Israel uniquely challenged such claims, in Moses confrontation with Pharaoh, in Elijah’s with King Ahab, in Daniel with the Babylonian and Persian monarchs. In the New Testament this was carried over into John the Baptist’s challenge to Herod, to Jesus’s challenge to Pilate and in the early Christian’s insistence unto death that Christ rather than Caesar was Lord. From the conversion of the Emperor Constantine in 312 AD Christianity became the official religion of Rome and its successor states. A tension between the religious and the political persisted, justified theologically on the basis of Augustine’s distinction of the two realms of the heavenly city and the earthly city, paralleling a dualism of body and soul rooted in Greek philosophy¹. In reformation times Luther likewise spoke of the two kingdoms, and the post reformation settlement of “cuius regio, eius religio” meaning the religion of the ruler dictated the religion of the ruled, ensured the persistence of state supported churches.

This approach draws on scriptural narratives of the exile, where Jews in captivity were called to work for the peace and prosperity of the city where they had been taken as slaves while keeping their windows open towards and hopes and prayers focused on Jerusalem. Thus Daniel serves faithfully as chief minister of Babylon and then of the Medo-Persian Empire, though confrontation and deliverance comes over the religious issue of bowing down to idolatrous statues of the king. In the same way in the NT Paul writing to the Christians in Phillipi, (a Roman colonia where citizenship of the empire was given as a reward for military service) that our true citizenship is in heaven. The NT elsewhere seems to teach submission (if not necessarily total obedience to civil authorities (Romans 13) although like Daniel it draws the line at offering worship to the Emperor or acknowledging the Lordship of anyone other than Jesus Christ.

Islam meanwhile knew little of such dualisms, with a divine revelation bringing a framework of law covering every aspect of life. In the west certainly there was an ongoing tension between autocratic rulers often claiming a Divine right or sacred anointing, which met opposition and resistance from the citizenry. The English revolution of the 1640’s and the French one of 1789 both resulted in the decapitation of monarchs and experiments with

1 Of course this does not do theological justice to the ministry of Jesus who can best be understood as living among, affirming the value and empowering marginalised people, bringing social change from the bottom up more than through confrontation with the powers that be. Nor does it deal adequately with the theology of Augustine who for example also made a distinction between the visible church as institution and the invisible pure church of true believers.

republicanism. While in Britain the outcome was an early development of religious toleration and widening democracy, arguably well prepared by the ethos of Protestantism, in France the outcome was a more aggressively secular state, and high levels of anti-clericalism. The North American version was an amalgam of French enlightenment politics with British religious tolerance. Secular states in different versions became the norm throughout Christendom, in independent India, and in parts of the Islamic world such as Turkey and Iraq. Even where established churches survived as in England, Scotland and Scandinavia their political power was much curtailed, and their active membership much reduced by the end of the 20th Century. In place of the notion of the state as sacred came the new sacred international declaration of human rights based on the Enlightenment rationality of equality before the law of every citizen.

The third theme in the story which is perhaps the most significant in the context of social action by faith based groups is the relation of religion to charity and human welfare. The assumed decline in the power, significance and ambit of the church or faith community in the face of modernity is what I will refer to by the third term **Secularisation** (though I remain uneasy with this as the ordinary usage of the term usually implies a wider process which also covers political power and institutional dominance). The early church as a minority sectarian religion was noted for their welfare roles. Tertullian one of the early Christian writers considers that the care for the helpless and a loving kindness mark the Christians “in the eyes of many of our opponents”. As the church became established in the following millennium the role was delegated to the Monasteries, the friars and eventually in Protestant lands to (often reluctant) parishes. In the 18th and 19th Centuries in Britain the Evangelical revival was followed by a tidal wave of charitable and reforming societies from anti slavery groups to teetotalism, from district hospitals to the forerunner of the probation service, from orphanages to Darby and Joan clubs. Co-operatives and other mutuals and the organised labour movement also had strong links with religious ideas and institutions, and gradually gathered political influence. The liberal nonconformist conscience and the Christian socialism of churchmen such as Archbishop William Temple were a major foundation stone for the welfare state established by the first post war Labour government which offered free cradle to grave health care, universal education and social insurance for all citizens. By the 1980s economic pressures, neo-liberal ideologies, and a populist media led scapegoating of “scroungers” combined to make the retrenchment of provision politically acceptable. For three decades since the first Thatcher government the public sector has been in retreat, and welfare services are increasingly contracted out to “more efficient” providers including private companies, “voluntary sector” not for profit organisations, and within specific regulatory constraints to faith communities and faith based organisations. In this context we currently encounter the rhetoric of the “big society” and “the localism agenda” which seems to suggest that neighbourhood communities should take responsibility for the welfare and wellbeing of their members at no cost to the public purse. Churches and other faith communities, who in some neighbourhoods are almost the only groups with high levels of social capital, who have a known propensity for caring for others less fortunate than themselves, and who may be relatively naïve in the ways of the world are (depending on how one sees it) willing potential partners, or ripe for exploitation in these processes.

