

TMM42360 Dissertation in Theology, Ministry and Mission

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Outsourcing love: to what extent can the establishment of independent charitable structures help  
Parish Churches across the Diocese of Leeds achieve flourishing?

15,555 words

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## Introduction

This essay looks to evaluate the establishment of separate and independent charitable structures by parish churches within the Church of England (CofE) to begin to examine how the move towards separation of structures impacted on the activity that took place and to what extent it helped achieve flourishing within the wider community. The focus is on charities established to engage in local work that retain a connection to the parish church rather than to those working in wider activity either nationally or internationally.

This reflection is important because while there is remarkable work taking place that is important to celebrate there is a danger that “Christian voluntary action could be strategic, patchy and episodic if it was not clearly understood to be integral to the churches’ theology and spirituality”.<sup>1</sup> This essay will hope to in part address this concern by reflecting both theologically and practically on the role of Christian social action within the church and in particular the question of separation of structures.

“Loving God and loving our neighbour go together like the warp and the weft of a piece of fabric. They hold each other in place and together can be strong, and beautiful, and adaptable, for any number of uses. But each without the other would be disconnected strands. When we weave them together in our life as people of God, we open up a range of possibilities that can make a real difference. Possibilities that can transform lives and transform communities.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Malcolm Brown, ‘Acknowledgments’, in *Anglican Social Theology Today*, ed. by Malcolm Brown (London: Church House Publishing, 2014), pp. ix–xii. pix

<sup>2</sup>

"uris":["http://zotero.org/users/local/Rd3QNw2Z/items/5DR5JQP8"],"itemData":{"id":6,"type":"report","publisher":"Theos, Church Urban Fund","title":"Good Neighbours: How Churches Help Communities Flourish","author":{"family":"Bickley","given":"Paul"},"issued":{"date-parts":["2014",6]}}, "schema":"https://github.com/citation-style-language/schema/raw/master/csl-citation.json"} Paul Bickley, *Good Neighbours: How Churches Help Communities Flourish* (Theos, Church Urban Fund, June 2014). P2

This quote from Archbishop Justin Welby in his forward to a 2014 Theos report on church community work highlights the importance of this question. Does the establishment of independent charitable status cause these threads to pull apart in any way?

The essay will follow four sections.

In the first section we will look at the context of Anglican Social Action (ASA) to explore the tradition the work takes place within both historically and in its current practice seeing the varied ways in which the CofE has attempted to work towards flourishing communities. Secondly, we will look at how one might identify where flourishing is happening by looking at four potential goods of ASA that are frequently referenced as desirable within the literature of Christian social action particularly within an Anglican Context. These goods are *Relationality*, *Loving Kindness*, *Perseverance* and *Networks of Cooperation*. Thirdly, we will present the findings from a series of semi-structured interviews I conducted across the Anglican Diocese of Leeds with a variety of people involved in parish based social action either as clergy, trustees of independent charities or project leaders of the charitable social action work. The objective of these interviews was to use the four identified goods as means of evaluating the impact of separation and how those interviewed felt the decision to establish separate structures had impacted on their ability to achieve them.

Finally, we move to suggesting some recommendations for those involved in these church-charity partnerships or those looking to set them up in the future.

This essay finds that the move to establish separate charitable structures has been largely a positive one and one that has the potential to help parish churches seek flourishing. It can help them cultivate the good of *Perseverance* and build *Networks of Cooperation*. The resources of the Christian faith if the parish church however do help those working in social action cultivate goods of *Relationality* and *Loving Kindness* and therefore separation of structures present a risk that these might be lost. However, this risk can be mitigated by keeping a close relationship between the church

and the charity and therefore the recommendations outlined below are designed to help this relationship stay strong in order to help the church-charity partnership in its mission to seek flourishing.

### *Why Flourishing?*

In order to examine the impact of separation it is firstly important to ask what the purpose of social action is. The Diocese of Leeds uses language of “Transforming Communities” to describe its missional work, a common descriptor of what Christian mission organisations are hoping to see<sup>3</sup>. However, while ‘transformation’ is useful as a way of shorthand way of describing positive change, challenges arise when the “longhand or specific aspirations of a group are not reflected on or named.”<sup>4</sup>

This essay instead uses language of flourishing to describe the hoped outcomes of the social action because of flourishing’s roots within the Christian tradition, its holistic nature and its focus on relationships. Christian flourishing draws its reference from the words of Christ in John 10:10 “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” and is one of those concepts that can be recognised more easily than it is measured<sup>5</sup>. And yet the conviction of the Christian faith is that relationships are the essence of flourishing<sup>6</sup> because a biblical understanding of personhood is “fundamentally...relationally orientated”<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Anna Ruddick, *Reminaging Mission from Urban Places: Missional Pastoral Care* (London: SCM Press, 2020). P8

<sup>4</sup> Ruddick. P10

<sup>5</sup> Justin Welby, *Reminaging Britain: Foundations for Hope* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018). P95

<sup>6</sup> Samuel Wells, Russell Rook, and David Barclay, *For Good: The Church and the Future of Welfare* (London: Canterbury Press Norwich, 2017). P14

<sup>7</sup> Joel Green, ‘Restoring the Human Person: New Testament Voices for a Wholistic and Social Anthropology’, in *Neuroscience and the Person: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, ed. by Robert John Russell and others (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000). P3

To live in fullness of life, or as we might say, to flourish as God intended, is to “know ourselves to be dependent on others”<sup>8</sup>. Anna Ruddick’s helpful definition of flourishing in urban mission draws on similar themes of dependence on others by recognising that flourishing is about the self but also includes others; flourishing is “a stronger love of self, a more positive approach to life choices, an increased ability to act, increasing awareness of a good God, and mutuality”<sup>9</sup>. We will return to this in more detail when we address the goods we are hoping to see but critically we will be asking if the establishment of independent charitable structures increase or harm the potential for interdependence through increasing social bonds.

### **Section One- Seeking Flourishing: Anglican Social Action**

In this first section we will see that seeking the flourishing of the community has been central to the life of the CoFE both in the past and in the present. This has been outworked in a variety of ways throughout history and ASA is a current central practice of the church that looks to follow the call to love your neighbour. This is part of the gift of ASA that it is able to respond to context as it looks to seek flourishing and live faithfully to the Scriptural call of love of neighbour. By Anglican Social Action we mean structured coming together by people within local parish churches to help improve their lives and solve the problems that are important in their communities<sup>10</sup>.

Christians have recognised the centrality of this call since the time of the early church as recorded in the book of Acts (Acts 4:32-35). Through the medieval period this was frequently carried out through the monastic orders caring for the poor and the sick and since the start of the Church of England the

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<sup>8</sup> Church of England, ‘Who Is My Neighbour? A Letter from the House of Bishops to the People and Parishes of the Church of England for the General Election 2015’, 2015  
<<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/whoismyneighbour-pages.pdf>>. p26

<sup>9</sup> Ruddick. P82

<sup>10</sup> Hannah Rich, *Growing Good: Growth, Social Action and Discipleship in the Church of England* (Theos, Church Urban Fund, 2020). P48

parish system has created a space for the church at the centre of a local community as part not just of Anglican ecclesiology but also of its missiology<sup>11</sup>.

“The Church has been for many generations, the hub of community life. The parson was often the magistrate and school teacher and administered the parish welfare system, part of the fabric of law and order and integral to the well-being of the parish<sup>12</sup>.”

This is the beginning of Paul Ballard and Lesley Hesselbee’s excellent introduction to the changing nature of church community work over the years which is there is not space to replicate here but it highlights how the work of Christian love of neighbour has adapted and changed to the context it finds itself in.<sup>13</sup> Key moments within the development of ASA they highlight include Archbishop Temple’s famous “*Christianity and Social Order*” with its influence on the creation on the welfare state following the Beveridge report and the *Faith in the City* report of the 1980’s which was critical for a generation of Anglican clergy wrestling with their calling to love their neighbour.

In more recent years this call continues to be espoused as central in various strategy documents, reports and speeches from figures within the Church of England. For example, the recent “A Vision for the Church of England in the 2020s: ‘Christ centred and Jesus shaped. Simpler, humbler, bolder”” places the phrase Jesus Shaped at the centre which is articulated as the “Christian life as a life shaped by the Five Marks of Mission”<sup>14</sup>. The Five Marks of Mission are an expression of the Anglican Communion’s understanding of holistic mission<sup>15</sup> and include within them the Third Mark “to respond to human need by loving service”.

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<sup>11</sup> The Commission of The Archbishops of Canterbury and York on Housing, Church and Community, *Coming Home: Tackling the Housing Crisis Together*, February 2021. P10

<sup>12</sup> Paul Ballard and Lesley Hesselbee, *Community & Ministry: An Introduction to Community Development in a Christian Context* (London: SPCK, 2017). P1

<sup>13</sup> Ballard and Hesselbee.1-4

<sup>14</sup> The Most Revd Stephen Cottrell, *A Vision for the Church of England in the 2020s. ‘Christ Centred and Jesus Shaped. Simpler, Humbler, Bolder: A Commentary to Accompany the Picture*, November 2020  
<[https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/A%20vision%20for%20the%20church%20of%20England%20in%20the%202020s%20-%20commentary%20by%20Stephen\\_Cottrell.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/A%20vision%20for%20the%20church%20of%20England%20in%20the%202020s%20-%20commentary%20by%20Stephen_Cottrell.pdf)>.

<sup>15</sup> Anglican Communion Office, ‘Anglican Communion: Marks of Mission’, *Anglican Communion Website* <<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/marks-of-mission.aspx>> [accessed 13 April 2023].

In the contemporary Church of England this is frequently carried out through social action. The 2019 Statistics for Mission Data indicated that 77% of Anglican churches were involved in one or more forms of social action representing 35,000 projects<sup>16</sup>. While most commonly these activities are carried out within the church structures there has been a move over the past few decades to establish separate charitable structures for this work.

