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**SPECIAL
EDITION**

Mapping the activities of Faith-Based Organisations in Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper is an outcome of the Religions and Development Research Programme in Nigeria. The rationale for this study is that the nature, scale and activities of faith-based organisations (FBOs) are poorly understood and documented in Nigeria. The aim of the study was, thus, to undertake a mapping exercise of the nature, scale and activities of FBOs in development in Nigeria. The objectives are: (a) To increase awareness of the nature and scale of faith-based contributions to development in Nigeria. (b) To provide the necessary background and contextual information for further studies under other components of the RaD research programme, helping those involved to prepare detailed research proposals and to select geographical locations, faith traditions and FBOs for further study. The methodological approach included the review of documented evidence and structured interviews. The study is of a qualitative character seeking to identify nature, scale, location and activities of faith-based organisations through in-depth interviews with representatives of umbrella organisations and key informants from faith groups.

The survey revealed that the number of registered and active FBOs is limited in Nigeria. However, the active ones can be found in almost all the states of the federation, or at the least, in every geopolitical zone of the country. It also revealed that a high proportion of religious organisations provide some human services. Most of the FBOs mobilise and rely on deeply engaged volunteers rather than paid staff, thus delivering services more efficiently than other providers. The key advantage of FBOs is that they have better access to volunteers, which could be used to expand their role in delivering social services. The faith-based organisations also have the advantage that they are located in communities where services are needed. They are also involved in informal networks (e.g., cooperating, coordinating, and working together with other organisations). These increase their delivery of human services. FBOs often have a direct impact on social institutions, such as schools, which socialise people and change values over time. In addition, their jurisdiction often includes a number of areas such as morality, beliefs about the spiritual bases of disease, rules of family life and sexual activity. FBOs are also very active in practical areas of poverty reduction, providing income-generating programmes for

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members. The paper concludes that, generally, little research has been done on specific operational issues affecting FBOs activities in development. There is need for case studies to specifically examine FBO programmes and their impact, and here longitudinal studies could greatly contribute to the study of an effort primarily oriented toward a long-term horizon. There is also the need to find out if faith-based organisations bring distinctive advantages to community development. The issue could be readily addressed by comparing faith-based and secular organisations active in community development.

Key Words: Nigeria, Faith-based Organisations, Development, Religion.

Introduction

Issues of religion and involvement in social services and economic development are now common topics in the public rhetoric. Religious congregations are often strong social institutions in distressed neighbourhoods long abandoned by secular organisations, leaving them well-positioned to effectively solve community problems. Often, the religious community is seen to have a role similar to the philanthropic sector - as an institution that bridges the gap between the needs of the poor and the programmes and services of the public and private sectors. Historically, religious organisations were the first resort for people in need, when there was not a consistent, uniform, standardised, secular, government-supported social safety net. Presently, the reductions in the Federal Government's social spending have once again focused the political debate on providing for the poor in the religious community. Congregations (individual churches or mosques) provide money, people, facilities, and goods to assist in service delivery. In addition, congregations also often take on the institutional commitment to become involved in community partnerships aimed at solving or managing social problems.

Religious organisations are an important part of the social capital of a community. Religious congregations provide a wealth of talented, highly-trained, professional leadership, large formal memberships, regular meetings, and ties to larger denominational and ecumenical movements. The congregation is a strong social network, and informal leadership opportunities and formal leadership programmes may empower lay leaders with the skills to serve community needs. Faith institutions are seen by many to advance a broad moral vision and promote the common good. Religion is seen as a motivation, or even an imperative, that calls people to act on their faith for the good of others.

In recent years, policymakers have begun to look to churches, synagogues, mosques and other faith-based organisations to play a greater role in

strengthening communities. Policymakers' optimism that faith-based organisations might take on a greater role has multiple sources: the desire in some quarters to reduce the role of the public sector; the existence of a small number of high-profile successes in health, education and economic empowerment sponsored by large churches; the perceived paucity of other strong institutions in many disinvested neighbourhoods; and high expectations about the potential of faith communities to address problems that others have found intractable.

As noted by Onaiyekan¹⁵ (2003), "The world community has gradually begun to recognise the positive role that religion can play in the affairs of the world. For a long time, the United Nations, for example, tried to avoid dealing with religion, condemning it at most to the margins of its activities. Of recent, however, it has begun to recognise that the world neglects religion at its own risk, especially since religion features a lot in many of the conflicts in the world. It is a great thing that we are beginning to realise that religion can be not only a cause of conflict, but also a solution to it and to other problems of this world. It is interesting to note that the Secretary-General of the United Nations convened a forum of religious leaders in New York a couple of years ago. Such a move would have been unthinkable only ten or fifteen years ago. Even the United Nations Agencies, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNAIDS, etc., are beginning to take religious organisations seriously under the newly coined term – "faith-based organisations". This certainly is a move in the right direction."

Surveys such as the World Bank's *Voices of the Poor* have also aroused interest in faith groups, as they show that no other organisation is more firmly rooted or has better networks in poor communities than the religious ones and that religious leaders are trusted more than any others. Faith-based organisations are thus seen as essential agents both for influencing the opinions and attitudes of their followers and for carrying out development work at the grassroots. Their influence is recognised as a potentially key element in the solving of conflicts, even though, or perhaps because, religious groups are often seen as the cause of them.

This paper is a synopsis of an elaborate research report and there is therefore the limit to which all issues such as activities, structures, nature and scale of FBOs can be exhaustively discussed here, though many of them were considered in the report. The paper was set out to narrate the activities of FBOs, to present information for those who may wish to work with any of them for development activities. The paper was not set out to infer problems of

¹⁵ Archbishop John Onaiyekan is the Catholic Bishop of Abuja (Nigeria's capital) and President of the Christian Association of Nigeria.

development; instead, the paper was set out to *map* the activities of FBOs in development. The term *mapping* suggests that the activities found should be discussed as they were without tampering with the information supplied. The objectives of the paper which emanates from the objectives of the research project were clearly set for all the countries¹⁶ that participated in the project. Since this is a mapping exercise, the objectives were uniform across countries involved in the project for the purpose of comparison. Content analysis was used so as not to dilute the information collected from the FBOs. Rigorous analysis of the FBOs activities would not be performed because of the nature of the subject under consideration, which is *mapping*.

