

WHO'S AFRAID OF HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT? NAVIGATING THE INTERFACE BETWEEN FAITH AND DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper explores the interface between faith and development and the tensions and conceptual difficulties that arise for donors and faith-based organisations (FBOs) as they pursue partnership together. Across the world FBOs play a hugely significant role in meeting the needs of the world's poorest and often exhibit strong institutional capacities, but they are also *faith-based* and therefore the majority see development as a holistic project, carrying with it a responsibility to meet spiritual needs as well as physical. A particular focus of this paper is on evangelical Christian FBOs due to their commitment to evangelism alongside social action, with Tearfund as the primary case study.

Whilst exploring Tearfund's faith stance and the difficulties faced by donors more generally, this paper suggests that the current course of action of many donors, requesting that FBOs separate off their 'religious' activities from their 'development' activities, causes FBOs to lose their faith-based distinctiveness and is actually futile due to the faith context of the majority of beneficiaries and the difficulties that arise in attempting to separate the two activities. This paper joins a current trend in scholarship urging donors to take a more nuanced approach to their engagement with FBOs.

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Introduction

Whilst on fieldwork in India I visited a non-governmental organisation (NGO) which focuses on the philosophy of education and its practice in rural villages. Upon enquiring if they were a faith-based organisation (FBO) I received conflicting answers from the two founders (Joshi and Gupta interviews). One stated they were not a FBO since their purpose was neither to promote a particular faith nor to find converts. The other explained they were a FBO since they encourage the pursuit of (any) faith, and they work to rebalance the secular, 'modern' bias in present educational systems. They have also built Hindu temples for rural communities, in return for permission to open schools in the villages. This example highlights not only the problems posed in defining FBOs, due in part to their occasional reticence to label themselves as such, but also the ambiguities and controversies surrounding the role of faith and faith-based activity in development.

The role of faith in development is a contentious issue and one which requires an open and respectful approach. 'Project secularisation', promoted initially by Enlightenment thinkers, has led to a strict separation of religion and politics in liberal democracies, along with a relegation of religion to the private sphere¹. As a result, religion and faith have become taboo subjects and ones which donors² struggle to engage with without feeling uncomfortable or fearful (Ver Beek 2000, Hovland 2008). Therefore up until the late 1990s, donors were viewing FBOs with ambivalence, funding, if any, mostly mainstream Christian FBOs (Clarke 2006: 836).

¹ For a complete treatment of the effects of secularisation and modernisation theory on perceptions of the role of faith in development, see Selinger 2004.

² The donors I refer to here and throughout the paper are bilateral and multilateral donors.

Yet FBOs have historically played a crucial role in development and, despite the reticence of donors, are hugely significant actors in the present international scene: in Sub-Saharan Africa it is estimated that 50% of health and education services, at the turn of the Millennium, were provided by FBOs (Wolfensohn cited in Clarke 2006: 837); in 2009, World Vision International (WVI), a leading Christian relief agency, had an income of US\$2.575 billion and projects working in nearly 100 countries (WVI 2009); and across Africa there is mounting evidence of the impact the Church is having in the fight against HIV/AIDS, for instance, one Kenyan church has a team of volunteers supporting 29,000 people affected by HIV/AIDS (Tearfund n/d: 4), and it is estimated that globally 25% of all care and treatment services to people living with HIV/AIDS are provided by the Catholic Church alone (UK Consortium 2011: 11).

Increasingly donors are waking up to the reality that in order to tackle poverty, they will have to work far more closely with organisations which play a focal role in communities or are situated in hard to reach areas, organisations which are so often faith-based. In 2005 the UK Department For International Development (DFID) embarked upon a £3.5 million research project, to better understand the interface between religion and development. According to Clarke (2007: 86), DFID are speaking frequently with faith leaders, and DFID country offices are increasing their co-operation with FBOs. However, DFID's approach has been criticised as tentative and somewhat ad-hoc, highlighting the conceptual difficulties for donors in generating a coherent corporate position on FBOs (ibid.). As Hovland (2008) has pointed out, when donors do engage with FBOs the role of faith is often sidelined as much as possible and their policies force a dichotomy between so-called 'development' work and 'mission' activity which can undermine the comparative advantage of FBOs. Literature on FBOs is also often so consumed with their institutional

capacity that it fails to consider the added value which faith itself brings to development work (notable exceptions being Tyndale 2006, Haynes 2007, Clarke and Jennings 2008).

Therefore in this paper I will be discussing the role played by faith in development, and the resultant tensions and issues this raises particularly for evangelical Christian FBOs (ECFBOs). As Clarke has noted: “Evangelical organisations are significant for the way they combine humanitarian and development activities with a fervent commitment to winning converts to the faith” (Clarke 2007: 83), thus making donor engagement difficult. I will be using Tearfund, a leading evangelical relief and development agency, as a case study since they have invested considerable time and effort in carefully delineating their faith stance in an open, coherent way.

For the purposes of this paper I am content adopting Clarke and Jennings’ definition of FBOs as “any organization which derives inspiration and guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith” (Clarke and Jennings 2008: 6). Whilst this definition also fails to articulate the on-going role of faith in FBOs’ developmental activities, considering the sheer variety of FBOs, for the purposes of this paper it is an appropriately all-encompassing definition.

The first section of this paper will undertake a preliminary discussion on the reasons behind the past failure of the development community to engage with faith in development, discussing how development is often perceived as a secular project by donors, but as a holistic project by most FBOs. I will then present the case for the inclusion of faith as an integral part of holistic development, and therefore the need for FBOs to articulate their

faith stance as a vital first step towards engagement with donors. The second section will then consider how Tearfund has articulated its own faith stance around the concept of integral mission to remain true to its core evangelical beliefs and to employ faith in development. This chapter will also explore one of Tearfund's more radical faith-based projects.

The final section will focus on why donors have concerns regarding FBOs, using DFID as a case study. I will consider the question of proselytising and the inherent problems in expecting FBOs to draw a clear line between 'faith' activities and 'development' activities. It will be posited that the development community should take a more nuanced approach to engagement with FBOs, reconsidering its secular assumptions regarding development and appreciating the synchronism of faith and development for many of the world's poorest.