Malcolm Brown's 'The Case for Anglican Social Theology Today' traces the different theological influences at play over the past century in the CofE concluding that "An Anglican Social theology for today is unlikely to be a single, internally coherent and sufficient tradition or thought or practice<sup>17</sup>".

In part this diverse tradition and changing face of Anglican social engagement and the relative role it has played in the life of the church throughout the years has been dependant on the context it finds itself. One example of context shaping the theological reflection of the church was the '*Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas*' which was established following the experience of urban parishes who had experienced the riots of 1981<sup>18</sup>. Previous research of Christian Social Action within the UK found that this trend of context shaping reflection was still the case today;

"For the main part, members of churches did not speak about being motivated by a set of abstract Christian principles. Rather, they were shaped by being part of a worshipping community of a particular kind and in a particular context that was responding to their communities in particular ways.<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Rich. P48

<sup>17</sup> Malcolm Brown, 'The Case for Anglican Social Theology Today', in *Anglican Social Theology Today*, ed. by Malcolm Brown (London: Church House Publishing, 2014), pp. 1–27. P26

<sup>18</sup> Brown, 'The Case for Anglican Social Theology Today'. P9

<sup>19</sup> Paul Bickley, *Good Neighbours: How Churches Help Communities Flourish* (Theos, Church Urban Fund, June 2014). P4



This also echoes our findings in the interviews we conducted where interviews described how the context they were in shaped both the need for, shape of and telos of social action. For example one of the interviewees commented. “How could you start like building up a church in an area like this? Without looking outside the door?” while another said “There was no doubt in the church that the community of this area needed some sort of community centre”.

The reality both historically and in contemporary community engagement that seeking flourishing is at least in part driven by the contextual realities and is able to adapt in practice, shape and structure to the neighbour in front of us means that the focus on social action and the move of churches over the past few decades to establish separate structures for this activity is not inherently right or wrong but instead can be evaluated by its outcomes, particularly how it impacts flourishing.

When looking to evaluate where flourishing can be found an important development that has influenced the ideas of ASA and its view of flourishing is ABCD (Asset Based Community Development)<sup>20</sup> which while not coming from a Christian tradition has been very influential particularly with social action that has interacted with the Church Urban Fund over recent years.

ABCD looks to work and operate not from a place of lack or need but instead from a place of goods of what communities have<sup>21</sup>. What was common from our interviews was that even when this language wasn't used the influence and shared ethos with ABCD was there:

We didn't use the language of Asset Based Community Development, but actually, it was sort of fundamental to, what we were doing. We had a sense that's where the church was in terms of what have we got? What can we contribute to now? What are our gifts? What are our strengths, what can we put in?

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<sup>20</sup> 'Together Network: "About"' <<https://togethernetwork.org.uk/about>> [accessed 16 February 2023].

<sup>21</sup> Al Barrett, *ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION* (Church Urban Fund, 2013). P1

This influence of ABCD is leading to more recent reflection on ASA moving away from the more traditional ASA focus on eradication of the great evils<sup>22</sup> following the Beveridge tradition. *'For Good'* the recent work by Samuel Wells, Russell Rook and David Barclay which, while not explicitly Anglican, is characteristic of this move; "the churches have no particular expertise in eradicating the evils but they have profound investment in affirming, upholding and cultivating the goods. Their name for the goods is the kingdom of God"<sup>23</sup>.

Both of the Archbishop's of Canterbury's recent commissions "Coming Home" (Housing, Church and Community)<sup>24</sup> and "Reimagining Care"<sup>25</sup> use language of values and goods in their recommendations focusing on what the church does well rather than simply focusing on the needs it seeks to address. Finally, the recent *'Growing Good'* report from Church Urban Fund/THEOS highlights the relationship between social action, church growth and discipleship and identified "characteristics" of good that could be found in the churches work<sup>26</sup>.

This recent move does not ignore the significant levels of need that exist within communities nor mean a total rejection of the earlier traditions within Anglican social thought, but instead shifts the focus onto the goods both within the church and the wider community which, largely is a positive one. Our interviewees described how approaching their work from the goods they had and wanted to see gave them a focus. For example, one interviewer described how while the vicar wanted to start a youth group they recognised that they didn't have the expertise within the church to deliver this.

Seeking flourishing of the wider community and loving your neighbour therefore have been and continue to be central to Anglican thought and practice. The diversity of thought and tradition is in

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<sup>22</sup> Wells, Rook, and Barclay. P8

<sup>23</sup> Wells, Rook, and Barclay.p10

<sup>24</sup> The Commission of The Archbishops of Canterbury and York on Housing, Church and Community.

<sup>25</sup> The Commission of The Archbishops of Canterbury and York Reimagining Care Commission, *Care and Support Reimagined: A National Care Covenant for England*, January 2023.

<sup>26</sup> Rich. P12

part a reflection of the diversity with the CofE and in part a reflection of the changing context. The current context is one in which the CofE often expresses love of neighbour and seeks flourishing through social action projects based either within the local church or in connected charities. Meanwhile recent thought has highlighted the importance of identifying assets and cultivating goods that would indicate flourishing when undertaking social action work rather than focusing on a deficit model.

## **Section Two: Seeking Flourishing: Goods of Anglican Social Action**

This focus on goods in seeking flourishing is one which this research will follow as we look to evaluate the impact of charitable structures. While recognising the diversity of ASA and its hopes, in this second section we identify four common threads that seem to be largely present in the literature when asking the question what is ASA working towards? Or how might we identify flourishing in social action? These four goods are:

- "*Relationality* "
- "*Loving kindness*"
- "*Perseverance*":
- "*Networks of Cooperation*":

Where a good is drawn directly from a particular author I have identified it within this essay for example *Loving Kindness* is drawn directly from the Archbishops '*Reimagining Care Commission*'<sup>27</sup>.

While others such as *Relationality* are drawn from various similar words such as Wells, Rook and Barclay's good of 'relationship'<sup>28</sup>, Hannah Rich's language of 'Hospitality'<sup>29</sup> and Angus Ritchie's rule of 'People over Programmes'<sup>30</sup>. These are certainly not definitive or exhaustive goods and perhaps represent loose categories with room for diversity of understanding within each of them but they are

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<sup>27</sup> The Commission of The Archbishops of Canterbury and York *Reimagining Care Commission*.

<sup>28</sup> Wells, Rook, and Barclay. P13

<sup>29</sup> Rich. P86

<sup>30</sup> Angus Ritchie, 'Rule #1 People Before Programmes', in *12 Rules for Christian Activists* (London: Canterbury Press, 2020). P10

an attempt to outwork the intention of ASA in a grassroots context. Finally, it should be noted that these goods are mutually supporting and interconnected<sup>31</sup> and for example the outworking of *Loving Kindness* is often a focus on *Relationality*.

This section will look at each of these four goods in turn to see how the cultivation of them within ASA can help lead to flourishing for the communities and neighbourhoods where the social action is taking place. As we look at each good we will see both a theological rationale for its connection to flourishing as well as posing questions about how a move to separate charitable structures could increase or decrease the likelihood of the good being cultivated.

### *Relationality*

The first aspirational good that is frequently referenced within the literature as necessarily present for flourishing is *Relationality*. This is often articulated along the lines of ‘people over programmes’<sup>32</sup> or sometimes that a project seeks a relational approach. As we discussed earlier central to a Christian view of the flourishing life is to experience life in all its fullness, to live as fully human by, in the words of Karl Barth, sustaining relationships “with what is not oneself”<sup>33</sup>. The impact of sin in the world is the breakdown, firstly in our relationship with God but critically also in reconfiguring the patterns of interdependence within human relationships<sup>34</sup>. A significant part of the work of the church therefore is undoing this damage and looking to both recognise and strengthen “communal patterns of mutual interdependence<sup>35</sup>” in order to enable and increase the flourishing of every person<sup>36</sup>; “because communion is at the heart of God, it must also be at the heart of the church’s life.”<sup>37</sup> .

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<sup>31</sup> Wells et al (2017) make the same point in their work evaluating church social action.

<sup>32</sup> Ritchie. P10

<sup>33</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, ‘Human Being, Individual and Social’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 158–88. P172

<sup>34</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2019). P60

<sup>35</sup> Wells, Rook, and Barclay. P13

<sup>36</sup> Simon Cuff, *Love in Action: Catholic Social Teaching for Every Church* (London: SCM Press, 2019). p xv

<sup>37</sup> Angus Ritchie, Caitlin Burbridge, and Andy Walton, *Just Church: Local Congregations Transforming Their Neighbourhoods* (The Contextual Theology Centre, 2013). P18

The good of *Relationality* in regards to social action finds itself within the longstanding Christian tradition of hospitality as a way of demonstrating love of neighbour. Hospitality within social action opens the way for genuine mutual relationships as it has the potential to change the power dynamics<sup>38</sup> that exist between ‘service users’ and ‘workers’.

The centrality of relationships and mutual interdependence to the Christian Faith naturally come through in the importance of relationships to Christian social action with Theos/Church Urban Fund research finding that it was a “key characteristic of Christian Social Activity”<sup>39</sup> and indeed it was a strong theme in the interviews we conducted with this quote characteristic; “Yeah, I would say is that actually I think relationally we see so much in the person of God. That actually if relationships good enough for God, then it's probably gonna be good enough for us, hasn't it?”