The rationale for this study was that the nature, scale and activities of faith-based organisations (FBOs) remain poorly understood and documented in Nigeria. The aim of the study was, thus, to undertake a mapping exercise of the nature, scale and activities of FBOs in development in Nigeria. The objectives are:

- a) To increase awareness of the nature and scale of faith-based contributions to development in Nigeria.
- b) To provide the necessary background and contextual information for further studies under other components of the Religions and Development research programmes, helping those involved to prepare detailed research proposals and to select geographical locations, faith traditions and FBOs for further study.

The paper is divided into four sections. This introductory section provides the aims and objectives of the FBO mapping research project. The second section provides a contextual historical overview of the evolution of FBOs in Nigeria. The third section presents a profile of the different types and activities of FBOs, while the fourth section concludes the paper.

Conceptual Clarity

Definition of FBOs

This section provides an overview of different attempts to define and classify FBOs. What is meant by the term faith-based organisation? Conclusions regarding scope and scale are dependent, in large part, on how FBOs are defined. Therefore, describing the various ways in which FBOs have been defined is an important first step in understanding the extent of their activity. Various definitions of FBOs were considered. However, the one provided by Martens (2002) in Julia Berger's (2003) writing and the characteristics included by Gerard

¹⁶ The research was carried out in four countries: Nigeria, Tanzania, India and Pakistan.

Clarke (2005) were accepted as working definitions to guide this study. Even though the definition quoted by Julia Berger is the main one adopted, we had to also bear in mind some of the shortcomings and limitations of the definition, particularly with reference to Nigeria. Martens, (2002) views "religious NGOs" as:

...formal organisations whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and which operate on a non-profit, independent, voluntary basis to promote and realise collectively articulated public good at the national or international level.

An ingredient of Julia's definition is the utilisation of religious beliefs and doctrines by FBOs, which may also be found in secular NGOs. There are instances where secular NGOs are driven by faith as it is the case in the United Kingdom. In Nigeria, all FBOs are driven by particular faith doctrines, without any disguise.

There does not seem to be a generally-accepted definition of faith-based organisations (FBOs) in Nigeria. However, from available information, from both primary and secondary sources such as the work by Ibrahim *et al* (2006), FBOs are characterised by one or more of the following: affiliation with an organised faith community; a mission with explicit reference to religious values; a governance structure where selection of executive members is based on religious beliefs or affiliation and/or decision-making processes based on religious values; and financial support from religious sources.

At a minimum, FBOs must be connected with an organised faith community. These connections occur when an FBO is based on a particular religious ideology and draws staff, volunteers, or leadership from a particular religious group.

A useful definition, finally agreed upon, describes FBOs as "A general term, used to refer to religious and religious-based organisations, places of religious worship or congregations, specialised religious institutions, and registered and unregistered non-profit institutions that have religious character or missions"¹⁷. The first part of this definition allows for the inclusion of faith based profit as well as non-profit organisations, and faith based government as well as

¹⁷ Taken from *Defining Faith Based Organisations, in Faith in Action, Examining the Role of Faith Based Organisations in Addressing HIV/AIDS, 2005, a Global Health Council publication, available from www.globalhealth.org.*

non-government organisations. This definition is valuable because it helps to distinguish FBOs from secular organisations.

A general assertion by most FBOs interviewed in the course of this study is that FBOs are religion-based organisations that engage in social provisioning and seek to generate social change through their religion. The purpose of most FBOs in Nigeria is to propagate the religion, conduct religious education and fulfil religious injunctions. The pursuit of the general welfare of members and their economic empowerment follows from this perspective. In other words, the social action of FBOs is rooted in utilitarian strategies and spiritual obligations.

Specification of Typology

In addition to coming up with a definition of FBOs, the specific aims of this study require us to focus on the role of FBOs in development related activity. For this purpose we had to develop a set of typologies that give an overview of the engagement of FBOs in development. We are interested in the similarities and differences between these typologies in different contexts.

While the definitions and descriptions of FBOs above are valuable they mask the numerous distinctions that can be found among these organisations. For example, a small organisation in a local congregation and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) are both FBOs that draw staff and volunteers from a particular religious group. However, these FBOs differ substantially in the scope and scale of their service provision.

A few typologies were considered before finally settling on one. Smith and Sosin (2001) provided a typology along the dimensions categorised by mission, service focus, and bureaucracy. Their data was derived from a case study of social service organisations. Sider and Unruh (2004) produced a typology based on case studies of domestic community service organisations. Their work offered distinct criteria for organisations and programmes, rightly noting that programmes run by religious organisations may be completely free of religious references, and vice versa.¹⁸ Sider and Unruh separated organisations into six different categories (listed from most to least faith-based): faith-permeated, faith-centered, faith-affiliated, faith-background, faith-secular partnership, and secular. FBOs can also be classified according to the size of the organisation and the size of the geographical area for which they provide services. Cnaan (1999) defines six categories of religious service organisations: 1) local congregations; 2) interfaith agencies and ecumenical coalitions; 3) citywide or region-wide sectarian agencies; 4) national projects and organisations

¹⁸ Sider and Unruh, "Typology of Religious Characteristics," 110.

under religious auspices; 5) para-denominational advocacy and relief organisations; and 6) religiously-affiliated international organisations. While these categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive, they do distinguish between FBOs along the dimension of geographical locus of service. These three typologies were not found adequate since the consensus at the FBO mapping study planning workshop in July 2006 was also to organise the FBOs in terms of the different types of development activities they are involved in.

