



# Alternative Service Delivery Project

## Government Relations With Religious Non-Profit Social Agencies in Alberta: Public Accountability in a Pluralist Society

*As part of its Alternative Service Delivery Project (ASDP), the Canada West Foundation is publishing a series of research reports on select topics related to non-profit organizations – particularly non-profits that deliver social services – and their relations with government.*

*This report, written by Dr. John Hiemstra, is based on the results of a 1997 survey of religious non-profits in Alberta, and examines the impact of government on this important subset of the non-profit sector. Although based on the experiences of religious non-profits, the findings point to issues that affect the non-profit sector in general, and provide much-needed empirical data from which to hypothesize about the state of affairs in other parts of the country.*

*In many ways, the interplay between governments and faith-based non-profits agencies highlights the more general issue of the appropriate balance between the independence of the non-profit sector and the conditions placed on non-profits by governments that provide them with public dollars.*

### Introduction

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The push to privatize government services and generally retrench the welfare state has once again increased Canadian governments' interest in a robust non-profit sector. In Alberta, as in many other provinces, governments have argued that churches and religious non-profit agencies should shoulder more responsibility for social and other services (see Sass and "Running").

The tendency to ask churches and religious non-profits to do more raises important questions about the nature and success of the current relationship between religious non-profits and governments. On the one hand, government has a legitimate concern to maintain public accountability for the actions of the non-profit agencies that it funds or otherwise engages. On the other hand, even the general non-profit sector expresses fear that too close a relationship with government will lead to "agency dependency" and cause "a loss of distinctiveness and independence associated with the voluntary agency"

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## Key Findings

### Profile of Faith-Based Agencies

The annual revenues of the agencies vary widely with 18.2% reporting revenues of \$100,000 and under, and 11.7% reporting revenues of over \$10 million.

Given the variation in budget size, it is not surprising that there are large differences in the number of full- and part-time staff employed by the agencies; about one fifth (20.3%) of the agencies have no full-time staff, just under two-thirds (63.4%) employ between 1 and 50 full-time staff, and 16.4% employ from 50 to over 1000.

The vast majority of agencies (88.4%) report the assistance of at least one volunteer, and three in ten (30.7%) have over 100 volunteers.

About half (51.3%) of the agencies were started in the last 20 years, with 12.8% established in the last five. This suggests that religious non-profits are not simply relics from the religious past, but that faith communities continue to launch new agencies.

### Religious Characteristics of Faith-Based Agencies

Two-thirds (67.9%) of the agencies report that they have a statement of faith/religious principles. Of the agencies that have a statement of faith, 68.6% expect their employees to agree with it.

Three-quarters (75.3%) of the agencies claim that their religious orientation is important for their staff and hiring decisions. However, only 15.8% indicate that they will only hire staff that agree with the organization's religious orientation.

Eight in ten agencies report that their religious orientation is very important (58.4%) or somewhat important (23.4%) for the "organization and structure" of their agency. Three-quarters of the agencies say their religious orientation is very important (51.3%) or somewhat important (23.7%) in choosing the "types of services" they provide. Agencies also report that their religious orientation shapes the "character of their services," with 62.2% saying it was very important and another 24.3% that it was somewhat important.

It is noteworthy that very few faith-based agencies give expression to their religious commitments by limiting clientele to their own community members. Only two agencies say they give preference in accepting clients to those in agreement with their religious orientation. This is confirmed by the fact that only 5.3% of the agencies draw more than half of their clients from their own religious community.

### Effects of Government on Religious Agencies

Over three-quarters (78.7%) of the agencies attempted to acquire funding from government in the six years prior to the survey. The relative importance of government funding to the agencies varies; about the same proportion of agencies receive 1-20% of their budget from government (33.9%) as receive 81-100% (32.2%).

Sixty-nine percent of the agencies say that – overall – the government funding they receive has a very positive or somewhat positive effect on their organization, 21.3% say it is neutral, and only 9.8% say it is somewhat negative. When asked about the effects of government funding on the "religious character" of their organizations, only 11.9% of the agencies report it as positive. Three-quarters (74.6%) describe it as neutral, while 13.6% say it was somewhat negative.

The agencies report a variety of positive developments that result from government funding: 63.8% expanded their services; 27.6% hired staff with higher levels of education; 29.3% used more professional staff instead of volunteers; 55.2% claim to provide more effective services; and 12.1% say the funding helped them avoid having to close down.

The agencies also report a variety of negative consequences of government funding: 34.5% had to become involved in "lobbying" legislators and government agencies; 22.4% had to deal with clients that had more severe emotional and behaviour problems; 27.6% had to put more time and effort into paperwork than "should be necessary"; 17.2% became more "bureaucratic," and less flexible and creative; and 8.6% received fewer private gifts and volunteer hours.

In regard to hiring practices, 14.6% of the agencies that receive government funds hire staff in agreement with their religious orientation but feel they must do so subtly and indirectly, and 12.5% would like to hire staff in agreement with their religious orientation but feel they ought not to do so or feel it is illegal.

Almost one in five agencies (17.3%) report that, in light of the government funding they receive, they had to either be more subtle or completely curtail informal references to religious ideas by staff in contact with clients. Just over a quarter (27.1%) say they openly and directly encourage clients to make personal religious commitments, 16.7% do this subtly or indirectly, and 6.3% of the agencies report they would like to do so but feel they ought not to.

Seventeen percent of the agencies say government officials have occasionally questioned their religiously based practices or brought pressure to bear to change some of them. One agency reports that this has occurred frequently.

(Kramer 1979b, 399). Religious non-profit agencies have the added concern that working closely with government may weaken or completely secularize their religious identity – the beliefs that some scholars suggest have motivated the founding and operation of these agencies (James 1987). Has the embrace of non-profit agencies by Canadian governments become so powerful, or perhaps inappropriate, that it threatens to suffocate the very agencies that government hopes will "do more?" Virtually no academic literature deals with the Canadian religious non-profit sector and its relationship with government.

The central concern of this report is the effect of government policy on various types of institutional pluralism. In particular, it focuses on the types of non-profit "institutions" that have been created and are being run by diverse "religious communities." Does government policy leave non-profits, and in some cases their originating religious communities, the independence they need to function according to their own motives and purposes? At the same time, does government have the room it needs to achieve its task of providing unpopular services, dispensing equitable public funding, and securing public accountability for the accessibility and quality of services?

This report pursues these questions by presenting the findings of a 1997 survey of faith-based non-profit social and health agencies in Alberta. Seventy-nine religious non-profit agencies responded to 51 questions about their work and relationship with Canadian governments. This report briefly sets out the composition of the religious non-profit social sector in Alberta and addresses how religious non-profits understand their beliefs influence their functioning. The report then analyzes the nature of the relationship between religious non-profits and the governments with which they deal. In particular, it explores the extent to which the identities and work of these agencies have been influenced by government regulations and funding.

## Religious Non-Profits in the Literature

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A common method of categorizing social service agencies and organizations is by sponsorship, yielding the categories of government, commercial, and non-profit agencies (e.g.,

Jaco). (The non-profit sector is often referred to as the "third" or "voluntary" sector.) Non-profits are defined in *The Social Work Dictionary* as organizations "established to fulfill some social purpose other than monetary reward to financial backers" (Barker). Non-profits include everything from professional associations and arts groups to churches, research institutes, homeless shelters, and trade unions. The *Alternative Service Delivery Project* is primarily concerned with the subset of non-profits that deliver social services, often called social welfare agencies.

A great deal of academic study has focused on "government agencies" during the recent welfare state era, but less attention has been given to the Canadian non-profit and commercial sectors. Salamon says "this pervasive partnership between government and the voluntary sector has attracted surprisingly little attention...systematic assessments of the value and impact of the relationship have been virtually nonexistent" (1987, 99-100).

This report focuses on one subcategory of the non-profit sector: "faith-based social service agencies." These agencies are principally dedicated to social services, but are created and run by religious or church communities. Another subcategory of the non-profit sector is "church-based social services" (i.e., social services provided as secondary functions of institutions that are primarily dedicated to worship). Church-based social services merit further study, but are not the focus of this report.

