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# In Your Thinking be Adults: Where Churches Could and Should Co-operate with 'Secular' Funders

**Given that it is now accepted for evangelicals to be involved in social action, there is still debate about whether, and how, churches should accept finance from government and other sources to fund their community projects. Will such funding mean that the project is secularised? After examining these concerns and looking at government documents, Nigel Oakley uses a case study to contend that it is possible to take such funding without being bound to a secularising agenda or giving up on being church.**

## Introduction

The debate over 'evangelism verses social action' may have rumbled on over the years (and I am not about to re-visit it here), but most evangelicals would now concur with Joe Kapolyo that social action, while it should never replace evangelism,<sup>1</sup> arises simply 'out of the nature of God and the nature of human beings ... [it] should be a natural outflow of our common humanity.'<sup>2</sup>

However, the 'outflow of our common humanity' leads to concerns about the overlap between church and state, and what occurs in terms of control of a project especially once a church accepts money, either directly or indirectly, from the state. There are concerns from both sides of the partnership: the government needs to see that it does not support 'proselytising' and the church has concerns about its independence. I shall, first of all, discuss briefly three differing types of social action to show where cooperation can occur before looking at some theological concerns over partnership with the state. After briefly examining some government documents to show the government's perception of what church/state involvement may require a case study will demonstrate how my own church undertook a community project, used money from 'secular' sources, and yet retained control of the project.

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1 This is a traditional evangelical view of the World Council of Churches' approach to social action, see Stott 1996: 169.

2 Kapolyo 2004: 135.

## Community involvement: Three kinds

There are three different kinds of community involvement that Christians undertake. The first is when Christians act as agents of social advocacy and reform. To take recent examples, the Christian churches involvement in Make Poverty History, and Trade Justice campaigns would fall into this category. Past examples include anti-slave trade agitation,<sup>3</sup> and we may only guess what the situation on racism may have been in the United States without the work of Martin Luther King.<sup>4</sup> This has led, inevitably, to Christian resistance against government policy.

The second form of community involvement is those projects that are explicitly 'Christian' and evangelistic ie where a coming to faith is regarded as an essential part, or is a programmed aim, of the engagement with the community. The point here is that many Christians believe that coming to faith in Christ is intrinsic to resolving social difficulties and addictive behaviour. However, if a scheme *expects* religious participation by any member of the community in the church's programme then it in turn, as I shall discuss below, must expect to be seen as proselytising. It therefore would not gain funding from government or other sources that must be seen as balanced in their approach to all citizens of whatever faith (or none).<sup>5</sup>

There is a third kind of community involvement: community involvement which seeks to provide assistance and comfort to the community *regardless* of the faith commitment of community members. It is those schemes, and only those schemes, which can be presented as providing assistance and comfort to the community without any religious requirement on that community which, I contend, can and should be able to apply for public funding. The sorts of schemes envisioned are child care projects, information and advice services, training schemes, refugee projects, parish (not church) halls – all schemes that exist to serve the whole, not just the Christian, community.<sup>6</sup>

While we must be clear, for reasons discussed below, that a faith *requirement* cannot be acceptable if a project seeks public funding, it is, however, possible to *hope* for that commitment. When his (then) church sought public funding for a Parish Hall in Belmont, the Revd Dr Robert Innes stated it thus:

We would expect that people will become Christians through the existence of the hall, through informal relationships, opportunities for meeting, friendship and service. *This is not a programmed aim of the hall*; it is a matter of having greater opportunities to scatter the seed of the gospel, of opening up opportunities for people to find their way into the fellowship of the church.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, the Belmont Parish Hall Constitution clearly states that 'The [Belmont Parish Hall] Association shall be non-party in politics and non-sectarian in religion.'<sup>8</sup> So different 'partner organisations' using or funding the Parish Hall will have their own rationale for using or funding the hall and, in order to follow

3 For an account of evangelical involvement in this movement see Coffey 2007.

4 For a survey of critical engagement by evangelicals, see Wolffe 2004.

5 See Local Government Association 2004b which quoted further below.

6 Details of all but the last example (which I shall discuss later in this article) can be found in Smith 2004b: 23-7. See also [www.northeastchurches.org.uk](http://www.northeastchurches.org.uk)

7 Innes 2003: 9 emphasis added.

8 The Belmont Parish Hall Association Constitution, section 2 (d).

the Constitution, no-one is required to show Christian commitment, or take part in religious services.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the church has, if you will, its own agenda: it is hoped that people will become Christians, but this is a 'side effect' of the Hall's existence. If people see and feel the fellowship of the Church through the activities of the Parish Hall, they may start to feel they belong to that fellowship and then, over time, start believing. This end point, however desirable, is not a requirement on any who use the Hall – faith will not, and indeed cannot, be forced upon any user.