For the purposes of the study, *development* refers to work centered on longer-term social and economic change, which aims to fight poverty and promote social justice. It was agreed that the main focus would be on the materialistic aspect of development, including some elements of spiritual development. The positive and negative aspects of spiritual development should be taken note of. One typology found useful was developed by Gerard Clarke (2005), derived from his international review of the roles of FBOs in development. According to Clarke (2005, page 12), five types of FBOs are evident in the context of international development:

- Faith-based representative organisations or apex bodies
- Faith-based charitable or development organisations
- Faith-based socio-political organisations
- Faith-based missionary organisations
- Faith-based radical, illegal or terrorist organisations

Clarke focuses on organisations involved in: (1) public policy debates; (2) social and political processes that impact positively or negatively on the poor; and (3) direct efforts to support, represent or engage with the poor. Such organisations operate in the same policy arenas as donors and development NGOs involved in national and international policy debates and are therefore important stakeholders in the development enterprise. These five types of FBO are described below:

- *Faith-based representative organisations or apex bodies* which rule on doctrinal matters, govern the faithful and represent them through engagement with the state and other actors;
- *Faith-based charitable or development organisations* which mobilise the faithful in support of the poor and other social groups, and which fund or manage programmes which tackle poverty and social exclusion;
- *Faith-based socio-political organisations* which interpret and deploy faith as a political construct, organising and mobilising social groups on the basis of faith identities but in pursuit of broader political objectives or, alternatively, promote faith as a socio-cultural

construct, as a means of uniting disparate social groups on the basis of faith-based cultural identities;

- *Faith-based missionary organisations* which spread key faith messages beyond the faithful, by actively promoting the faith and seeking converts to it, or by supporting and engaging with other faith communities on the basis of key faith principles;
- And finally, *faith-based radical, illegal or terrorist organisations* which promote radical or militant forms of faith identity engage in illegal practices on the basis of faith beliefs or engage in armed struggle or violent acts justified on the grounds of faith.

An adaptation of this typology is employed here. The typology does not precisely reflect the mapping exercises carried out in Nigeria. For example, we were not able to research illegal faith-based organisations. This is because none of the key informants was able to identify any of such FBOs and none was so listed in any of the directories.

Theoretical and Historical Overview

In this section, the evolution of FBOs is investigated. Historically, there are three major religions in Nigeria: African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam. It is difficult to identify the exact population percentage of the different religions in Nigeria, so the issue of the percentage is a matter of continuous debate. This is so because of a lack of accurate census figures. The earliest census figures on religion is of the 1931 census, which had 50 per cent of the population registered as *pagans* with the percentage declining to 34 per cent in 1952 and 18.2 per cent in 1963; leaving Islam with 47 per cent and Christianity with 34 per cent of the population.¹⁹ Almost nobody is registered today as a pagan and as the 1991 and 2006 census did not pose the question of religious affiliation, it is not known for sure which of the two religions gained a majority of the rest of the *pagans*.

Apart from these three, one can also find almost every other religion in Nigeria. Nigerians travel all over the world in search of education and employment and, when they come back, they bring new religious ideas and connections. Consequently, today there is a considerable range of spiritual science adherents usually Eastern-related, esoteric and metaphysical movements, such as the Rosicrucian, Eckankar, Holy Grail, and the Aetherius society.²⁰

¹⁹ The 1963 census was the last one that posed the question of religious affiliation. Subsequent censuses were silent on the issue.

²⁰ "The Sharia Debate: Religion and Politics in Nigeria," Interview with Rosalind Hackett, <http://web.utk.edu/rhackett>, accessed on 15/10/2005.

There are a few Hindus, Buddhists, Baha'is, Rastafarians, and a sizeable number of Jehovah's Witnesses. There are other groups which are distinctively Nigerian and are spreading fast, like the Olumba Olumba, and the Aladura groups. Secret societies still exist even though they were officially banned in 1975. In order to help us see the unique characteristics of the three major religions in Nigeria, we will look at their history and relationships with one another.

The presentation here deals mostly with Islam and Christianity. The amount of information reported on each of these religions is based on available materials. African Traditional Religion is treated only briefly because of paucity of information on the activities of adherents of this religion. As could be seen from above, the adherents of this religion continue to diminish with time, hence the lack of visibility of their activities.

African Traditional Religion

African Traditional Religion is the precursor of Islam and Christianity. Consequently, it has shaped the ways that Africans have adopted Christianity and Islam (Mbachirin, 2006:76). In African Traditional Religion, religious and political authorities were interdependent. The king promoted religion, built places of worship, and enforced doctrines and ritual observances. He led religious festivals; he was the leader of the priests. The king together with the chiefs, priests, and doctors were the custodians of the customs and traditions. They also played a crucial role in the socio-economic and political life of the society. Religion legitimised politics and politics legitimised religion. People in political positions and those with special talents were regarded as sacred. Laws functioned to protect sacred objects, direct worship, educate the tribe on matters of justice, self-restraint, and morality (Burns, 1951:235-236). It is also interesting to note that even though ethnic groups and families had their own gods, the existence of a Supreme Being was appreciated throughout the country. The Supreme Being was invisible and remote. He was the creator but had little to do with individual affairs. Because of this, more attention was given to the minor deities who were more concerned with human affairs.

The society under African Traditional Religion was free of religious conflicts. Religious conflicts came with the introduction of foreign religions. Proselytisation and competition for membership were none-issues in African Traditional Religion. What characterised African Traditional Religion was respect and tolerance of the views and practices of others. In most cases, rituals, festivals, dances, ceremonies, and even gods were adopted from other groups. An essential character of traditional religion worth mentioning again is justice and communal harmony. Despite these tolerant and justice-seeking attitudes of

traditional religion, the attitude of the government, Islam, and Christianity towards it is rather one of hostility. Both the missionaries and the colonial masters considered traditional religion barbaric, primitive, and tragic (Mbachirin, 2006:78). The colonial attitude to religion was that of respect for the dominant religions and religions that were more likely to be used for their advantage. From the beginning there was an attitude of disrespect for traditional religion.

The Coming of Islam, its Spread and the Evolution of Islamic FBOs

Of the foreign religions, Islam is the oldest in Nigeria. Most scholars²¹ claim that Islam came to Nigeria in the 11th and 12th centuries, and by the 15th century it was well-established. Before the coming of colonialism, Islam had already taken root in most parts of Nigeria with the exception of the Igbo and some ethnic groups in the Middle Belt. Islam came through Kanem Empire and spread into Borno, northeast of Nigeria, and then spread to the Hausa states in the 15th century.²² By the 16th century many converts were made in Yoruba land. There are others who suggest that Islam came to Yoruba land first through Mali and Sonhgai before traders from Northern Nigeria (Babalola, 2002:43). In this early phase Islam reached the Old Oyo, Ikoyi, Ogbomoso, Iseyin, Igboho, Ketu, and Lagos. The Islamic scholars, on the other hand, undertook the spread of Arabic education, Islamic culture, and the principles of Islamic law. Their aim was to establish Islamic communities (Onaiyekan, 1988:219).