What is ‘development’ anyway? Confronting a secular context

“To ignore the spiritual dimension of life is to ignore the main driving force of many of the materially poorest people in the world”

(Tyndale 2006: 170)

In his article *Spirituality: A Development Taboo*, Ver Beek highlights the scarcity of development literature engaging with religion and spirituality, facets of life which for many of the world’s poor are incredibly important. Lunn (2009: 937) has also identified this long-term neglect and avoidance of these issues in development theory, policy and practice. In Ver Beek’s (2000: 37) survey of three well-respected development journals, for the years 1982-98, he found no articles on the topic of ‘spirituality’ and only 16 on ‘religion’ compared with 120 for environment, 163 for gender and 170 for population. This shows the distinct failure of the development community to realise and engage with the role of faith in development prior to the millennium, despite a 1980 edition of *World Development* (8(7-8)) concerning ‘Religious Values and Development’, which appears to have gone largely unnoticed by the community at large (Clarke 2007: 79). Yet, in this very issue, Goulet (1980: 481-2) argued that development experts were becoming “one-eyed giants”, employing a reductionist, Eurocentric approach to development which “enthroned the economic view of society and man” (Gunatilleke cited in Goulet 1980: 481), whilst undermining the role of faith in bringing *meaning* to people’s lives.

In the decades following WWII, the development project pursued a secular, economic agenda until the introduction of the ‘basic needs’ discourse of the 1970s which advocated a more human-centred form of development. However despite calls for a more

contextualised approach focussing on multidimensional responses to poverty, the role of faith in development continued to be sidelined with FBOs being viewed therefore as “interesting or irritating marginal players in the struggle for human emancipation from poverty” (Linden 2008: 90). Linden has pointed out the close link which has always existed between ‘God-talk’ and ‘development talk’ and the futility in attempting to forge a neat distinction between the two. He argues that the secular discourse has in fact distorted history and hijacked the foundational work of religious groups in the formation of universal development and human rights concepts (ibid.: 78), an argument with which I am inclined to agree. Whilst the development community awakes to the possibility of engaging with FBOs, it is often guilty of attempting the incorporation of FBOs into a ‘development project’ of which FBOs are already a part in their own right.

When it comes to the actual role of faith in development, rather than just the question of partnership with FBOs, Ver Beek (2000: 39-41) suggests that the avoidance of spirituality in development projects, by donors and practitioners, has been for four main reasons: firstly a fear that they will be seen to be imposing an ‘outsider’ perspective, resulting in a withholding of views so as to ‘respect’ other cultures; secondly a Northern perspective that dichotomises between development work and ‘sacred’ work; thirdly a fear of causing conflict in fragile areas; and finally a dearth of methods for addressing spirituality. Unfortunately, as both Ver Beek (2000) and Goulet (1980) point out, whilst *secular* development practitioners may have had the best of intentions, they have often disregarded culture themselves, trampled on belief, undermined traditional social networks and imposed a secular mindset, engaging in a dangerous, subtle proselytising of a material gospel.

Yet a distinct shift has occurred due in part to the proliferation of FBOs across the world and their role in the international development scene, but also as a result of the re-emergence of faith in the political arena in the form of global advocacy campaigns such as Jubilee 2000 and critical reports such as the World Council of Churches' 2001 *Lead Us Not into Temptation*³, or more negative forms such as religiously-motivated terrorism (Clarke 2007: 85, Tyndale 2006: 168). As the development community attempted to listen more carefully to the needs and concerns of the poor, a report was commissioned to hear the experiences of approximately 60,000 different people who were considered 'poor' in 60 countries. Amongst other findings, *Voices of the Poor* found that spirituality continues to play an important role for individuals and communities coping with poverty (Narayan et al in Clarke 2007: 80), and that religious institutions and FBOs are perceived as important for both their "spiritual and 'welfarist' roles" (Narayan et al 2001b: 191). A later *Human Development Report* commented on "the profound importance of religion to people's identities" (UNDP 2004: 54) and the need for state protection of religious freedom and individual choice.

An Alternative Faith-Based Approach

The obvious secular orientation of development has attracted much criticism from scholars. One of the first to challenge it was Denis Goulet, who argued against a narrow reductionist approach to development and instead believed that for development projects to succeed the motivation and meaning for the change must be drawn by the community from their own culture and religion, thus utilising their "spiritual capital" (Gellar 2010: 100). Goulet understood what so many others miss, that "Development is above all else a question of human values and attitudes" (Goulet 2006: 176). It is only once this insight is taken

³ To read more about the significance of this report and other documents released by Christian organisations, see Appleby and Bindenagel 2010: 293-298.

onboard that anyone can begin to appreciate the comparative advantages of FBOs because they are willing to engage with values and attitudes on a spiritual level, in a context-appropriate way. James Wolfensohn, as President of the World Bank, recognized that “Over and over again, we have found that when we ignore the way of life of the poor, their values, relationships and culture, we cannot improve even their material condition” (cited in Brown 2000: 11).

The institutional advantages of FBOs are now well known: they provide sustainable, efficient development services; they often have access to the poorest and are valued by them; they have superb networks and global links; and they can motivate volunteers, action and civil society advocacy (James 2009a: 7, Belshaw et al. 2001: 215, Haynes 2007: 17). Tsele has also argued the importance of FBOs because they see people as “subjects of their lives”, rather than “objects of development” (Tsele 2001: 210), although many secular NGOs share a similar perspective. However FBOs also bring other more contentious spiritual advantages to the table in the form of ‘spiritual teaching’, ‘hope, meaning and purpose’ and ‘transcendental power’ (James 2009b: 4-5).

In an article entitled ‘*As an atheist I truly believe Africa needs God*’, Parris said:

In Africa Christianity changes people's hearts. It brings a spiritual transformation. The rebirth is real. The change is good...Those who want Africa to walk tall amid 21st-century global competition must not kid themselves that providing the material means...will make the change. A whole belief system must first be supplanted (The Times 2008: 17).

Here we see the more controversial aspect to FBOs, the role of faith itself in development as a powerful tool for changing people's values, attitudes and behaviours. As we have seen with all the attempts at typologies (Sider and Unruh 2004, Clarke 2008, Hefferan et al 2009), FBOs are not an homogeneous group, they draw on their faith in different ways and to different extents, but the vast majority see faith as an integral part of their development work, and those that are rooted in local communities often cannot understand a worldview which attempts to separate spirituality from the rest of life.