Religious communities have historically played a key role in the creation of non-profit social services and continue to run agencies and provide high levels of financial and volunteer support. The *1997 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* highlights the importance of religious factors for involvement in charitable giving and volunteering. Affiliation with a community of worship and frequency of attendance at religious services are "associated with both a heightened incidence of charitable giving and a higher amount of giving" (Hall, *et al.*, 17). Religious organizations are first among the beneficiaries of individual charitable donations, while health and social service organizations are second and third respectively. It was also found that "people with strong religious ties volunteer at rates higher than the rest of the population" (32). Voluntary action (on the part of people with and without strong religious ties) is not focused on religious

agencies, but spread out over many types of organizations, with social service organizations being the highest at 21% of total volunteer hours (32, 33).<sup>1</sup>

The general literature on non-profits offers conflicting insights on how a relationship with government may influence the full range of non-profit agencies. In a comparative study of the United States, Holland, England and Israel, Kramer (1979a) suggests that increased reliance on government funding does not necessarily lead to the diminished autonomy of non-profit agencies. In later articles he explores the question of autonomy further, suggesting that the dichotomy between government accountability and agency autonomy may in fact be false (Kramer 1979b; 1994; and Kramer and Grossman). Salamon (1987; 1995) also finds the relationship between government and non-profits has been a partnership that generally works well for both sides. Ostrander (1985) thinks the relationship between government and non-profits has been good enough for non-profits to be successfully integrated into the welfare state, provided they are seen as public but non-governmental agencies.

James (1987) argues that agencies are losing their autonomy to governments. He suggests that studies such as Kramer's overlook the real loss of agency autonomy because they focus too much on agency outputs rather than the inputs (e.g., who an agency can and cannot hire). The real loss of autonomy occurs on the input side. None of the above studies, however, explicitly focus on the distinctive characteristics and challenges that "religious" non-profits experience. These unique challenges include maintaining the agency's religious identity, unique institutional features, and relationship with its religiously-motivated donors and volunteers. Agency autonomy is of particular concern today as governments are looking to society once again to develop new social agencies to meet current needs, and as James notes in his international study of non-profits, "universally, religious groups are the major founders of non-profit service institutions" (1987, 404).

Literature on the Canadian non-profit sector also fails to deal adequately with the question of religious non-profits (see Armitage; Campbell; Hornick, Thomlinson and Nesbitt). One common viewpoint in the social policy literature understands Canada to have been historically

developing a welfare state in which "services come increasingly from the state." In this viewpoint, voluntary and faith-based agencies were seen as remnants of "an earlier philanthropic stage" (Armitage, 194).

Another viewpoint notes the two waves of government reliance on non-profits, and provides overviews of developments in the non-profit sector. For example, Ismael suggests that an explosion of agencies occurred in the voluntary sector during the 1960s and 1970s when many provincial welfare states expanded through these agencies. Ismael and Vaillancourt further suggest in their comparative study of privatization in Canadian provinces that since many governments are now privatizing (i.e., contracting out services to third parties), they are showing a preference for non-profit community-based programs. Neither article, however, adequately explores the sources of, and sustaining power behind, these types of agencies. In particular, neither article mentions how these developments influenced the subcategory of "religious" non-profits.

The comparative literature on non-profits also fails to deal adequately with "religious" non-profit agencies. In assessing this literature, Wuthnow observes that "recent studies of the voluntary sector have often focused on secular non-profit organizations rather than paying attention to the full range of churches, synagogues, and parareligious associations that also make up this sector" (21). A few helpful studies do exist. Two American studies by Netting provide some insights on how government funding influences church-related agencies. She shows that many agencies fear government funding because it might lead to their absorption into government, secularization, loss of autonomy, or insecure funding (1982). In a study of agencies affiliated with three denominations, Netting found that these agencies tend to compromise by seeking a balance between their identification with a religious community, the professional community, the community of service providers, and the client community (1984).

Another very helpful American study by Monsma (1996) analyzes the influence of government funding on religious children's services, colleges, and international development agencies. Monsma found that these agencies in general experience a low level of problems or

pressures due to their religious practices. However, he also warns that many institutions report increasing government pressure to restrict their religious practices. Significantly, many of these practices are considered by these agencies to be critical to their religious identity. Monsma notes that "there certainly is a clear danger that the old adage of 'he who pays the piper calls the tune' will apply when it comes to governmental funds flowing to private, voluntary institutions and agencies" (11).

The main conclusion to be drawn from this literature is that we need a clearer contemporary picture of how religious non-profits function in Canada. What is the composition of this sector? What role does faith play within these agencies? How have these agencies experienced government policy? Has government served to reduce agency autonomy, increase bureaucracy, or cut agencies off from their supporting communities? Are agencies becoming too financially dependent on government? This report makes a contribution towards filling in these gaps in the literature on Canadian religious non-profits and their relationship with government. The weakness of the literature, on this front, makes it necessary to provide a significant amount of descriptive detail.

## **Methodology: The Survey**

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The "Alberta Faith-Based Social Agencies Survey" (1997),<sup>2</sup> on which this report is based, provides a new source of data on the non-profit health and social welfare agencies sector in Canada. A fifty-one question survey was mailed out to 207 "faith-based" social agencies in Alberta at the beginning of June 1997. The Executive Director (or equivalent) of each agency was asked to fill out the survey and was promised that responses would remain confidential. Reminder letters were mailed out during July and a final reminder letter with a duplicate survey was mailed September 12. The closing date for returned surveys was October 15, 1997.

The Alberta organizations targeted by this survey were selected on the basis of two cross-cutting categories of societal plurality (see Mouw and Griffioen, 15-19). The first type, "institutional plurality," refers to the variety of types of social organizations and institutions within contemporary society. The types of institutions included

in the survey were non-profit social welfare and health agencies, including hospitals and medical centres, social service agencies, daycare centres, homes for the elderly, extended care facilities, counselling centres, foodbanks, and low income housing agencies.

The second type, "directional plurality," cross-cuts the first type, and refers to the variety of religious and ideological communities within society. These communities have created and sustain a number of the non-profit agencies in Alberta. Religion is the form of directional plurality focused on in this study. In order to adequately capture the motivations and aims of some faith-based non-profits, religion is understood more broadly than "belief in supernatural beings and forces" (Hiebert and Hiebert-Crape). Religion often provides a framework of ultimate meaning for people which helps them interpret and integrate reality, live their daily lives, and act on problems (see Geertz, 79-80). Understanding that religion can function this broadly is helpful for explaining in part why some religious non-profits have had difficult relationships with governments that define religion more narrowly.

This study examines only non-profit agencies that explicitly indicated their religious faith. It includes agencies that are associated with aboriginal spirituality, Islam, Judaism, Latter Day Saints, a variety of mainline Protestant and evangelical Protestant churches, and the Roman Catholic Church.

The names and addresses of all agencies in the province that even remotely appeared to fall within the dual categories of "institutional plurality" and "directional plurality" were collected through a variety of means. A total of 207 agencies and organizations were finally identified and included in the survey mailout. Although some of these agencies seemed likely to cross the line between religion and ethnicity (see Driedger and Chappell), each agency was asked to affirm whether or not it saw itself as a religious agency. Almost one hundred agencies sent some sort of reply to the mailout, with 79 agencies filling out the survey. The range of responses resulted in a very good representation of both the types of social services present in Alberta and the categories of faith groups present in the faith-based non-profit sector.

The 51 questions in the survey are grouped into four categories. The first set focuses on the agencies and asks them to describe the kinds of services they provide, their size, and funding sources. The second asks about the religious background of the agencies and the strength of their links to supporting faith communities. The third set of questions asks about the agencies' financial relationship with governments and the effects of public funding on the way they deliver their services. The final section asks about the influence of non-funding-related laws and regulations on the agencies.<sup>3</sup>