The Islamic FBOs had their beginnings before the Christian FBOs. The objective of most of the Islamic FBOs then was to covert non-Muslims. They also tried to forge a strong Islamic community through such activities as the sponsorship of Quranic schools (Falola, 1998:31). Beginning with the *jihads*, the desires of the Nigerian Muslim community has been to Islamise Nigeria and establish an Islamic state. The zeal for an Islamic state has been expressed by individuals and organisations and various attempts have also been made to realise this dream. Muslims in Nigeria feel they are under obligation to continue the objective of the *jihad* of Islamising Nigeria that was not completed by Uthman dan Fodio (Mbachirin, 2006:91). The emergence of many Islamic organisations, to a large extent, was a reaction to Christian missionary activities and their capacity to combine religious and educational, as well as health and social activities. Many Islamic FBOs later turned political because they felt politics was

²¹ The detailed history of Islam in Kanem and Borno is provided by Peter B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development from 8th to the 20th Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1982), 66-71.

²² See Peter Clarke (1982).

the best medium to address some of the issues. For Muslims, this was natural, as they do not separate religion from politics. So there were some Muslim organisations that from the beginning had political backing.

After independence, FBOs such as the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) (Society for the Victory of Islam) were established with the aim of creating an Islamic state. These organisations train and send missionaries all over Nigeria. Muslims also have various ways of helping their members cope with the modern world. They have various programmes that help them deal with hardships and with the growing industrialisation. There are organisations such as the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), which was established in 1985, that help women improve themselves and fight for their rights in what is clearly a patriarchal society. Muslims in Nigeria also have the Red Crescent just like the Red Cross as a way of responding to social services. It serves in mosques, festivals, and on local *haji*. In the early part of the colonial era Muslims despised western education, which they considered to be an instrument of the Christian missionaries to convert people to Christianity. They were later compelled by the socio-economic and political advantages attached to Western education to embrace it. To provide Western education for the Muslim without the influence of the Christian, Muslim FBOs in the south such as the Ahmadiyya, Ansar-ud-deen, started opening Muslim schools in which Western education was combined with Islamic education.

From the 1980s the country witnessed the proliferation of Islamic FBOs as a result of the Muslims' reaction to the general economic and governance crises, which they perceived to be a direct failure of the Western-style development paradigm and their attempts to search for an alternative development strategy. In this struggle for the alternative mode of development, the Islamic organisations are considered desirable (Ibrahim *et al*, 2006).

Coming of Christianity, Its Spread and Evolution of Christian FBOs

According to Kenny (1979:172), there are scholars who believe that Nigeria came in contact with Christianity in the middle ages. There is evidence that the Nubian and the Coptic Christians came to the Benin Kingdom around the 15th century via North of Nigeria and Ida. The evidence for this is the *formee cross* which is believed to have been derived from Nubia. Also John Kenny writes, "Written documentation is available for evangelisation of the Benin area beginning in 1486 and four missionary journeys across the Sahara to the North of Nigeria in 1688, 1719 and 1850" (Kenny, 1979:172). However, Christianity did not take root in Nigeria until the 18th and 19th centuries. Christianity was closely linked with European trade and colonialism; chaplains accompanied traders not

just to minister to them but to also convert Africans. These missionaries established mission stations at trading posts.

Christianity became established in Nigeria by the various efforts made in the 19th century. There were many things happening in Europe at that time that created interest in mission work. Things like the Industrial Revolution in Europe, the Great Evangelised Revival in Europe and America (Duzurgba, 1991:186) and the end of slave trade which, in one way or the other, contributed to the beginning of mission work in Africa and Nigeria in particular.

The coming of Christianity to Nigeria was not just the work of European missionaries. The pioneer missionaries who made wider impact were freed slaves. Caleb Oladipo writes, "As early as 1792, Christianity arrived in Africa through many groups of Christians of African birth or descent who had come to faith in Christ as plantation slaves or soldiers in the British army during the American war of independence, or as farmers or squatters in Nova Scotia after it" (Oladipo, 1996:325). This contradicts the perspective that only Islam had African missionaries. Without the role played by the Africans Christianity would not have come at the time it did nor would it have come to the places it came.

On the whole there were three mission groups that came to Nigeria namely, Catholics, Protestants, and nondenominational or fundamentalists/Pentecostals. There were more missions than we have mentioned here, but the ones mentioned are the pioneer missions. Many others came later, and almost every denomination represented in Nigeria came because of missionary activities (Gofwen, 2004:4).

The evolution of the Christian FBOs began with the coming of Christian missionaries. The aim of the missions was to provide social civilisation for Africans. They sought to rescue Africans from what they called dangerous paganism and Islam; as such, they destroyed everything African which they considered opposed to the type of civilisation they knew. They changed things like the methods of marriage, marriage ceremonies, and norms. Things like native medicine and medical care by native doctors, rituals and festivals, dances, dresses, and music were condemned. They replaced these with Western civilisation (Galloway, 1960:64). The primary interest of the missionaries was not economic but they unavoidably inculcated economic and technological skills to their adherents. Most of the social, economic, and political influence or benefits came as part of a natural process. The beginnings of modern social services in Nigeria were made by the missions (Galloway, 1960:64). They came together in associations to address religious, social, economic, and political matters as they were affecting them and their converts. Religious issues centered on strategies for the work and how to deal with obstacles that hindered the

dissemination of the gospel. Socially, they were looking for ways to provide education, health care, and other social services to the people. In addition, they were looking for ways of acquiring government or overseas support for the projects they began. Most of the economic benefits were the consequence of the religious and social programmes. Education provided by missionaries with the initial aim to help converts read the Bible became an avenue for Christians to get paying jobs and consequently improve their standard of living.