The emergence of post-secular public space

A new visibility of religion in public life is now powerfully shaping academic debates and theories. . Thus, almost forty years ago for Peter Berger, the term ‘secularisation’ described a process ‘by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols’ (1973: 113). Now Berger and others are using terms such as desecularisation to describe the resurgence of ‘furious, supernaturalist, fundamentalist or conservative expressions of religion’ (1999: 6) in politics and public life. Jurgen Habermas, meanwhile, refers to ‘a postsecular self-understanding of society as a whole, in which the vigorous continuation of religion in a continually secularizing environment must be reckoned with’ (2005: 26). This last observation suggests that the idea of postsecularism is not describing the **replacement** of secularisation within liberal democracies by a resurgent public expression of religion. Rather, it suggests that ongoing dynamics associated with secularism now compete within secularity of the public sphere with some unexpected expressions of an emergent and confident religion.

Debates about the post-secular have been taken up in a range of academic disciplines in recent year and are helpfully summarized and critiqued in a recent paper by Beckford (2012). He gathers the numerous definitions of the term “post-secularity” into six distinct clusters, concluding that none of them are adequate to capture what is happening and that both the evidence base and the sophistication of understanding of the discourse is poor

the orientation of many writings about the post-secular is normative and speculative. The other side of this coin is that concern with empirical evidence and analysis is relatively underdeveloped. And curiosity about the processes whereby the basic terms of “religion,” “secular,” and “postsecular” are negotiated in social life tends to be low.

In dealing with FBOs Beckford suggests

that the relatively high visibility since the late 1990s of faith-based activities and FBOs in the British public sphere signifies something more subtle and interesting than either the instrumentalization of religion or the so-called postsecular resurgence of faith.

.....far from being postsecular in any of the current meanings of the term—is actually associated with the state’s “interpellation” of selected religions as partners in the delivery of public policies for managing diversity, combating inequality, and promoting social enterprise.

..... although the ability of faith-based social enterprise to succeed in Britain is uncertain at a time of austerity and of drastic reductions in public expenditures, there is no doubt that part of religion’s visibility in the public sphere owes something to its engagement in social entrepreneurialism.

1.3 Faith and public policy in the UK

A second dynamic influencing the spiritual and religious capital debate is centred on social policy discourse about the role of religion in civil society and public life. This can be traced through the impact on UK social policy of seminal US based research from Putnam (2000) which, within the context of a disestablished, deregulated social 'market', sees churches and other faith groups as 'incubators' for volunteering as well as 'bulwarks' against the erosion of civil society.

Within the UK, such a view of religious groups has coalesced within social policy from the late 1990s to the present day with a series of policy initiatives and guidelines. These include the establishment of the Inner Cities Religious Council (replaced by the Faith Communities Consultative Council in 2006); the Local Government Association (LGA) (2002) and Home Office guides (2004) to partnership working with faith communities; the requirement that Local Strategic Partnerships involve and consult faith groups in the development of Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements; and the £13.8 million Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund (2007) established to encourage faith groups to build stronger and more cohesive communities and prevent religious extremism.