Despite the recent flourish in literature on FBOs, only a handful of scholars have studied the role of these more contentious activities in FBOs' work. With the aid of some insightful case studies, Haynes (2007) has considered the role religious leaders and FBOs have played in encouraging communities to engage with areas such as health, education and peace-building; often religious teachings have played a key role in uniting communities and changing mindsets. In Clarke and Jennings' (2008) book, they bring together a collection of essays on the issue. Through the case studies the various authors reflect on the tensions and questions that arise in engaging with FBOs since their agendas are often different to those of their secular counterparts, for instance Christian missionary societies (Hovland 2008), Muslim organisations committed to *Da'wah* (Kroessin and Mohamed 2008) and even groups normally labelled as terrorist organisations, for instance Hezbollah (Harb 2008).

Hefferan et al's (2009) collection of essays is also useful for understanding the variety of approaches taken by FBOs, and interesting research questions are posed, for instance, regarding the long-term cultural implications of WVI's work and the impact of conversions to evangelical Christianity (Hogue 2009). Tyndale's book *Visions of Development: Faith-*

Based Initiatives highlights, also through a number of different case studies, the positive role that spiritual insights and practices can make to development projects. But she also warns of the possible danger of FBOs, when working with a community of a similar faith background, matching up beliefs and adjusting those that do not fit (Tyndale 2006: 165).

Bringing Faith into a Secular Project

Not everyone agrees that faith should, or can, play a larger role in development. Samuel Huntington's well-known thesis on *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), whilst acknowledging the positive contributions of world religions, predicted a coming age whereby the world would be divided primarily along religious fault lines between homogenous cultural units: "the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations" (Huntington 1993: 22). Proponents of a faith-based approach would therefore be seen as "naïve multiculturalists, or worse still, the supplicants of ethno-separatists bent on the destruction of Western civilization" (Jennings and Clarke 2008: 261). Huntington's theory is very reductionist and fails to appreciate the complexity and the multivariate causes of conflict. Unfortunately the discourse has contributed to a view of religion as something inherently dangerous, which does not help the 'naïve multiculturalists'.

In refuting Huntington, Sen has argued against giving more importance to a person's religious identity over and above their other identities (Sen 2006: 19). He argues that classifying people in homogenous groups ultimately leads to increased polarisation between people of different faiths and can contribute to conflict in sensitive areas (ibid.: xvi). This is a reasonable point, however, taking a faith-based approach does not necessarily require that a person's myriad of other identities be ignored. Rather it

recognises the importance of faith in a person's life for reasons outlined above and appreciates how religious teachings and traditions may need to be challenged so as to enable gender-based or class-based approaches which others advocate for.

As a result of their inclusion of faith aspects, many FBOs prefer to prefix 'development' with words such as '(w)holistic', 'full human' or 'transformational'. While contending with a predominantly secular worldview and advocating the need for 'holistic development', FBOs need to be clear about their own faith-based distinctiveness. In his article *Handle With Care*, James argues the need for FBOs to have the courage to "clearly define for themselves and to outsiders what their faith identity means and how it is operationalised in their work" (James 2009b: 7). Yet in Berger's (2003) analysis of religious NGOs, she found that many had never considered their religious identity. FBOs have good reasons for their reticence, for instance, taboos around faith, a desire to fit in with a 'professional' environment, working in dangerous contexts, and concern that it will disqualify them from donor funding (James 2009a: 10-11).

Therefore it seems that encouraging FBOs to articulate their faith stance should be a fruitful pursuit for all involved, but one which will require taboos, prejudices and current frameworks to be challenged. There is a need for donors to develop "faith literacy" (Clarke 2007: 91), which understands the historical development of FBOs' beliefs, the reasons why they engage in certain activities and the motivations behind those engagements. It is to these questions that we will now turn, as we explore how Tearfund has articulated its faith stance and what their motives are for development and why.

What is Integral Mission? Confronting a dichotomy

“ ‘Integral mission’ has to do with this basic issue of the integrity of the church’s life, the consistency between what the church is and what it proclaims” (Ramachandra 2009:10).

In his *World Christian Encyclopedia*, Barrett states that evangelicals are “characterized by commitment to personal religion...reliance on Holy Scripture as the only basis for faith and Christian living, emphasis on preaching and evangelism, and usually conservatism in theology” (Barrett 1982: 71 cited in Hearn 2002: 39). Amongst ECFBOs, heterogeneity in mission statements and operational policies is rife despite this common ground. Perhaps the most significant element of an ECFBO’s faith identity is the supremacy it gives to either ‘social action’ or ‘evangelism’. Throughout the twentieth century the roles and primacy of these two facets of the Christian mission were hotly debated.

There are many different forms of social involvement, from local community development through to national socio-political reform, and the biblical themes of compassion, service and justice provide a strong case for Christian involvement (Chester 2004). In using the term ‘social action’, I refer to actions which may spring from a faith motive but which may also be carried out by secular entities, therefore these actions are often perceived of as ‘development’. The social gospel and liberation theology movements of the twentieth century, which emphasised the role of Christians in bringing physical liberation (ibid.: 27), were condemned by many evangelicals precisely because they swung the pendulum too far in the direction of social action and were seen to compromise the call to evangelism.

Definitions of evangelism throughout the twentieth century were numerous and shifting, at times being synonymous with mission and at times being the second component of mission along with social action: “Mission includes both evangelism and social action” (Stott 1975: 162). Bosch (1980: 11-20) has provided a useful study on the terms ‘mission’ and ‘evangelism’ (see also Berg 1995). He concludes that evangelism is at the core of mission, and always involves the bringing of good news; *euangelion* being the Greek word used in the New Testament describing the *Christian* gospel (Stott 1975: 58). This is the definition I intend when using the term evangelism, therefore it is an activity particular to Christian FBOs, informed by their biblical worldview and desire to see the world restored to right relationship with God.

Giving primacy to evangelism over social action has at times caused groups to use social action as bait for evangelism, resulting in so-called ‘rice Christians’⁴ (Hovland 2008: 176). As a result ECFBOs can often be viewed with suspicion and accused of engaging in neo-colonial, culture-destroying and proselytising activity. On the other hand, ECFBOs which prioritise social action over evangelism, may be accused of compromising their evangelical beliefs, mirroring their secular counterparts. The debate within the Church regarding the roles of evangelism and social action is unlikely to reach a consensus. Therefore if this fundamental dichotomy is not confronted, ECFBOs will find themselves in a confused position. Rather than give supremacy to one over the other, Tearfund employs a concept of integral mission to avoid drawing a dichotomy between the two.

⁴ A term used to describe Christians who have accepted the faith out of hunger rather than genuine conviction.