Despite the efforts of missionaries to come together, Christian unity was difficult. They did not involve the indigenous Christians in such cooperation efforts. Commenting on this, Yusuf Turaki (1993: 158) says: "The missionary emphasis on denominationalism in effect created many brands of Christianity and communication and exchange or fellowship across denominations was almost non-existent. Christian identity was not formed across denominational lines and thus could not easily unite all Christians. Christian identity was rather vertical with parent church or mission." Three reasons have been given why Christian unity was difficult in the colonial era: First, there was the absence of a commonly-perceived national threat. Next, there was no sufficiently-politicised religious leadership with a nationalist vision in any of the three Christian blocs (Catholics, Protestants, and nondenominational or fundamentalists/Pentecostals). Further, there were limitations imposed by the colonial administration on socio-cultural interaction among Nigerians from the South and the North (Enwerem, 1995: 75).

Although Christianity in Nigeria was and is marked by diversity, the Nigerian church is never without an attempt to bring unity among Christians in Nigeria. There are numerous Christian organisations in Nigeria that aim to bring ecclesiastical unity. Some are formed specifically to provide some particular kind of social service to the people (for example, the Christian Health Association of Nigeria which was founded in 1973). These are either on a denominational level or an interdenominational level. There are those that target a specific group and work to improve the status of such a group (for example, the Urban Ministry, which was established in 1991 to promote the holistic development of the urban poor in Nigeria). Various churches have associations for women; there is the Women's Fellowship (Zumuntar Mata), Young Women's Christian Association, and Girls Life Brigade for girls which provides women with elementary education, maternity education, child welfare, various crafts, and hygienic rules.

Many Christian FBOs emerged as a result of religious, socio-economic, and political conditions in the country. At some stage, especially after the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) there were various things which Christians had together as common concerns. There were such issues as the taking over of

schools, hospitals, suspicions over missionaries as agents of destabilisation leading to the denials of visas to missionaries, the imposition of tax and import duties on gifts to the various churches from abroad which were initially tax-free, etc. The Christians thus decided to act together to better handle these difficulties. Many Christian organisations now exist to respond to societal problems in Nigeria.

The main motivation for Christians coming together was, thus, to work together with greater force and to present a unified voice on issues affecting their work and coverts. Both the missionaries and indigenous Christians could see injustices and discrimination in government policies and activities of the Muslim leaders so the formation of Christian associations and organisations were to address these social, economic, political, and religious injustices and discriminations (Mbachirin, 2006: 153). Mbachirin argues that Christians fought these injustices through religious and political organisations. The political situation in the country dictated which way the battle was to be fought. Muslims were using government and political machinery to achieve their social and economic struggle. Christians also felt they had to do the same. Politically, associations helped them challenge government policies and present their views on societal issues. Religious, socio-economic, and political conditions were thus directly or indirectly behind the emergence of many of the Christian organisations.

Methodology

As stated earlier, the aim of the study is to undertake a *mapping* exercise of the nature, scale and activities of FBOs in development in Nigeria. The methodological approach included the review of documented evidence and structured interviews. The study is of a qualitative character seeking to identify nature, scale, location and activities of faith-based organisations through in-depth interviews with representatives of umbrella organisations and key informants from faith groups. Most of the key informants and faith-based organisations were identified at an inaugural project meeting in July 2006. Others were identified from snowballing with the help of key interviewees. An interview guide was developed embracing various themes including legal status, organisational structure, membership strength, sources of funds, main activities, collaboration with other FBOs, and relationship with government. Interviews and searches for secondary information were conducted in Oyo, Lagos, Anambra, Enugu and Kano states and the Federal Capital Territory. Attempts were also made to unearth mapping studies that could have been carried out from the Nigerian offices of the DFID, OXFAM, Action Aid, EU, UNICEF and UNDP. Also the

Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), from where relevant information regarding the FBOs could be generated at the national level, was visited.

Research Findings: Organisational Types and Activities of FBOS

A description of the different types of FBOs is presented here. The study did not cover all the FBOs in existence, partly because of the sheer number of the relevant organisations, which has risen in almost direct proportion to the decline of the Nigerian state. A good example is the number of Islamic FBOs in Nigeria, which is estimated to have risen between 1980 and 2000, from 54, or 4.14 per cent of the total registered NGO population of 1,350, to 523, or 12.98 per cent of the overall NGO population of 4,028 (Salih 2002, p. 11). There is actually a possibility of these figures being inaccurate, given the reality that many NGOs/FBOs, for various reasons, fail to register and do not show up in the relevant directories. The reverse is that many registered organisations are in fact paper creations with no existence or capacity, properly speaking. As such, not all the states of the federation were visited during the fieldwork for the survey. Details of the FBOs are not presented in this paper. The details, which include the history, geographical spread, activities involved in, funding sources and volume, membership and/or target groups, relationship with government, potential biases in coverage, use of faith, and finally, strengths and weaknesses of the FBO are presented in the main research report.

FBOs were generally willing to reveal information about their structure, geographical spread and activities but were not very forthcoming on funding issues. The usual response was that majority of funds was received from members' contributions. Not much information was also available from FBOs on relationship with government. A recent workshop involving FBOs²³ confirmed that FBOs' relationship with government was not cordial and therefore weak, and there is a need for the relationship to be strengthened.

Most FBOs visited were found to be branches or affiliates of major FBOs. While some FBOs are found in all states of the federation, some are found only at regional level. While the aims and objectives of these FBOs in the different branches may be the same, the activities are sometimes different. Five categories of faith-based organisations were identified based on an adaptation of the Clarke (2005) typology discussed earlier. These are: 1) interfaith organisations; 2) apex bodies; 3) development organisations; 4) socio-political organisations and 5) mission organisations. While these categories are not

²³ Workshop on "Faith Communities and Development Process in Nigeria", a component of the Religions and Development Project, held at Abuja, August 28 & 29, 2007.

necessarily mutually exclusive, they do distinguish between FBOs along the dimension of the different types of activities they are involved in.

Only two interfaith organisations were found during the survey. One is the Nigeria Inter-religious Council established in 1999 by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The rationale behind the establishment of the council was to promote mutual understanding among the adherents of various religions in the nation, especially among Christians and Muslims, that is, to encourage religious harmony in the country. This has been the guiding principle behind the public pronouncements of the leaders of the council. The other interfaith organisation is the Interfaith HIV/AIDS Council of Nigeria which was established in 2002 to build the capacity of the faith community in Nigeria and facilitate the establishment of a systematic HIV/AIDS service delivery mechanism operating through local churches and mosques in Nigeria.

