Finding Meanings for ‘Faith in Development’: An Examination of the Applied Theology of World Vision and Its Broader Implications for the Development Sector and Practice

By

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Abstract


This research in applied theology articulates the key theological motifs of a leading international development organisation, World Vision. A revelatory case study was undertaken using largely qualitative research techniques to assess how these motifs were reflected in the organisation’s development work and practice. A corpus of evaluation reports and interview transcripts were provided by World Vision which related to the integration of faith in international development projects. The materials examined covered eight country contexts from Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East and Eurasia.

Grounded theory was applied to explore the dataset. This process revealed many linkages and identified 37 different ways in which World Vision’s theology influenced its praxis. A basic quantitative analysis was undertaken to provide a general indication of prevalence and distribution of the links identified. Key risks associated with World Vision’s development approach were also identified, especially through its work with churches.

Some particular emphases of World Vision’s development work were identified, including a consistent, spiritually based interiority, a strong people-centeredness (reflecting ideas about incarnational love) and a pervasive emphasis on positive inter-faith relationships arising from a vested theological position. Overall, World Vision’s approach to development was assessed as cohesive and distinctive.

The research for this study moved beyond high-level theological motivations to the role of organisational theology and its more concrete impact on development work. In this way, the study has responded to calls in the literature for greater knowledge and transparency when it comes to faith-based approaches to development. It raises some significant implications for the development sector and development practice, indicating that theology itself can be an important resource in responding to poverty and disadvantage.
Acknowledgements

Rev. Rob Kilpatrick, Ashley Goode and Andrew Newmarch must be thanked for their pioneering work in conducting the evaluations which laid the foundation for this thesis. So must World Vision Australia for agreeing to make those reports and the records of interviews available.

I have been blessed by Dr Richard Copland, who has helped open up a new set of challenges that have changed my world. I am also grateful to my colleague Sheldon Rankin for his enthusiasm, friendship and insights.

My supervisors, Dr Greg Elsdon and Dr Andrew Menzies, have been a constant encouragement to me as this research has been shaped and reshaped. Dr Paul Woods must be recognised for his thoughtful comments on the manuscript. I am also grateful to Dr Alan Niven for taking the time to read it.

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<td>ADP</td>
<td>Area Development Program: the suite of development activities facilitated by World Vision within a particular geographic area. The communities where ADPs are located range in population from 20,000 to 100,000. The ADP is World Vision’s characteristic development model. The life of an ADP is 12 to 15 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry</td>
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<td>AOG</td>
<td>Assemblies of God</td>
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<td>ATR</td>
<td>African Traditional Religion</td>
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<td>AusAID</td>
<td>The executive agency responsible for delivering the Australian Government’s international aid and development program. This agency was dissolved and collapsed into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade from 1 November 2013</td>
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<td>BOND</td>
<td>British Organisation for NGOs in Development</td>
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<td>CC</td>
<td>Christian Commitments: refers to the functional area within World Vision which takes administrative responsibility for promoting and developing its faith-based policies. CC also provides pastoral care for staff, spiritual nurture activities (including devotional programs) and oversees church relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDC</td>
<td>Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoH</td>
<td>CoH: World Vision’s scripturally based Channels of Hope program. This is an integrated series of workshops on HIV or gender issues in which traditional paradigms are challenged by reference to sacred sources.</td>
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<td>CoHG</td>
<td>Channels of Hope for Gender</td>
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<td>CPP</td>
<td>Church Partnership Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development (UK government)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DME</td>
<td>Design, monitoring and evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>F&amp;A</td>
<td>Finance and Administration</td>
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<td>FBO</td>
<td>Faith-based organisation</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus group discussion</td>
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<td>FGM</td>
<td>Female genital mutilation</td>
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<td>GOC</td>
<td>Georgian Orthodox Church</td>
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<td>HEA</td>
<td>Humanitarian and emergency assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (also ‘HIV and AIDS’)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HPR</td>
<td>Healing, peace and reconciliation</td>
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<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International non-government organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>KII</td>
<td>Key informant interview</td>
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<td>MQ</td>
<td>Ministry Quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>National Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-government organisation</td>
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<td>NO</td>
<td>National office: refers to a World Vision national office located in a developing country</td>
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<td>Partnership</td>
<td>The World Vision partnership – a global federation of separately incorporated bodies who have covenanted together to fight poverty. National Office entities are located in developing countries, and Support Office entities are typically located in Western donor counties. The partnership identifies itself as a partnership of Christians</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNG</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
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<td>reports, evaluation</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>RPS</td>
<td>Religious Practices Scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>WV</td>
<td>World Vision partnership or a World Vision National Office (depending on context)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WVI</td>
<td>World Vision International: the entity coordinating accountability, compliance, and international policy formation within the global World Vision partnership and which provides treasury functions to member entities</td>
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<td>YBC</td>
<td>Youth Bible Curricula</td>
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1. Introduction: Setting the Scene

This thesis sits in the field of applied or practical theology. Specifically, it looks at the way Christian theology can influence or inform international development work.