This focus on presence with people and mutual relationships with those in poverty is articulated clearly by Sam Wells as “Being With”. His work *‘Nazareth Manifesto’* gives four potential approaches to social engagement. The first is ‘Working For’, which means “relying on one’s own resources and skills to address a person’s problems on their behalf”. The second, ‘Being For’, is “orientating one’s life towards the well-being of others while actually making direct contact with those others”. The third ‘Working With’, looks to help address someone’s issues through a “collation between one’s own skills and resources, the skills and resources of those in need, and the skills and resources of third parties with an interest in these issues”<sup>40</sup>. The fourth is ‘Being With’ which is for Wells both the method and the goal of social engagement because it “imitates the primary way God interacts with humanity and the creation”<sup>41</sup>. It is similar to ‘Working With’ in the mutuality of the relationship but its primary function is not action but instead on “stillness, on disposition”<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Rich.p88

<sup>39</sup> Nick Spencer, *Doing Good: A Future for Christianity in the 21st Century* (Theos, 2018). P54

<sup>40</sup> Samuel Wells, *A Nazareth Manifesto: Being With God* (Chicester: John Wiley & Sons, 2015). P100

<sup>41</sup> Wells. P30

<sup>42</sup> Wells. P23

This focus on stillness rather than activity perhaps means that much of the social action work that takes place in CofE churches could be described as Working With and Wells is clear that there is certainly a place for this approach and much to be appreciated about it but that Being With should be the primary goal of social engagement because Working With “still speaks the language of problem and solution”<sup>43</sup>.

Previous research has critiqued foodbanks as a response to food poverty in part because they fall short of the biblical view of hospitality and the opening up of oneself in relationship<sup>44</sup>. Foodbank provision that is simply about the supply of food can be contrasted with Jesus’s table fellowship and teaching as recorded in the Gospels where rather than providing a service he instead was showing a way of “rebuilding human community on principles radically different from those of his surrounding social and religious culture<sup>45</sup>”. As Hannah Rich notes “There is a profound difference between feeding someone and eating with them.<sup>46</sup>” The difference is one of relationships and the offering of the gift of hospitality that both signals respect and demands reciprocal recognition from the other, “a demand that presumes and intends the possibility of a common life”.<sup>47</sup>

In her reflection on Christian social action Ann Morisy questions the approach that when increasing needs within the community are uncovered the automatic assumption and response is to provide a “greater diversity of services and more professional approach to its work”. This move towards professionalisation could for Morisy reinforce the distinction between helper and helped in such a way that the “potential for graceful relationships is inhibited”<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> Wells. P115

<sup>44</sup> C Allen, ‘Food Poverty and Christianity in Britain: A Theological Reassessment.’, *Political Theology*, 17.4, 361–77. P368

<sup>45</sup> Nathan D. Mitchell, *Eucharist as Sacrament of Initiation* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1994). P79

<sup>46</sup> Rich. P86

<sup>47</sup> Luke Bretherton, *Christ and the Common Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019). P272-273

<sup>48</sup> Ann Morisy, *Journeying Out: A New Approach to Christian Mission* (London: Continuum, 2006). P28-9

This resistance to external funding and professionalization is also seen in Community Organising movements such as Citizens UK which seek to finance themselves through annual fees from member institutions so that “action is determined by member’s priorities...rather than the targets and agenda of external funders<sup>49</sup>”. Through our research we will test this thesis, if Morisy is right we should expect to see a risk that the move to a separate charitable status and external funding impact on the quality and nature of the relationships formed in such a way that people may have a more transactional experience as the purpose of the activity is to meet funding targets as opposed to being places primarily of encounter with the other.

### *Loving Kindness*

The second good that we are arguing that should mark ASA is that of *Loving Kindness*. This finds its roots in the Old Testament word *hesed* used to describe the loving commitment and kindness of God<sup>50</sup> towards his people such as Psalm 23:6 “Surely goodness and *hesed* will follow me all the days of my life”. Christian thought holds that this *Loving Kindness* shown to us by God is then to be outworked in love for others: “love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34). Christian Social Action therefore, draws its motivation from the *Loving Kindness* received, and is outworked in the *Loving Kindness* demonstrated to others. This again reinforces the shift in focus from the needs that are observed to the abundance of *Loving Kindness* that is present.

Precisely because this *Loving Kindness* flows from and draws its inspiration from the *Loving Kindness* of God towards us it is an attitude of abundance and generosity, God’s *Loving Kindness* reaches to the heavens (Ps 36:5), the earth is full of it (Ps 33:5), He is the giver of every good and perfect gift

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<sup>49</sup> Ritchie. P17

<sup>50</sup> John Goldingay, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: Exploring Text, Approaches and Issues* (London: SPCK, 2016). P285

(James 1:17) and His kingdom is like a great dinner where those in the streets and lanes, the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame are welcomed in and there is still room for more (Luke 14:15-24). We have commented earlier on Jesus's table ministry in the context of relationships but it also is of note here as it too was characterised by generosity, building on the invitation of the messianic feast<sup>51</sup> a "feast for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines" (Isaiah 25:6). Generosity therefore characterises this attitude of *Loving Kindness* and should characterise ASA.

This approach begins by recognising that all humans are both bestowed with the most incredible dignity and value as beings created in God's image. As this letter from the House of Bishops ahead of the 2015 General Election shows, this is fundamental to ASA.

"Followers of Jesus Christ believe that every human being is created in the image of God. But we are not made in isolation. We belong together in a creation which should be cherished and not simply used and consumed. This is the starting point for the Church of England's engagement with society, the nation and the world."<sup>52</sup>

At the same time *Loving Kindness* also recognises that all are in need of healing. *Loving Kindness* shaped compassion is to suffer alongside those who *like us* are in need<sup>53</sup>. *Loving Kindness* does not look to create self-supporting individuals through the eradication of all needs but instead looks for ways to recognise mutual interdependence and our relative needs for one another as we serve and love each other.

For Churches encounters with poverty aren't the reluctant exercise of grudging duty but the entry point to an interface with the incarnate Jesus and the stepping-off point to the meeting of our own unnamed, unrecognised but nonetheless deep-seated need.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Dennis Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003). P285

<sup>52</sup> Church of England.

<sup>53</sup> Nick Spencer. P50

<sup>54</sup> Wells, Rook, and Barclay. P16



While love for neighbour is far from an exclusively Christian perspective these doctrines of the image of God within all humanity, the universality of human brokenness and the incarnation which means we can encounter Jesus in the face of other (Matthew 25:31-46) s do present a deep basis for ASA and the potential for it to cultivate the good of *Loving Kindness*.

The good of *Loving Kindness* is critically different from simply trying to meet needs or as one interviewee put it “people aren’t just some statistic” as this approach can end up with those within the church community in a position of superiority with the resources and capacity to provide<sup>55</sup>. Instead *Loving Kindness* “must be distinguished by the fact that they (Christians engaging in social action) do not merely meet the needs of the moment, but they dedicate themselves to others with heartfelt concern, enabling them to experience the richness of their humanity.<sup>56</sup>”

We see here the strong connection between *Loving Kindness* and *Relationality*. *Loving Kindness* according to the Archbishop’s Commission on Care isn’t first and foremost something we do but is instead “an attitude that is oriented towards the good and flourishing of the other. It is a primarily relational concept...because it is shaped and modelled on God’s compassion and *Loving Kindness* for us which is expressed in His desire for relationship with us.”<sup>57</sup> This connection between the goods is one we observed in action in our interviews.

What is clear is that the good of *Loving Kindness* is deeply shaped in its character by Christian doctrine. Its inspiration is the covenant love of God, its commitment to dignity is shaped by the Genesis account and it’s recognition of mutual need as well as mutual dignity comes from a Christian understanding of brokenness. If demonstration of the good of *Loving Kindness* helps lead to flourishing and if the resources of the Christian faith of the parish church help to bring this about it

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<sup>55</sup> Morisy. P28

<sup>56</sup> Pope Benedict, ‘Deus Caritas Est’, 2005  
<<https://catholiccharitiesks.org/wp-content/uploads/God-is-Love-Deus-Caritas-Est.pdf>>.

<sup>57</sup> The Commission of The Archbishops of Canterbury and York Reimagining Care Commissiony.p13

will be important to analyse if separation of structures impacts on the ability of the charity to continue to have this good at its heart.

Secondly, if *Loving Kindness* is marked by generosity then there are potential questions around scarcity and the impact that fears of scarcity have on churches decision making. A frequent rationale for the establishment of an independent charity is the ability to acquire external funding and manage the scarcity of finances experienced by many churches. Having acquired funding how does this impact on the congregations view of the charity, is it something it still feels responsible for and a desire to be generous towards? Or does the church community now view this as something that should cover its own costs through other funding sources? Hannah Rich highlights how the acts of generosity in giving to the work of the church projects increased levels of discipleship and faith in the congregation<sup>58</sup>. Is this still true when the project is in separate structures and funded by outside sources or is the work still characterised by generosity and *Loving Kindness*?

Finally, the work of liberation theologians (which heavily influenced '*Faith in the City*') also cautions us when thinking about *Loving Kindness* and generosity. Paula Freire asserts that "True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes with nourish false charity. False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, 'the rejects of life', to extend their trembling hands"<sup>59</sup>. *Loving Kindness* and compassion as characterised here is not to be patronising because it recognises the dignity and worth of the image bearer with whom they interact as the basis of their work<sup>60</sup>. This provides a helpful challenge to ASA about the role they can play not just in meeting needs but also in addressing systematic injustice.

### *Perseverance*

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<sup>58</sup> Rich.

<sup>59</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 1979). Found in ellen p94

<sup>60</sup> Ellen Loudon, 'Rule #6 Identify the Good Things and Give the Good Things Away', in *12 Rules for Christian Activists* (London: Canterbury Press, 2020). P94

The third good identified and often raised as critical in the literature is that of *Perseverance*. This long term, committed approach, particularly in more deprived communities, can be contrasted with the approach of some other statutory projects and charities, which may only work in the area for a short time then leave when the initiative's funding changes<sup>61</sup>.

*Perseverance* in a place is central to both Anglican ecclesiology and missiology<sup>62</sup> and is a strength and good of ASA that should not be taken for granted despite many parish churches do draw their congregations from a far wider area than the traditional parochial boundaries<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, while noting the dangers of an inflated views of one self-importance and the uniqueness of Christ's ministry<sup>64</sup> *Perseverance* in a particular place calls ASA to follow Christ's example in the incarnation by entering into the life of a community not simply supporting from the outside.