Articulating a Faith Stance

Tearfund's birth in 1968 occurred amongst the controversies of the social gospel and liberation theology. It began life as the Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund, in response to growing contributions from evangelical Christians in Britain who saw the plight of the poor and wanted to give towards a relief effort which was Christian in character and where money would not become lost in world systems (Hollow 2008: 18). Whilst the Fund would only work through Christians in the developing world, it would be used indiscriminately to assist anyone in need. From the very beginning, Tearfund was functioning as a FBO, its first policy statement in November 1968 stated that:

TEAR FUND exists to relieve suffering. It operates in the name of Christ, in obedience to His commands, taking into account spiritual needs as well as physical ones... (cited in Hollow 2008: 46).

Here we see faith as the motivator for action, but we also see the realisation that the relief of suffering requires meeting both physical and spiritual needs. Slogans such as 'They can't eat prayer' challenged conservative Evangelicals who wanted to maintain the place of primacy for evangelism.

Four years in, in 1972, Tearfund was picking up on contemporary debates and denouncing the separation between the 'spiritual gospel' and the 'social gospel', pointing out that the "Early Christians were thrust out into the whole world to declare the whole gospel to the whole man" (Hoffman cited in Hollow 2008: 29). This line of thought was debated at the first ever Lausanne Conference in 1974 which produced the Lausanne Covenant expressing, amongst other things, a commitment to holistic mission and a rejection of the view that evangelism and social concern were mutually exclusive (Stott 1996). While the

Covenant attempted to bring the two together, it did not explain how this might occur. A further consultation in Grand Rapids in 1982 stated that evangelism and social action were inseparable partners, and that social action was a “consequence of evangelism”, as more Christians were released into service, and may be “a *bridge* to evangelism”, enabling people to hear without bribery (International Consultation 1982).

Some Evangelicals continued to be suspicious of social action assuming that all resources should be channelled into the winning of souls. Therefore Tearfund needed to define well their own faith stance as they attempted to persuade others. The term integral mission comes from the Spanish phrase ‘*misión integral*’, which was a play on ‘*pan integral*’ (wholemeal bread), pointing to the concept of mission with nothing taken out (Raistrick interview). This concept was expanded upon in the 2001 Micah Declaration:

It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ (cited in Chester 2002: 19).

Ramachandra (2009) warns against taking this integral view too far and assuming that one is only authentic if it is accompanied by the other, which leads to difficulties for Christians working in environments where open proclamation is not possible or where it will be misunderstood due to negative historical experiences. He argues instead that the starting point for mission should be what the Church *is* rather than what the Church *does*, and that as a result of this focus it should be impossible to distinguish between what is evangelism

and what is social action. Chester sums it up when he says “Integral mission is about the church being the church” (Chester 2002: 8).

Integral mission in Tearfund projects

Tearfund have used this notion of integral mission to articulate their faith stance. They do not give primacy to evangelism over social action but nor do they ignore it or attempt to disguise it. Instead they see the dichotomy as a false one, “The two are indivisible” (Raistrick 2007). In Tearfund’s policy documents they define integral mission according to the 2001 Micah Declaration and clarify that their focus is on transformation for the poor through the local church. I asked Tulo Raistrick, Tearfund’s Church and Development Advisor, about the critique which is sometimes levelled at Tearfund that although they claim to use integral mission as a foundation, they in fact still focus far more on social action, thus compromising their call to evangelism. He responded that Tearfund is fully committed to integral mission but that it is worked out differently according to the context and type of work.

In their programme-based work which is undertaken through local churches, Raistrick mentioned that all Tearfund partners are evangelical Christian and are expected to have a strong commitment to a *holistic* gospel. But he highlighted that often this is how the church is functioning anyway due to a context where faith is talked about far more and is shared naturally amongst neighbours, and where it is impossible to differentiate between social, economic, physical, psychological and spiritual needs. Tearfund’s role then is to support these churches to continue doing what comes to them naturally. If Tearfund is to engage in ‘evangelism’ then this is seen as being a “more contextualised and appropriate way of doing evangelism anyway” (Raistrick interview).

But this does raise some interesting issues. As Raistrick later went on to say, the local church is not an NGO with a single focus on poverty reduction. Even if Tearfund wanted to, they could not tell the church to stop certain activities, the church has a much wider agenda, including preaching the Gospel, and often all its work is of value to the community. Tearfund has chosen to support and build up the local church in its relief and development work and it has recognised that when organisations engage with churches strict dichotomies simply cannot be applied, they would not be context-appropriate anyway, nor, from Tearfund's point of view, theologically appropriate. Raistrick mentioned also that partners often are extremely grateful for Tearfund's faith-based stance and the opportunity to talk about their faith openly rather than having to separate it off and pretend it does not exist.

In exploring further this question around the role of evangelism in Tearfund's non-operational work, it is worth exploring one of their most innovative programmes called *Umoja*, which whilst not primarily about evangelism, Raistrick did describe as a "deeply spiritual process" (Raistrick interview). *Umoja* is described as a 'transformational church and community initiative' and its aim is to empower the local church to facilitate community co-operation in developmental initiatives whilst reducing dependency. Through a course of bible studies, developed by Tearfund, the local church is encouraged and equipped to realise that their biblical mandate is to reach out to the community to meet physical needs, as well as spiritual. These bible studies can be offered to the wider community as well if the church decides, but this usually only occurs in contexts where the bible is already held up as an authoritative source. Once the local church has organised community meetings where decisions about ways to meet pressing needs have been made

in a collaborative way, it is unlikely the church will maintain ownership of the project, from this stage it becomes a community project.

So far the *Umoja* scheme has been implemented in around thirty countries and in several thousand communities where the church has a presence (ibid.). Raistrick called it a “remarkably transformative process” (ibid.) and cited one example in particular in North Sudan where *Umoja* has been incredibly effective at building positive relationships between Christians and Muslims, with the two communities working closely together to combat poverty and local Imams now lobbying the government to allow a church to be built in the community. Interestingly, Raistrick mentioned that while *Umoja* is not about building churches or seeing conversions, in almost all circumstances where *Umoja* is used, the church grows significantly. One report measuring its impact in a Cambodian community talks of decreases in social disruption and division, alcoholism, gendered divisions of household labour and domestic abuse, and mentions increases in women’s empowerment and in democratic decision-making. But it also talks of increased respect for once-persecuted Christians, increased confidence on the part of those Christians to share their faith and that “The church has grown, and all but two households now attend the local church” (Tearfund 2007: 34-35).