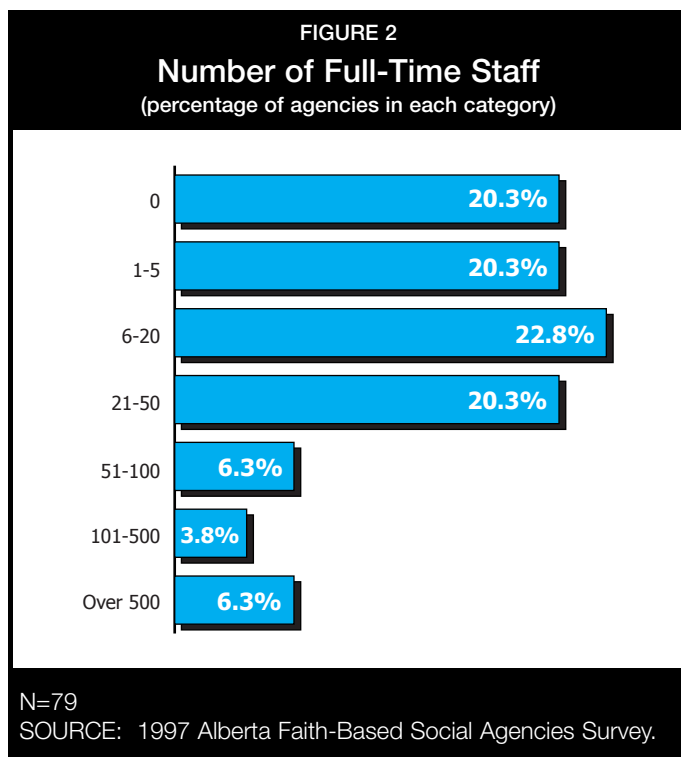
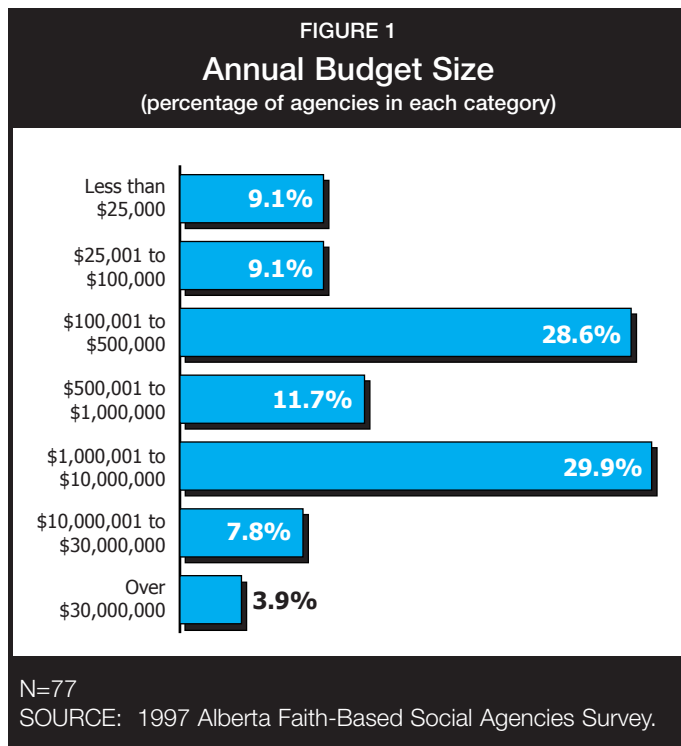
## Alberta's Faith-Based Non-Profit Social Service Sector

This section of the report outlines the basic composition and functioning of the faith-based non-profit social and health sector in Alberta. Since little research has been done on the "faith-based" sector in Alberta or Canada, base-line data on the size of the faith-based non-profit sector relative to the larger non-profit sector in Alberta is unavailable.

The faith-based non-profit agencies were asked to indicate the types of services they deliver and the relative importance of each service to their organization. (Many agencies provide more than one type of service so the total exceeds 100%.) The agencies are dispersed quite evenly across the full range of social and health services targeted by this survey. The most commonly delivered services are individual/personal counselling (51.3% of the agencies), and care for the physically/mentally challenged (38.2%).<sup>4</sup>

All of the remaining services on the list are provided by at least 11% and up to 29% of the agencies. These include aboriginal services, addictions counselling, adoption, child welfare, day care, extended care facilities, family/marital counselling, food banks, homeless shelters, hospital/health care, immigration/refugee support, low income housing, seniors' day care, seniors' lodging, and seniors' long-term care facilities.

There is a huge disparity in the size of the agencies found within Alberta's religious non-profit social sector. The sector has some very large players, with 11.7% reporting



annual budgets in excess of ten million dollars, and 29.9% reporting budgets between \$1,000,000 and \$10,000,000 (see **FIGURE 1**). Just over 40% of the agencies report budgets between \$100,000 and \$1,000,000, and 18.2% of the agencies report budgets of less than \$100,000.

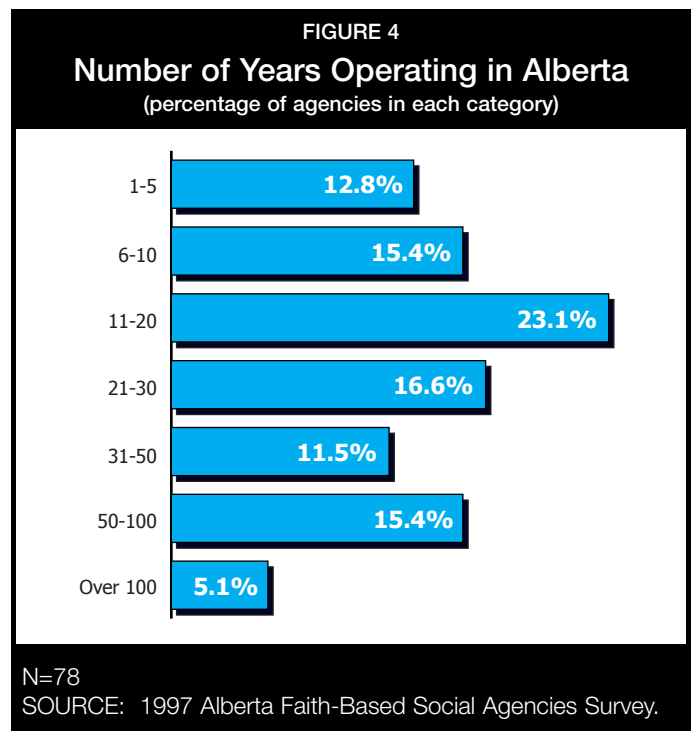
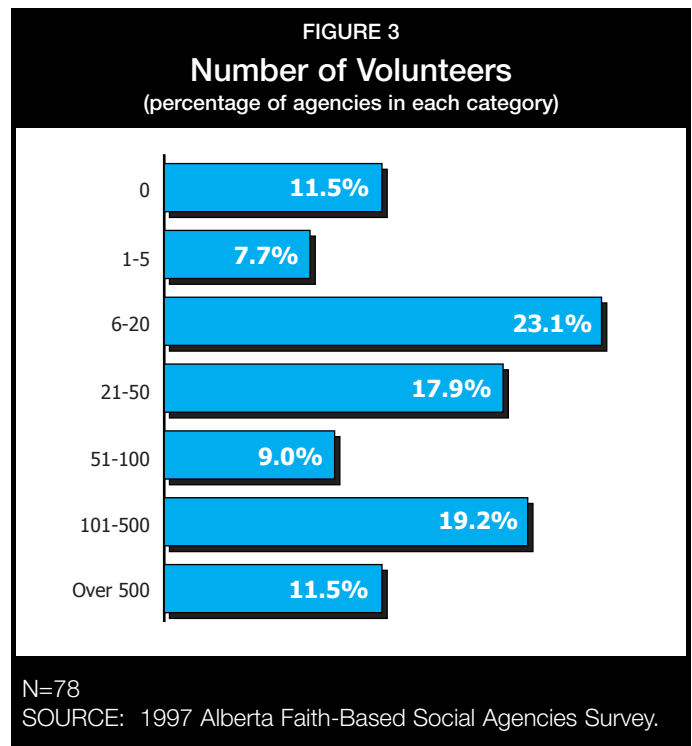
This variation in budget size among the agencies is reflected in the number of staff they employ (see **FIGURE 2**). Of the 79 agencies surveyed, 20.3% have no full-time staff, and 19.0% employ no part-time staff. The agencies have a mean of 85 full-time employees, while the median agency has 12 full-time employees. Over two-thirds (69.7%) of the agencies surveyed have between 1 and 100 full-time employees. The picture for part-time employees is similar, with an agency mean of 61 part-time employees, and a median of 5 part-time employees.

The religious non-profit sector reports a heavy use of volunteers, with almost nine in ten agencies reporting the assistance of at least one volunteer, and almost four in ten reporting the use of over 50 volunteers (see **FIGURE 3**). The median agency reports 37.5 volunteers while on average there were 174.5 volunteers per agency.

The age of the faith-based agencies is quite diverse (see **FIGURE 4**). Four of the agencies included in the survey are over one hundred years old. Agencies originating before the modern welfare state, that is over fifty years ago, constitute 20.5% of the group. Half (51.3%) of the agencies were started in the last 20 years, with 12.8% established in the last five years. This suggests that faith-based agencies are not simply relics from a religious past. Rather, faith communities continue to launch new agencies.<sup>5</sup> The newer agencies tend to be small, with all agencies started in the last 10 years having less than a total of 30 full- and part-time employees.

Most faith-based agencies are indigenous organizations. Seventy-two percent of the agencies report being exclusively local while another 13.0% are restricted to operating in Alberta alone. This suggests that Alberta's faith-based social agency sector is very Albertan and Canadian in character.<sup>6</sup>

Although religion is sometimes regarded as a predominately rural phenomenon, faith-based social service agencies in Alberta are predominantly located in the cities. Half (51.3%) of the agencies report that they are located, at least in part, in Edmonton, while 26.9% are based in Calgary.<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that some of the larger agencies have headquarters in one of the cities, but run affiliate agencies and services in rural areas.