*Perseverance* can give ASA a far deeper and richer understanding of a community than could be gained by organisations or statutory services who might working in an area but not based there. In her research Hannah Rich quotes a congregational member of an estate parish as saying "We are there, we live there and we don't go home at the end of the day"<sup>65</sup>. Archbishop Rowan Williams termed this local understanding that can only be given by those closest to the ground as a "patient attention"<sup>66</sup>, a commitment to understanding and staying in a place where others leave is a good that should be cultivated and aimed for by ASA. One of our interviewees described the experience of living in a vicarage with the charity based at the church next door;

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<sup>61</sup> Rich. P74

<sup>62</sup> The Commission of The Archbishops of Canterbury and York on Housing, Church and Community. P10

<sup>63</sup> Stephen Spencer, *Anglicanism* (London: SCM Press, 2010). P205

<sup>64</sup> Ruddick. P73

<sup>65</sup> Rich. P75

<sup>66</sup> The Report from the Commission on Urban Life and Faith, *Faithful Cities: A Call for Celebration, Vision and Justice* (London: Methodist Publishing House and Church House Publishing, 2006). P69

And it's about active listening and being constantly, always being rooted. Maybe living next door is one thing, but it's being incredibly rooted in the local community. It means you know what is going on and what is the current needs are.

This rooted *Perseverance* helps to enable flourishing as it gives an opportunity for those undertaking ASA to understand deeply the people they are working alongside.

Secondly, *Perseverance* and a recognition that the church can be there for the long haul also moves levels of trust beyond those of professionals delivering a service (however well received) to that of “fellow humans living, working and forming deep personal relationships with other people<sup>67</sup>”. Once again the interplay between the different goods is true here, *Perseverance* can help develop the good of *Relationality* and demonstrate a *Loving Kindness* that is committed to the good of the other, recognising their dignity and value, not simply providing a service but instead a kind of social glue<sup>68</sup>.

The question that emerges here for our research therefore is, does the move to independent charitable status increase the ability of the church's response to be long term? On the one hand the move towards a separate structure that is more easily able to access funding and the creation of its own trustee's board to oversee its work should increase their ability to persevere and commit. However, if the move means that the project becomes dependant on the same resources and cycles of short term funding will it instead lose its distinctive good as projects as its workers come and go?

### *Networks of Cooperation*

The fourth and final good of ASA is the ability to form what Paul Bickley calls “Networks of Cooperation”. *Networks of Cooperation* are not simply practical solutions to addressing issues within the community but have theological roots on which to draw. Martyn Snow draws on language of

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<sup>67</sup> Nick Spencer. P54

<sup>68</sup> Bickley. P54

interchange and gift to describe how partnerships can build relationships<sup>69</sup>, lead to growth<sup>70</sup> and ultimately are imitating the self-emptying of Christ on the cross and expressing his risen life in the church<sup>71</sup>. We have described *Networks of Cooperation* as a good in and of themselves rather than simply a way to achieve the goods we want to see because in them we can learn to recognise the dignity within one another, express *Loving Kindness*, learn the humility that we cannot do everything on our own and discover the joy of the other<sup>72</sup>.

Bickley uses this terms to describe what he sees as a potentially unique contribution of the local parish church. While all charities and statutory authorities stress the importance of partnerships Bickley's research found that local clergy and church based community workers were seen as

“Natural networkers’, ‘relationship brokers’ and were seen as go-to people for other local leaders...It was clear that such relationships weren't inevitable – there had been ‘other vicars’ whom people had found more difficult to work with...but trust was easier to build than perhaps it might be for other organisations. Churches were there to stay.”

Research has found that faith can act as a “easing” force for collaboration between not only groups of the same faith but also between different sectors including wider voluntary sector and the private sector<sup>73</sup> and it is perhaps the sticky-ness and *Perseverance* of the Anglican Church raised above that interplays with their ability to be trusted and form these local partnerships. *Networks of Cooperation* can be formed in places where the local church is seen as the institution, and critically the people, who have been there for the long haul<sup>7475</sup>. Ballard and Husselbee argue that while this is easier in

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<sup>69</sup> Martyn Snow, *Mission Partnerships: Parishes Working Together in Mission* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2013). P10

<sup>70</sup> Snow. P13

<sup>71</sup> Snow. P26

<sup>72</sup> Wells, Rook, and Barclay. P15

<sup>73</sup> Rachel Wharton and Lucy De Las Casas, *WHAT A DIFFERENCE A FAITH MAKES Insights on Faith-Based Charities* (NPC, November 2016). P16

<sup>74</sup> Rich. P75

<sup>75</sup> Nick Spencer.

smaller contexts such as villages it can also be effective in urban contexts and that the church can bring cooperation and support to community life.<sup>76</sup>

The separating out of church and charity immediately creates a new partnership and so we will expect to see this good realised in the interviews. However, one question is to the extent that these *Networks of Cooperation*, which may need to be maintained across a city wide or regional basis, draw the work of the Christian community away from its rootedness to the place when “the parish ideal preserves the significance of face-to-face encounters across classes and generations”<sup>77</sup>.

In this section we have examined four goods of ASA that can help us identify where flourishing of communities is occurring. They are places where *Relationality* is at the heart of the work. Where the bonds of interdependence at the heart of what it means to be a human are strengthened in order to enable and increase the flourishing of every person. They are places where *Loving Kindness* is expressed, where the universal dignity and universal brokenness of humanity are understood in such a way that the helper-helped distinction is broken down and mutual flourishing is enjoyed. They are places of *Perseverance* where those taking part are committed to a community beyond the life cycle of a funded project in such a way that people are known and loved. And finally they are places where *Networks of Cooperation* are formed, recognising that to flourish is to work not in isolation from one another but depending upon one another.

### **Section Three: Seeking Flourishing: Implications of Separation**

And so critically this next section will examine the impact of separation on these four goods asking the question how the move towards separate charitable structures helped or inhibited their cultivation and thus the ability to move towards flourishing. This section is based on a series of

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<sup>76</sup> Ballard and Husselbee. P57

<sup>77</sup> Malcolm Brown, ‘The Church of England and the Common Good’, in *Together for the Common Good: Towards a National Conversation*, ed. by Nicholas Sagovsky and Peter McGrail (London: SCM Press, 2015), pp. 120–38. P124

semi-structured interviews with various individuals either currently involved or those who had been involved in the setting up of parish based charities. This included project workers, clergy and trustees and our aim was to understand their reasons for setting up the separate structures and if they saw any impacts from the decision either intended or otherwise. I noted where these interacted with the four identified goods of *Relationality*, *Loving Kindness*, *Perseverance* and *Networks of Cooperation* and if there were other goods that they identified. All of the interviews took place in inner city Bradford in July 2023.<sup>78</sup>

This section will start by noting the reasons for separation before exploring each of the goods in turn. It will demonstrate that for some of the goods such as *Perseverance* and *Networks of Cooperation* the move was largely positive enabling greater cultivation of the good while for others such as *Relationality* and *Loving Kindness* separation presented a risk that the goods could be lost. Those charities that retained a close relationship to the church were more able to keep the goods at the heart of their work through retaining the resources of the Christian faith of the parish church.

#### *Why did the separation of church and charity take place?*

Our research found that the main reasons for the establishment of these charities were practical in nature. By this we mean they were based in the operational realities of the social action rather than in theological convictions or theoretical opinions about the nature of the work. While there were some charities that were established at the start of the church's journey with social action the most common journey was the church had begun to do social action, the work had grown and there was perceived to be a need for separation of structures.

Most frequently this was because it was perceived to make it easier to attract external funding from either grant making bodies or local authorities. For example one interviewer told the story like this:

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<sup>78</sup> Further information about the interviews including dates, example questions and the locations of those interviewed can be found in the appendix.

“So initially, it just ran as it was ...a project that was just part of our church. And then as we began to try and raise more funds, we saw the value of a charitable structure”. It was also perceived that independent oversight through a dedicated independent trustee board was a strong positive that would help the stability of the project, as was the ability to create their own policies and procedures. All of the interviewees commented that help setting these structures up had been provided from the outside either from Christian organisations or local voluntary sector infrastructure organisations.

Finally, others commented that in order to continue to increase their capacity they needed to separate structures, this was particularly true for those who were in smaller congregations. “I think it was that we recognised that as small local churches we don't have the reach and the capacity that we would like in our local community.” They perceived that separation would help them to reach more volunteers and dedicate time to focus on community work.

While all the places interviewed articulated the theological roots of the social action work only one articulated a theological rationale for the move towards separation. This was in a project that was set up not as a church charity but as an intentional local partnership between the parish church, the local mosque and working men's club. The vicar at the time who was interviewed described how the charity had been set up in the old church school based next door. The establishment of the charity was partly due to practicalities but also was theologically rooted in the self-emptying *kenosis* of Jesus in the incarnation. This giving away of power and control provided a resource for the vicar to structure the charity as a partnership without the church feeling a need to “own the work”.

It is important now to turn to see whether the separation between church and charity impacted on the goods of ASA we identified earlier and if so whether those projects who had a greater distance between the church and charity were more or less impacted.



### *The Impact of Separation on Cultivating Relationality*

The first good identified was *Relationality*. This was Christian work that looked to restore, recognise and strengthen the communal patterns of mutual interdependence<sup>79</sup> in order to enable and increase the flourishing of every person<sup>80</sup>. As we noted earlier one of the questions arising from the literature was, was the “potential for graceful relationships is inhibited”<sup>81</sup> by a move towards separation, grant funding and paid workers?

All of those interviewed articulated that this good was important to their work and at the centre of what they were hoping to do both before and after separation, with one for example, desiring how in their feeding project the moments of relationship building as someone came to collect a food parcel were more important than the actual food that was given. What we found was that the move towards separate charitable status did not inevitably lead to a change in this relational approach or a decline in the centrality of relationships to the offering but in part this was because those charities where were able to retain the good of *Relationality* had made conscious efforts to ensure they could.