This latter example shows where Tearfund may run into difficulties finding support for its work amongst a secular audience. When asked about funding for *Umoja*, Raistrick stated that no statutory funding is used for three clear reasons. Firstly, it does not require huge amounts to run since it is implemented by the local church. Secondly, it addresses the mindset of change and is wholly owned by the local community, therefore Tearfund cannot tell donors from the outset what will be achieved in quantitative measures. Thirdly, some

country representatives have faced donors expressing a desire not to be directly involved with the local church; these donors like the process but want it to begin with a group more representative of the community rather than the local church. The fact that Tearfund is not willing to compromise on this position shows how seriously they take their commitment to integral mission and using common faith as a tool to meet churches where they are currently at and empower the local church to see social action as an integral part of their own faith.

Tearfund does receive a significant amount of institutional donor funding for both operational programmes (75% of outlay) and poverty reduction projects implemented through local churches (Raistrick interview). In 2009/10 their total funding from bilateral and multilateral donors amounted to around £20.5 million (Tearfund accounts 2009/10). In the next chapter we will consider the difficulties for both donors and ECFBOs as they pursue partnerships together.

What is the role of faith in FBOs? Confronting value-based development

“Working with religion and development is not for those who want simple solutions...It is for those with courage to live with complexity and paradox” (James 2010: 8).

Many scholars have recognised the shift that has occurred in donors’ thinking from a position of suspicion and reticence to engage with FBOs, to a realisation that many FBOs are well-placed to make a significant contribution to poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals (Clarke 2007, Lunn 2009, James 2009a,b). In Hovland’s (2008) study on the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS) she highlights how this growing interest has brought to the fore the complexity of the relationship between secularism and religion, and the difficulties in attempting to apply a strict separation between ‘mission’ activities and ‘development’ activities of FBOs. An important question she raises, is whether or not donors force FBOs to give up their faith-based distinctiveness through their dichotomising policies. As we have seen, whilst arguing that we are currently observing the “neat separation between faith and development breaking down” (James 2009a: 5), James (2009b) appeals to FBOs to unashamedly articulate clearly their faith-based distinctiveness, but he also calls for donors to cease fearing the ‘spiritual dimension’.

Clarke (2007: 81) has also raised similar issues, in outlining the shift in donor’s thinking, he mentions the conclusion the World Bank came to that FBOs must adapt to become ‘agents of transformation’. But he questions how far donors have considered that they too will need to adapt when it comes to “faith literacy...funding modalities, and...engagement with FBOs beyond the mainstream Christian churches” (ibid.: 91).

A recent White Paper issued by DFID committed to “double support to faith based groups recognising the unique contribution that they can make in both delivering development on the ground, and connecting with communities here and abroad” (DFID 2009: 134). The £3.5 million *Religions and Development* research project, referred to earlier, shows how seriously DFID is now pursuing partnership with FBOs. However, Clarke (2007: 86-87) points out that these steps are still tentative and that DFID has faced much criticism about their engagement, including from ECFBOs who argue that their grant applications are turned down due to an unfounded fear that funds will be used for proselytising activities. There is a need for donors to develop a coherent corporate position on the role they perceive that faith can play in development, rather than “blindly assuming that development, as a ‘secular’ project, is opposed to religion” (Hovland 2008: 174). Currently donor policy can be ambiguous and exposes a failure on the part of donors to understand the significance of faith in the lives of both FBO workers and often their beneficiaries.

Donors: Legitimate concerns or blinkered vision?

Concern over religious fanaticism and terrorism, coercive proselytising, and misguided use of religion, have all contributed to a context where faith is all too often viewed with suspicion, unease and distrust. In addition to this, Tyndale (2006: 167) adds the following objections by development agencies to FBOs: they can be a divisive force, irrational, often opposed to modernity, reinforcing patriarchy, and anti-democratic.

Many of donors’ concerns are perfectly legitimate. When in conversation with a former DFID employee (DFID interview 1), he highlighted the fact that DFID is distributing public monies and has a responsibility to the UK citizens to use the money as neutrally as

possible, not favouring any one religious or political position in accordance with the Red Cross Code of Conduct⁵ (RCCC, Principle 3). When asked for their position on funding FBOs, DFID replied that “All faith based organisations are welcome to apply for any one of DFID’s funding mechanisms and are obliged to observe the same conditions as any other NGO. *DFID does not support organisations actively involved in proselytising*” (italics mine, see Appendix A for full response). Other fund guidelines state that DFID cannot fund projects that “contain any element of evangelising or proselytising” (DFID website). It is important both at home and abroad that the British government is not seen to be funding the expansion of Christianity overseas, or any other faith. Nor should they be seen to be supporting organisations which use the vulnerability of the poor as a platform for proselytising.

In a January 2005 edition of *The New York Times*, Rohde exposed the work of Evangelicals from a church in Texas posing as aid workers in Sri Lankan refugee camps whilst sharing the gospel with the inhabitants. Concerns were expressed not only by secular onlookers but also by local churches and other Christian FBOs, who feared a backlash against Christians by Buddhist hard-liners, and harboured concern over promises of miraculous healings being made to already-traumatised tsunami victims. Ahmed (2005) has also criticised such groups, along with well-known evangelical organisations such as Samaritan’s Purse. Her main concerns are their short-term nature and the way such groups take advantage of the vulnerability of the poor, contributing to the creation of ‘rice Christians’.

⁵ The Red Cross Code of Conduct is a self-policing code developed by major disaster response agencies in 1994, development agencies are often asked to sign up to it before they qualify for institutional funding.

There are clear problems with donors being seen to fund such groups, even more so in Muslim-dominated areas. Ahmed criticises the US government funding of Christian missions because it makes the work appear as a religious crusade and is being interpreted by some as “theo-political and cultural imperialism” (ibid.). However, in a study undertaken by Ebaugh et al (2006), they found that despite the increased availability of government funds for FBOs, the more religiously expressive ECFBOs, such as this one based in Texas, are very reluctant to seek funds precisely because of the restrictions which would be imposed on the exercise of religion in their development programmes.

