

support only to a specific faith group or denomination, and whether FBOs exclude certain sources based on religious convictions (Sider & Unruh, 2004:123).

Religious practices of staff

This characteristic has to do with the participation of the staff, volunteers and board members in organised religious practices (Sider & Unruh, 2004:122).

The four programme characteristics

In the next instance the typology examines four programme characteristics of the organisations to establish their religious content:

Religious environment

This characteristic refers to the environment or space in which a programme is executed, for example, whether there are explicit symbols or references to a specific faith group (Sider & Unruh, 2004:123).

Programme content

This characteristic shows whether specific religious activities form part of the programme, for example, devotion, singing, readings from holy books of a specific faith group, and whether invitations to take part in the religious activities of a specific faith group are extended (Sider & Unruh, 2004:123).

Integration of religious components

This characteristic reveals how beneficiaries of the service are likely to encounter religion in the context of the programme. In this regard the authors refer to previous research in which five general strategies for the integration of religion were developed: implicit, invitational, relational, integrated-optional and integrated-mandatory. These strategies are organised around three questions that have a bearing on the religious content of programmes. Are the religious dimensions of the programmes explicit? Is explicit religious content part of the programmes? Are explicit religious elements compulsory for participants of the programme, or can they be excused from participation? (Sider & Unruh, 2004:123-124).

Expected connection between religious content and desired outcome

This characteristic looks at the expected connection between the spiritual technologies (religious activities) and the social service or programme. The methodology of faith-permeated and faith-centred programmes, for example, is shaped by the belief that religious outcomes, such as conversion, are essential to the desired social service outcome (Sider & Unruh, 2004:124).

In the final analysis, Sider and Unruh acknowledge that their typology has its limitations and that the actual reality is more complex and therefore difficult to categorise (Sider & Unruh, 2004:119). However, their classifications remain valuable, despite such possible deficiencies, and form an important basis on which further research can build. This is particularly true in the South African context, where there is no research that focuses on the conceptualisation of FBOs.

THE RELEVANCE OF SIDER AND UNRUH'S TYPOLOGY FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Historical perspective

In order to properly appreciate the relevance of Sider and Unruh's typology in the South African context, it is necessary first to describe briefly the place and role of churches and other civic organisations in the historical development of the country's social welfare sector.

In descriptions of the development of the social welfare sector and social work as a profession in England and the United States, the pioneering contribution of the Christian church and its leaders is widely acknowledged (Midgley & Sanzenburg, 1989; Mupedziswa, 1996; Netting *et al.*, 1990). This situation is no different in the case of South Africa, where the church sector likewise played a leading role in the development of the social welfare sector. Various authors have referred to the fact that the involvement of the church goes as far back as the arrival of the Dutch colonists in the middle of the seventeenth century. The Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or VOC), which sent the colonists, had strong ties with the Reformed Church in the Netherlands. As a result of this relationship the colonists immediately started with a diaconal ministry similar to that of the church in their mother country (Botha, 1957:65; De Klerk, 1990:74; Patel, 2005:66). According to Nieuwoudt (1990:74-102), this ministry was initially characterised by alimentionation or emergency relief, but there were also examples of "embryonic organised institutional care".

The history of many schools and institutions in South Africa tells the story of how the church responded to national disasters such as wars, epidemics, economic crises and other social needs. At the beginning of the previous century women's organisations also emerged. Up to the beginning of the 20th century social welfare programmes were primarily rendered by religious groups and volunteer women's organisations. A separate State Department of Social Welfare was established only in 1937. It is important to note that before the establishment of the Department of Social Welfare there were very few pieces of legislation and policies regarding social welfare, and that the involvement of the state in the provision of social welfare services was very limited. On the other hand, a well-developed social welfare sector in civil society already existed as a result of the endeavours of churches, women's organisations and other organisations. However, Patel (2005:66-84) rightly points out that the development of the social welfare sector in South Africa took place along racial lines and was mainly focused on the white population group.