The emphasis on this aspect of religion increased exponentially after the events of September 2001 and the bombings in London in 2005. As Beckford (2012) points out "The "securitization" of religion has strongly boosted its visibility in the public sphere." Consequently, , community cohesion policies are often perceived as intrinsically linked to the prevention of violent extremism, which in popular thinking is seen exclusively as a problem for Muslim communities and nothing to do with Christian churches. Recent legislation on equalities extended to cover categories of religion and belief are one important element of the softer side of the state's response. As a religious minority Christians should feel comforted by the protection afforded to religion under equalities legislation. However for many of them the protection of minorities is seen as essentially for other groups, for faiths that are relative newcomers, and for minorities defined by sexual practices which contravene Biblically grounded moral codes.

However, the political rhetoric on religion by which faith is seen as making a positive contribution to social policy areas such as regeneration, social cohesion, anti-terrorism initiatives and private contracting for public services, remains largely superficial. Faith groups are themselves often ambiguous about their new status as 'political flavour of the month'; some have welcomed the opportunity to become big players in the provision of social services and the many government area based initiatives. Others however, have felt uneasy at what they consider undue pressure (via funding programmes and 'capacity-building' training) to play down their historical identities, beliefs and distinctive ethos in order to become part of a more regulated and professionalised 'sector'.

Arguably the intolerant polemic of the "new atheism" is an inevitable reaction to this "re-emergence of faith" as intellectual and political space is contested – although there seems to be little sophistication among their champions about the possibility of distinguishing secularism versus belief as a battle of ideas, from secularity versus Christendom as political

arrangements, or from secularised state led versus faith-based welfare provision. Still less is there any evidence for organized atheism as a driver for the organization of social welfare or community flourishing.

At the same time Christian churches are still feeling the impact of secularism as orthodox belief is less popular, membership and attendance numbers decline, congregations are aging even faster than the population at large. There is little sign of widespread “confidence in the gospel” as plausible public truth or of its being relevant beyond the spheres of emotional and domestic life. Faith can seem little more than a consumer lifestyle choice, and a leisure entertainment activity to fill a Sunday.

Secularity too brings uncertainties and conflicts if we are in a post secular age. Is it permissible or wise for a politician to “Do God”? How far is religious language permissible or even comprehensible in political debate? Can religious values be enshrined in legislation without restricting the rights and freedoms of unbelievers? Is there a continuing valid role for bishops in the House of Lords or should other religious traditions be formally represented there? Should prayers continue to be said before sessions of Parliament and local authorities, and if so whose forms of prayer should be used? Should the church in England and Scotland continue to be established, and ultimately should the sacred nature of the monarchy remain linked to the Christian religion or be abandoned altogether?

For our current purposes it is the secularisation or de-secularisation of welfare that is the most significant issue. Nostalgia suggests not so long ago, and “Britain was a Christian country”. There was a dominant established church, alongside other Christian denominations, who founded, ran and then handed over to the state numerous welfare institutions. Yet Christian faith is always suffused by hope, the vision of a better world, on earth in this age, or in heaven (on earth) in an age to come. And Christian faith is always to be worked out in love, love of God and care for one’s neighbour. For half a century churches were content to cover some of the gaps in the welfare state, introducing innovative responses in the hope that campaigns and pilot projects might grow into strong voluntary sector organisations or mainstreamed state provision. Despite the long outgoing tide of secularisation the current post-secular moment engenders hope that it may be turning. As “the poor will be always with you” there is human need crying out to be met and few other Good Samaritans on the road. Christians therefore have a new opportunity to get involved in welfare and community development. What then are the practical options for Christian groups to engage with contemporary social welfare and policy issues?

Christian reactions to the contemporary situation – Seven ideal types

In the remainder of the paper I want to explore seven possible positions that churches and faith based organisations can and do take in terms of engaging with the current post-secular situation in the UK, and specifically with the current social policy and welfare provision. As ideal types it is possible to observe organisations that overlap two or more of the positions – there may even be some who adopt a different one for every day of the week. The scheme

proposed is not intended as a scale or continuum, more of a mapping of multi-dimensional space.