A further concern for donors is to ensure that “Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind” (RCCC, Principle 2). DFID include in their guidelines that they will not fund any organisation which “Discriminates against any groups on the basis of gender, disability, race, colour, ethnicity, religion etc” (Grant FAQs, DFID). Such a stipulation could be challenged, after all there are well-resourced, experienced NGOs targeting their work specifically at women or children, and yielding greater results than if their resources were spread more thinly. We have already seen the remarkable transformative work being done through *Umoja*, yet because it begins with the local church, donors shy away from funding it. However perhaps donors need to appreciate that this focus is not due to a sectarian agenda but rather it is a FBO using their comparative advantage of common faith to help meet a community’s needs.

The question of ‘proselytising’

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* proselytising is converting a person from one opinion, creed, or party, to another (Fowler and Fowler 1964: 983). It is the proselytising

component in some FBOs which has caused many to criticise the combination of faith and development. The question may be posed though how far donors are in fact funding the expansion of a materialistic, rational, Western view of development by the very fact that they are implying through their actions that religion is not required for development. As we have seen above, religion plays a major role in the lives of many of the world's poorest, in fact James (2010: 3) estimates that religion is a hugely significant element in the worldview of 90% of all people that development agencies are working amongst in the developing world.

The development community is against the spread of religious ideologies through aid but appears to be blind to the fact that through a modernising, secular agenda it too is spreading beliefs and values about life and its purpose. Salemink has pointed out that normally development involves a “quasi-religious moral conversion to a capitalist ethos” (Salemink 2004: 128). Ultimately, all development is value-based, this point has been a particular emphasis of the *Religions and Development* research programme. Therefore often there is a fundamental discrepancy between what donors say is the purpose of development, and the holistic development which FBOs are engaging in. As Marshall and Keough have noted, “How can development agencies and governments constructively integrate faith groups’ perspective on ‘poverty reduction’ into their programs and policies, when many faith groups do not view poverty reduction as the central question in the creation of more fulfilling, sustainable lifestyles?” (Marshall and Keough 2004: 23). Maybe a good starting point is to consider the faith context of the beneficiaries, many of whom prioritise their spirituality above material progress⁶ (Abbink 2004: 134).

⁶ The charity I refer to at the very beginning of this paper had often found in their work amongst rural Himalayan villages that a temple was requested by the community before a school or health clinic.

As Abbink (2004) notes there are a variety of approaches to the issue of conversions among FBOs engaged in “new missionising” rather than “unmediated conversion campaigns” (ibid.: 133-134). For some groups, the emphasis is on conversion first (most Pentecostals and Islamic movements), whilst others (most Christian groups) engage in providing material, health and educational benefits, and at the same time, or after a while, look for interest in religious change. It is this latter group which donors may find themselves in dialogue with and having to determine appropriate policy for.

Determining policy however, is an extraordinarily complex and problematic exercise when beginning with different concepts of development. In Abbink’s study (2004), he found that missionaries working amongst the Suri in Ethiopia, whilst patiently developing educational and health programmes, had also enabled members of this isolated, crisis-ridden community to pursue dialogue concerning faith and belief, in a period of rapid change and modernisation. The moral challenges of Christianity were discussed along with dialogue on Suri concepts of God and supernatural influences; without pressure there have been a number of converts. This example illustrates well why some FBOs ‘proselytise’. These missionaries viewed development as a much wider issue than just meeting physical and material needs and recognised the moral contributions of faith and the way dialogue about beliefs can help communities adjust to changes occurring around them (ibid.).

Whilst donors are unlikely to ever fund these actual dialogues, they do need to face the questions of whether or not they would be willing to fund the general development programmes and pay, for instance, field workers’ salaries knowing that such conversations are occurring and that the development work itself is helping earn trust and respect for the missionaries amongst the locals. These issues are very difficult for donors to engage with

due to a secular context and their responsibility to the RCCC, and, if they are a government department, their citizens also. Yet when engaging with FBOs, it is not so simple as to be able to ask them to put their faith to one side, particularly not in faith-based societies. Faith is such an important part of people's lives, beneficiaries often want to act upon and talk about faith, and to pray. And one may question what is wrong with this if it is invited by a beneficiary and done in a non-coercive, context-appropriate, sensitive way by a FBO with a well-articulated faith stance? FBOs are wary of doing this for fear of losing donor funding and donors are a long way from dispelling these fears.

Despite the increase in interest around FBOs and the need for further engagement by donors, there is a serious dearth of literature on how exactly this engagement can occur. There are various case studies of faith in action, but little theoretical engagement providing workable models. Perhaps the reason for this is the complexity of the issue, as James has noted, "Working more explicitly with religion in development is not neat and tidy. It will not be comfortable or easy" (James 2010: 7). It requires donors to develop a 'faith literacy', to seriously consider the importance of religion as a part of development, and to courageously embrace the risks and challenges of working with religion (ibid.). If DFID have listened to the results of their £3.5 million research project, they will have heard exactly this message (Deneulin and Rakodi 2010: 52).

James (2010: 5) has pointed out the two options available to donors as they engage with FBOs: Either ask for a clear separation between development activities and faith activities, or take a more flexible, nuanced approach which appreciates the abundance of grey areas. The popularity of the former approach indicates what donors are currently willing to fund, that is, the institutional benefits of FBOs, and highlights their extremely limited

engagement with the faith aspect of FBOs' work. As we shall see in the next section, this is a course of action which both Hovland's study and my own research on Tearfund proves to be futile and even unhelpful.

A clear separation between faith and development?

The concerns of donors have led to a variety of responses in policy towards FBOs. In her piece *Who's Afraid of Religion?*, Hovland explores the experiences of NMS as they engage in both evangelisation and development work. Like Tearfund, NMS see their work as holistic but unlike Tearfund they have in the past been engaged in church building and call their overseas staff 'missionaries' (Hovland 2008: 173-174). Since the 1990s, NMS have found themselves caught up in the middle of a national debate on whether or not government aid money should be given to Christian development organisations that also engage in 'missionary' activity. The Norwegian government funds NMS to the sum of around £12 million pounds each year but demands that the funding be strictly used for development work only and not religious. Hovland points out that this view of religion is itself the result of a post-Enlightenment, secularized society whereby faith can be compartmentalised and relegated to the private sphere.

What Hovland argues is that this strict separation called for by donors between 'development' work and 'religious' work is actually a false distinction and one which is only really possible to implement in theory rather than in practice. What is more, this donor policy actually sends NMS into a "somewhat schizophrenic mode" (Hovland 2008: 180) since the very activities which give them their comparative advantage as a FBO are having to be split-off from the rest of their activities and perhaps terminated due to a lack of funding.