The establishment of the Department of Social Welfare introduced a new phase in the development of the South African social welfare sector, namely the development of a legislative framework to organise and regulate the social welfare sector. This process started seriously after the inception of the Department of Social Welfare in 1937. Two pieces of legislation became foundational in the course of time, namely the National Welfare Act (Act 100 of 1978) and the Fund-raising Act (Act 107 of 1978). The former Act aimed to make provision for the establishment and composition of a South African Welfare Council, regional welfare councils and certain committees, as well as to provide for the development of welfare programmes and the registration of welfare organisations (Republic of South Africa, 1978a:2). The aim of the latter Act was, amongst other things, to control fundraising in public (Republic of South Africa, 1978b:3).

Both acts required that social service organisations had to be registered according to a set of registration requirements (Republic of South Africa, 1978a:5, 1978b:7). The implementation of

these acts consequently brought faith communities to the point where they had to take policy decisions on the position of their social service programmes. Many churches and other faith communities as a result decided to register their social services as welfare organisations and fundraising bodies.

Patel points out that, apart from the formally registered welfare organisations that worked in partnership with the apartheid government and received subsidies, many organisations also operated that did not register. She refers to them as the “informal sector” – “progressive development organisations” that had their origins in the trade union and liberation movements and formed part of the struggle against the apartheid government (Patel, 1992:53-69; 2005:82). This group of organisations did not receive subsidies from the government and were not organisationally as well developed as the organisations in the formal sector.

It was therefore necessary in the post-apartheid era to change existing legislation to accommodate the above-mentioned informal sector. The Non-profit Organisations Act (Act 71 of 1997) had to perform this function. The aim of the Act was to create an enabling environment in which non-profit organisations could flourish. It also had to establish an administrative and regulating framework in which organisations not for gain could manage their affairs (Republic of South Africa, 1997:2).

However, the Non-profit Organisations Act has not succeeded in being an instrument through which all social service and development organisations could register. This is not only because organisations are given a choice to register or not, but also because the act defines organisations only in terms of the form of their legal entities, namely associations, companies or trusts. As a result it is especially difficult for organisations from the faith-based sector to fit in, because of their own unique structures and organisational models. Indeed, if it is taken into consideration that a large number of social service organisations originated from the religious sector, Swilling and Russell’s observation that a wide range of social formations in South Africa that came into being over the years can be forced into the category of “non-profit organisations” only with difficulty and without recognising their unique nature is relevant here (Swilling & Russell, 2002:3).

The dawn of the new democratic dispensation in South Africa also heralded a new beginning for the social welfare and development sector in South Africa. According to the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), social welfare policy in the post-apartheid dispensation rests on the partnership between the state and civil society. An important aim of the policy is therefore to promote and strengthen this partnership, which in the White Paper’s identification of actors explicitly also involves organisations from the religious sector (Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1997:8). It follows that FBOs and the religious sector generally are thus recognised as a natural part of civil society and the partnership with the state in the new policy dispensation. In the establishment of such partnerships, however, another significant critical principle that has to be taken in consideration is the right of cultural, religious and language groups to establish, maintain and organise societies and other institutions as enshrined in Section 31 of the Constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

Application of Sider and Unruh’s typology

This article supports the argument that in order for the religious sector to make a meaningful contribution to social welfare – and by implication social development – in post-apartheid South African society, a concerted attempt should be made to develop appropriate policies within which FBOs will be able to operate. The criterion of “appropriateness” is specifically

used to indicate that such policies should provide space for FBOs to participate in the social upliftment and development of the country without jeopardising their unique identity and ethos. In this regard the argument by Sider and Unruh makes a lot of sense: “If public policy is to encourage the civic potential of the faith community, it must also accommodate the commitment to spiritual nurture that flows from the same source” (Unruh & Sider, 2005:259).

So far some of the issues in the emerging debate on the role and contribution of the FBO sector in South Africa have been explained in this article. The typology of Sider and Unruh can contribute to this ongoing debate in a number of ways.

Firstly, the identification of different types of FBOs based on their religious connections opens the perspective that no generic or typical definition of an FBO needs to be developed. It has already been argued that one of the complicating factors in the conceptualisation of FBOs is precisely the understanding of the concept of “faith” as well as the unique languages that different faiths use. Different religions or faith groups, for example, have their own unique concepts to refer to the way in which their followers assemble to exercise their faith: the synagogues of the Jews, the mosques of the Muslims and the churches of the Christians. Some of the concepts can even have further multiple meanings, such as the word “church”, which has different meanings for Christians, as Smit (2002:246), for instance, points out in a recent contribution.