Parachurch organisations have been major players in international development work for as long as international development has been recognised as an academic discipline or profession. These organisations actively engage with the communities they serve. On a daily basis they are concerned with questions of justice, compassion, achieving fullness of life, advocacy, and at times, political action. Despite the longevity of their involvement, there has been very little attempt to reflect critically on how an organisation’s theology informs its development practice. Instead, according to Linden, faith-based organisations (FBOs) have been viewed with a level of condescension and curiosity. They have been boxed as ‘interesting or irritating marginal players in the struggle for human emancipation from poverty.’\(^1\) This dismissive view contrasts with their status as some of the world’s largest development NGOs.\(^2\) It is now time for a deeper examination.

1.1 What is development?

The idea of ‘development’ is a contested term, both as to its meaning and how it may be achieved within communities. It is commonly accepted that the objective of development is ‘to advance human dignity, freedom, social equity and self-determination’\(^3\) and that a lack of development involves ‘social exclusion, poverty, ill-health, powerlessness and a shortened life-expectancy.’\(^4\) While these lofty goals are shared by many, there are lively debates about how they may be achieved. This research will show that a more holistic approach to development, which takes religious beliefs of communities seriously, can offer some significant benefits. Furthermore, as this happens, some established understandings of ‘development’ may be challenged.

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\(^1\) Linden, A 2008, ‘The language of development: what are international development agencies talking about?’ in Clarke, G & Jennings, M (eds), Development, civil society and faith-based organisations: bridging the sacred and the secular, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, pp. 72–93, at 90.


\(^3\) Clarke, M 2013, in Clarke, M 2013 (ed.), The handbook of research on development and religion, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham UK, p. 1.

\(^4\) Ibid.
1.2 The research problem: going below the surface of faith-based organisations

Before 2000, the idea of religious faith having a positive role in development was downplayed by the academy or even seen as anathema. Since then, research in this area has gained momentum, although there are still major gaps. One gap exists because the potential contribution of religion tends to be viewed in narrow, instrumental ways. According to King, this has led to the superficial labelling of actors in the sector according to their donor constituencies, rather than to addressing religious identity in terms of its distinctive development models and contributions. He argues that to be meaningful, a religious identity should tell us ‘how religion actually functions in religiously motivated relief and development.’ In a similar vein, Jones and Petersen note that very little research has addressed the question of ‘the different ways in which faith or religion is signified and practiced within these organisations [FBOs].’

1.3 Parallel queries in social science

Similarly, in a related area of social science, Ferguson observes that ‘Multiple studies conclude that faith-based services are effective, yet relatively few aim to identify the specific faith components related to successful outcomes.’ It is argued that in international development there is a parallel need to define which elements of faith-based operational practice contribute to or impede successful outcomes. The present research aims to show how the religious identity of a development organisation actually contributes to its development work in particular contexts. This will move the discourse beyond viewing religion as a private motivation for a cohort of staff or a donor category. This kind of research is important because it is recognised that the links between religions and development have been neglected in social science research and existing studies and proven methodologies are scarce.

7 Jones & Petersen, p. 1298.
9 University of Birmingham 2011, ‘Religions and development in India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania: Inspirational or Inhibiting?’, Religions and Development Research Programme Policy Brief No. 21, p. 2.
1.4 Locating myself in the narrative

Raising questions about the role of faith in international community development overlaps with my own personal journey. My background is in law, with most of my professional life spent as a tax partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers. During and after that period I began the serious study of theology. From 2002 I also began a series of life-changing journeys to Timor Leste, which introduced me to some of the challenges of community development practice. In that time I established a small non-government organisation (NGO) and after a few years retired from my professional practice. Since then, I have been a board member of two faith-based development organisations. From 2009–2012 I was a senior executive of World Vision Australia, and I am presently the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Anglican Overseas Aid. I am now an Anglican minister. These roles have provided many occasions to reflect on the distinctive contribution that Christian faith may make to international development work.

Over this period a range of views have been expressed to me by development sector colleagues about the integration of faith in development work. A common perspective is that FBOs do essentially the same ’stuff’ as secular ones, and there is no real difference. Others locate the distinctive contribution of FBOs in the area of personal motivation. This may mean that while development work is inspired by faith convictions, it is not materially different from other organisations in terms of its execution. A few colleagues have argued that Christian faith influences both the motivation and the execution of development work. More ambitiously, some have posited that faith-based approaches must inform the understandings of what ‘development’ is, claiming that such approaches speak to a more comprehensive notion of personhood which takes spiritual life seriously.

Some detractors of faith-based approaches see them as introducing far too many ethical problems, especially when mixed with an evangelical agenda. Another group describe faith-based approaches as well meaning but sometimes amateurish. They point out that faith-based actors occasionally transgress accepted norms of development practice, and divert attention from more important ideas about universal human rights.

This multiplicity of perspectives has been exercising my critical faculties for several years. My hunch is that many of these perspectives are correct when viewed from the experience of particular organisations. This has instilled a desire to unpack the meaning of faith in development for those organisations, to gain a better idea of the contributions and risks their approaches represent. To focus on one organisation allows for a more meaningful and carefully contextualised analysis.
1.5 The case study

My contention is that there is a benefit in Christian FBOs reflecting specifically and intentionally on how their theology informs their development work because this can expose both the benefits and risks in terms of development practices. Such information may benefit other FBOs and be of interest to the development sector more generally. This study’s research addresses this contention by illustrating how it has been possible to articulate key elements of the organisational theology of one leading organisation and, in doing so, provide a rubric for examining the influence of those motifs on its development work.