Two main apex religious bodies exist in Nigeria, the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). The former was established in 1973 and right from the beginning was closely linked with politics. It has a very strong political voice. Among the objectives of the SCIA were to spread Islamic faith across the nation and even beyond, to bring different Muslims groups together to work for the common good of Islam and act as a bridge between these different groups, and to speak to the government with one voice on Islamic matters. As a result of the need to have one voice representing the interests of Christians, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) was founded in 1976. The objectives of the Christian Association of Nigeria are to serve as a basis of response to the unity of the church; to promote understanding, peace and unity of the churches; to promote understanding, peace and unity among the various peoples and strata of society in Nigeria through the propagation of the Gospel; and to be a watchdog of the spiritual and moral welfare of the nation.

Many development FBOs exist in Nigeria. Many provide emergency and developmental assistance to individuals and families. Some of these social services represent short-term immediate assistance. Examples of these social services include emergency food, financial, and clothing assistance. Other social services represent more long-term developmental assistance. Examples of this form of social service include child care, long-term homeless shelters, individual and family counselling, employment assistance and training, youth mentoring, and after school programmes. The main development Islamic FBOs in Nigeria includes the Federation of Muslim Women Association in Nigeria (FOMWAN), the Nasrul-Lahi-Il-Fathi Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) and the National Council of Muslim Youth Organisation (NACOMYO). The main Christian FBOs include

the Christian Rural and Urban Development of Nigeria (CRUDAN), the Justice Development and Peace Caritas Commission (JDPC), the Urban Ministry (UM), the Christian Health Association of Nigeria (CHAN) and the People Oriented Development (POD) of ECWA. It was, however, noted that the activities of some of the FBOs may not be exclusively about development activities but also include socio-political activities. A good example of this is the JDPC. Most of their activities include roles in service delivery, especially in health and education, economic (e.g. micro-finance) as well as a community development dimension.

Only a few socio-political organisations were identified. According to Clarke (2005), socio-political organisations are organisations that interpret and deploy faith as a political construct, organising and mobilising social groups on the basis of faith identities but in pursuit of broader political objectives or, alternatively, promote faith as a socio-cultural construct, as a means of uniting disparate social groups on the basis of faith-based cultural identities. Religious organisations play an important role as real forces for social organisation, change and advocacy; and in many situations as providers of social services and as social safety nets. They therefore provide both doctrinal support and action. Two Islamic socio-political FBOs were identified. These are the Jama'atu Nasri Islam (JNI) and the Centre for Human Rights in Islam (CHRI). Two Christian socio-political organisations were also identified. These are the Justice Development and Peace Caritas Commission (JDPC) and the Ecumenical Commission of Justice and Peace (ECJP). As earlier noted, some of the FBOs, identified as development organisations, are also involved in socio-political activities. The JDPC is a good example.

Many missionary organisations exist in Nigeria. Missionary organisations, according to Clarke (2005), are organisations which spread key faith messages beyond the faithful, by actively promoting the faith and seeking converts to it, or by supporting and engaging with other faith communities on the basis of key faith principles. Some of the Islamic missionary organisations identified are the Ansarudeen Society, the Council of *Ulama*, the Muslim Students Society (MSS), and the Anwar-ul Islam Movement of Nigeria formerly known as the Ahmadiyya Movement-in-Islam of Nigeria. Some of the Christian missionary organisations identified are the BEGE Ministries International, the Serving In Mission (SIM), the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).

FBOs often have extensive networks of people, institutions, and infrastructure, especially in rural areas, where few other such institutions exist. FBOs often have a direct impact on social institutions, such as schools, which socialise people and change values over time. In addition, their jurisdiction often includes a number of areas such as morality, beliefs about the spiritual bases of disease, and

rules of family life and sexual activity. FBOs are also very active in practical areas of poverty reduction and providing income-generating programmes for community members. However, there is little evidence of their involvement in policy formulation and implementation.

Table 1 presents a summary of faith-based organisations by type, while Table 2 presents mapping of activities of FBOs and Table 3 presents the spread of types in Nigeria. A quantitative table of FBOs is not presented since not all the states of the federation were visited and as such not all FBOs in Nigeria were surveyed. Table 1 also does not present all the FBOs surveyed. It presents examples of the different types of FBOs based on their activities.

This survey of FBOs revealed that not all the FBOs in Nigeria are very active. However, the majority of the examples presented in Table 1 can be found in almost all the states of the federation, or at the least, in every geopolitical zone of the country. It also revealed that a high proportion of religious organisations provide some human services. Most of the FBOs mobilise and rely on deeply engaged volunteers rather than paid staff and are thus in a position to deliver services efficiently. The key advantage of FBOs is that they have better access to volunteers. They have the advantage that they are located in communities where services are needed. They are also involved in informal networks (e.g., cooperating, coordinating, and working together with other organisations).

Table 1: Faith-based Organisations by Type

Type	Definitions/Comments	Most Common Activities	Major examples
Interfaith	These are groups of different congregations, denominations or religions that join together for a common cause, or to provide large-scale services that are beyond the scope of a single congregation.	Promote mutual understanding among the adherents of various religions in the nation. Bringing the two major religious groups (Christian and Muslims) together to present a common front in the fight against HIV/AIDS.	Nigerian Inter-religious Council Interfaith HIV/AIDS Council of Nigeria
Apex Bodies	Apex bodies rule on doctrinal matters, govern the faithful and represent them through engagement with the state and other actors.	Spread Islamic faith across the nation, bring different Muslim groups together to work for the common good of Islam and speak to the government with a united voice on Islamic matters. Promote understanding, peace and unity of the churches and speak to the government with one united voice on Christian matters.	Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs Jama'atu Nasril Islam Christian Association of Nigeria Christian Council of Nigeria Nigerian Catholic Bishops' Conference Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria
Development Organisations	Development organisations mobilise the faithful in support of the poor and other social groups, and fund or manage programmes which tackle poverty and social exclusion.	Service delivery, especially in health and education, an economic (e.g. micro-finance) as well as a community development dimension.	Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria Nasrul-Lahil-Il-Fathi Society of Nigeria Justice, Development and Peace Commission Christian Health Association of Nigeria Christian Rural and Urban Development Association of Nigeria People-oriented Development Urban Ministry
Socio-political Organisations	These are organisations that interpret and deploy faith as a political construct, organising and mobilising social groups on the basis of faith identities but in pursuit of broader political objectives.	Responds to human rights violations, monitors political process and governance issues.	Jama'atu Nasril Islam Justice, Development and Peace Commission
Missionary Organisations	These are organisations which spread key faith messages beyond the faithful, by actively promoting the faith and seeking converts to it.	Providing social services by supporting and engaging with other faith communities on the basis of key faith principles.	Ansarudeen Society Islamic Foundation of Nigeria Council of Ulama Muslim Students' Society Muslim Sisters' Organisation Anwar-ul Islam Movement BEGE Ministries Int Serving In Mission Young Men's/Women's Christian Associations