Type 1: Religious enterprise and the consumer church

Perhaps the easiest position for a church to take in contemporary society is to ignore some of the difficult social questions and concentrate on the worship experience as a product in the religious market. A relatively non demanding gospel and a well packaged worship experience with inspirational music and preaching can draw in crowds of worshippers and offer them a spiritual and emotional blessing. In some cases the promise of the blessing may be extended to the material through a doctrine described as the prosperity gospel – which in harsh economic times has a tendency to disappoint more often than to be fulfilled. Different churches may find a niche market for their wares, targeting for example particular age, class or ethnic groupings. At the most demanding such churches see themselves as an Assembly of the faithful, a called out group (the original meaning of ekklesia) and mark themselves out by a ritualised holiness centred in a relatively small number of taboos, such as abstinence from drugs, alcohol, illicit sex and certain styles of clothing. Such churches rarely engage in social action, especially beyond the bounds of their own membership, eschew politics and concentrate on winning souls so that people may find their way to heaven. However they are often the home for spiritual, social and economic entrepreneurs and Christian businesses may emerge alongside the church. In this way they can flourish in the post-modern culture where individuals can pick and mix beliefs, lifestyles and spiritualities. (There are also more individualistic expressions of faith responding to the market, with a focus on personal therapy and spirituality, often straying from Christian orthodoxy into New Age practices or syncretism with Eastern religions.) Successful businesses are safe to ignore the assaults of secularism, although atheistic ideas may be rejected as demonic or unscriptural. Meanwhile political secularism (or its alternatives) are largely irrelevant as long as there is freedom of belief and for assembly to worship.

Type 2: Church as social capital –koinonia - incarnation

Our second type is that of many local church congregations, especially those which define their ministry in terms of a small geographical parish, whether in a rural or urban setting. Typically they will be small and intimate and have few cultural resources to provide lively and dynamic worship experiences. They will often be closely connected by kinship, friendship and neighbourly relationships to the members of the neighbourhood community who are not explicit believers or signed up members of the congregation. There will be good mutual support in times of need – the low level bonding social capital that keeps a local community functioning. There may also be commitment to develop bridging social capital with outsiders, often expressed in low key activities such as parent and toddler groups or luncheon clubs for the elderly. Much of this work is hidden so that it will rarely come to the attention of the authorities, still less draw down funding from the statutory sector. As economic circumstances get worse and the welfare state is retrenched the burden of filling the gaps in services is increased and such churches usually rally to the task with increased generous giving of time and money. However the rhetoric of “the big Society” may be

accepted, with the codicil “of course the church has been doing this sort of stuff for centuries.” In many circumstances the help given will be material and practical with no mention of God, yet it is not always totally secularised as there will be little embarrassment over offering prayer when asked to do so. Theologically the watchwords are likely to be *koinonia* (community / fellowship) and incarnation modelled on the word of God that became flesh and “moved into our neighbourhood”. Many of the abstract arguments around secularism will be seen as irrelevant to everyday concerns, there may be some local engagement with the political world and occasional conflicts over the outworking of secularity.

Type 3: Parallel kingdoms - two cities -

There is a long tradition in Christian theology rooted in Augustine’s seminal *City of God* and writ large in Martin Luther of a dualism involving the church and the state. There are two cities, two kingdoms the one spiritual the other secular which ultimately operate by different logics and according to different moralities

This theological understanding is perhaps the dominant one in contemporary Christianity in the UK and allows the accommodation between the church and state by which the church is (in England and Scotland) by law established, alongside toleration for other Christian denominations, other faiths and irreligion. It provides the logic from the churches’ point of view for working in partnership with the state, for taking public money in order to provide education and social services through the church, and to operate within the law and ground rules set by the state. One consequence of this is that sizeable faith based organisations can operate effectively alongside worshipping groups. Examples that come to mind are many local church linked projects such as those sponsored and part financed by the Church Urban Fund, The Oasis Academies, or the social services work of The Salvation Army. One consequence of this is that the social welfare and community work may take place in relative isolation from the worshipping congregation, and appear from the outside to operate on largely secular principles, employing at least some staff and volunteers who are not believing Christians. However the division is not always as sharp as it appears for in the background prayer for the work may be offered, invitations to share in religious activities may be given and the controlling Trustees and senior management may be required to be Christian believers, motivated by their faith and guided by their values. Occasionally this can lead to conflict with government policies or requirements of legislation as for example in recent issues affecting Roman Catholic adoption agencies who were required by law to offer placements with gay or lesbian couples.

This model then can be seen as one which adapts reasonably well to conditions of secularity, yet does not necessarily imply total secularisation in respect of its activities. However increasingly it seems to be coming under attack from militant secularism which sees it as an illegitimate persistence of religion in the public realm.