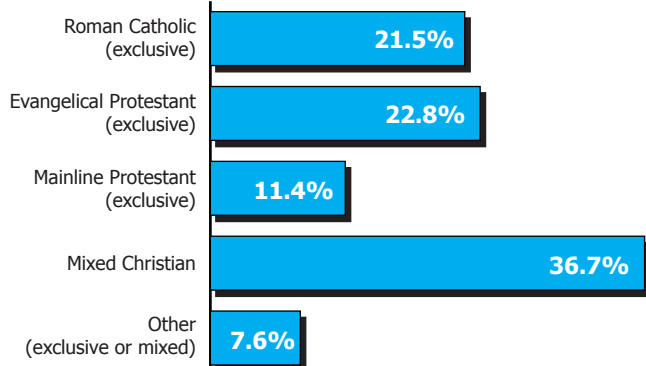


## Religious Characteristics of the Faith-Based Sector

A number of survey questions probe for the influence that religious orientation has on the agencies' identity and activities. Are faith-based agencies religious in name

FIGURE 5

### Religious Background of the Agencies (percentage of agencies in each category)



N=79

SOURCE: 1997 Alberta Faith-Based Social Agencies Survey.

alone, having been partly or largely secularized? Does religious orientation play any shaping role in these agencies? While it is difficult to arrive at definitive answers to these questions, some tendencies are evident in the survey results.

One indication of the role faith plays in an agency is the character of the faith tradition that nurtures it. Agencies were asked to identify the religious background out of which their organizations arose. If there was more than one community involved in starting their agencies, they were asked to identify all of them. The religious community responsible for developing the most non-profit agencies is the Roman Catholic Church, with 44.0% of the religious non-profits indicating they had grown out of, at least in part, this faith community.

The Alliance, Anglican, Baptist, Mennonite, Pentecostal, Reformed, Presbyterian, and Salvation Army communities each accounted for initiating, in some cases with other communities, between 10-20% of the total number of agencies. It is noteworthy that all but two of these are evangelically-oriented denominations.<sup>8</sup> The Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, Lutheran, Mormon, Seventh Day Adventist, Sikh, traditional Aboriginal, United Church, and Orthodox communities were each identified as the source of, at least in part, less than 10% of the total agencies.<sup>9</sup>

In order to assist in analysis, **FIGURE 5** groups the agencies according to whether they were initiated exclusively by Roman Catholics, evangelical Protestants, or mainline Protestants, initiated by a mixture of Christian groups, or initiated by other religious groups (both exclusive and mixed).<sup>10</sup> This classification assumes that the commonly used designations of "mainline," "Catholic," and "evangelical" indicate something important about a community's understanding of how their faith ought to influence their development of, and involvement with, culture.

The denominational make up of Alberta in 1991 was: Roman Catholic 27%, mainline Protestant 31%, evangelical Protestant 12% (approx.).<sup>11</sup> When the religious backgrounds of the agencies are compared to the corresponding denominational make-up of the Alberta population, it is clear that the percentage of exclusively Catholic agencies is less than their percentage of the population, evangelical Protestants are over-represented, and mainline Protestants under-represented. When the mixed Christian category is taken into account, the Catholic share of agencies exceeds its percentage of the population, evangelical Protestant over-representation increases even further, and the mainline Protestant share of agencies moves a bit closer to their share of the population.

Another measure of the importance of faith to a non-profit organization is whether or not the agency explicitly refers to its religious basis in its official purposes. Two-thirds of the agencies report that they have a "statement of faith" or a "statement of religious principles" for their organizations. Statements of faith can vary greatly from references to Biblical passages to more explicit doctrinal statements. To illustrate this range, I selected two statements from the "Annual Reports" of Alberta non-profits which were collected prior to executing the survey. A commonly used Bible passage is Matthew 25: 35-40:

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. Naked and you clothed me, I was ill and you comforted me, in prison and you came to visit me. Then the just will ask Him, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or see you thirsty and give you to drink? When did we visit you when you were ill or in prison?



TABLE 1

'Faith Community' by 'Having a Statement of Faith' and 'Requiring Employees to Agree to a Statement of Faith'

	Statement & Agree	Statement Only	No Statement	TOTAL
Roman Catholic*	6 (35.3%)	6 (35.3%)	5 (29.4%)	17 (100%)
Evangelical Protestant*	12 (75.0%)	3 (18.8%)	1 (6.3%)	16 (100%)
Mainline Protestant*	2 (22.2%)	3 (33.3%)	4 (44.4%)	9 (100%)
Mixed Christian	13 (48.1%)	2 (7.4%)	12 (44.4%)	27 (100%)
Other (exclusive or mixed)	2 (40.0%)	0	3 (60.0%)	5 (100%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35 (47.3%)</b>	<b>14 (18.9%)</b>	<b>25 (33.8%)</b>	<b>74 (100%)</b>

N=74 \*Exclusive NOTE: totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.  
SOURCE: 1997 Alberta Faith-Based Social Agencies Survey.

The King will then answer them, I assure you as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for Me.

The following example goes beyond Biblical passages to more detailed doctrinal statements:

We believe all individuals are unique and are created in the image of God. Therefore, we believe we are all interdependent; in need of relationships that are mutually supportive and encourage growth in each other. Our Creator is the centre of our connection to each other and is the reason we treat each other with respect and appreciation.

We believe our natural inclination is to be self-centred, selfish, and judgmental, resulting in disrespect, abuse, and exclusion of one another; contrary to the will of our Creator. We depend on God the Father, His Son, and His Spirit, to provide us with the desire and ability to be compassionate, caring, and supportive of one another.

TABLE 1 shows that the use of a "statement of faith" is common across all categories of religious non-profits.

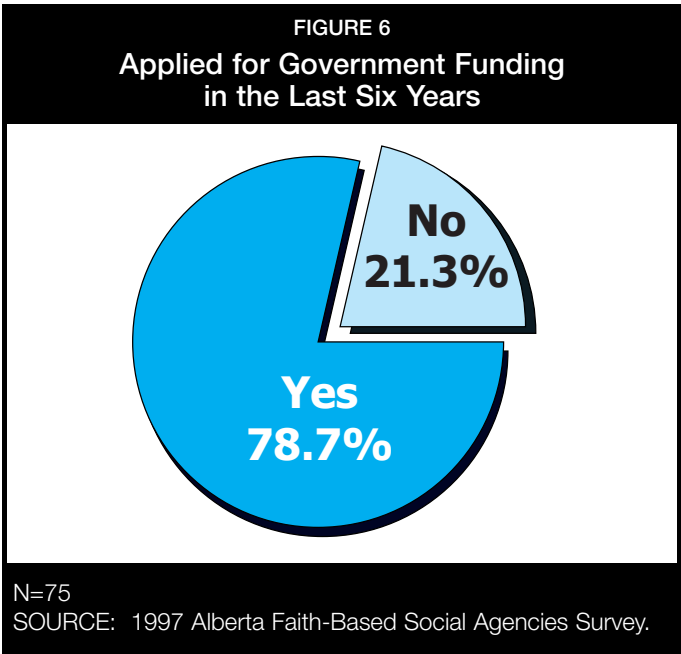
The importance of faith to religious non-profit organizations can also be seen in the ways they hire staff. The general non-profit literature indicates that control over the selection of staff is critical for achieving an agency's goals (James 1987). Seventy-five percent of the agencies claim that their religious orientation is important for their "staff and hiring"

decisions. For agencies that have a statement of faith, over two-thirds indicate that they expect their employees to agree with it. Agreement with a "statement of faith" is not unique to a particular religious community, as a number of agencies within every category – Roman Catholic, mainline, evangelical, mixed Christian, and other religions – require their staff to agree with their agency's statement. The evangelical Protestant agencies, however, are significantly more likely than any other type of agency to require employee assent to their statements of faith.

Only 15.8% of the agencies indicate, however, that they will only hire staff that agree with the organization's religious orientation, and only 14.5% say they "give preference" to job applicants that agree with the agency's religious orientation.