For this purpose World Vision kindly granted access to a corpus of recent internally published evaluation reports and interviews that examined, in a broad way, the integration of faith within a number of its country development programs. This was a rare opportunity, as materials of this kind are not publicly available. It was possible to identify the main themes of World Vision’s theology based, among other things, on a series of official policy documents. This opened up the opportunity for a revelatory case study.

1.6 Organisational theology as the entry point

The faith connection of some FBOs is very loose or tenuous. Other organisations simply choose more open systems, or diverse methodologies or personnel. There are good reasons why an examination of organisational theology is an effective entry point in exploring what faith means to an organisation and its development practice. By mapping a working theology, it becomes possible to expose what ‘faith in action’ means for an organisation. This process may identify areas of potential comparative advantage or disadvantage in terms of praxis. It is argued that as organisations become more intentional about mapping their theology, they can gain a better understanding of theology as a potential resource in responding to disadvantage.

1.7 Broader implications and importance

The case study permitted observations to be made about a particular organisation, with a particular theology, operating in particular settings. This kind of research is important because while international development has discovered religion, ‘it has yet to investigate its diverse meanings for faith-based organisations.’

It is not suggested that World Vision is a representative of all FBOs, although it is likely that there will be others like it. The intent of

the case study was to shine light on what faith means for a particular organisation, not to claim a representative status for the subject.

Having said that, while a case study does enable a more specific analysis, this does not necessarily delimit its usefulness. On the contrary, the firm anchor of a case study allows well-grounded observations to be drawn that may have a more general application. The experience of this case study is that significant implications did emerge which will hopefully contribute to the growing discourse about the roles of faith in development. The penultimate chapters sketch out those implications for the sector, the literature and development practice.

This kind of research is also essential to improve the transparency of FBOs. To this extent, the thesis responds to James’ clarion calls for research which will promote greater ‘faith literacy’ for donors and other stakeholders. Unless more is known about faith-based approaches, it will not be possible to optimise their benefits nor mitigate their risks. Accordingly, this type of research is of fundamental concern to both the development profession and the world’s poor.

1.8 Statement of thesis

At the outset of this research, the question of what faith may mean to World Vision was open ended. I did not have a very detailed hypothesis in mind. On the contrary, the hypothesis was deliberately broad. I wanted to see if World Vision’s theology was capable of thematic articulation, and, if so, to then examine how its theological motifs were reflected in its development work and practice. I wanted to let the data speak to the maximum extent possible, forming its own connections. In this way a more organic and authentic picture could emerge. Against this background, the hypothesis that this thesis explores can be presented as follows:

• World Vision has a number of key theological emphases which frame its development work
• these theological motifs inform its development work in significant and particular ways
• taken as a whole, its approach to development can be considered as cohesive and distinctive
• it is possible to identify potential advantages and disadvantages arising from this theologically informed approach to development

• the application of World Vision’s theological framework will be nuanced to reflect local culture, traditions and development needs.

1.9 Method

Grounded theory was considered the most suitable method of research for this thesis. This is a leading method used in the social sciences that operates differently from many approaches. Instead of embarking on research with a detailed and preconceived hypothesis to test, and then selecting a method considered apt to prove it, grounded theory allows more room for the data to speak in the construction of theory. Theory is allowed to develop organically from the data under review as linkages are formed by exhaustive coding, sub-coding and grouping.

Grounded theory provided a corrective to the extreme positivism that was incipient in social science research up to the 1960s. The proponents of this method, Glasser and Strauss, recognised that knowledge was not an external, objective reality to be uncovered through a detached scientific process. They rejected the sterile and more limiting notions of falsification and hypothesis testing. They instead proposed a more organic process of theory emergence from the data. At the same time, they recognised a need for a systematic approach to counter the at times uncontrolled subjectivism of phenomenological research.

Their approach allowed for a creative yet systematic interplay between the researcher and the data being collected and analysed. This approach highlighted the steady emergence and constant refining of conceptual categories, in contrast with data assessment against preconceived hypotheses. In this way, Glasser and Strauss ‘offered a compromise between extreme empiricism and complete relativism by articulating a middle ground in which systematic data collection could be used to develop theories that address the interpretive realities of actors in social settings.’

The purpose of grounded theory is to elicit understandings about patterned relationships. It is an interpretive process, not a logico-deductive one. It relies on the constant and reflective interplay between the researcher, the data and the emerging theoretical categories. Grounded theory is unsuited to narrow hypothesis testing. The hypothesis under examination in the

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14 Suddaby, p. 635.
15 Ibid., p. 634.
16 Suddaby observes that ‘where grounded theory is used to “test” preconceived notions of what is likely to be observed, [the] chances are that he or she will “see” the intended categories and overlook the emergent ones’ (Ibid., p. 637).
present research is wide-ranging, positing very broadly that an FBO’s characteristic theological motifs can influence its development work, presenting areas of comparative advantage and risk. Grounded theory is well suited to this kind of spacious inquiry.