One way they did this was by being careful and deliberate about the type of funding they applied for and would turn down funders who they didn't think were right for them or who didn't understand the relational approach that the charity was working with. They would also continue to run projects that they knew would be tricky to find funding for or that wouldn't be easy to monitor if they felt that they were important to do because they believed that all they people they worked with “were all equal in the eyes of God, all deserved a chance and are all loved by God”.

Secondly, some of the projects deliberately remained small to keep close links to church as they believed that as the size of the project increased and the distance from the church increased the

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<sup>79</sup> Wells, Rook, and Barclay. P13

<sup>80</sup> Cuff. p xv

<sup>81</sup> Morisy. P28-9

*Relationality* of the work changed. One commented on a charity they had been part of that had not done this: “It (the charity) became much more of a centre where you had professionals working in it....not quite a community. The community didn’t quite own it in the same way. When it was in the church, the elderly people felt like it was their project now they’re just a helper to the leader”.

Staying small and helping people to feel an ownership over their project was credited with preventing the work from feeling like another statutory service that people were accessing and allow the work to feel “messy”; “That means removing some of the ego that desire to create something perfect, that actually we can be messy, that we can be small. We can be low, but we are there and consistent”.

This leads to a question of standards of care. Some expressed a sense that a larger, more ‘professional’ project delivered by specialists was in some ways of a different nature of what they were trying to achieve with one interviewer commenting that when their charity grew larger and more professional it “I felt like the reciprocity sort of diminished slightly even if it didn't disappear entirely”.

One charity with very close links to the church told a story of a volunteer within the project who captured the ‘messy’ relational approach they were aiming for;

He’s this local guy who, you know, just sort of shuffles along and so on and yet, you know, we the team, welcome him as a volunteer and the most he’s capable of is standing in the corridor by the sign going ‘It's this way to the food bank’ and he does it and we love him and you know, there's no criticism of him. It’s about treating people with a sense that, you know, they are capable.

The idea that there is an inherent trade-off between a professional or relational approach was also challenged with the vicar associated with one of the more informal projects commenting on the high

standard of work, up to date policies and structured approach to volunteering that the project was able to deliver while still maintaining a “family feel”.

It is perhaps a question of how words are understood and perceived. A number of the interviewees were keen to stress a “messy” or “family” approach that focused on the individual and prioritised them and their journey over the charity’s projects. This lean towards informality was contrasted with either a council programme (though often they were in receipt of local authority funding) or a larger charity. This “messy” approach was not however to be understood that they did not want to provide a high quality of care, all of the charities had for example safeguarding policies and procedures, provided training for their volunteers and connected into wider third sector support structures. One of the clergy noted that it was the decision to go independent that had contributed to this high quality of care: (a desired good noted by some in the field<sup>82</sup>). “And in some respects, that's absolutely amazing because it gets done to a different standard than if it had just been church volunteers”.

In summary, the good of *Relationality* remained central to the work of the charities after separation. There was however a perceived risk that it might be lost and it required a degree of intentionality to keep the same. Some of the charities were selective about their funding sources and stayed small to help ensure they could keep their same approach.

### *The Impact of Separation on Cultivating Loving Kindness*

The second good that we had identified as core to ASA was *Loving Kindness*. This good begins by recognising that all humans are both bestowed with the most incredible dignity and value while also are in need of healing. The universality of both the value and brokenness of all of humanity places caution on a type of Christian charity to avoid patronising care and look instead for a reciprocal love

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<sup>82</sup> Jon Kurt, ‘Keeping Christian Distinctiveness’, *Grace & Truth Blog*, 2018  
<<https://gracetruth.blog/2018/05/05/crisis-of-faith-in-social-action-keeping-christian-distinctiveness/>>.

that receives as well as gives. Finally it is generous in its approach as God is generous and abundant in his love towards us.

Again, all of the charities interviewed articulated how important this approach was to them and commented that they didn't feel that the move to separation had caused this good to inherently be lost. But they did explain how an ongoing close relationship with the church helped them retain this good. The factors that achieved this were; a theological recognition and articulation of the universal brokenness of humanity, the context of the work and retaining a close relationship with 'grey areas' between the church and charity.

Firstly, a number of the interviewees articulated how the Christian faith of the staff and volunteers led to an understanding of the "deep poverty within everybody". Some of the charities spent time articulating this conviction and considering how it impacted their work. This meant that in their interactions with others they looked to treat them "with dignity and grace and kindness" because they wanted to follow Christ's example; "We are ambassadors for Christ". This had led to people wrestling for example with the terminology they used for those who accessed the charity, feeling uncomfortable with language of clients because it didn't capture the mutual benefits that were received. It also meant that lots of the charities placed a high value on those accessing the services finding ways to give back as quickly as appropriate and possible.

This means that actually they (service users) are seen as representatives of the charity & the church and allows them to have some status. It gives them some sense of purpose and an identity, which often society has tried to take away from people and gives them some sense of self-worth as well.

Related to this, the second factor that various interviewees noted that helped stop the charities activities being paternalistic was the importance of keeping high levels of cross-over between the

church and charity. Not only was this connected to the use of church volunteers drawn from the local geographic community but also they celebrated that there were those who had first encountered the church through accessing services such as a foodbank. One vicar noted that the church congregation was largely made up an older element who had been instrumental as volunteers in the charity for a long time and then a younger element the majority of whose first contact was with the charity but had since joined the worshipping community and frequently also volunteered themselves at the charity. Another described it as “really exciting” that at their ‘Food Pantry’ which was actually an informal partnership between the separate charity and the church, people were able to “give and receive” and it was the place where the distinction between those accessing, those providing the service, and the church members was the most grey.

This was true also in the physical space, one charity which ran an art therapy project spoke with pride of the blurred lines in terms of whose space the building was. This allowed them to give dignity through showing the art in the church; “Through this this combination of church and charity its meant that the people are doing art, doing therapy through that, but then we’re putting it on display, allowing people to take ownership of the church building”.

The third factor that the interviewees credited with keeping *Loving Kindness* central was the particular context, inner city, that they found themselves in. Patronising charity that demeaned local people was safeguarded against because the staff and volunteers were frequently drawn from the local community. As one project leader put it “I think the fact that I live here helps because, you know, I’m really sensitive to people talking like that about the area because it’s my home.” This was true especially when those who accessed the services of the charity went on to volunteer with it, which was very common; “I think the way our volunteers and staff relate to beneficiaries is not paternalistic, it’s not looking down, patronising, it’s, well I’ve been where you are or I still am”. While not certain it would seem

that the current and historic connections with the parish church acted as a factor that meant both the staff and volunteers were more likely to be drawn from the local area. It would be suggested that the local, parish connection was a positive factor in reducing the danger of patronising charity.

In summary, the good of *Loving Kindness*, like *Relationality* was seen as deeply important to the charities after separation. There was, like *Relationality*, a perception that to cultivate this good required intentional decision making. The interviewees commented on the importance of the resources of the Christian faith, keeping close links with the church and being aware and shaped by your local context.

#### *The Impact of Separation on Cultivating Perseverance*

The third good of ASA we had hoped to evaluate the impact of separation of structures on was *Perseverance*. As articulated above being committed to the place and the community is one of the great strengths of ASA and it was something that came through as very important in the interviews; “The church is here and here for the long haul, and it's seen and it's committed to the community and its people and it's and it's seen in that way.” “We're different to kind of a council programme or something like that in the fact that this is long, very long, term”. Two of the charity leads both described their work as a long journey with one describing the heart of their project “as journeying with people where they're at”.

Across the board there was a strong sense that the move towards separation had increased the *Perseverance* of the work through spreading risk, accessing volunteers and allowing the charity to access wider funding pots. We also found that the success of the charities also could have a positive impact on the church's ability to persevere in contexts which were tough to do so.

As discussed above part of the rationale for separation was to increase the stability of the project and share the risk. More than one interviewee, particularly in the smaller churches noted that the move had allowed them longevity through spreading the risk into different areas of the organisations that could both support each other. One interviewee told a story of how the church benefited from receiving rent from the charity but then when the charity had gone through some financial difficulties they were able to pause the rent for a season and then pick it back up.

Secondly, the interviewees commented how they were able to access increased levels of volunteers by becoming their own charity. They reported that some of their volunteers would not have joined a church project because of their different beliefs but did when the project had its own separate identity. The size and location of the churches, most of which were relatively small, meant that to a greater or lesser extent the projects drew their volunteers from a much wider base than just the church congregation. As one project lead commented “If we were dependent on church volunteers, church running, it wouldn't be happening now”.

Thirdly, in a similar way to widening their volunteer base the move also allowed them to access a wider range of funding pots. This had been the key driver for the move and proved to deliver on its objectives.

“Do I think it would have been different if we weren't set up as an independent charity?

I do think we have a broader base of funders that we can go to, which I do think enables longevity in a way that if we were just picking from the same pool of folks who are who are happy to fund churches.”

This point was echoed in a number of interviews. They consistently saw separate status as critical for their continued ability to attract the funding they needed to keep going.

Rather than the charities being a drain on the church we actually found they benefited them in a variety of ways that impacted the *Perseverance* of the church. Clergy reported that having the charity based at the church increased their reputation in the area, attracted funding that was able to pay for repairs for the building and kept the building open and well used. They also told stories of people who had come into the congregation through the project. This mutual dependence was articulated like this “If the project shut the church would be at risk. And if the church shut the charity would be very different and potentially would shut”.

While this appears to be a strong commendation that *Perseverance* increases through separation we identified in the literature a potential risk for the charities would be that they would be subject to the same short term cycles of funding and staff turnover that many charities were. However our findings were that keeping a close relationship with the church could help mitigate some of these risks.

Staff turnover particularly amongst the leaders of the charities was very low with many of them led 20 years later by the same people who had helped to pioneer the initial work when it was in the church. Because they’d often been part of, or were still part of, the local church community they stayed. They saw their work as more than simply a job but as fundamental to who they were “It’s our very identity. We are here for the whole of our community. And whatever they are facing, you know, we are there for them”. The individual projects within the charity may have come and gone but the workers were committed to the place with one saying they would be doing it even if there wasn’t any money.