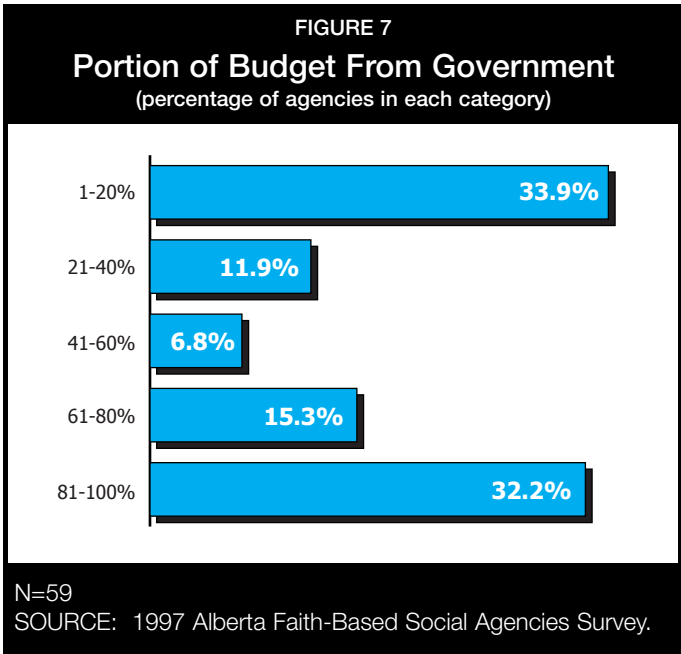
Many agencies indicate that religion also plays an important role in other aspects of their organization. Eight in ten agencies report that their religious orientation is very important (58.4%) or somewhat important (23.4%) for the "organization and structure" of their agency. Seventy-five percent of the agencies say their religious orientation is very important (51.3%) or somewhat important (23.7%) in choosing the "types of services" they provide. Agencies also report that their religious orientation shapes the "character of their services," with 62.2% saying it was very important and another 24.3% that it was somewhat important. Furthermore, 71.8% say their religious orientation led them to provide services differently from other organizations which provide similar types of services.

A variety of other explicitly religious practices of the agencies were also evident in the survey results.<sup>12</sup> Agencies were asked to identify which religious practices they engaged in from a prepared list. Ninety-two percent of the agencies report a generalized spirit or atmosphere of service/love/concern among their staff; 63.2% offer voluntary religious activities while 11.8% have required religious activities; 56.6% display religious symbols or pictures in their facilities; 55.3% have informal references to religious ideas by staff in contact with clients; 39.5% have spoken prayer at meals; 30.3% have paid chaplains while 21.1% report volunteer chaplains;<sup>13</sup> and 23.7% engage in efforts to encourage clients to make personal religious commitments.



It is noteworthy that very few faith-based agencies give expression to their religious commitments by limiting clientele to their own community members. Only two agencies say they give preference in accepting clients to those in agreement with their religious orientation. This is confirmed by the fact that only 5.3% of the agencies draw more than half of their clients from their own religious community. Religious non-profits are clearly not self-interest organizations that exclusively serve their own communities; rather, they serve the general public.

Another indicator of the influence that religious orientation has on an agency is whether it maintains an active relationship with the community that initiated it. The agencies report several forms of connection with their religious communities. The strongest bonds are maintained through board membership and volunteering. Sixty-three percent of the agencies get over half of their board members from their own religious community. Forty percent of the agencies secure over half of their volunteers from their own religious community. Agency reliance on their own religious communities for employees is somewhat weaker, with 28.0% of the agencies securing more than half of their employees from their own religious community. The weakest connection to supporting communities, by far, is through clients, with only 5.3% of the agencies drawing more than half of their clients from their own faith community.



The agencies also report that the relationships with their supporting communities have changed in a variety of ways since their organizations were started. Over a third (35.5%) of the agencies report that financial backing from their supporting faith community has weakened since their agencies started, while 21.1% report that it remained the same, and 31.6% report that it has become stronger.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, volunteer support appears to be strengthening for slightly more agencies: 38.2% of the agencies indicate strengthened volunteer support, 30.3% unchanged, and 26.3% that it weakened. Moral and prayer support has also increased: 44.6% of the agencies say it increased, 36.5% report it stayed the same, and 13.5% say it weakened. Most faith-based non-profit agencies report a relatively strong relationship with their supporting faith communities. Many of these agencies have not evolved into autonomous organizations that are disconnected from their originating communities. However, the responses also indicate that the ties between some agencies and their communities are weakening, and in some cases, becoming significantly weaker.<sup>15</sup>

**Effects of Government on Religious Agencies**

The character of the relationship between government and faith-based agencies is explored by a series of survey questions regarding the effects of government funding on

agencies, and another set of questions on the influence of non-financial regulations. Over three-quarters (78.7%) of the agencies attempted to acquire funding from national, provincial, or municipal governments in the six years prior to the survey (see **FIGURE 6**). Six agencies said they had a policy of not applying for government funding while another eight did not apply for funding because that was the way things worked out.

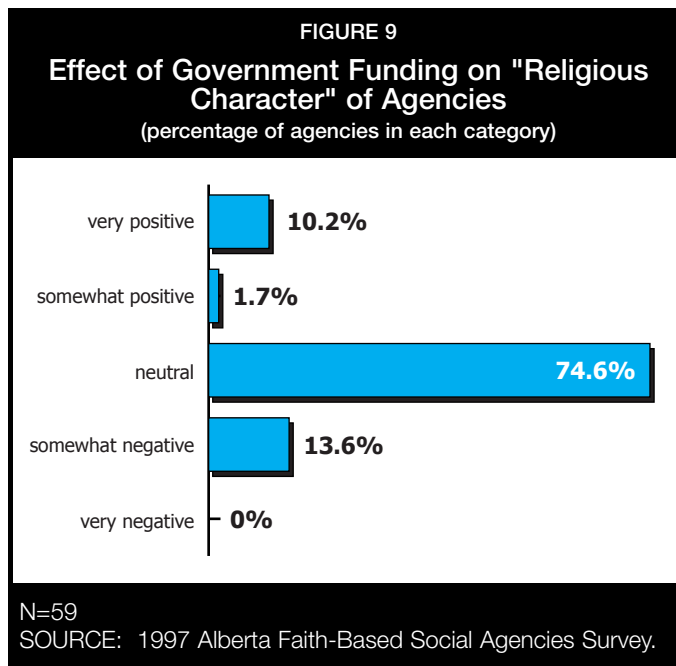
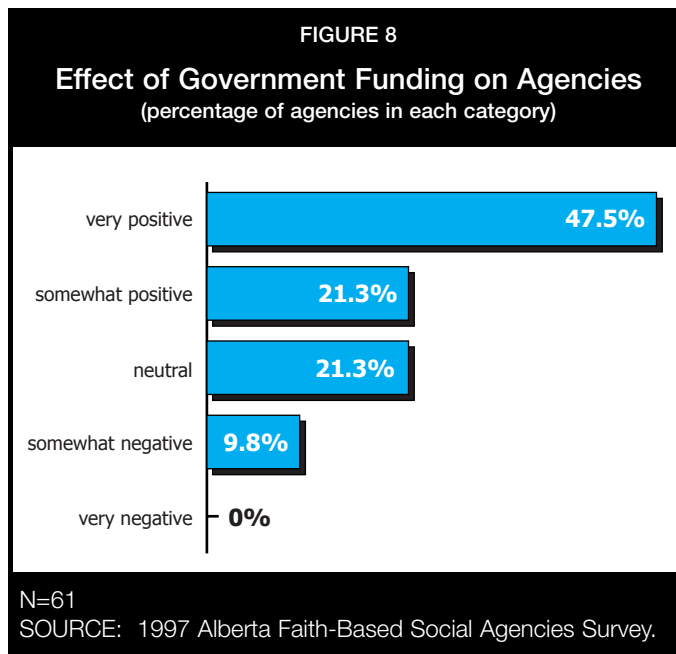
Agencies receiving government funding get a variety of levels of support (see **FIGURE 7**). A third (33.9%) of these agencies receive 1-20% of their budget from government. At the other extreme, just under a third (32.2%) receive 81-100% of their budget from government sources.

No clear pattern emerged in regard to the forms of government funding that are being used to support faith-based agencies. Frequently mentioned forms of funding were purchase of service contracts, construction grants, grants for equipment loans, employment subsidies, and grants of in-kind materials.

### Benefits and Problems Related to Government "Funding"

The positive and negative effects of a relationship with government on an agency's ability to carry out its distinctive aims were pursued in a number of questions. A large majority of the faith-based agencies that receive government funding characterize the effects of the funding on their organizations as positive (see **FIGURE 8**). Sixty-nine percent of these agencies say government funding had a very positive or somewhat positive effect, 21.3% say it had no effect, and only 9.8% say it was somewhat negative. But, when asked about the effects of government funding on the "religious character" of their organizations, only 11.9% of the agencies report it as positive (see **FIGURE 9**). Three-quarters (74.6%) describe it as neutral, while 13.6% say it was somewhat negative. Respondents were much quicker to say government funding was largely positive for their overall functioning than to say the same about the influence of government funding on the overall "religious" character of their organization.