This project therefore falls into the third category of community involvement. The church is involved in and with the community simply because the community is there and the love of God and neighbour compels that involvement.

### **Christian community involvement: Problems from the church side**

We shall return to this specific example later, but first it is necessary to explore the more general case for such Christian/secular co-operation. The Faithworks foundation, has 'since its launch in February 2001... been working towards empowering and inspiring individual Christians and every local church to develop their role at the hub of their community'<sup>10</sup> According to their website, Faithworks believes that

In every British community there is an aching need for a new approach to tackling needs and providing public services. The door of opportunity is wide open for local churches to ... provide solutions to the breadth of people's needs ... Within this changing climate, the Faithworks Movement was formed to help churches make the most of this opportunity... But we will only be able to do so as we provide social action initiatives in a relevant and thoroughly professional manner, working with other churches, secular agencies and the Government – for the good of those we serve.<sup>11</sup>

This sounds all well and good, but the Faithworks approach has faced criticism from those concerned that Christian organisations must retain an independence from the state if they are to retain a capacity for criticism. Indeed, while Faithworks is commended for its affirmation of 'the significance of church-based involvement in local community projects', Roy Dorey criticises it for being 'void of any challenge to the agenda set by the Government'. Indeed Faithworks, according to this view, is merely 'going along with what is asked for'.<sup>12</sup>

The danger of 'going along with what is asked for' is that it can cause Christians to concur with how our society regards religion: as a private, not a public, matter. Expressions of religious views, even if those views are the basis for our community involvement, are generally viewed with embarrassment at best. Indeed, Grace Davie argues, correctly, that 'the phrase ['privatised religion'] gives an accurate impression of the current state of affairs, for it is true that religion has very largely become a matter of personal or private choice. *So long as the expression of your views does not*

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9 This was demonstrated by the fact that the first activity to take place in the newly opened hall was a Tai Chi class.

10 See [www.faithworks.info](http://www.faithworks.info) (last accessed July 2007)

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11 See [www.faithworks.info](http://www.faithworks.info).

12 Dorey 2005 available [www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/vhi/fis/fpr/dorey.pdf](http://www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/vhi/fis/fpr/dorey.pdf).

*offend anyone else*, you can believe whatever you like.<sup>13</sup> In other words, for all that government may wish to utilise the partnership of churches (and other faith groups), they are only accommodated 'as long as they stay within civil society'.<sup>14</sup>

However, Dorey's criticism misunderstands how a liberal democracy works (or is supposed to work). If it is perfectly legitimate for an opposition party to support a government on a policy on which it agrees then surely it is possible to support – or even take money from – a government when church and state agree without the church necessarily thereby forfeiting the right to disagree with that government over its policy or actions. The question is over where the church should stand apart and be different.

'Standing apart', says Stanley Hauerwas, should position the church so it 'can serve society imaginatively by not being captured by societal options or corresponding government policy'.<sup>15</sup> Even if we assume that Hauerwas is correct, and there is necessary conflict or collision between church and state, Hauerwas still states that he is 'not opposed to trying to harness the resources of state power to alleviate the needs of people'. He objects, however, when 'we think *only* in those terms'.<sup>16</sup> In other words, the problem is when the church forgets that there is more than one way of engaging with the community. Hauerwas clearly leaves open the door to cooperation with the state where the state seeks to alleviate the needs of the poor and disadvantaged in society, but he refuses to close it on the church's prophetic role in society. There is, however, nothing in a liberal democracy to stop a church seeking co-operation with the state on one aspect of its community life if it can be part of the solution while criticising the same state in another area, or even the same area.<sup>17</sup>

The above, related, dangers are two expressions of the fear that involvement requires total adoption of the state's agenda, including its apparent wish to deny faith motivation for community projects. This fails to recognise Steve Chalke's (the founder of Faithworks) position. It is not a case of overt collusion with everything the government says and does. He expects churches to be engaged with the community *and* to remain distinctively Christian in the process.<sup>18</sup> Chalke goes so far as to say that 'when [statutory bodies] refuse to work with us because we're Christian, they act irresponsibly – especially in view of their mandate to provide the kind of best quality, cost-effective care we can help them with'.<sup>19</sup> In other words, we as Christians do not require others to take on our faith before we work with them or allow them to be involved in our projects. On the other hand, we must, according to Chalke, also expect them to respect that it is our faith which motivates our community involvement. Of course, there can be confusion over what our faith motivation means but if we are to be involved in the community because we are Christians, we should not be expected to deny or cover up this fact.