Type 4: Internal secularisation coupled with professionalism

Our next type takes the accommodation with secularity a step further and largely accepts that the church and Christian theology should not seriously influence the operation of social welfare. Rather like the OT book of Esther we have a narrative where the name of God is not mentioned, yet the chief protagonists are at the centre of political and social influence working for the good of the community. Policies may be guided by a generalised ethos and values which derive from or at least resonate with Christian ethics, but they are usually left implicit. Individuals in the organisation may well have a personal faith or spirituality and be active members of a church, but for the most part they are expected to keep this as a private leisure activity and operate on a professional and bureaucratic basis. This allows such organisations to enter into the world of competitive contracts to deliver welfare services, to have equal status with other voluntary sector bodies and for the most part to avoid conflict with the secularists. Examples of such organisations would be Barnardos, the Children's Society and the Samaritans.

Type 5: Values, campaigns and co belligerents

One of the recognisable opportunities of the post-secular world is that churches and faith communities are among the strongest potential mechanisms of mobilisation for political action. While political information can be rapidly and widely disseminated through mass media and online social networks, persuasion to act still works best among communities that regularly meet together. Apart from workplace groups and schools, places of worship and the congregations that meet there are the most common such institutions. They have shared values and opportunities to hear messages that reflect religious values invoking justice as did the prophets of old. They are also groups which can organise for defence or co-operation. Many Christians have invoked the model of Nehemiah who on the return from exile organised the rebuilding of the ruined city of Jerusalem as a community enterprise. Just as Nehemiah made alliances and drew resources from the Persian Empire these campaigning groups are not afraid to work with allies or co-belligerents from other faiths and none. Just as he mobilised his forces to defend the walls of the city and the people working on them such groups also defend and speak out for the rights of others, especially the poor and oppressed. Examples of such movements in which Christian groups play a leading role are the Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History Campaign, Stop the Traffik and the broad based organising campaign for the Living Wage promoted by London Citizens, a broad coalition of churches, mosques, trade unions and community groups.. Such campaigning may even include secular atheists, who will often respect the secular objectives of campaigns, and merely see as irrelevant the religious roots of the values and mobilisation which drives them.

Type 6: Church militant and resistant

There are in the UK a considerable number of Christians who are extremely concerned about the attacks of the secularists, the politics of secularity and the processes of secularisation. They tend to be conservative or fundamentalist in their theology, but more significantly they hold strong views about Britain's Christian heritage. They look back to a time when they believe the churches were full and the prison's empty and often make use of the language of "our Christian nation". While not all of them are members or supporters of the established church (they include some Roman Catholics, and independent evangelicals), they share an

assumption that the laws of the land should be based on Christian principles and often campaign and litigate towards this end. Many of their concerns are around sexual morality, and the life issues, but they may also contend for freedom of conscience and religious liberty in the public sphere – for example supporting Christians who feel they have faced discrimination in employment or business in the face of conflict with certain elements of equalities legislation. They may become involved in some specific areas of welfare and care, for example in pregnancy and relationship counselling, although it is hard for them to resist operating from a normative stance, and to avoid being thought of as judgemental. Such groups may find heroes and models in the OT in the persons of Elijah who resisted the false prophets of Baal or in Joshua who fought battles to allow God's people hegemony in the Promised Land. The most prominent example of an organisation with these characteristics is probably the Christian Institute, and attempts to establish Christian political parties.