The researcher’s own insights and professional experience, as well as the literature and data all feed the interpretative process at the heart of grounded theory. Glasser very much emphasised openness, flexibility and emergence as the founding principles of this process. This contrasts with a more prescriptive forms of the theory promoted at a later stage by Strauss in an effort to promote greater standardisation and rigour in qualitative analysis. Suddaby cautions against using grounded theory techniques in a highly mechanistic way, especially ‘a neutrotic over-emphasis on coding.’ He observes: ‘although the rigid application of grounded theory technique might produce passable results, such a mechanical approach usually lacks the spark of creative insight upon which exemplary research is based.’ By adhering to Glasser’s founding principles, it has been possible to leverage the helpful tension between ‘art and science’ inherent in the original methodology, and to maintain what Glasser refers to as ‘theoretical sensitivity’.

In this study, eight research domains were established by stating some of the key themes of World Vision’s theology. Data was coded to these domains, and grounded theory was used to establish whether there were any relevant linkages among the data in each domain. The result was the production of a taxonomy describing how World Vision’s theology informs its development work in 37 different ways.

A possible methodological weakness was that the research relied on internally produced reports and interviews. It was not possible to exclude the risk of tendentiousness in the production of the secondary sources which comprised the dataset. Nevertheless, the dataset covered a broad range of contexts and sources and these were sufficiently voluminous to enable particular themes to be drawn out.

1.10 Flow of chapters

- Chapter 2 examines three distinct bodies of literature that provide context for the thesis.

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18 Suddaby, p. 638.
19 Ibid.
Chapter 3 provides additional background, and it will outline some of the prevalent theories of change used in the development sector. The main differences between faith-based and other types of development agencies do not lie in their selection of a theory or theories of change, but in other factors that flow from their organisational culture. In the case of World Vision, these factors are strongly informed by its organisational theology.

Chapter 4 sets out the reasons why World Vision was selected as a research subject and the proposed methodology.

Chapter 5 attempts to articulate thematically the main elements of World Vision’s theology and related faith practices.

Chapters 6–10 analyse a series of internal World Vision evaluation reports (and supporting documents and data) covering eight countries in Africa, the Balkans, Eurasia and the Middle East. The analysis will be looking for evidence of how World Vision’s theology and related faith practices are reflected in its development work in these places.

Chapter 11 examines the significant risks associated with World Vision’s theologically informed development approach.

Chapter 12 considers whether the thesis has been established.

Chapter 13 examines some of the general implications from the research, including for the surrounding literature.

Chapter 14 considers an eclectic range of implications to arise from the research for development practice.

Chapter 15 will provide a brief overview and outline some prospective areas for further research.

This research has been thoroughly stimulating to conduct, and it is hoped that sharing of this work will provide equal stimulation for the reader. The next chapter examines the literature surrounding the research.
2. Why There is a Need to Map Organisational Theology: The Literature Surrounding the Problem

2.1 Overview of literature

This chapter outlines three distinct bodies of literature which all suggest that a careful examination and articulation of a development organisation’s theology can provide a helpful analytical foundation. The first body of literature shows that there are diverse high-level theological reasons that may motivate Christians to engage in development work. However, the sheer variety of these reasons, and the fact that international development work is mediated through organisations with their own corporate structure and identity, suggests that FBOs should be considered on a case-by-case basis. There are multiple theologies of development that reflect a diverse range of development organisations.

In corollary, a second body of literature shows that attempts to generically categorise Christian faith-based development and community service organisations have been largely unsuccessful. One of the reasons for this is that insufficient attention has been paid to the internal theology of organisations in accounting for their differences. The focus has been on attempts to measure external features, rather than core theological beliefs, which can produce a misleading picture.

A third body of literature highlights that there has been a consistent under-representation in the academic literature of the role of religious faith within development studies. This is partly as a result of modernity thinking, and it has led to a lack of understanding about the way faith functions in carrying out development work. Together, these three bodies of literature suggest that a case study examining an organisation’s theology and associated development praxis is long overdue. This type of study may highlight important connections in terms of how an organisation can use its theological underpinnings to respond to the challenge of international development work.

2.2 Theological support for Christian involvement in development

Theological literature reveals a variety of theological reasons why Christians are involved in undertaking international development work.
One powerful motif is that Christians have a role in working for the coming kingdom of God. The kingdom is a rich collation of ideas that looks forward to a time when God will reign fully in all things and the heavens and earth will be renewed. The corresponding Old Testament notion of shalom pictures the whole of creation taking its right order and relationship before God. In this new kingdom, the sinful and selfish exercise of power by humans over others will give way to godly relationships and the whole of creation is reconciled with its Creator and with itself.

In terms of human relationships, important biblical metaphors associated with the idea of the coming kingdom include the nations streaming to Mount Zion to learn of God’s ways and the beating of instruments of war into ploughshares.

The renewal of the world is alluded to in St Paul’s writing, which speaks of all of creation groaning, awaiting its rebirth. There are other images that point to a time when the existing enmities within creation will be removed. In Isaiah, a striking picture is given of a new era of peace associated with the messianic descendant of David: “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox” (Isa 11:6–7).