The agencies report a variety of *positive* developments



that result from government funding: 63.8% expanded their services; 27.6% hired staff with higher levels of education; 29.3% used more professional staff instead of volunteers; 55.2% claim to provide more effective services; and 12.1% say the funding helped them avoid having to close down. One agency writes, for example, because of government funding, "we are able to keep our housing fees to a minimum." Clearly, government funding is significantly helping the religious non-profit agencies and the people they serve.

Some of the agencies also report a variety of *negative* consequences of government funding: 34.5% had to become involved in "lobbying" legislators and government agencies; 22.4% had to deal with clients that had more severe emotional and behaviour problems; 27.6% had to put more time and effort into paperwork than "should be necessary"; 17.2% became more "bureaucratic," and less flexible and creative, and 8.6% received fewer private gifts and volunteer hours than they otherwise would. One agency writes that they now "offer services with a priority that is not the same as the one we would have selected."

A number of agencies also reported that government funding negatively influenced their explicit religious practices. In reference to hiring, one in five (20.8%) say they openly and directly hire only those staff in agreement with their religious orientation. However, 14.6% of the agencies hire staff in agreement with their religious orientation but feel they must do so subtly and indirectly, and another 12.5% would like to hire staff in agreement with their religious orientation but feel they ought not to do so or feel it is illegal. The same pattern occurs with agencies wanting to "give preference" in hiring staff to those in agreement with their religious orientation.

It is important to note that many agencies do not report problems with government funding precisely because they do not want to engage in these hiring practices at all. Equally important, however, is that among the agencies that do choose to engage in these practices – i.e., "only hiring or giving preference in hiring to staff in agreement with their religious orientation" – more agencies (24) report problems as a result of government funding than report engaging in these practices openly and directly (20).

Almost one in five agencies (17.3%) report that, in light of the government funding they receive, they had to either be more subtle or completely curtail informal references to religious ideas by staff in contact with clients. At the same time, 59.6% say their staff openly and directly make informal references to religious ideas. When we consider the more controversial issue of staff encouraging clients to make personal religious commitments, there is a closer split between agencies who do so openly and those who feel government restricts them. Just over a quarter (27.1%) say they openly and directly encourage clients to

make personal religious commitments, 16.7% do this subtly or indirectly, and 6.3% of the agencies report they would like to do so but feel they ought not to.<sup>16</sup>

A final issue related to whether government funding negatively influences agency behaviour is raised by seven agencies (N=46) who believe their organization's religious perspective played a role in the lack of success of one or more of their applications for funding.

## **Benefits and Problems of Government "Regulations"**

Fifty-seven percent of the agencies report being governed by laws and regulations unrelated to government funding. Most of these agencies (88%) report that these laws and regulations had no effect on their ability to hire staff who share their religious beliefs. Twelve percent say the regulations made it somewhat or much harder to hire staff who share their religious beliefs, while none say regulations made it easier. Eighteen percent report that these laws and regulations made it somewhat harder to deliver social services in a way that reflects their agency's religious perspective.

Seventeen percent of the agencies say government officials have occasionally questioned their religiously based practices or brought pressure to bear to change some of them. One agency reports that this has occurred frequently. An agency writes, for example, that officials "questioned our policy that those living in the centre must attend church each Sunday." Sometimes these questions are resolved happily, e.g., one agency reports that government initially questioned them but "once they saw the integrity of our work they were good to us." Sometimes these questions are resolved with a compromise; e.g., an agency writes that "they sometimes question programs but see these outside their funded areas." And sometimes these questions cause problems; one agency reports that official questioning made it "difficult to receive non-profit status."

Agencies also report "non-governmental" criticism of their religious practices. One in ten (11.8%) report non-governmental pressure, criticisms, law suits or threats of law suits due to religious practices. Some agencies offer examples of pressures and criticisms they received:

TABLE 2

## 'Faith Community' by 'Only Hire Staff in Agreement With Your Religious Perspective'

	Openly and directly	Do it, but feel you must do it subtly or indirectly	Would like to do it, but feel you ought not to	Would like to do it, but feel you legally cannot	Have no desire to do it	TOTAL
Roman Catholic (exclusive)	2 (15.4%)	0	0	1 (7.7%)	10 (76.9%)	13 (100%)
Evangelical Protestant (exclusive)	2 (22.2%)	5 (55.6%)	0	1 (11.1%)	1 (11.1%)	9 (100%)
Mainline Protestant (exclusive)	1 (16.7%)	0	0	2 (33.3%)	3 (50.0%)	6 (100%)
Mixed Christian	5 (29.4%)	2 (11.8%)	1 (5.9%)	1 (5.9%)	8 (47.1%)	17 (100%)
Other (exclusive or mixed)	0	0	0	0	3 (100%)	3 (100%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	10 (20.8)	7 (14.6%)	1 (2.1%)	5 (10.4%)	25 (52.1%)	48 (100%)

TABLE 3

## 'Statement of Faith' by 'Only Hire Staff in Agreement With Your Religious Perspective'

	Openly and directly	Do it, but feel you must do it subtly or indirectly	Would like to do it, but feel you ought not to	Would like to do it, but feel you legally cannot	Have no desire to do it	TOTAL
Statement/staff must agree to it	9 (42.9%)	5 (23.8%)	1 (4.8%)	0	6 (28.6%)	21 (100%)
Statement only	1 (9.1%)	2 (18.2%)	0	3 (27.3%)	5 (45.5%)	11 (100%)
No statement of faith	0	0	0	2 (12.5%)	14 (87.5%)	16 (100%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	10 (20.8%)	7 (14.6%)	1 (2.1%)	5 (10.4%)	25 (52.1%)	48 (100%)

N=48 SOURCE: 1997 Alberta Faith-Based Social Agencies Survey. NOTE: totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

"pressure from people who do not understand that [our agency] can be [a specific faith] and yet serve people outside [our] faith," "criticisms from other agencies who have a problem with a gospel inspired mission," and "some individuals have questioned our philosophy and made an unreal connection between our religious practices and our employee practices."

### Why Problems with Government?

A large majority of the faith-based agencies (69.0%) that receive government funds characterize the effects of this funding as positive. Yet, an undercurrent of problems is reported. What is the meaning of these warning signals? This section examines what characteristics of the agencies correlate with reporting problems with government funding. How does the nature of the religious vision or denominational attachment of a non-profit correlate to a positive or negative assessment of the influence of government on their activities? Just how dependent are these agencies on government?

TABLE 2 shows that at least one agency in each category

of religious affiliation except "other" report problems with government influencing their choice to hire only those staff that agree with their religious orientation. Proportionately, more evangelical Protestant agencies feel they have problems in this area, with 2 agencies doing it openly and directly, 6 reporting some difficulty with government funding influencing their choice of staff, and 1 having no desire to do this.

An agency's use of a statement of faith is linked to problems with government. TABLE 3 shows that having a statement of faith correlates with the feeling that government funding restricts an agency's freedom to hire employees who assent to their religious perspective.

A similar pattern emerges in response to the question of whether government funding influences an agency in "giving preference in hiring" to staff in agreement with their religious orientation. TABLE 4 shows agencies related to all denominational categories report some sort of problem with government funding on this question, but agencies related to evangelical denominations were more likely both to give preference in hiring to staff in agreement with their religious orientation (4 do so openly

TABLE 4

## 'Faith Community' by 'Give Preference in Hiring to Those in Agreement With Your Religious Perspective' (N=46)

	Openly and directly	Do it, but feel you must do it subtly or indirectly	Would like to do it, but feel you ought not to	Would like to do it, but feel you legally cannot	Have no desire to do it	TOTAL
Roman Catholic (exclusive)	1 (8.3%)	0	0	1 (8.3%)	10 (83.3%)	12 (100%)
Evangelical Protestant (exclusive)	4 (40.0%)	3 (30.0%)	1 (10.0%)	1 (10.0%)	1 (10.0%)	10 (100%)
Mainline Protestant (exclusive)	0	0	1 (20.0%)	2 (40.0%)	2 (40.0%)	5 (100%)
Mixed Christian	5 (29.4%)	2 (11.8%)	0	0	10 (58.8%)	17 (100%)
Other (exclusive or mixed)	0	0	0	0	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	10 (21.7%)	5 (10.9%)	2 (4.3%)	4 (8.7%)	25 (54.3%)	46 (100%)

TABLE 5

## 'Statement of Faith' by 'Give Preference in Hiring to Those in Agreement With Your Religious Perspective' (N=45)

	Openly and directly	Do it, but feel you must do it subtly or indirectly	Would like to do it, but feel you ought not to	Would like to do it, but feel you legally cannot	Have no desire to do it	TOTAL
Statement/staff must agree to it	8 (44.4%)	4 (22.2%)	0	0	6 (33.3%)	18 (100%)
Statement only	0	1 (9.1%)	2 (18.2%)	3 (27.3%)	5 (45.5%)	11 (100%)
No statement of faith	1 (6.3%)	0	0	1 (6.3%)	14 (87.5%)	16 (100%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	9 (20.0%)	5 (11.1%)	2 (4.4%)	4 (8.9%)	25 (55.6%)	45 (100%)

SOURCE: 1997 Alberta Faith-Based Social Agencies Survey. NOTE: totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

and directly), and to report problems associated with this practice (5).