From interviews conducted during the survey, it was revealed that FBOs' influence derives from their ability to integrate their messages into broader belief systems, avoiding just delivering "superficial awareness creation". Religion also has other comparative advantages in disseminating messages and educating about social issues. For example, churches and mosques have regular audiences at their places of worship. Local FBO workers and leaders have a history of regular contact and involvement in the daily lives of their congregation. Within most FBOs, a strong associational infrastructure at the national and local levels exists. For example, in the Anglican Church, this includes the Mothers' Union, Fathers' Union, youth groups and other church-related associations. Such an advantage is particularly vital in rural areas, as many development-related NGOs are concentrated in cities and towns, whereas religious groups often have a strong presence in rural areas. In Nigeria, this existing infrastructure, according to FBO respondents, means that religious organisations are the first to increase awareness of development issues and encourage discussions among the population. These grassroots activities have made religious organisations a more present and permanent fixture in ordinary life, especially in rural areas. This associational infrastructure coexists with a spirit of *voluntarism* among FBO members. Religious organisations can often also provide guidance and influence curriculum development in schools. They may be able to engage in advocacy work, such as in the north where some religious leaders are advocating increasing girls' minimum legal age of marriage. Finally, in many cases religious organisations believe they command a good deal of respect and trust from much of the congregation. Their flock perceives their actions as less politically driven and selfish than those of government leaders.

However, there are two major deficiencies. One is that the religious organisations are strong on vision but weak on practical strategies for attaining the kind of equality and well-being they dream of; the other is that their community development work is carried out on such a small scale that it may not make a significant contribution to the fight against poverty.

The religious communities do not seem to see it as their role to come up with national strategies for development but they do point out that the values, which should underlie such strategies, are to be found in the programmes they are running or supporting. However, some faith-based organisations lack the capacity to enter into collaboration with government agencies or to perform as expected because of inadequate information technologies, management structures, and financial systems which limit their ability to manage complex social services. The study also found that faith-based providers lack the financial

capacity to raise start-up funds for new programmes. They are, in most cases, looking for support from government, which in most cases do not materialise. Faith-based organisations face challenges in building capacity, connecting with funding sources and evaluating their programmes.

Faith-based organisations indicate, from interview discussions that even if they do not do a better job than secular NGOs, they can become connected with and inspire local religious communities which, in turn enhances their effectiveness.

Emerging Issues and Concluding Remarks

This concluding section mainly raises some issues of concern and conclusion. The evolution of Christian and Muslim faith-based organisations began in the colonial era. The FBOs in the beginning were formed to address social and religious matters which also had economic consequences rather than political issues as we see today.

FBOs and Society

There is a growing awareness that development work is largely inter-cultural work and that religion is a relevant factor in a given cultural setting. Where religion and spirituality are rooted in the everyday life of people and society, they can make an important contribution to sustainable development. Religion is a force for social change. It has the power to shape and transform society negatively or positively. Nwosu (1993: 129) says, "Religion could be seen as a catalyst with abundant evidence of political and socio-economic dynamism". Though religious people often act individually, religious bodies generally assume that they can function better through organisations or associations with specific goals and objectives (Mbachirin, 2006:125). Acting collectively, Christians will make better use of the weight that they carry and will express more articulate and coherent ideas. Such organisations allow different groups with one faith to work together and have the capability of presenting a stronger and more thoughtful voice on matters affecting a religious faith. A Nigerian saying states that "A river does not go straight because it flows alone." The implication is that when you act alone you are bound to make mistakes. It is with this belief that religious bodies, despite denominational differences, still come together to form associations or organisations. Religious organisations are defensive or offensive. In Nigeria, as will be seen later, the most prominent, vocal, and well-organised are more defensive in their attitudes and approaches to issues. This posture suggests that such organisations are developed to deal with particular social problems. This is not to say that individual churches do not respond to societal ills independently.

Sometimes they even do better and sometimes they are the ones that take the lead or motivate these organisations in taking specific actions.

Nigeria, as a third world nation, is beleaguered with many problems that make life difficult. The difficult situation in the country can be attributed to the inability or failure of the government to provide for the people and control divisive elements. Nigeria is a country divided ethnically, socially, economically, politically, and religiously. One divisive element affects the stability of another aspect of life. Unavoidably, divisive elements breed tension, violence, intolerance, general unrest, indiscipline, and all forms of social vices. Divisiveness leads to distrust, stereotyping, hatred, disharmony, malice, and feelings of insecurity. Religious divisiveness usually develops into suspicion. In the atmosphere of divisiveness, people tend to group themselves into associations or organisations to protect their group, to struggle for better treatment, to achieve domination or have more influence on policies that affect the society. These associations and organisations fight discrimination and victimisation. One would not be wrong to suggest that divisiveness is one the most important reasons for the numerous organisations and associations in Nigeria. These associations or organisations have differing aims and objectives and have negatively or positively contributed to the life of the nation. In addition, frustration at the state's failure to deliver on promises of basic social welfare, coupled with the moral devaluation that is thought to be integral to the ascendancy of secularism, appears to have provided a conducive environment for faith-based groups to emerge and grow in influence.