Another project lead described how work with an external fundraiser had helped her realise that staying small and rooted in the place was really important to her. The fundraiser had encouraged her to go for larger pots of money, increase the staff team and increase the reach of the project. The



project lead described her reluctance in part because the risk of the staff being made redundant at the end of the project cycle. There was a sense that just increasing the amount that they were dependant on funding, while in the short term may have increased their reach, in the longer term may have had unintended consequences in terms of the consistency of offer from the charity and that consistency was particularly important in the context.

The move to separation had according to the interviews led to an increased ability to cultivate the good of *Perseverance*. Separation had allowed them to widen their volunteer and funding base and reduce risk. The concerns that the literature had raised about short term funding cycles were minimised intentionally by those that kept a close relationship with the parish church by staying small and continuing to operate with the advantages of commitment to place that ASA has at its heart.

#### *The Impact of Separation on Cultivating Networks of Cooperation*

The fourth good of ASA that we wanted to explore was *Networks of Cooperation*. This was the idea that the *Perseverance* raised above interplays the ability to be trusted and form these local partnerships, where the local church is seen as the institution, and critically the people, who have been there for the long haul. We were interested to see if the separation impacted the ability to form *Networks of Cooperation* and how they related to parish boundaries.

There was some scepticism to the idea from Bickley's research that the vicar was natural networkers or relationship builders through others saw that as a key part of their work. The perception across a number of the interviews was that instead the move had made it easier to build partnerships. Largely this was a feeling in terms of the way others would perceive them. One interviewer described how a local partner of the church's social action was particularly sceptical about church involvement due to a distrust that it was simply about proselyting and the move to a separate charity helped to ease

these concerns and allow the work to continue. Even the church that kept the charity as a subsidiary of the church recognised that the separation had enabled partnership working in a new way

However, in some ways it is harder to prove a counterfactual. The interviewees also talked about how important partnerships were at the beginning of the project before they were an independent charity and some of the increased openness to partnership working may reflect a change in the sector where partnerships between faith groups and both the statutory and voluntary sector have increased.

One of the key factors raised was that the employment of a community worker gave internal capacity to invest in time building partnerships. The clergy spoke about demands on their time and while they saw building *Networks of Cooperation* with local voluntary sector organisations or going to meetings with local councillors as important they did not always have capacity to do so. Having a separate charity with paid community worker who could do some of that was positive. While employing a community worker was possible under church structures this was often done by someone in a separate charity.

Overall, the move towards separation seemed to have a positive impact on the good of *Networks of Cooperation*, and the charities seemed again to be able to have some of the advantages of increased capacity and autonomy without losing any potential ability of the church to be a relationship broker.

### *Section Three Conclusion*

In summary, when looking at the four goods of flourishing that we had identified within ASA we found the picture was largely positive in regards to their ability to continue to cultivate these goods after establishing charitable structures.

All of the charities interviewed highlighted a focus on *Relationality* as important to their work both before and after separation. The risk that they would lose this focus after moving towards a grant funding model with paid workers was consciously mitigated against by a close relationship with the church, being selective about what funding they applied for, staying small and working hard to keep a “family feel” alongside a high standard of care. The resources of the Christian faith that all people “were all equal in the eyes of God, all deserved a chance and are all loved by God” were retained and led to a person centred approach.

The second, and related, good of *Loving Kindness* was again central to the work of the charities we interviewed and they didn’t feel that the move to separation had caused this good to inherently be lost. It was perhaps this good that they were able to articulate was strongly influenced by their Christian faith and that they were able to retain by both speaking about this theological conviction internally and also by maintaining a close and reciprocal relationship with the church high levels of cross-over. This was particularly important for preventing the work from feeling paternalistic or patronising. The interviewees spoke positively about members of the church congregation who were themselves local people volunteering at the charity whilst at the same time being recipients of the charities services. This blurred relationship between service user, volunteer and church member was central to the charity’s operation and retention of an ethos of *Loving Kindness*.

The third good of *Perseverance* in a place was the identified good which the separation of church and charity led to the most significant positive impact on. This was true both for the charity and the church with interviewees commenting that without the ability to attract external funding and

volunteers (both of which were increased by separation) they did not think the work would have been able to continue as long as it had. The identified risks of falling foul to the short term cycles of funding and staff turnover that charities face were mitigated by maintaining a close relationship with the church. The charities that did so were able to gain the advantages of separation in regards to longevity and *Perseverance* while continuing to operate with the advantages of commitment to place at the centre of the Anglican parish system.

In regards to the good of *Networks of Cooperation* the impact of separation did not appear to be too significant and what impact there was appeared to be positive. The increased time available to a paid community worker was a positive for relationship building and the interviewees reported back being their own organisation did help them build partnerships but there may have been wider structural changes that had caused this impact.

At this stage we have explored the importance of social action within the Church of England as a way of seeking flourishing and we identified four goods of ASA that while not exhaustive or complete represented key goods that those undertaking social action work should look to cultivate within their work, *Relationality, Loving Kindness, Perseverance* and *Networks of Cooperation*.

We then conducted a series of interviews with various people who were involved, either currently or in the past, in parish churches that had established separate charitable structures to attempt to evaluate how this decision had impacted on the four goods. We found that for some of the goods such as *Perseverance* and *Networks of Cooperation* the move had been positive enabling greater cultivation of the good while for others such as *Relationality* and *Loving Kindness* retaining a close relationship with the church enabled the charity to keep the goods at the heart of their work while retaining the resources of the Christian faith of the parish church. It is these findings that will then

inform our next section on recommendations in regards to how the decision to separate structures can help parish churches achieve flourishing.

#### **SECTION FOUR: SEEKING FLOURISHING: KEEPING A BEST OF BOTH WORLDS:**

It is clear that those church-charity partnerships who were able to keep a close relationship post separation did so through conscious and intentional decisions to prevent a distant relationship. The majority of the charities interviewed had been set up with the parish (loosely understood) in mind, with a desire to keep the involvement of the church post separation. Both clergy and community project leaders articulated that while there was deemed a necessary separation of structures, for reasons articulated above, further relational separation between the work of the church and the charity was deemed a risk and that there was a desire to keep the relationship close. Retaining a “Christian ethos” or “faith being at the heart” was deemed critical to the future of the charity. One project put it like this; “We are a body that points back to the church as its parent and as its reason in its impetus really.”

The result of these intentional decisions was that for some of the projects there was very little perceived distinction between the church and charity. This was true within the charity, the church and externally with those who accessed the services of the charity. At the same time despite these efforts there was an acknowledgment from some that the decision had led in some instances to a larger than desired gap in relationship. “When you create separate organisations it immediately creates a ‘them & us’ element”. Some of the charities, despite efforts to the contrary had found their relationship had grown more distant or difficult over time.

A potential important question which there is not space to evaluate here is whether those interviews saw the more of the separate charity as not just related to but actually part of the church. This would pose questions of ecclesiology and where the church can be found. In Avery Dulles’ ‘Models of the

Church' one of the proposed models is '*The Church as Institution*' where the governing function is part of what it means to be the church.<sup>83</sup> The decision to therefore provide separate governance structures for missional social action would appear to put the activity, whilst worthwhile, outside of this understanding of church. Whereas certain understanding of the '*The Church as Servant*'<sup>84</sup> would articulate the work of the charity very much as the work of the church in action.

In order to safeguard against the perceived risk of "drift" those involved made a variety of decisions around structures, staff, volunteers, space, size of the project and taking time to articulate what they wanted to see. At times those who had joined more recently, for example clergy who had taken a post since the separation, also mentioned things they wished had been done to keep the church-charity relationship closer or better. From our research however, we have identified some measures which were more successful than others and also some measures which weren't taken that could have helped. After noting the measures taken that seemed to have limited impact we will posit four recommendations for those who are wanting to keep a close relationship between the church and charity as our findings suggest this is critical to help the separate structures lead to flourishing.

#### *Intentional Decisions with Limited Impact*

The first decision was around the precise nature of the charitable structures. While all of the charities described decisions they had made in terms of the legal constitution of the new charity this, while potentially helpful, appeared to have either a limited impact on the closeness of the church-charity relationship or certainly did not appear to be sufficient to prevent drift. The measures taken varied from project to project all had within their constitution some form of requirement for a portion of trustees to be from the church or for the Chair of Trustees to be the incumbent of the church. In one case where the charity was a subsidiary of the Parish Church Council (PCC) all of the trustees had to

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<sup>83</sup> Avery Cardinal Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Image, 2002). P30

<sup>84</sup> Dulles. P80

be appointees of the PCC while in others it was only a certain number. There did not appear to be a correlation between what legal safeguards they chose and the nature of the ongoing relationship.

The second factor which was frequently commented on was where the project was delivered in regards to if it took place with the church building, in a church hall or similar building on the same site or indeed in a nearby location within the parish. There was however a variation in how significant a factor this was in keeping a strong relationship.

For some it was really significant with one the charities that were based in the church building commenting; “We're very clearly in a church building without having to have much conversation...that I think is quite profound” they commented that those who came to access the services of the charity often saw the work of the charity as part of the church because of the location. While another of the charities that was based in their own separate building was perceived to be the most separate with the separate physical buildings given as a significant reason for this.

However, others didn't see the need to be hosted in the same space as important. One charity hosted most of its services not in the church but in a local community hub & library a five minute walk from the church but this was not seen as significant or problematic. Furthermore, one of the clergy who had inherited a charity hosted within the main church building described how the relatively distant relationship between the two organisations meant that if he wanted to have a conversation with someone accessing the charities services about faith or church he would have to leave the rooms designated to the charities activities and continue the conversation in a separate part of the building. Our observation is that charity being based in in the church building may be helpful in maintaining a close relationship but it was not on its own sufficient and could actually lead to a strain on the relationship where the church and charity are sharing a space.