Furthermore, every religion or faith community also has its own view of how to be involved in society and the social needs of individuals and communities. Some faith communities may prefer organised and formally structured programmes with employed staff, while others may prefer a more spontaneous involvement with the needs of people and communities. It also happens that some people interpret the term FBO in a very broad sense and include all organisations with some or other connection to religion, whereas others use the term in a very narrow sense, excluding all but those organisations that are religious in a narrow sense. The classification of types of organisations – faith-permeated, faith-centred, faith-affiliated, faith-background and faith-secular – on the basis of the religious characteristics of the organisation and its programmes as well as the proximity of its connection with a particular faith community or religion is a creative contribution to the development of a generic language to describe FBOs.

The work of Sider and Unruh clearly shows that the term FBOs is an inclusive concept that can refer to actions or programmes initiated by faith groups, based on the convictions and values of that specific faith group that motivate them to become involved in society and address the needs of people and communities. These actions, in turn, can take on different forms. They can involve individuals or small groups of people who reach out informally, or they can be organised programmes aimed at a whole community or even a country or a region. Such organisations can be positioned further from or nearer to the faith community that established it. In the South African social welfare and development sector there are probably many such examples, for instance, BADISA (the social services organisation of the Dutch Reformed and Uniting Reformed Churches in the Western and Southern Cape), Hope Africa (the social development programme of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa) and the Salvation Army. Although these organisations see themselves as part of the church, they are linked to the church in different ways and the connection is reflected in different ways in their organisational structures (BADISA, 2003; Hope Africa website; Salvation Army, 2001). But there are also instances where faith groups take the lead in meeting the social welfare and development needs

of their communities without establishing organisations. This is often the case in other African countries, where the social welfare sector is not always as well developed.

Secondly, the way in which Sider and Unruh use the religious content of organisational aspects as indicators to conceptualise FBOs can certainly be a valuable contribution to the South African debate on the conceptualisation of FBOs. They identify the tangibly expressive ways that religion may be present in organisations through its expression in observable and explicit phenomena such as language, symbols, policies and activities. These expressions of faith usually manifest in organisational documents such as the mission statements of organisations (FBOs), other internal policies, the composition of its governing bodies and the selection criteria for staff (Sider & Unruh, 2004:117). This approach can be valuable in the current debate on the transformation of the South African social welfare sector. Issues such as transparency, democracy, accountability and the accessibility of social welfare services of FBOs form a critical part of the discourse (Department of Social Development, 2004). These issues pose a challenge to FBOs with regard to their internal policies such as the composition of their management boards, the selection of staff and their programme activities. The critical question in this regard seems to be how FBOs can remain faithful to their unique identity and ethos as expressed in their mission statements and internal policy documents, but also be part of the transformational agenda of the social welfare sector. At the same time the challenge for the state is how to acknowledge the uniqueness of FBOs in its policies.

An example can be the already mentioned: the Non-profit Organisations Act. In the discussion above the point was made that this piece of legislation categorises organisations in terms of existing legal categories. A starting-point in the discourse on how to deal with FBOs in social welfare policies could be to amend the NPO Act to provide for FBOs as a special type of NPO. In the process of establishing criteria for such types of organisations, the typology of Sider and Unruh can be very useful.

A third contribution of Sider and Unruh's typology to the South African discussion on the FBO sector is its focus on the religious aspects of social welfare programmes as a distinctive characteristic of FBOs. From the second half of the twentieth century the programmes of certain FBOs in the formal social welfare sector in South Africa started to lean towards religious neutrality. This tendency was the result of various factors. The dependence of FBOs in the formal social welfare sector on state subsidies that developed over the years is certainly a contributing factor. In the apartheid era social welfare programmes serving the white population group were given preferential treatment, as Patel shows. In 1976 state expenditure for social welfare for the white population group amounted to 56% of the total expenditure in comparison to 28% for black people and 16% for coloureds and Indians (Patel, 2005:71). This consequently led to a situation where it became attractive for FBOs rendering social welfare services to the white population group to receive substantial state subsidies. Another contributing factor was the close relationship that developed between those churches predominantly serving the white Afrikaans-speaking community and previous government, and the role that they (the Afrikaans-speaking churches) played in the development of social welfare policies, including the policy on subsidies from government. This led to a point where the line between faith-based and government policy became practically invisible.