**13** Davie 1994: 76, emphasis added.

**14** See Bretherton 2005: 4 at [www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/vhi/fis/fpr/bretherton.pdf](http://www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/vhi/fis/fpr/bretherton.pdf).

**15** Hauerwas 1987: 90. See <http://theologytoday.ptsem.edu/apr1987/v44-1-symposium3.htm>

**16** Hauerwas 1987: 90, emphasis added. Cf. Bretherton 2005: 6.

**17** Belmont Church was quite at liberty to criticise the lack of community facilities in its area especially once it had plans in place to provide those facilities with its Hall. *How* those criticisms were expressed would, of course, be a matter of judgement.

**18** Chalke 2003: 83.

**19** Chalke 2003: 77-8.

There is, however, another, related, danger once churches do get involved with the community and undertake community projects. How is a church to remain being church while they maintain a community project? There is a danger that the people involved become so concerned with the paper-work (and the other bureaucracy that goes with seeking grants and running community projects) that they burn out. This is especially the case if they are also faced with responsibility for more 'spiritual' goals 'such as praying with and pastoring people.'<sup>20</sup> This is a danger, especially for small congregations (who may be advised to seek other churches and partners to work with), but only if it is assumed that 'spiritual' goals are indeed more 'spiritual' than the mundane form-filling that goes with community involvement. The example below shows how Belmont Parish Church avoided this pitfall but the church was big enough to have people involved in both areas (and both are indeed necessary) without inflicting burn-out on any one, or any few, people.

### **Christian community involvement: Problems from the government side**

Despite all the difficulties, the government documentation reveals a palpable willingness and desire to work with faith communities however naively, or pragmatically, this may be expressed. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that faith groups will get a hearing from the relevant departments as many civil servants and local government officers will be, if not anti-religion, at least suspicious of religious motives. Their own secular understanding will mean that they could suspect that if they gave money to a religious group, for whatever cause, they will be seen as supporting that particular religion over others.<sup>21</sup>

The cultural suspicion of faith may be hard to eradicate, but the UK government still sees faith communities 'as potentially valuable allies in tackling social exclusion, as they can provide access to some of the most marginalised groups in society. Therefore it is inviting faith communities to open up their services to other sections of the population, and to apply for statutory funding in the same way as other local welfare providers.'<sup>22</sup>

There are tensions within (and potentially outside) government. The government may have the instincts of 'a liberal benevolence towards religious diversity', but it also has evidence that 'religious identity *could* present a serious threat to community cohesion.'<sup>23</sup> One area where this threat may emerge is from the bottom rungs of society's ladder. These are the 'hard to reach' people where faith communities often operate but where people 'identify with forms of religion ... which may challenge the status quo'. In facing a government that has 'no strong commitment to reducing economic inequality (especially at the top end of the income distribution)',<sup>24</sup> there can be no guarantee that a faith community working among the poor and oppressed will share the government's agenda. This is not least because churches understand regeneration based on ideas of restored relationships, but the government tends to concentrate on aspects of 'empowered independence.'<sup>25</sup>

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**20** Bretherton 2005: 6.

**21** Smith 2004a: 200.

**22** Institute for Volunteering Research, 'Faith and Voluntary Action: Community, Values and Resources' on <http://www.ivr.org.uk/faithreport.htm>.

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**23** Baker 2005: 113, emphasis added.