### *Intentional Decisions with Effective Impact*

On the other hand there did appear to measures and decisions that the church-charity partnership could take that would have an effective impact on the relationship and we have used these measures to form the following four recommendations. They are;

1. Allow a blurred perimeter but keep a clear core
2. Share the vision widely and often
3. Stay small and local
4. Be selective about funding sources and recruitment.

If these four recommendations are followed our assertion is that the likelihood of maintaining a close relationship would be significantly increased and the consequential chances of cultivating the four goods of flourishing *Relationality, Loving Kindness, Perseverance & Networks of Cooperation* would be maximised.

### *Allow a Blurred Perimeter but Keep a Clear Core.*

This first recommendation based on the steps taken by the church-charity partnerships appears to help projects maintain their focus on *Relationality, Loving Kindness* and *Perseverance*. This balance of clarity and blurriness may appear to be contradictory but it is a question of mutual understanding and commitment about what should be blurred and what should be clear (Figure One).

Those charities with the closest relationships with the church described how “There’s a lot of grey areas (between church and charity) which is really important” or indeed that “It’s not always that clear where church finishes and the charity starts or the charity finishes and the church starts and I think that’s a strength.”

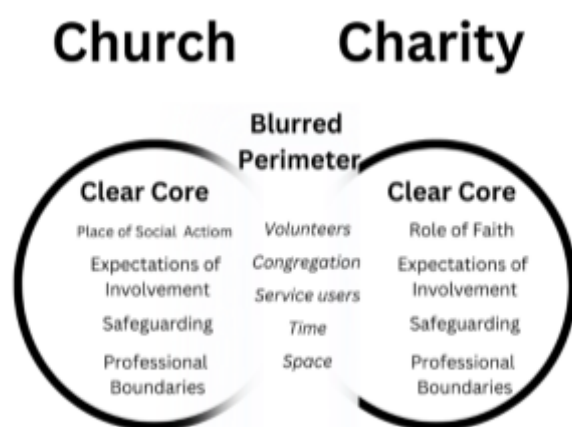


Figure One



At the same time there were areas of the relationship where they were both very clear about. Helen Cameron's work on organisation partnerships is helpful in establishing the level of formality required in a church partnership highlighting "The churches that were most comfortable with the relationships they formed were those who operated at a level of formality that they had the skills to handle<sup>85</sup>". This certainly rings true in our research but we also found that it was not simply what level the formality should operate at but what elements of the partnership and work needed different levels of formality and clarity.

Maintaining a blurred perimeter is primarily about the people involved. The projects frequently referenced how having a blurred perimeter between volunteers, service users, and members of the church congregation was hugely positive in terms of cultivating *Relationality* and demonstrating *Loving Kindness* without it becoming patronising or paternalistic. Familial metaphors were frequently used when describing this practice highlighting the close ties that were possible. There was a recognition that at different stages an individual may be a service user but they were encouraged to participate, have agency and where appropriate engage in wider church life rather than simply be someone who was in need. The same was true for church members, there was no stigma attached to them being recipients of the charitable activities and they were encouraged to volunteer and join the work.

This blurriness was also helpful in terms of space. While not all of the projects shared a building those that did were required to navigate sharing space. Those with the closest relationships were able to share this space in a way where both saw it as mutual space and where the clergy and PCC were prepared to embrace the blurred edges of what was church space and what was charity. The leadership also needed to be prepared to relinquish control even where this may have had knock on

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<sup>85</sup> Helen Cameron, *Resourcing Mission: Practical Theology for Changing Churches* (London: SCM Press, 2010). P136

effects for the church using the space. One project described the high level of autonomy the charity was given by the vicar in regards to their activities within the church. "He says 'I bless this, run with it. And I think you have to have a degree of freedom to do that rather than feeling everything I do I have to run it by the vicar'".

However, at the same time there needs to be mutual clarity at the core of both organisation in other areas. Firstly, both organisations need to have clear expectations of the others involvement in their work and be able to accept the blurred perimeter and accept the potential costs of this. For example, where the charity saw the space they were sharing as blurred if this expectation was not matched by the church leadership this could lead to relational difficulties, frustration and in the longer term a distancing of the relationship. The same was true if the church expected the relationship to be blurry but the charity expected clear boundaries in regards to levels of involvement from the church leadership then they could perceive interest as a meddling in their affairs.

Another area of clarity that was important to keep the relationship close was to have a clear articulation of how church relates to the charity in terms of faith. One of the clergy wrote down a list of "*Faith Based Reasons*" for the work that the new charity was to do which highlighted that each person was created in the image of God and that God was calling them to reach out to build community. This became an important document for the charity and sits within their constitution, goes alongside their rental agreement and is shown to new staff. The charity leader referenced this document as key for ensuring a close relationship with the church was maintained.

Others mentioned that they did not feel that this had happened and it had led to a distance in the relationships. For those who did, they appeared more easily to be able to draw on the Christian tradition in their work, for example the universal dignity and brokenness of humanity, a doctrine that helps to cultivate *Loving Kindness*. This need to state frequently and confidently the theological

resources the charity is able to draw on is important because the charity does not exist in an ideological vacuum. Jon Kurt writes this in his reflection on Christian social action:

In my experience, the voluntary sector tends to become the dominant influence. It's access to funding, good practice and its secular ideology, especially around equal opportunities, is often far more confidently stated than the church's theology. This means that even when the resources of church buildings and the faith of many volunteers are significant factors in keeping a community project going, a distinctively Christian perspective is easily marginalised, or entirely absent.<sup>86</sup>

This helpful reminder about the need to be clear about the theological roots of the work also applies to the church. As the upcoming second recommendation states it is important that the place of social action in the Christian faith and the importance of the charity's work to the church's outworking of its discipleship is also clearly and regularly articulated.

Finally, while we have celebrated the blurred nature of the personnel involved and the service user, volunteer, congregation overlap this does have potential risks involved in terms of professional boundary setting and safeguarding. The need for clarity and a clear core also comes into play, clear safeguarding, volunteer training and understanding of power dynamics is critical to maintain. Relationships where all flourish are not those in which all boundaries are eliminated.

### *Share the Vision Widely and Often*

The second recommendation for maintaining a close relationship and being able to draw on the theological resources of the church while having the benefits of the separate charitable status is that it is not simply enough to articulate the ethos at the start without intentionally ensuring that it was shared widely and often both within the charity but also critically the church.

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<sup>86</sup> Kurt.

Phil Butler in *'Well Connected: Releasing Power, Restoring Hope through Kingdom Partnerships'* offers a number of principles for effective partnerships including the following;

Effective partnerships have a high sense of participation and ownership. Facilitators need to give special attention to the widest possible participation in objective-setting, planning and the process of meetings, and on-going communications—increasing the likelihood of widest possible ownership and commitment to the common vision. Let people in on the process, not just the dream<sup>87</sup>.

This need for wide participation and understanding of common vision was true in our findings both in charity and church context. On the charity side we sometimes encountered a perception that while the project leader may have understood the nature of the church-charity connection, particularly if they were involved in setting it up, this wasn't always the case with wider staff and volunteers, especially if they were drawn from outside the church. This sometimes led to frustration and missed expectations within the charity as they related to the church. A former trustee of a project with a very close relationship to the church articulated how even if the personal changed the relationship wouldn't because of the wider participation in vision "It's not been their (vicar & project leader) power, and ideas and responsibility. It's not just held by one or two people, but it's actually very shared".

However, while often the perceived risk was that the charity would withdraw from the church we also found that unless there was a wide level of ownership within the church congregation the emotional separation that creating a separate entity for an element of your missional activity can create over time to a disengagement from the wider church towards the charity.

"I think the challenge I've watched is the ability to create an emotional separation between what was set up as something to enable and furthers the church's mission actually can end up feeling sort of subcontracted out to somebody else."

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<sup>87</sup> Phil Butler, *Well Connected: Releasing Power, Restoring Hope through Kingdom Partnerships* (Milton Keynes: Authentic, 2005). P321

The separation in some instances led to the congregation not seeing the work of the charity as part of their outreach, the church struggling to fill the trustee spots on the board (thus increasing the distance) and in one instance a curate who never went into the charity building (which was next door to the church) despite being based at the church for three years.

It is obviously critical that the clergy are engaged and aligned on the work but this is not sufficient.

Cameron notes this problematic dynamic

It is almost always the priest who takes on this boundary spanning role...however, if boundary spanning is done primarily by one person then the partnership can rest on that person's reading of the territory and its needs...the transition between one priest and the next can be difficult when different readings occur.<sup>88</sup>

This was certainly true in our research, where there was an interregnum in one of the parishes the new incumbent found the relationship had moved and changed during the gap, in another the particular incumbent did not have the same understanding of the church's involvement in the community and so the relationship grew further apart to the extent that the most recent incumbent felt unable to restore it because a new pattern had been established.

One interviewee commentated that generally social action work is often undertaken by a small percentage of a church congregation "The Activists". Perhaps however, whilst the work is carried out within the church structures, with the volunteer base being drawn largely from the church, these 'Activists' are able to win others to their cause and keep the wider congregation engaged in the work of the project. The move to separation however, could create an emotional separation as articulated above that unless intentionally addressed could lead the wider congregation to lose interest in the work of the charity over time, particularly as people who had been involved at the start move on.

While much concern was taken up with ensuring the charity didn't pull away there was less

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<sup>88</sup> Cameron. P143

awareness and intentionality to ensure the wider church congregation and leadership remained engaged and committed to the work of the charity.

### *Stay Small and Local*

A third recommendation that both helped the charity to maintain a close relationship and prevent some of the perceived risks of separation around *Perseverance* and *Relationality* was a commitment to staying both small and local. This does not mean that the charity could only work exclusively within the parish particularity as poverty doesn't respect parish boundaries<sup>89</sup> but there is an advantage to keeping the focus of the charitable work the local community (loosely understood) if there is a desire to maintain a strong relationship.