A similar trend can be noted in the new democratic dispensation in South Africa. Dependence on state subsidy has brought FBOs to the point where they are confronted with the choice whether to accept the religiously neutral social welfare agenda of the state or to take the risk of a decrease in income. In order to maintain their position in the social welfare sector and the

level of their service delivery, FBOs are therefore left with no other choice but to write their programmes according to the priorities of the state with the aim of getting the maximum state subsidy, rather than on the basis of the religious characteristics of the organisation. Khan correctly observes that in such circumstances “challenging government policy does not come into consideration” (Khan, 2007:24).

Finally, another factor that influenced the inclination of FBOs in the formal social welfare system in South Africa towards adopting neutral programmes is the professionalisation of Social Work, which started since the middle of the twentieth century. In many FBOs social workers play a key role in their programmes and it happens that choices for or against programmes are taken on the basis of social scientific and professional considerations rather than religious convictions. In this regard the comment of Kruger and Williams is relevant. These authors warn that “(s)ocial workers’ tendency to ignore the relevance of spirituality in the lives of people might cause them to overlook a vital source of strength, growth and therefore empowerment” (Kruger & Williams, 2003:307). In the current debate in the South African context on how the partnership between the state and the religious sector should develop, the challenge for FBOs is to ensure that there will still be space for religious aspects in their programmes.

A decisive point in the debate on the conceptualisation of FBOs that does not figure in Sider and Unruh’s typology is the role of faith as a motivational factor for volunteers to become involved in social welfare. A number of studies on this aspect can be found in the literature, for example, Wuthnow (1991) and Unruh and Sider (2005), who did their research in the USA. However, similar research in the South African context is not available.

CONCLUSION

This article attempted to show why a more nuanced use of the term FBO is necessary in South Africa, as in other parts of the world. Although politicians and policy-makers in South Africa are of the opinion that faith communities and FBOs can make a noticeable contribution towards meeting the country’s current social welfare and development challenges, it has also become apparent that not enough recognition is given to the peculiar identity of the religious sector. In the discussion it was argued that within a larger discourse on the development of a new, equal and non-racial social welfare and development sector for South Africa, a debate on the role and contribution of FBOs towards achieving this end should pay more concerted attention to the question of how the unique identity of FBOs can be accommodated.

It was furthermore pointed out in the discussion that authors world-wide have come to the conclusion that it is not so straightforward to determine a single, commonly accepted definition for FBOs. As a result these scholars rather propose a typology or classification consisting of various components according to which organisations in the religious sector can be classified. This article has argued that the typology of Sider and Unruh provides a helpful framework to describe South Africa’s own faith-based sector and that further research on its application can provide a valuable contribution in the further development of social welfare policy in the country.

Besides the importance of being able to define who or what FBOs are, these organisations also want to be acknowledged in terms of their own peculiar identity and given a distinctive space in the social welfare sphere. In accordance with this recognition it was indicated in the discussion that the current transformation of the social welfare sector in South Africa and the development of new policies for the sector in more than one respect presents faith groups and FBOs with a

dilemma. On the one hand, FBOs want to be faithful to the faith-based nature and contents of their programmes. On the other hand, however, they are part of the social welfare and development sector. This implies that the way in which social welfare policies are implemented often makes it difficult for FBOs to retain their own identity. In this regard the emerging partnership between the religious sector and the South African state can be an interesting venture that can inform social welfare policy in future.

But the discussion on the definition of FBOs also compels faith groups and the governing bodies of FBOs themselves to look anew at their identities and the distinctive nature of their programmes. The recent appeals of leaders from government to the churches and other FBOs clearly illustrate an expectation that the religious sector could make a unique contribution in the struggle against HIV and AIDS and poverty in the country. However, what this unique contribution could be has not been adequately researched and described. The typology developed by Sider and Unruh could serve as a useful instrument for FBOs in the new-found challenge to evaluate themselves and especially the contents and impact of their programmes.

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