**24** *Ibid.*

**25** Wells 2003: 18.

This is just one aspect of the ‘cultural difference’ between church and ‘state’. Another difference is found around the way in which church and ‘state’ operate. In general, it may be assumed that faith groups have ‘few paid staff, but the involvement of many unpaid volunteers on an informal and spontaneous basis.’<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, what is broadly termed the ‘regeneration industry’ deals in ‘the need to “hit” floor targets and conduct endless evaluations’.<sup>27</sup> Further, the people involved in the regeneration industry are paid and can change with alarming rapidity, thus making relationships difficult to form and sustain. Therefore there is, unsurprisingly, suspicion and distrust on both sides: the regeneration industry fears that religious groups will only be interested in proselytization, and religious groups ‘sometimes experience the local authorities as tokenistic, bureaucratic and inflexible.’<sup>28</sup>

So, there are difficulties for any church to negotiate. The key aspect, however, is trust: can public funders trust the faith communities with public money, without the faith communities using it to forward their own agendas? Bluntly, of course, the answer is ‘No’. Even where the faith community is intending to provide a service for the community – in terms of a community building, a homelessness programme or providing assistance for the disabled – there will be, as noted earlier, some form of ‘faith agenda’ (Belmont church, for example, hopes some people will come to faith). But, in seeking to serve the community, and particularly serving the vulnerable in the community, public and faith interests are largely at one, and it is surely in the churches’ interest to build on that common ground that their work is for the whole community.

### **Churches working primarily for the community**

If churches are going to work with statutory organisations then churches need to address themselves to the government’s agenda and look at the concerns which need to be addressed. A chief concern is that a secular liberal state will not wish to see any of its funds being used ‘to fund religious worship, instruction, or proselytization’.<sup>29</sup> The Local Government Association publication *Faith and Community: a good practice guide for local authorities*, states it this way,

On the one hand, there is general agreement that public funding should not be used to support the worship activities of faith groups or the propagation of a particular faith. On the other hand, both central government and many local authorities now accept the validity and value of funding services and activities run by faith groups.<sup>30</sup>

This is open and flexible, but the LGA guidelines are just that – guidelines. Local authorities are free to be as open towards faith communities, or not, as they see fit. However, as the document itself points out,

while there are a number of statutory requirements which prescribe what local authorities must do, in many instances it simply makes good sense to look at the health of this particular relationship [between the authority and the faith communities] as one of a local authority’s many relationships, with its wider community.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Baker 2005: 113.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* See also Home Office Faith Communities Unit 2004: 28 (section 2.4.7).

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Local Government Association 2004b, para 5.1.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, para 1.10.

It is this relationship that is often key. The LGA itself states that '[m]any faith communities also report that local authority officers seem unwilling to engage with them due to a misunderstanding of their motivation and purposes.'<sup>32</sup> But, '[d]ecisions on whether to fund a particular organisation should be made in terms of the nature of the case the organisation is making, rather than on whether it has a religious or secular culture.'<sup>33</sup> From this, it is clear that a church *should* be able to obtain public funds for any scheme that is mainly for the community.

## Accentuating the positive

In 2004, to follow up the good practice guide quoted above, the LGA issued 'Community Cohesion – An Action Guide: Guidance for Local Authorities.' This guide maintains the positive, if paternalistic, approach of the 2002 document. In chapter 8 'Working With Faith Communities',<sup>34</sup> it notes that '[i]n the 2001 census, 76.8 per cent of people in the UK identified themselves as having a religion.' Therefore '[f]aith is a key area for community cohesion for a number of reasons, including 'faith communities have much to offer their area as providers of services and as contributors to community cohesion projects.' (Section 8.2).

The report notes that:

Faith communities are a key part of the voluntary and community sector... This can be through participation in particular projects or through the wide range of services that they offer from their centres or places of worship... Informally, faith communities can represent a valuable form of community self-help through work with the young, older people, lunch clubs or drop-in and advice centres. Providing resources and support can increase their involvement. Faith communities can be good points of access into harder-to-reach communities (8.6).

The LGA's own advice ends (there are several examples of good co-operation quoted afterwards) with a series of practical steps that the Local Authority could take in its work with faith communities. Of course, even the phrase 'faith communities' shows the broad-brush approach that government has. We may wish for a more nuanced approach, given the great number and the variety of 'faith communities' that exist, but the LGA only goes so far as to tell local authorities that they should be 'aware of the faith demographics of your area'.<sup>35</sup> (There is, presumably, no point in seeking the co-operation of an unrepresented community...). The LGA also recommends that local authorities

- Support faith communities by promoting their role in relation to the local voluntary and community sector infrastructure.
- Establish and sustain a strong local inter faith structure for inter faith co-operation and a mechanism for consultation with faith communities or support and existing faith forum.
- Challenge religious stereotypes...
- Use available resources to establish and disseminate good practice in working with faith communities

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, para 5.4.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, para 5.3.