Type 7 : Pentecostalism and the power of prayer

Our final type is perhaps the most radical in its resistance to secularism in that it persists with a strong sense of the enchantment of the world, accepts and expects the miraculous action of an interventionist God and relies on faith and prayer as their most important resource. Pentecostal or charismatic in emphasis, they see the Holy Spirit at work in transforming people's lives on earth, as well as offering them salvation in the life to come. In many ways they adopt a high risk strategy, as the evidence would seem to be that many who are prayed for are not healed, that many who make professions of faith do not persevere as long term disciples. Dealing with disappointment is not easy and requires both theological and pastoral finesse. And there have been cases of ministry practices, especially around exorcism, where the leaders involved have abused their power, become controlling and abusive causing untold harm to their victims. The Bible narratives are taken at face value and heroic models would include the prophet and miracle worker Elisha, and Jesus himself. High profile meetings with preaching, prayer and healing ministry are popular, although recent cases of advertising such events have fallen foul of the secularity of the Advertising Standards authority. However, this model also provides many examples of quieter more pastoral approaches through which broken lives have been restored. In particular one thinks of a variety of residential projects such as rehabilitation and detoxification centres for people who have abused drugs or alcohol, and of community support groups based on more explicitly Christian versions of the 12 steps programme introduced by Alcoholic Anonymous. For the most part organisations of this type are not much concerned with the secularity of politics. However, they do tend to run into difficulties with the secularisation process in the world of social care, especially when looking to the statutory sector for funding to support their activities...

We can summarise our discussion in a table mapping out how the different types react to the three elements of the secular that we have defined.

INSERT TABLE HERE

Conclusion

In the light of this analysis it behoves the secular world to appreciate the diversity in the three distinct aspects of beliefs about God, preferred model of relating to the secular state, and capacity and commitment to deliver social welfare services. It is not possible to treat the “Faith Sector” as a single entity, even if we restrict our view to the historically dominant and still most widely present Christian churches. Policy makers and funders, at both national and local level need a more sophisticated religious literacy, in order to understand the nature of the beast and to make rational policy and financial decisions, which will maximise the potential for delivering high quality and good value services through appropriate partnerships and contracts .

The churches and Christian faith based organisations also need a clearer understanding of their role in a rapidly changing society, which may or may not yet be “big”. Although religious belief has it’s vigorous critics among the secular humanists, Christians need not react as though they are about to be thrown to the lions by an oppressive persecuting Caesar. While they are entitled to defend their beliefs with well presented apologetics, they should see the advantages for people of all faiths and none of living within an open, tolerant and secular democracy. They may seek to persuade by well grounded arguments that their values offer a good basis for law and policy but are not wise to seek to impose their view on others. In the delivery of social and community service they need to recognize how particular organisations wish to make themselves distinctive (or not) in terms of faith, and recognize the level of capacity and particular vocation they have to work in a particular field. They need to decide how they can best relate to statutory commissioners and other funding bodies and seek to understand the circumstances where they can work in partnerships and contracting relationships. Where this is not appropriate they should stop complaining about lack of funding and get on with delivering the care that they can provide within the limitations of the resources they can muster.

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Type	Reaction to Secularism - realm of ideas	Reaction to Secularity realm of politics	Reaction to secularisation realm of social welfare.	Example
Type 1: Religious enterprise and the consumer church	Not very important in the light of success in the religious market.	Largely irrelevant as they are apolitical	May adopt a business enterprise model of providing services	Mega Churches
Type 2: Church as social capital –koinonia - incarnation	Some erosion of orthodox belief and lowered expectation of God to work miraculously	Acceptance of the ground rules of the secular state – some local lobbying	Provides low key welfare support on a shoe string budget	Local parish and neighbourhood congregations
Type 3: Parallel kingdoms - two cities	Worship and prayer tends to be confined to the private spheres and Sunday meetings	Partnership with the state and secular voluntary bodies.	Operates through community projects funded and managed on secular basis but with support of believers	Denominations and their social work departments such as Church Urban Fund and The Salvation Army
Type 4: Internal secularisation coupled with professionalism	Belief and Spirituality largely a private matter – professional values predominate	Accepts the ground rules – some cautious evidence based lobbying	Competes for major contracts and commissions on a professional basis	Barnardos, Children's Society
Type 5: Values, campaigns and co belligerents	Beliefs and values of the religious tradition under-gird campaigns	Seek out and work together with allies in secular democracy	Campaigns and lobbies in order to influence policy	Make Poverty History, London Citizens
Type 6: Church militant and resistant	Our faith is the Truth and should be declared publicly	We are Christian Nation, we need Christian laws	Contends vigorously in Parliament and the courts	Christian Institute, Christian People's Alliance
Type 7 : Pentecostalism and the power of prayer	The world is not disenchanting – God works today	Generally apolitical but some points of conflict with secular state	Provides care and services but without state funds	(Some) Christian Drugs Rehabs, healing missions.