An agency's use of a statement of faith also correlates with an agency reporting difficulties with government funding influencing its "giving preference in hiring" to staff in agreement with its religious orientation. **TABLE 5** shows that 14 agencies without a statement of faith have no desire to give preference in hiring staff to those in agreement with their religious orientation while one does so openly and directly, and one reports problems. Five agencies that have a statement of faith but do not require employee assent have no desire to engage in this practice, 6 report problems, and none do it openly and directly. In contrast, 8 agencies that have statements of faith and require employee assent openly and directly "give preference in hiring staff" to those in agreement with their religious orientation. Four agencies report problems on this point while 6 have no desire to do so.

In regard to an agency encouraging clients to make personal religious commitments, **TABLE 6** shows that out of the Catholic, mainline Protestant, evangelical Protestant, mixed Christian, and other religions

categories, only mainline Protestant agencies do not engage in, or have a desire to engage in, this practice. While this activity is strongest in evangelical Protestant agencies, a number of Catholic and mixed-Christian agencies also engage in this activity, or would like to do so.

An agency's use of a statement of faith once again correlates with an agency reporting that government funding negatively influenced their practice of encouraging clients to make personal religious commitments. **TABLE 7** shows that agencies with a statement of faith are more likely than agencies without a statement to report that government funding causes problems with them encouraging clients to make personal religious commitments.

The types of agencies reporting negative effects on agency practices from government "regulations" are similar to those that report negative effects of government funding. No correlation exists between an agency's budget size or religious affiliation and the agency's positive or negative characterization of its ability to hire staff who share its religious beliefs. But a strong correlation exists between an agency using a statement of

TABLE 6

## 'Faith Community' by 'Encourage Clients to Make a Personal Religious Commitment'

	Openly and directly	Do it, but feel you must do it subtly or indirectly	Would like to do it, but feel you ought not to	Would like to do it, but feel you legally cannot	Have no desire to do it	TOTAL
Roman Catholic (exclusive)	3 (25.0%)	0	1 (8.3%)	0	8 (66.7%)	12 (100%)
Evangelical Protestant (exclusive)	7 (58.3%)	4 (33.3%)	0	0	1 (8.3%)	12 (100%)
Mainline Protestant (exclusive)	0	0	0	0	5 (100%)	5 (100%)
Mixed Christian	3 (18.8%)	4 (25.0%)	1 (6.3%)	0	8 (50.0%)	16 (100%)
Other (exclusive or mixed)	0	0	1 (33.3%)	0	2 (66.7%)	3 (100%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	13 (27.1%)	8 (16.7%)	3 (6.3%)	0	24 (50.0%)	48 (100%)

TABLE 7

## 'Statement of Faith' by 'Encourage Clients to Make a Personal Religious Commitment'

	Openly and directly	Do it, but feel you must do it subtly or indirectly	Would like to do it, but feel you ought not to	Would like to do it, but feel you legally cannot	Have no desire to do it	TOTAL
Statement/staff must agree to it	8 (40.0%)	6 (30.0%)	1 (5.0%)	0	5 (25.0%)	20 (100%)
Statement only	3 (27.3%)	1 (9.1%)	1 (9.1%)	0	6 (54.5%)	11 (100%)
No statement of faith	2 (11.8%)	1 (5.9%)	1 (5.9%)	0	13 (76.5%)	17 (100%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	13 (27.1%)	8 (16.7%)	3 (6.3%)	0	24 (50.0%)	48 (100%)

N=48 SOURCE: 1997 Alberta Faith-Based Social Agencies Survey. NOTE: totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

faith and reporting difficulties on this issue. Agencies with no statement of faith report that government regulations do not result in difficulties for their hiring staff in agreement with their religious beliefs, while one agency with a "statement of faith not requiring employee assent" reports difficulty, and four agencies that do require employee assent to their statement of faith report difficulties in hiring staff in agreement with their religious beliefs.

The same pattern occurs with the question of how non-financial laws and regulations influence an agency's ability to deliver its services in a way that reflects its religious perspective. This issue does not correlate with agency size or religious affiliation. Large and small agencies report difficulty as do Catholic, evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, and mixed Christian agencies. But, use of a statement of faith does correlate with this question. Three agencies with a statement of faith and 5 with a statement of faith requiring employee assent report that non-funding laws and regulations made it somewhat harder for their agencies to deliver their services in a way that reflects their religious perspectives. Only one agency said these laws and regulations made it

easier, and it had a statement of faith that did not require employee assent.

## Conclusion

The results of the "Alberta Faith-Based Social Agencies Survey" (1997) yield several conclusions on the relationship between Alberta faith-based agencies and government – whether federal, provincial or municipal. A large majority of the faith-based agencies that receive government funds characterize the effects of this funding as positive. Many report government funding resulted in a range of healthy developments within their organizations. A large majority of agencies also say government "regulations" did not hurt their agencies.

The survey results further suggest that many faith-based agencies use their religious visions to shape their organizations and practices and, for the most part, they are getting along well with government. Finally, the results indicate that government is able to leave religious non-profits the room they need to function according to their vision while at the same time achieving its goals: public

accountability for the accessibility and quality of services, equitable public funding, and the provision of unpopular services. At least, this survey suggests that government's task is being done to the satisfaction of many religious non-profit agencies.

A significant undertone of discontent with the impact of government funding and regulations also comes through in the responses. First, government funding is identified as causing negative developments on issues facing all non-profits; e.g., the need to start lobbying legislators, increased paperwork, and decreased flexibility and creativity of the agencies. Second, the effects of government funding also relate directly to the explicitly religious identity of agencies; e.g., weakening relationships to supporting communities, government influencing their priorities, pressure to curtail religious practices, and the feeling some agencies have that they cannot restrict hiring to those in agreement with their religious orientation. The importance of this finding is underlined by the fact that, of the agencies choosing to hire according to their religious orientation, more agencies report problems because of government funding than report that they are able to openly and directly hire as they wish.

Why do some agencies report that government funding or regulations mean problems for their agency while others do not? Variables such as size, budget, employees, and region do not shed light on this question. Nor does denominational affiliation correlate with agencies that identify problems. Evangelical Protestant agencies report marginally more problems while mainline Protestant agencies report somewhat less. By and large, however, reporting of problems consistently cuts across all denominational categories.

The most striking finding is that agencies choosing to have a statement of faith, or further requiring employee assent to these statements, are most likely to report problems with government funding and regulations. The fact that agencies choose to have a statement of faith and require employees to assent to them, could be a measure of the intensity of their commitment to a particular religious vision. However, it could also be the case that desire for a statement of faith is a reflection of an agency's assessment of how far its religious vision differs from

mainstream assumptions. Some agencies expressly indicate that they choose not to apply for government funding because of their vision.

This raises the possibility that agencies with very strongly held religious norms are coming into conflict with the increasingly secular norms of mainstream society.<sup>17</sup> What seems to be at stake with these issues, we suggest, is that different players – governments, agencies, religious communities, clients – in the non-profit sector have different visions on the proper relationship of "faith and culture." That is, behind the positive and negative agency experiences with government are some significantly different views of what is and is not a valid role for religious beliefs in life, social services, and public policy. Much more study is needed on this topic. In particular, we need more historical and qualitative research on what religious non-profit agencies "understand" their faith to mean for their agency work (see Niebuhr).

More study is needed of the public policy frameworks that can potentially structure government relationships with religious non-profit agencies. We need to analyze how other Canadian provinces have dealt with faith-based non-profits, since policy frameworks between provinces can vary greatly. We also need to look at how governments abroad have dealt with faith-based non-profits. The United States, even with its (un-Canadian) constitutional separation of church and state, has developed the "Charitable Choice" provision written into the 1996 United States federal welfare reform law (see Esbeck 1997a,b). This allows the states to spend federal funds on certain religious non-profit social agencies without requiring the agency or client to compromise their faiths.