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<sup>34</sup> Local Government Association 2004a, chapter 8, pp. 29-33.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

- Promote use of local places of worship by schools and youth organisations as a resource in teaching the value of diversity
- Promote opportunities for inter faith dialogue and in particular learning among children and young people about different faith and about the scope for co-operation between different faiths.<sup>36</sup>

Examination of other documents reveals similar positive statements. The Home Office also has some direct advice 'for Faith Communities on Responding Effectively to Government Initiatives.'<sup>37</sup> It places an onus on faith communities to:

- i. Familiarise yourself with Government
- ii. Be persistent
- iii. Speak With A Common Voice
- iv. Develop Appropriate Structures
- v. Be Clear
- vi. Include Women, Young People and Older People
- vii. Become Involved in Local and Regional VCS/BME structures and Consultations.
- viii. Generosity of Spirit
- ix. Develop a Common Approach
- x. "Something in Common"

On the other hand, the Home Office also gives itself (and other government departments) considerations to bear in mind when consulting faith communities. The 'aide-memoire' includes advice that officials should:

- Include a wide range of faiths and beliefs... *If you are not consulting all faiths you should state this and explain why.*
- Think about the capacity of faith organisations. Most are voluntary organisations without full-time staff. Consider allocating financial resources to facilitate consultations.
- Ensure that women, young people and older people are represented. these groups are traditionally harder to reach in the faith communities. Refer to the good work being done by the Woman and Equality Unit in the Department for Trade and Industry and the Children and Young People's Unit in the Department for Education and Skills. *Clearly state on consultation that these groups are to be included and ask faith organisations to explain how these groups were reached.*<sup>38</sup>

There are many things to note here. The first is the multi-faith approach. Another is the assumption that secular society 'reaches' women, young people and older people better than faith communities. However much faith communities may dispute such assumptions, they are there and the hapless official will require the appropriate explanation!

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Home Office Faith Communities Unit 2004, chapter 3, pp. 33-38.

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*: 31 (emphasis added).



We can, therefore, say that there is, within government, the willingness for faith communities to be involved in local initiatives. There are plenty of documents (more than have been quoted here) to show this is the case.<sup>39</sup> The churches, and other faith communities, have to decide where they wish to sit on the 'collusion verses collision' spectrum. Overt collusion with regeneration projects means, as noted above, that one takes the government's agenda on board uncritically. Here the following question must be asked: what is the difference between your faith community and a secular/government funded social service agency? On the other hand, 'overt collision – i.e. a rejection of the assumptions and ethos of the [government's] regeneration matrix – leads to self-imposed marginalisation, self-selected disempowerment.'<sup>40</sup> There may be times when collision is necessary but if the church wishes to say to communities that 'God cares about what you care about, and your church wants to discover what God is doing here', then involvement is inevitable and it will require both time and, given the potential pitfalls noted, trouble.<sup>41</sup>

### Belmont Parish Hall

Being devoted to a project for five years can, I think, be described as putting in 'significant time and trouble.' That is how long it took for Belmont Parish Church to get its Parish Hall up and running.

The Revd Dr Robert Innes, who oversaw the project, argued in his paper that the church is – or ought to be – much more than that which merely keeps the 'religious' bits of life ticking over while leaving the rest of society to its own devices. Rather, the church 'works within society to try to conform the world to God's pattern and ordering.'<sup>42</sup>

In the light of the relative openness of public bodies in the UK to applications from religious organisations, over five years ago, the decision was taken to seek public funding for the parish hall. This entailed a lot of work, not least to show that the project undertaken was truly community based.

For any application for funds, the information required by the funding body is extensive. This in itself is a test of whether an organisation really wants the funding requested. As the funders are interested in community projects, one of the early questions asks: 'How do you know there is a need for your project?'<sup>43</sup> For the Belmont Parish Hall (BPH), the answer lies in the survey conducted in the community. '97.4% of the respondents said there was a need for more hall and meeting space in the area.'<sup>44</sup> Further to this, '89% thought the proposed location for a new hall is the right

**39** Some local councils are happy to have faith involvement. South Tyneside has produced a pack for faith communities to help them in 'getting started on the funding ladder.' See South Tyneside Council 2006.

**40** William Temple Foundation 2003: 7. The text of this report is available from the Foundation's website at [www.wtf.org.uk/documents/1st-year-report-academic-summary.pdf](http://www.wtf.org.uk/documents/1st-year-report-academic-summary.pdf).