Establishing the kingdom of God is seen by Christians as a global task requiring a fundamental transfiguring of relationships within creation. The coming of God’s kingdom is foreshadowed by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and it is usually understood to reach fulfilment with the return of Christ to earth. Theologians such as NT Wright believe that the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ is emblematic of the Christian call to work for this kingdom. Most Christians believe that they exist in the in-between time, sometimes described as a ‘now-but-not-yet’ period of history. This refers to a time when Christians look for signs of God’s in-breaking rule, while holding firm to a vision of the ultimate fulfilment of his purposes. Development work is conceived by many Christians as a way to help communities experience a more abundant life in the present, as a foretaste of this coming kingdom. Dewi Hughes from TEAR Fund is an exponent of this view in his book God of the poor: a biblical vision of God’s present rule.

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1 See Episode 1 of The Faith Effect DVD series produced by World Vision Australia in which NT Wright is interviewed.
2 Isa 2:2–4.
3 Rom 8:22.
5 Hughes, D 1998, God of the poor: a biblical vision of God’s present rule, Authentic, Milton Keynes.
While the kingdom of God is seen as the sovereign work of God alone, Christians are invited by God to live in anticipation of what he is doing. In this sense, God’s people may be seen as having an active role in joining in the expression of the Creator’s redemptive purposes. According to one view, God’s people may be seen as co-creators with God in a joint enterprise of restoring the world. International development work – which has an emphasis on social equity, health and prosperity, peace and reconciliation, and care for the environment – has many points of resonance with the motif of global restoration contained in the idea of the coming kingdom.

Jurgen Moltmann, a theologian in the reformed tradition, sees the kingdom as a future event, but one that comprehensively informs the present. In his view, Christian eschatology is a vital area of doctrine because it should comprehensively shape the way the followers of Jesus live in the present. Christians are said to comprise an eschatological community of salvation: ‘This eschatological orientation is seen in everything from which and for which the Church lives.’ On this analysis, ‘mission is not carried out within the horizon of expectation provided by the social roles which society concedes to the Church, but it takes place within its own peculiar horizon of the eschatological expectation of the coming kingdom of God, of the coming righteousness and the coming peace, and of the coming freedom and dignity of man.’ For Moltmann, the first intercession in the Lord’s Prayer – which enlists disciples in God’s service, ‘Thy kingdom come on earth, as it is in heaven’ – is as much a statement of call as it is of invocation. As Christ’s disciples orient themselves towards this future vision, they will actively seek God’s rule within their communities and the world. Development work is one way to give expression to this Christian hope of a renewed world.

Another theological basis for undertaking international development work is social Trinitarianism. The work of Miroslav Volf is one example of a contemporary theologian has explored the social implications of the Trinity in human affairs. Broadly, social Trinitarianism highlights the relationship between the members of the eternal Godhead as being prototypical of God’s aspirations for humans. The Trinity is seen as a community of self-giving love that is the paradigmatic example. The Father’s love is made manifest in the costly surrender of the Son. The Son’s love for the Father is demonstrated through faithful

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7 Ibid, p. 327.
8 Mt 6:10.
obedience and service. The Holy Spirit is also imbued with these qualities, indwelling the Godhead in a living social relationship known as *perichoresis*.

Social Trinitarianism contends that humans were made in this social or relational image of God. They are intended to emulate the kind of self-giving and faithful community displayed within the Godhead. International development work is one way for humans to express relational solidarity with each other – through mutuality and service, and by seeking to build true community. The understanding that all humans are made in the image of God also lays an important foundation for Christians in understanding and promoting human rights.

Another basis for Christian development work is responding to the prophetic call to defend vulnerable communities. The public commencement of Jesus’ own ministry recalled the prophet call of Isaiah. Jesus described his mission in Luke’s gospel in these terms: *The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,*

Development work focusses on impoverished communities, and often communities which have experienced some kind of oppression or trauma. A key thrust of development work is to move beyond a merely compassionate response to sustainable improvements and justice. The prophetic call throughout scripture to defend the widow and the orphan may at times imbue development work with a more political character. Important aspects of development practice are concerned with ensuring that vulnerable groups obtain justice and their human rights are respected. This resonates with the ancient injunction to ensure justice in the gate.

The focus on justice and rights has received attention in recent decades with the emergence of liberation theology. This is a form of political theology emanating from Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s. It interpreted the teachings of Jesus as calling for active liberation from unjust social economic and political conditions, and it is sometimes associated with the application of a Marxist pedagogy to Christian scriptures. International development work and liberation theology share a common impetus in that both respond to

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11 The phrase ‘widow and orphan’ can be understood as biblical code for any disenfranchised group.
12 Richard Shaull is one prominent example of a theologian who, in his earlier writings, emphasized the horizontal dimension of salvation. For him, salvation meant ‘liberation, which could only be achieved by overthrowing the existing order’. Harvey Cox, at an earlier stage also stressed that ‘God is first of all present in political events, in revolutions, upheavals, invasions and defeats’ since ‘it is the world, the political world … which is the arena of God’s renewing and liberating activity’ (Cox, H 1965, *God’s revolution and man’s responsibility*, Valley Forge, Judson, pp. 23, 25.
13 Amos 5:15. The gate refers to the city gate, which was traditionally the place in ancient Israel where an aggrieved person could come to seek justice from the city elders.
circumstances in which oppressed or impoverished peoples seek liberation. The emphasis on community empowerment and participation, which is a consistent feature of development theory, has strong resonances with liberation theology. As well as addressing similar contexts, liberation theology recognises the important role of political advocacy and social mobilisation in bringing about change.