While in some senses the idea that each parish church draws its congregation from, and is largely focused on, its particular geographical parish is a historic ideal rather than a current reality we did observe that the charities that had a city wide reach had less connection to the parish church where as those who saw it is as important to keep it as a local project, for example focused on the loose parish or ward boundary were more likely to maintain connection.

It is in some sense quite clear and obvious why this is the case, if the church and charity both had a similar local focus then it was easier for them to align on vision and objectives, the leadership of both organisations would more clearly see the benefit of partnership and the congregation of the church, especially where the majority came from the local area would feel a greater emotional tie to a charity that was supporting their local community.

We have already noted above that when the volunteers were drawn from the local community, as were the local congregation, there was more likely to be an understanding of the issues that the

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<sup>89</sup> Bickley. P28

people accessing the services felt, a greater potential for empathy for their shared experience and the challenges they faced thus reducing the risk of paternalism.

As well as this rootedness, by staying local the commitment to remaining small was critical to retaining some of the goods that we have identified. There was a perception that an increase in growth led to an increase in a way of operating that decreased *Relationality* and more akin to a professionalism that wasn't desirable. It is also interesting that in the charities that had grown larger there was less need for church support both from volunteers but also from the clergy. A couple of the clergy commented that the larger size of the charity now meant they were less involved and invested because they didn't see the need to support it in the same way. The growth in the charity reduced a dependency on the church.

It is strange to see an interdependency on one another as a good to be desired and it may be at times that a growth and separation is appropriate, certainly a partnership in which one party deliberately seeks an undermining or limiting of the other in order to keep the other dependant isn't flourishing but there is a distinctive Christian good that sees interdependence in partnerships as a good.

The need for partnerships is not...a sign of weakness and faith....every week we declare that our God is a God who does not just do it on his own...even Jesus, right up to the point he was abandoned in Gethsemane, did not do on his own. He had companions and fellow travellers. The abandonment of Jesus by the disciples in the garden is overwhelming for Jesus, a sign of how important companionship or partnership is in mission.<sup>90</sup>

Staying small helped to develop the good of *Relationality* and maintain the relationship between church and charity. It also appeared to help staff retention, a key factor in maintaining the good of

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<sup>90</sup> Phil Groves, *Global Partnerships for Local Mission* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2006). P6

*Perseverance*. Projects commented on not looking for large unsustainable growth even when others thought this was desirable, keeping small allowed a slower, more sustainable pace and allowed the vision of the charity and its relational approach based on *Loving Kindness* to be more easily embedded.

#### *Be Selective about Funders & Personal*

The final recommendation is connected and relates to being selective about funding sources and recruitment. Projects frequently commented that “Who you recruits makes a massive difference”. For some this meant they only employed Christians and in some cases this did appear to help maintain the relationship. However, in other charities despite having a Christian lead worker the relationship with the church became more distant over time. Instead, what seemed most important was that the lead worker was aligned with the desire to keep the relationship close and understood the implications for maintaining the interdependency and blurred perimeter. Where this alignment existed the relationship was maintained even if the staff did not share the Christian faith, though this certainly helped (particularly in regards to the lead worker in the charity).

This alignment on values and approach was also true for funders. As discussed above projects able to maintain the desired goods were selective about which funders they approached, they looked for funding sources that understood the relational approach that the projects were aiming for. This didn't mean that the funders had to be Christian, indeed one of the reasons that they went for independence was to broaden their funding base, but it did mean they turned down some funding opportunities if it caused them to compromise their approach.

This fourth and final section has explored the steps that can be taken to keep a close relationship between the church and charities after separation of structures. The reason this is important is that our research found that while cultivation of some of the goods such as *Perseverance* and *Networks of*



*Cooperation* were benefited by the move to separation for others such as *Relationality* and *Loving Kindness* retaining a close relationship enabled the church to keep the goods at the heart of their work through retaining the resources of the Christian faith of the parish church. Some of the decisions that the church-charity partnership made in terms of nature of charitable structure and physical location of the work were potentially helpful but not sufficient.

Instead, I have put forward four recommendations that if applied would increase the closeness of the partnerships. There are to allow a blurred perimeter but keep a clear core, share the vision widely and often (in both the charity and crucially the church), stay small and local, and be selective about funders and personal. Our assertion is that the implementation of these recommendations for churches that establish separate structures for their charitable work would go a long way towards helping parish churches achieve flourishing.

## **Conclusion**

This essay explored the question to what extent the establishment of independent charitable structures could help Parish Churches across the Diocese of Leeds achieve flourishing. To answer the question it followed four sequential sections.

The first section explored the context of ASA. It noted that the form in which the CofE has looked to seek flourishing has changed over the years despite the fundamental role that it has played both in the past and in the present. In part this is based on the different traditions that are contained within the CofE and in part is a response to the context. This means that the recent trend to establish separate charitable structures isn't inherently wrong but could be evaluated on results. This work has

argued that a means of evaluation is to look for goods that might indicate flourishing following others who over recent years have looked to identify goods of ASA that are desirable.

This search for goods that might indicate flourishing formed the second section. We identified four goods that were frequently present in the literature in this field; *Relationality*, *Loving Kindness*, *Perseverance* and *Networks of Cooperation*. These were not an exclusive list but they did give a helpful if limited indication of what flourishing might look like.

By conducting a series of interviews with people involved with these charities I found in section three that the cultivation of these goods was both important to the charities and churches but not a given. They had taken the decision to separate based on operational factors around risk management, funding sources and sustainability but recognised certain risks that the separation in terms of legal structures would also lead to a distancing of the relationship between the two organisations over time.

In regards to *Perseverance* and *Networks of Cooperation* I found that the separation had largely impacted in a positive way. The move helped sustain both the church and the charity, providing potential funding and volunteers, sharing the risk and increasing the reputation of the church with partners. This increased reputation was further cemented by having a project worker who was able to spend time forming *Networks of Cooperation* that the vicar recognised were good but couldn't always dedicate the time to.

On the other two goods of *Relationality* and *Loving Kindness* I found that while it was certainly possible to cultivate these goods after separation those that were able to do so the most were those who managed the risk of losing them by maintaining a close relationship with the church and thus retaining the resources of the Christian faith of the parish church.

In the final section I have described this as a ‘best of both worlds’ approach and posited four recommendations that would help this interdependent relationship to continue. These are firstly, to allow a blurred perimeter but keep a clear core. By this we mean to embrace the reality of interdependence and be comfortable with having a high degree of crossover between the church and charity particularly in terms of personal while at the same time maintain clarity and alignment at the core in regards to how this blurry-ness will work in practice, how the charity related to the faith of the church and how safeguarding and professional boundaries work in a ‘blurred’ environment.

The second recommendation was related and was to share the vision widely and often to ensure a wide level of buy in and understanding of the ethos and vision of the charity-church relationship. This was important in both the charity but also in the church to maintain an emotional connection with the congregation and so that they didn’t feel that the work of the charity was separate to their shared mission.

Thirdly, we recommend that staying small and local helped maintain alignment in vision and keep the relationship close. This was not about one party forcing the other to stay small and connected through undermining the other but through a mutual desire to remain connected and flourish together.

Finally, we have identified that being selective over recruitment and funding was important. Those that were able to identify workers and funders that understood the work, were aligned on ethos and committed to the shared goods were more likely to maintain a close and fruitful relationship and ultimately see flourishing in their communities.

Overall therefore, the move to establish separate charitable structures has been a positive one and one that has the potential to help parish churches seek flourishing. It can help them cultivate the

good of *Perseverance* and build *Networks of Cooperation*. The risks that they would lose the resources of the Christian faith that help keep the work focused on *Relationality* and driven by *Loving Kindness* is there and not to be minimised. However, it can be mitigated by keeping a close relationship between the church and the charity. To do this they would do well to follow the recommendations above.

Further research could examine these findings in a wider variety of contexts as this research was carried out in an inner city context in the North of England. It also could look at the impact of separation on other goods. As we noted the four goods identified in this piece do not reflect the totality of flourishing. For example some of the projects commented on the impact of evangelism from separation and this could be an area to be explored. Finally, it may be useful to compare with churches that made the decision to keep the work within the parish and ask how they found cultivation of the same goods.

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## **Appendix One: Interview Information**

### Interview Details

Rev. Derek Jones: Priest-in-Charge St Oswald's and All Saints Little Horton. Trustee of All Saints charity and The Landmark Centre charity.

Rev. Canon Denise Poole. Retired Vicar of St Augustine's Bradford and previous Chair of Communityworks charity.

Indi Alcock- Project Lead, The Anchor Project

Rev Rosy Fairhurst- Vicar of St Augustines and St Clements Bradford. Trustee of Communityworks and The Anchor Project

Rev John Bavington- Vicar of St Johns Great Horton and trustee of The Red Letter Project

Sarah Hinton- Project Lead, Shine West Bowling

Rev Jimmy Hinton- Vicar of St Stephens West Bowling

Luke Owens- Eden Team Leader West Bowling and previous Chair of Shine West Bowling

### **Sample Questions**

Why did you set it up?

How did you envision the relationship between the church and the charity? Did you put anything in place to influence this relationship?

How do you understand the work you do? How does it relate to your faith?

Are there particular influences on you? Theological or otherwise

#### Relationally

How would you describe the importance of relationships to the work you do?

Can you give some examples of that?

Do you see any impact on that through the move to separation?

How does external funding Grants impact on this?

#### Loving kindness

Where does the motivation to love come from?

How does it relate to meeting needs?

How do you balance the desire to be generous without patronising charity?

How does funding/charity status impact this?

#### Perseverance

Has charity impacted your ability in the long term?

When exploring funding sources how do you ensure they don't come and go?

#### Networks of cooperation

Some people say vicars are 'Natural networkers', 'relationship brokers' and were seen as go-to people for other local leaders: does this ring true?

Do people treat you differently if you come from the church or the project?