**41** Wells 2003: 26-7.

**42** Innes 2003: 4.

**43** Question B4 of the (Lottery) Community Fund Bid documentation. The Coalfields Regeneration Trust asks a similar question; 'How do you know that your project is needed?' (The Coalfields Regeneration Trust, *Main Grants Programme Application Form*, question 15, p. 5). As a third example, the Biffaward application form asks 'How have you identified the need for this project?' (Biffaward Application Form – Main Grants, question 3.1).

**44** Answer to question B4 of the (Lottery) Community Fund Bid documentation.

one.<sup>45</sup> Of course, it is not just that the community feels that a new facility would be nice. It must also be asked whether the church (or other organisation) has done its homework on finding out whether the proposed facility would be used? Has it got some form of management structure in place? Will the facility serve the community – and particularly the marginalised in the community?<sup>46</sup>

The requirement to answer such questions (with appropriate evidence) means that the ‘religious organisation’ has to engage, and engage seriously, with the community it seeks to serve.

The whole project, with its community survey, was a great deal of work. Concerns that ‘burn out of key personnel as they are caught up in paper work to account for grants, action being increasingly directed towards tangible outcomes and away from “spiritual” goals such as praying with and pastoring people<sup>47</sup> must be addressed. We had enough personnel to form a Parish Hall Committee separate from the PCC. This was vital, as the Parish Hall became a separate, community venture apart from the church (even though the Hall was built on church grounds). There was support from the church leadership to ensure that those members of the church working for the Parish Hall were seen as still ‘doing their bit’ for the church, despite such form-filling not being perhaps as ‘spiritual’ as praying or pastoring people. Ministry, and gifting, takes many forms but there is still one Spirit. But, most importantly, the church also had people who were concerned with other issues: those who worked for the local hospices, for the down-and-outs in our cities, and for the ‘Make Poverty History’ campaign. The church, as church, did not fall into the trap of assuming that the Parish Hall was the sum of its ministry to the community.

There were further aspects to the BPC committee. It sought to represent the community in its entirety but, on the other hand, funders had to note that, for example, the North-East of England is not as ethnically mixed as other parts of the country.<sup>48</sup> Disabled people and others were consulted and the local home for the elderly was represented on the committee as was the local council. However, the church, against the fears raised earlier in this paper, has taken care to ensure that seeking outside funding does not require loss of governance: the *Belmont Parish Hall Constitution* provides for the Committee to consist of the Archdeacon of Durham and the Vicar of Belmont and, after other interested parties have representation, the constitution allows ‘for each member appointed under the provisions ... the Parochial Church Council of Belmont shall have the right to appoint one further Member from amongst ... members of the Church or in accordance with nominations made by them.’<sup>49</sup> Under these provisions (seen and accepted by various grant making bodies including the Lottery), the church would always retain a majority on the Committee.

Space forbids a detailed discussion of the pros and cons of an application to the Lottery other than to note that a full debate was held within the PCC prior to the application. The bid was successful, which has great pragmatic advantage in that the Lottery is seen as a ‘gatekeeper’ to a lot of other funds because they know that a successful lottery bid means that the project has been thoroughly vetted.

45 Innes 2003: 10.

46 Such questions can be found on the forms indicated in n 43 above. Further on this paragraph, see Oakley 2006.

47 Bretherton 2005: 6.

48 Black and Minority Ethnic Groups make up 2.4% of the population compared to 9.1% of England as a whole.

49 The Belmont Parish Hall Association Constitution, section 7 (e)

On a lighter note, if there are those still unhappy about the lottery application, then it is pointed out that, if the money is 'tainted' then we, by putting it to good use, are 'untainting' it!<sup>50</sup> The final point is that the Lottery funded a third of the costs for the building, so to try to proceed without the Lottery would have meant that we would still be fundraising.

## Conclusion

Despite the legitimate concerns of those who worry about the church being secularised by cooperation with the state in terms of the government's current attempts to harness the voluntary sector to its regeneration cause, I submit that it is possible to take the money without necessarily dancing to the government's tune. Control and independence can be retained, while providing a service to the community – a service that will be appreciated, not least by the statutory bodies. Because of the case it had built up over five years, and the trust engendered, one council approached the committee to ask it to apply to a new funding stream to which it had just had access. The grant secretary duly applied, and the hall gained over £60,000. It can be done.

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**50** Conversation with the Grants Secretary for BPH. The idea is not original to him, but I have been unable to trace the original source.

- Local Government Association. (2004a). *Community Cohesion – an Action Guide: Guidance for Local Authorities*: LGA.
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