More generally, Christian social ethics suggest that the followers of Jesus should be willing to carry each other’s burdens. This reflects the second great command to love neighbour as self.\textsuperscript{14} Theologians like Bonhoeffer emphasise that compassionate action and mutuality underpin real community, and are based on the unity and reconciliation humans can experience in Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{15}

Jesus also disabuses attempts to narrowly circumscribe our personal responsibilities. In an acclaimed exegesis of the parable of the Good Samaritan, theologian Ken Bailey adopts a cultural critical hermeneutic. He points out that the victim in the parable is set up by Jesus to be an anonymous, generic person. The removal of the victim’s clothes by the robbers deprives the passers-by of the opportunity to determine his ethnicity based on traditional dress.\textsuperscript{16} The fact that he is beaten to unconsciousness means that his identity cannot be established by accent, language or direct questioning. The parable illustrates that responding to the needs of a fellow human constitutes true neighbourliness and transcends narrower formal categories.

Another reason for Christian engagement in international development work is a broad missiology based on an understanding of God’s universal presence within communities. This view acknowledges the self-bestowal by God on all of creation. According to theologians like Boff, the Holy Spirit is ‘the first missionary’ in every community. While acknowledging that humans are sinful and broken, God nonetheless provides signs of his life and presence, witnessing to himself within in every human context.

The self-bestowal of God on all communities means that development work can be based on the notion of human reciprocity. Because all peoples are made in the image of God, then they will reflect, albeit imperfectly, something of his goodness expressed within their own community life. This provides a firm and positive foundation in seeking to carry out development based on existing community strengths.

\textsuperscript{14} Mt 22:39.
A contrast can be drawn with the self-understanding of many Christian missionaries in the colonial era. The idea of the self-bestowal of God on all creation was not well understood or accepted. Such missionaries have been caricatured as seeking to ‘bring God in their suitcase’ in their attempts to ‘reach’ various ‘unregenerate’ people groups. If God is already present in developing communities, then it becomes possible to discern what God is already doing, or perhaps seeking, within those settings. Ways of building up and strengthening communities can then be identified and leveraged. These can be understood as authentic expressions of God’s grace. It is also becomes possible to learn from communities rather than instructing communities in an asymmetric way.

If God is understood as already at work in the world, then this can lead to a richer and fuller understanding of his redemptive agenda. Typically, faith-based development work may see salvation as less about the afterlife and more about seeking to give expression to the fullness of life in the present. This may involve affirming human life through programs that are holistic, temporal, broad-based and inclusive. There are resonances here with the Christian understanding of the in-breaking kingdom of God. However, these emphases also help to shape the idea of salvation itself. In particular, a broader understanding of salvation can emerge which is not primarily individualistic, nor deferred. The United Kingdom’s (UK’s) development agency Christian Aid captures this well in its by-line ‘We believe in life before death.’

So-called Catholic Social Justice Teaching provides another collection of teachings that support engagement in international development efforts. God’s ‘preferential option for the poor’ and ideas about the global ‘human family’ lie at the heart of this teaching. God’s affinity with the poor and outcast is so deep that to neglect the poor is to neglect our human obligation towards God. This line of teaching was clearly articulated through papal encyclicals in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is also very holistic in its approach. Most recently, Pope Benedict XVI has reiterated that ‘love for widows and orphans, prisoners, and the sick and needy of every kind, is as essential as the ministry of the sacraments and preaching of the Gospel.’ Deneulin explains: ‘A Christian vision of development does not separate the material from the spiritual dimensions of life. Christians believe that humans are made in the image of God and only reach their fulfillment in God. Development, working for social justice and protection of the environment goes hand in hand with conversion of the heart.’

17 Dues Caritas Est, paragraph 22.
18 Deneulin, S 2013, ‘Christianity and international development’, in Clarke, M 2013, pp. 51–65, 64.
Catholic teaching is nuanced when it comes to international development, which is not seen as an end in itself. Bertina has traced its evolution to a careful doctrine of ‘integrated human development’ resting upon the three pillars of social consideration, moral behaviour and reconciliation with God.\(^\text{19}\) Earlier papal encyclicals embraced the potential of technology and trade as means of social uplift, but later reflections noted the incipient dangers of technocracy and utilitarian absolutism.\(^\text{20}\)

While holistic, Catholic teaching makes it plain that the idea of development is always subordinated to the pursuit of historical reconciliation between humanity and God.\(^\text{21}\) According to Deneulin, ‘Christians believe that humans become more human when they are closer to God. To reflect this reality, Catholic Social Teaching refers to integral human development. The development of the whole person is not complete without spiritual considerations.’\(^\text{22}\) Therefore, the secular ‘religion of development’ practised by some institutions is seen as idolatry. Progress is possible only because God has decided from the beginning to make humans a sharer of his glory.\(^\text{23}\) Bertina states that ‘It is hoped that humanity’s wholehearted recognition of the human family and pursuit of its realisation – aspects of the divine plan – will prefigure the advent of the Kingdom of God.’\(^\text{24}\)