In DFID's case, their policy on FBOs is somewhat ambiguous. Their response to my question regarding their support of FBOs was noticeably brief and vague (see Appendix A) and when asked for definitions on 'proselytising' and 'evangelising' they were unable to provide any which poses a problem for ECFBOs. Stott has highlighted the problems with the term 'proselytising' and its connotations with arrogant imperialism (Stott 1975: 164). Are DFID simply referring to such coercive proselytising or do they mean any attempt at evangelism, or perhaps they mean any activity which could be interpreted as religious? When interviewing Tearfund employees, I asked them what they understood DFID's use of the term 'proselytising' to mean. Raistrick felt it meant coercive proselytism and the idea that someone would be forced to engage with Christianity so as to receive aid (Raistrick interview). Alan Robinson's (Head of Programme Funding) response was also in-line with DFID's concerns of attaching conditions to aid and actively promoting a particular faith (Robinson interview). From Tearfund's past experiences however, it seems that DFID mean more than seeking conversions, a few years ago they asked Tearfund not to include comments about praying with HIV/AIDS patients in a report (Tearfund interview 1). Without any clear policy documents or guidelines, it is not easy for ECFBOs receiving DFID funding to know what activities may cause difficulty and what activities DFID may be willing for them to continue because it contributes to the organisation's comparative advantage and ability to meet beneficiaries' needs.

I was informed that DFID are aware of the ambiguity in these terms and are currently reviewing the language they use and whether or not 'proselytising' and 'evangelising' are still appropriate terms given their openness to misinterpretation. But DFID's problems go beyond their vocabulary to a deeper issue of not yet having a coherent, corporate position

on the role of faith in development. Currently, DFID policy varies according to who you speak to and Clarke found that amongst DFID middle management there are “significant concerns about the erosion of DFID’s traditional secularism...They fear donor entanglement in sectarian or divisive agendas” (Clarke 2008: 262). Presently, engagement with FBOs is cautious and FBOs are having to forge a distinction between religious activities and development.

In their operational work, Tearfund receives 75% of its funding from donors (Interview). In programme-based work, any questions that people have about faith issues or conversations that people wish to have can be referred onto the local church. In operational work the policy is shaped by donor restrictions, Raistrick identified this as Tearfund’s most difficult area in terms of good practice. In operational work they look to work out their Christian distinctiveness through the “character with which our staff do the work... The way things are done will be based on a biblical worldview and a commitment to transparency, accountability and honesty, based on Christian beliefs...[and] a commitment...to maintaining the spiritual life of the team through bible studies, prayer etc...” (Raistrick interview).

Does this then mean that in actual fact Tearfund’s integral mission stance, and faith-based distinctiveness, is undermined by donors’ restrictions? According to Raistrick it does not mean that, what it does mean though is that any verbal witnessing that may occur must be done with a great deal of care, for instance, Tearfund would not support the handing out of tracts with aid. I asked what would happen if a Tearfund worker was giving out aid and was asked directly about their faith or why they did the work they did. It was clear that there is no easy answer to this question, Raistrick did not know of any DFID policy on this

so concluded that it would depend upon the individual. But on the whole Raistrick replied that in sensitive areas, the aid worker would need to try and ascertain why the beneficiary was asking these questions, if they felt the questioning was out of genuine interest then an invitation could be given for a conversation outside of DFID-funded hours.

It seems then that in operational settings Tearfund are unable to directly address a person's spiritual needs through their programmes. As an organisation they show a Christian distinctiveness, but when it comes to actually using faith in development, in donor-funded work they are severely restricted. As we have said before, Tearfund are comfortable with this due to their commitment to integral mission, but perhaps it does mean that in operational settings, just as Hovland found for NMS, Tearfund also lose a significant element of what makes them a FBO and the niche they could fill is left gaping.

One project I visited in India is funded by Tearfund's private donations and therefore is not affected by western donor guidelines, however they do receive some support from the Indian government (constitutionally a 'secular' republic) in the form of medicine and food. Due to what was referred to as the 'Indian situation', the spiritual activities and link with the local church are seen as outside reporting parameters since there is a concern that their activities will be mis-interpreted by the Indian government as 'proselytising' (Nayak interview). Alongside programmes working on health, education and community life, the project offers weekly spiritual classes for children, bible studies for youth and prayer for the sick.

Just as in all Tearfund projects, the partner in India showed a strong commitment to a holistic Gospel. The project does not actively proselytise, there is no coercion and aid is

given indiscriminately. But there is a blurring between spiritual activities and development activities precisely because of the way faith is viewed as an all-encompassing aspect of life. Therefore the government's desire for strictly secular projects is naïve. The majority of staff at the project were Christian, but not all, and at the staff meeting I was asked to share a message of encouragement and to pray for the team. When visiting some of the classrooms, bible stories were being used to teach English and life lessons, and the songs which children sang for visitors often had a Christian theme. Upon enquiring, I was told that ten of the families from the target area attended the local church, and it was clear that on occasion faith conversations and offers of prayer were given if beneficiaries showed an interest, through invitations to prayer groups.

James has identified two important areas where FBOs make use of faith explicitly in development work, in the "use of spiritual practices" and in "religious teaching in programme areas" (James 2010: 6). It appears from the examples above that asking FBOs to keep their spiritual activities separate from their development activities is an "exceptionally theoretical exercise" (Hovland 2008: 185), and one which risks the possibility of destroying FBOs' faith-based distinctiveness. But it also indicates a continued 'fear of religion' on the part of secular governments and a failure to appreciate the faith context of many of the world's poorest.

A more nuanced approach?

The second approach, which James (2010) himself advocates for, encourages donors to appreciate that all development is value-based and that there are no black and white areas. This more nuanced approach encourages donors to let go of strict dichotomies and to cease fearing involvement with religion. USAID's attempts to avoid discriminating against any

FBOs that mix development work and religious activity, suggest that USAID are reasonably tolerant of FBOs' desires to engage in holistic development, although they have faced criticism for this (see Boston Globe 2006 in Hefferan et al 2009: 5-6, Ahmed 2005, see also Clarke 2007: 82). Yet even USAID expect development work and religious work to be separated by 'time or place' (Clarke 2007: 82).