Funding, Influence and Accountability

FBOs are finding it increasingly difficult to run their programmes looking only to their traditional sources of funds. Many do not receive external support, having to raise their own support locally in resource-constrained settings yet they are providing parallel services to government and more. Many faith-based organisations solicit and support a large part of their operations through direct donations from members of the faith congregation, as mentioned by FBO respondents. This can mean that they are less dependent than some secular NGOs on government funding contracts. This study, however, observed that support from government depends on what part of the country the FBO is based. Many FBOs in the northern part of the country report appreciable financial support from state governments as in the case of JNI. Funding sources can offer further clues to an organisation's faith connection. However, clues to other sources of funding, other than traditional sources, are not available.

In some cases faith-based organisations may have quite direct ties with, or actually form part of, religious congregations, and consequently, gathering information can be more difficult (because of difficulties in categorisation but also because transparency of accounts may not be the norm). This is especially the case in financial matters, since religious congregations do not fall under the same tax filing requirements as non-profit organisations (the legal tax status of most FBOs). If government monies are involved, the congregation may create a separate legal entity to avoid separation of church and state complications.

In recent decades, many working in the development field have recognised the important impact of local faith-based humanitarian efforts, especially in addressing HIV/AIDS. Large donor agencies often partner with these smaller grassroots organisations on the field. These partnerships have many benefits including gaining local knowledge, greater reach into underserved areas, and employing local citizens. Though academic literature is sparse on these relationships, it is evident that these partnerships present challenges. Lack of local capacity and the separation between religious practice and development work are issues faced by organisations partnering with local faith-based aid groups. In northern Nigeria for instance, environmental obstacles to social sector programmes are a belief system which prioritises Islamic education above modern education, gender, poverty and the existence of a traditional alternative support system for health care delivery. These factors impact on the demand, supply, quality and relevance of social sector services by FBOs.

Competition and Cooperation/networking among FBOs

Of great hope is the way that people of different faiths and seemingly insuperable doctrinal differences respond together. The need for increased coordination and collaboration has never been greater. FBOs possess substantial influence, resources and reasonable overall organisational capacity. Some (e.g. the Jama'tu Nasril Islam, and the Justice Development and Peace Commission) are relatively large organisations with distinct missions and organisational structures. In addition, many (e.g. the Jama'tu Nasril Islam and the Justice Development and Peace Commission) allow their members or affiliates, both regionally and locally, to work quite independently, so their activities can vary importantly from place to place. The national organisations may or may not collect systematic information about those decentralised activities. The information from the interviews indicates that FBOs do collaborate through coalitions to tackle specific socio-economic issues. An example is the Interfaith HIV/AIDS Council of Nigeria which was established to build the capacity of the faith community and facilitate the establishment of a systematic HIV/AIDS service delivery

mechanism operating through local churches and mosques in Nigeria. However, greater collaboration is needed to maximise efforts, coverage, quality of service delivery and better utilisation of resources, both human and financial. The paucity of information through appropriate documentation remains a major issue to be addressed. Donor requirements for project proposals, monitoring, evaluation and reports can be extremely onerous and time-consuming, and FBOs lack the necessary information base to do this. FBOs are largely implementers: they are the *doers*. Few are trained to meet the documentation requirements of major funding agents.

Government-FBOs Relationship

As noted from interviews with FBOs, most religious organisations do not seem to see it as their role to come up with national strategies for development but they point out that the values, which should underlie such strategies, are to be found in the programmes they are running or supporting. Moreover, most faith-based organisations lack the capacity to enter into collaboration with government agencies or to perform as expected because of inadequate information technologies, management structures, and financial systems which limit their ability to manage complex social services. They also lack the financial capacity to raise start-up funds for new programmes. Faith-based organisations face challenges in building capacity, connecting with funding sources and evaluating their programmes.

Many governments enlist and support faith-based organisations to provide various social services. The argument in favour of this policy is that such organisations can be efficient providers of such services, not only because they are closer to the recipients of the services than are official civil servants and therefore have better information about the needs, but also because they experience some direct benefit from these actions and will therefore perform them for smaller salaries and/or weaker incentive payments. These policies are controversial. Some have questioned the validity of the claims of efficiency of faith-based organisations. But the main counterargument is that the actions of these organisations have by-products, for example promotion of their religious beliefs, which society may regard as improper for the government to support.

Religious movements pose a unique and complicated challenge to the development agenda and to the achievement of the MDGs. They often confront the legitimacy of states, offer citizens an identity at variance with the national identity, challenge the state's economic and social agenda, weaken the state's status in the international arena, seek to undermine universal principles promoted by international organisations, and more generally offer believers an

interpretation of their world at odds with the one advocated by international organisations. In sum, religious movements and identities can, and do appear to make it difficult for states and the international community to pursue their developmental agenda especially with regard to gender equity, minority rights, rights of vulnerable groups, wealth redistribution, democracy, and participation. More importantly perhaps, they do so in ways that are seemingly different from those posed by other interest groups or institutional actors. Governments thus need to have a better understanding of religious organisations and be able to negotiate space with them such that they are able to pursue a developmental agenda.

Finally, the fact that faith-based organisations could engage in community development does not necessarily mean that they should. Congregations and other faith-based groups, like other kinds of organisations, have strengths and weaknesses. They work in environments that pose different kinds of problems and offer varying kinds of opportunities. As the huge range of activities they already conduct demonstrates, faith-based organisations have many opportunities to make socially-valuable contributions. They should apply their energies in ways that capitalise on their comparative advantages; for many, that will not lead them into community development.

Areas for further research

Despite the broad discussion of the utilisation of faith-based organisations to provide social welfare services, surprisingly little research has been undertaken which has systematically investigated the distinctive attributes of faith-based organisations and their impact on clients, especially as it pertains to important goals of public policy such as effectiveness and efficiency. Little research has also been done on specific operational issues affecting FBOs activities in development. There is need for case studies to specifically examine FBO programmes and their impact, and here, longitudinal studies could greatly contribute to the study of an effort primarily oriented toward a long-term horizon. Supporters of community development need to know if faith-based organisations bring distinctive strengths or advantages to the field. The issue could be readily addressed by comparing faith-based and secular organisations active in community development. The primary objectives are to describe the extent to which the two groups differ (or not) and to obtain insight into any distinctive advantages or disadvantages that faith-based organisations bring to the field. One way to do this is to compare and contrast the two types of organisations in segments of community development already known to include faith-based and secular participants.

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