An appreciation of the broad human family, seeking the common good and promoting economic justice are all elements of the Catholic understanding of integral human development. So are expressing solidarity, promoting civic and social participation, and upholding the principle of subsidiarity. An excellent summary of some of the main elements of Catholic teaching as applied to development work is set out in Appendix 1. It has been prepared by Caritas Australia.\(^\text{25}\)

Finally, it can be argued that all theology should involve an iterative dialogue between the theoretical and the practical. This can prevent theology from becoming too abstract or divorced from reality. The present research will examine how the praxis of a leading development organisation is informed by theological motifs, opening up an important area of Christian ministry to critical analysis.


\(^{20}\) Ibid., p. 118.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., pp. 119ff.

\(^{22}\) Deneulin, p. 58.

\(^{23}\) Bertina, referencing John Paul II 1987, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* paragraph 31.

\(^{24}\) Bertina, p. 120.

\(^{25}\) See Appendix A: A list of Catholic Social Justice Teachings and Sources Concerning Development.
Theologians, like Schleiermacher, have recognised that the teleological goal and crown of theology as a discipline is to be found in practical concerns.\(^{26}\) Like most theologians, he argued from theory to practice and examined how theology was applied in given settings. More recent theologians, like Browning,\(^ {27}\) argue for the analysis to proceed in the reverse direction, seeing all theology as fundamentally practical. He argues that a consideration of real-life issues provides the necessary hermeneutic to construct and (re)appraise theological thought. This research sees movement in both directions: seeking evidence of pre-defined theological themes, but also entering into a dialogue about how field data poses risks and challenges for an important area of ministry. This calls for a reappraisal in some areas.

### 2.2.1 Implications for the proposed research

This literature suggests a wide variety of theological reasons for why Christians may be motivated to undertake development work. These motivations help explain the large number of different Christian traditions represented in FBOs undertaking development work. The over-representation of Christian organisations in development work has been noted in the literature.\(^ {28}\)

It follows that many Christian FBOs will respond to the challenges of development work within a framework of organisational theological emphases which directly inform or influence day-to-day practice. This thesis aims to complete a picture that moves beyond high-level theological motivations to the role of organisational theology and its more concrete impact on development work.\(^ {29}\) In practical terms this will involve a consideration of the way faith actually functions in the carrying out of development work.

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\(^{29}\) International development work involves complex logistics, support, and scale. It is invariably mediated through corporate structures. Those structures require management, governance, and policies informing various aspects of organisational life and culture. While broader theological motivations of the kind outlined will inspire development activity, particular theological motifs may be emphasised within organisational life. To complete the picture of the influence of theology on development work, it is necessary to examine how the specific theological motifs adopted by an organisation affect its work. This provides a positive theoretical reason for undertaking the present research.
2.3 Attempts to categorise faith-based development non-government organisations

A second body of literature speaks to attempts that have been made to categorise FBOs according to type. It will be argued that these attempts have been of limited use.

James argues that the current catch-all term ‘faith-based organisation’ is confusing because no consistent idea exists of what it means to be faith-based. The extraordinarily heterogeneous nature of FBOs can be bewildering and makes an analysis difficult. Likewise, Vanderwoerd observes that scholars in many disciplines have struggled to define organisational religiousness while recognising the need to move beyond ‘dichotomous groupings of non-profits as simply “religious” or “secular”.

2.3.1 Typologies

Typologies are one approach to avoid dichotomous characterisations, because they attempt to describe a broader spectrum. James has prepared a summary of two recent typologies that attempt to provide an overall picture of different types of FBOs. These are reproduced here to give an indication of two possible approaches.

Sider’s typology

- **Faith-permeated**: the connection is evident at all levels of mission, staffing, governance and support. The religious dimensions are essential to program effectiveness.
- **Faith-centred**: founded for religious purpose, remain strongly connected but participants can readily opt out of religious elements.
- **Faith-affiliated**: retain influence of founders, but do not require staff to affirm religious beliefs or practices (except for some board and leaders). They may incorporate little or no explicitly religious content, may affirm faith in a general way and make spiritual resources available to participants.
- **Faith-background**: look and act like secular NGOs. They have a historical tie to a faith tradition. Religious beliefs may motivate some staff, but this is not considered in selection.
- **Faith-secular partnership**: whereby an FBO works together with secular agencies to create a temporary hybrid that resembles a faith background.

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31 Vanderwoerd, JR 2008, ‘Religious characteristics of government-funded faith related social service organizations’, *Social Work and Christianity*, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 258–286; see also Sider and Unrah, pp. 109–110, about some of the difficulties caused by the poor understanding of different types of faith-based organisation.
32 Vanderwoerd, p. 260.
33 James, 2009, p. 13.
In the second typology, Clarke has formulated a different scale based on faith styles:\textsuperscript{34}

**Clarke’s typology**

- **Passive**: Faith is subsidiary to broader humanitarian principles as a motivation for action and in mobilizing staff and supporters and plays a secondary role in identifying, helping, or working with beneficiaries and partners.