Taking a more nuanced approach to engagement will most likely still not result in a clear set of guidelines. It will demand personal engagement by donors with FBOs, it refutes a one-size-fits-all approach, and it calls for donors to develop faith literacy, understanding the faith motivations of both the FBO and its beneficiaries. This may prove unpopular with donors, it will demand more time, more research and the development of more accessible funding channels for smaller organisations (Clarke 2007: 87-88, Tearfund 2006: 25). As James (2010: 7) has pointed out, it may lead to negative headlines, but maybe it will also lead to positive ones and greater development results as judged by all involved.

As we have seen with the *Umoja* project, there are areas of Tearfund's work which donors are fearful to engage with but which have witnessed impressive community transformation. Despite donors calls to start with a broader base of people, Tearfund has continued to begin the process with the local church precisely because they believe in the power of faith to harness commitment to values and encourage practice of the "golden rule" (Tyndale 2006: 155) and greater community co-operation and cohesion. The controversial aspects of this work are that proselytising has occurred indirectly through the local church and there has been church growth. Tearfund acknowledges that they cannot attempt to control from afar what the local church does and perhaps in taking a more nuanced approach, donors wishing to support this kind of development work could acknowledge this too.

Tearfund have repeatedly called for donors to recognise the untapped potential of African churches in the global fight against HIV/AIDS: 'Millions of community volunteers are caring for the poorest people...yet they remain largely invisible, under the radar of governments, NGOs and international bodies' (Tearfund 2006: 4). To engage with Africa's churches, donors will need to recognise and support their use of faith in shaping behaviours and attitudes, bringing hope, and providing home-based care through counselling and prayer – an incredibly valuable support in such a religious society (Tearfund 2006: 17). Africa's churches will need to recognise that they have often contributed to stigma and discrimination through harmful messages and judgmental attitudes (Tearfund 2007: 3). Therefore partnerships between donors and FBOs such as Tearfund, who have faith literacy in this area and have developed theological resources to help churches work through these issues, are of the utmost importance. But in taking a more nuanced, flexible approach to engagement, donors would need to appreciate that funding African churches' HIV/AIDS programmes should not come at the expense of them losing their faith-based distinctiveness and synchronism between faith and development.

Conclusion

These last examples of Tearfund's work illustrate just some of the challenges which donors face as they seek to engage more with FBOs. The shift that has occurred in attitudes towards FBOs amongst donors is to be welcomed and encouraged. The huge amount of work that FBOs are engaged in globally is now being recognized along with the contributions of a variety of scholars who have advocated the need to recognise the importance of faith in people's lives and its potential for aiding development. Other voices have also warned of the dangers of religion, and these are certainly to be heeded too so as to ensure that the potential of harnessing FBOs' work always outweighs the pitfalls (Deneulin and Rakodi 2010: 52). As we have noted, donors have remained wary of engaging with FBOs for fear of being accused of engaging in divisive, sectarian or proselytising agendas. A clear articulation of a FBO's faith stance and the role they perceive faith to play in development is a vital first step to partnership. Tearfund, as an evangelical Christian organisation engaging in both faith and development, have modeled this well for others and have an abundance of policy papers and reports useful for other ECFBOs.

As we have seen with Tearfund and other examples, faith is an extremely important dimension of life for both people involved with development and the vast majority of beneficiaries in developing countries. FBOs can bring important institutional advantages to the table in the form of strong networks, motivated volunteers, a vast reach, a long-term and sustainable presence, and holding the trust of the local community. But they can also bring more controversial spiritual advantages, in the form of religious teaching and sharing, and pastoral care and support, precisely because they are *faith-based*. Throughout this paper there has been a focus on ECFBOs precisely because they represent the more

tricky side of the interface between faith and development, the findings can be applied more widely to other faiths. What has been shown in this paper is that organisations which see conversions as their primary goal will have to, and in most cases will want to, rely on their own sources of funding – but importantly, this should not let them avoid international accountability in their methods. On the other hand for FBOs who employ the concept of integral mission (or an equivalent concept) in their work, there are distinct areas for donor engagement. Donors will need to develop faith literacy so as to be able to distinguish these organisations from one another.

Engagement, however, is still not a simple task and time and time again we have found ourselves returning to the fundamental question of ‘what is development?’ There will never be consensus on the answer, but there is a need for donors and FBOs to move forward regardless and for donors to challenge their secular assumptions so as to accommodate faith within development. Current expectations that FBOs will separate their religious activities from their development activities have been proven to be unrealistic and at times detrimental. As Raistrick pointed out, a secular worldview just does not understand the role faith plays in a person’s life and the incomprehensibility for those not familiar with a secular worldview in separating the two activities out (Raistrick interview). In asking for this separation, not only are donors potentially causing FBOs to lose their faith-based distinctiveness and hence leave the niche they could fill gaping, but they are also running the very real risk of breaching their own policies on proselytising by enforcing the idea that religion is to be reduced to the private sphere and is something separate from physical and material development.

Thankfully, FBOs are with us to stay and their messages of hope, faith in something

beyond material accumulation, and love and respect for one another, provide a much-needed alternative to the secular development discourse. Along with James (2010), this paper has advocated for a more nuanced approach by donors to engagement with FBOs, but with this comes a responsibility on all sides for consistency, integrity, understanding and a commitment to challenge assumptions and hear the alternative view. Navigating the interface between faith and development holds no easy answers or simple solutions, it is full of grey areas, but for those who dare to attempt, it holds the promise of tapping into untold potential which could see millions of lives transformed.

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Appendix A

Abercrombie House, Eaglesham Road
East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 8EA

Email: enquiry@DFID.gov.uk

22nd November 2010

Dear Anna Wrigley,

Thank you for your email dated 27th October 2010 about DFID's position on funding for faith based non-governmental organisations (NGO). I have been asked to reply.

All faith based organisations are welcome to apply for any one of DFID's funding mechanisms and are obliged to observe the same conditions as any other NGO. DFID does not support organisation actively involved in proselytising.

The Government has recently launched a new Global Poverty Action Fund (GPAF). The GPAF will provide up to £40 million per year to support projects focused on service delivery to assist poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals in poor countries. Projects will be selected on the basis of demonstrable impact on poverty, clarity of outputs and outcomes, and value for money. Faith groups are welcome to apply for funding. Further details about the GPAF are available on DFID's website: <http://www.DFID.gov.uk/Working-with-DFID/Funding-opportunities/Not-for-profit-organisations/Global-Poverty-Action-Fund>. Information on the criteria for funding can be found within the frequently asked questions information.

Josephine McLaughlin

Department for International Development