Berger and Neuhaus's study of the potential role of mediating structures in policy making, in the context of mega-government and mega-corporations, is also supportive of an accommodative approach to religious non-profits. Monsma's (1993) notion of "positive neutrality" addresses ways to create room within the American model to support religious non-profits in relating to government (also see Stronks; Sherman; Esbeck). The Dutch "structural pluralist" policy framework also tries to protect the religious integrity of non-profits in their relationship with government (see Lijphart; Hiemstra).



The "Alberta Faith-Based Social Agencies Survey" (1997) shows that governments and faith-based non-profits in Alberta have developed a close relationship. The size of faith-based non-profits shows that they have become an important part of the Alberta's social service sector. Many faith-based non-profits have become heavily dependent on government funding for their operations. At the same time, government is becoming dependent on some of these agencies to achieve its public goals. While many faith-based non-profits report that they have been able to maintain their autonomy, some express fear that they are too dependent on government and are suffering an unwanted loss of religious distinctiveness. ■

## Notes

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1. Hall, *et al.* do not indicate how religious donors specifically direct their donations. Furthermore, they define religious organizations quite narrowly, and then place this category side-by-side with the types of non-profit agencies that are the focus of this study, i.e., "health," "social service," and "development and housing" agencies (50).
2. I gratefully acknowledge funding from "The PEW Faculty Summer Scholarship Program" which helped support the survey research for this essay. Thanks to Harold Jansen for invaluable service in designing the survey, analyzing the results, and responding to this paper. Thanks also to Eric Kamphof for research assistance.
3. Special thanks to Stephen Monsma (1996) for generous permission to use several of his questions from his American study. In particular, I used questions 6, 7, 9, 13, and 14 from his "Questionnaire on Homes and Services for Children and Government Funds," 206-210.
4. Further study would be necessary to determine what percentage of the overall services in each of these areas are provided by the religious non-profit sector.
5. These numbers also hide the fact that many older established organizations continue to add new services or sub-agencies to existing services.
6. This raises an important question. Bibby (1987) is particularly critical of some evangelical churches for being American "branch plants." He says "Many of the Conservative [evangelical] groups are essentially 'branch plants' of larger American denominations: they frequently look southward for direction and sustenance, education institutions and materials, dynamic orators and congregational role models" (115). However, Rawlyk notes that Canadian evangelicalism is quite unlike American evangelicalism, particularly that Canadian evangelicalism has "unique irenic, mediating qualities" (223). Of the eleven agencies that indicated they were international, three were exclusively evangelical. All were associated with international denominations and none with a predominantly American denomination.
7. The urban and Edmonton slant of the data may be an artifact of the overall difficulty of locating faith-based agencies. No straight forward sources of faith-based agencies exist. Furthermore, no published data appears to exist with which to compare this finding.
8. Evangelical denominations are Protestant churches that believe in personal conversion, that Jesus died on the Cross for the sins of the world, that the Bible is the inspired word of God, and in the need to witness to non-believers at home and abroad (Rawlyk 118ff). In his survey of Canadians, Rawlyk reports that a complex "evangelical scale" involving 10 variables reveals that 16 percent of Canadians were evangelical, including a number people in the mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches.
9. In assessing religious community involvement in starting different numbers of agencies, however, it is important to note the relative size and multi-service character of some of these nonprofit organizations. Furthermore, some agencies started by churches no longer identify themselves as religious agencies.
10. These categories are similar to those used by Rawlyk (1996) and Bibby (1987 and 1993). Bibby (1987) uses the category of "conservative protestants" which he creates by merging a variety of smaller evangelical denominations (28). I use the term "evangelical Protestant" for this category. Based on the actual beliefs and practices of Canadians, Rawlyk places evangelicals at 16% of Canadians. These are dispersed across all denominations including Catholic, but this more accurate designation was too difficult to use in this study.
11. Based on Statistics Canada, "Population, by religion, 1991 Census" Catalogue no. 93-319-XPB. It should be noted that Alberta is not a "Bible belt." Studies consistently show church attendance in Alberta falling below the national average (see Rawlyk 1996, 77). However, Rawlyk (1996) also shows that belief in Christianity is strong in Canada, with 86% saying they believe

in God (56), and 66% believing that "Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried, but was resurrected to eternal life" (62). Important for this study, however, is that although "two in three (66%) agreed strongly or moderately that their religious faith was still important to me in day-to-day life" (76) this faith is strongly seen as private and internalized (73-80). An important question for this study, though it remains unanswered, is: do Canadians who see their faith as important in everyday life think of engagement in social and health non-profit agencies as a public or private activity?

12. These findings may be weakened by the reality that some agencies did not respond to some elements of this question simply because the character of their service(s) excludes them from engaging in these activities.

13. A total of 31 agencies have either a paid chaplain, a volunteer chaplain, or both, for a total of 40.8% of the agencies (n=76).

14. This drop in voluntary financial support might be related, in part, to the supporting community's perception that an agency is able to secure adequate government funding.

15. Which types of agencies have weakening ties with their communities should be studied.

16. Encouraging clients to make personal religious commitments is important for some Christian agencies who see it as an "addition" to their service, others who see it as "integral" to social services, and yet still others who see it virtually as the essence of social healing. This gets at underlying, and often conflicting, views of "Christ and culture" that are held by the agencies (see Niebuhr). For example, the American drug rehabilitation program "Teen Challenge" has personal conversion at the centre of its program. It has had a higher long-term success rate than many government-funded alternatives. The agency claims that "it is the life-changing power of religious conviction which makes possible a high success rate among those who persist and complete the program" (see Glenn). This approach could be government-funded provided it is a freely chosen program. There are also cases, however, where emphasizing conversion twists the social service and ends up being counter productive.

17. It is also possible that this conflict is the result not of religious or philosophic differences, but of a clash between the agency and government over the structural nature of a given service. The state is accountable to the public to ensure that services advertised as "family counselling," for example, structurally are family counselling and not worship services or something else.

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## About the Alternative Service Delivery Project

As governments in Canada have sought to balance their books and “reinvent” themselves, interest in the role played by non-profit organizations in the delivery of public services – particularly social services – has dramatically increased. In fact, as one of the core elements of the modern welfare state, the existing system of social service delivery by non-profits is being restructured. At the same time, many governments are increasing the number and range of services that they contract out to non- and for-profit providers. These changes, however, are taking place in an environment marked by a distinct lack of information about non-profits and their relationships with the state.

It is within this context that the Canada West Foundation has initiated the **Alternative Service Delivery Project (ASDP)**. The ASDP is intended to increase understanding of, and stimulate debate about, Canada's non-profit sector, its relations with the state, and its role in the delivery of social services. The ASDP will generate much needed **empirical evidence** of the costs and benefits of using non-profits to deliver state-funded social services.

The ASDP is focused on the delivery of social services by non-profit organizations, and has three main research components:

- (1) *an empirical study of non-profits and their delivery of social services paid for by the state;*
- (2) *a study of public policies related to non-profits and social services; and*
- (3) *a series of independent reports on key topics related to non-profits and the welfare state.*

The ASDP is one of a number of research projects funded by the Kahanoff Foundation, and collectively known as the **Non-Profit Sector Research Initiative**. The Non-Profit Sector Research Initiative was established by the Kahanoff Foundation to promote research and scholarship on non-profit sector issues and to broaden the formal body of knowledge on the non-profit sector. The Initiative works to increase understanding of the role that non-profit organizations play in civil society and to inform relevant public policy.

**For more information about the Alternative Service Delivery Project, please contact CWF Research Analysts Susan McFarlane ([susan.mcfarlane@wave.home.com](mailto:susan.mcfarlane@wave.home.com)) or Robert Roach ([roach@cwf.ca](mailto:roach@cwf.ca)).**

## About the Canada West Foundation

**CANADA WEST FOUNDATION** is a non-profit, non-partisan research and educational institute active in economic, social, and public policy studies. Founded in 1970, CWF has three primary objectives:

- ▶ to conduct **research** into the economic and social characteristics of the West and North;
- ▶ to **educate** individuals regarding the West's economic and social contributions to Canada; and
- ▶ to act as a catalyst for **informed debate**.

Canada West Foundation is a registered Canadian charitable organization. CWF welcomes the support of all those that believe viable regions enhance the strength of the Canadian federation. As an independent research institute, the Foundation depends on donations to carry on its activities. Tax deductible receipts will be issued for all donations over \$10.

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