- **Active**: Faith provides an important and explicit motivation for action and in mobilizing staff and supporters. It plays a direct role in identifying, helping or working with beneficiaries and partners, although there is no discrimination against non-believers and the organization supports multi-faith co-operation.

- **Persuasive**: Faith provides an important and explicit motivation for action and in mobilizing staff and supporters. Plays a significant role in identifying, helping or working with beneficiaries and partners and provides the dominant basis for engagement. Aims to bring new converts to the faith or to advance the faith at the expense of others.

- **Exclusive**: Faith provides the principal or overriding motivation for action and in mobilizing staff and supporters. It provides the principal or sole consideration in identifying beneficiaries. Social or political engagement is rooted in the faith and is often militant or violent and directed against one or more rival faiths.\textsuperscript{35}

There are some strong criticisms that have been made of typologies such as these.

Any typology will over-simplify complex phenomena. It remains the case that ‘real organisations and programmes rarely fit into ideal types.’\textsuperscript{36} Faith-based organisations and their activities will display characteristics that are dispersed across several types. The best a typology can do is force an overall approximation. Organisations rarely proceed smoothly from one category to the next. Typologies are linear but behaviour is not, with groups seldom taking on all the qualities of the next type in a predicted orderly sequence.

Sider’s typology focuses on the ‘tangibly expressive’ ways in which religion may be present in an organisation. This typology ‘is primarily concerned with religion as it is expressed in observable and explicit phenomena such as language, symbols, policies, and activities.’\textsuperscript{37} This presents significant problems. As Sider and Unrah acknowledge, ‘Some faiths express their religiosity in more tangibly evident ways than others.’\textsuperscript{38} It is difficult to construct a typology that takes account of different faith traditions, especially those traditions which are more accepting of open systems and inclusive approaches to ministry. It is possible that a ‘program may outwardly appear secular and yet be rooted in religious convictions and nonverbally embody a religious message.’\textsuperscript{39}

Typologies cannot easily deal with the

\textsuperscript{34} Clarke & Jennings.
\textsuperscript{35} James, 2009, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{36} James, 2010, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{37} Sider & Unrah, p. 117.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p. 118.
ambiguities that are presented by the data. While it is possible to identify and measure externalities, it is far more difficult to ascertain how ‘the behavioural manifestations of religion, such as values like mercy and justice, motivate and give deeper meaning.’ While some faith traditions have visible, tangible indicators that can be identified, other traditions are more diffuse or elusive.

2.3.2 Indexes and frameworks

Monsma has developed a Religious Practices Scale (RPS) as a means of gathering information about international aid agencies (and other types of non-profits). A questionnaire was administered and points ranging from one to five were assigned for each religious practice depending on the degree to which the practice would be conducive to religion permeating the entire organisation and all its activities. The result was that those organisations ranking high on the RPS adopted practices considered likely to infuse the entire organisation with a religious underpinning and ethos.

The central problem with this approach is that it is a measure of overt religiosity, based on contestable assumptions about organisational permeation. Some faith traditions do not engage in the more overt practices that scored very highly on Monsma’s index, such as personal faith sharing. Those faith traditions that operate in quieter and less intrusive ways would score less, even though their sincerity and conviction may be just as strong.

Jeavons’ approach is to identify and explore key characteristics that separately comprise an assessment framework. He posits that ‘an organisation’s religiousness can express itself across multiple facets of organisational life, and therefore religiousness is conceived as a continuum from thoroughly religious to thoroughly irreligious in all of its organisational aspects.’

Rather than try to fit religious organisations within typical boxes, Jeavons proposes seven different areas of an organisation’s life which can be separately examined in addressing the question of its religiousness. This type of framework does not enable a specific assessment of how religious a particular organisation is as a whole, nor suggest any points of continuity or discontinuity. Diagramatically, this approach is depicted in Figure 2.1.

40 James, 2010, p. 12.
Figure 2.1 Jeavons’ framework for the examination of religious organisations.\(^{44}\)

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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<td>Organisational self-identity</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Selection of participants</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sources of resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Goals, products, and services (including use of ‘spiritual technologies’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Information processing and decision making</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Development and distribution of organisational power</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Organisational fields (including program partners)</td>
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For each criterion, an organisation may be placed along a spectrum from least to most religious.

Jeavons looks to organisational ‘participants’ as one criterion for examining organisational religiousness. This includes the extent to which board members, staff and volunteers share religious convictions. This exposes a methodological limitation. Inclusiveness may itself be a value upheld by a religious tradition, and the living out of religious conviction may therefore mean less rigid hiring practices, rather than more, at least at some employment levels.

A similar issue arises with Jeavons’ criterion of ‘Resources’. This refers chiefly to the extent of public funding of the organisation. Again, there are serious methodological issues. Vanderwoerd’s study of two faith-based community service organisations that received substantial amounts of public funding did not reveal any significant threat to their religious identity. This research suggests that the amount of funding from one source is not necessarily a key determinant of the organisation’s religiousness.\(^{45}\) Organisational leaders ‘exercised a choice about which funding sources would drive their mission and which would be used to accomplish their mission.’\(^{46}\) The bureaucracy and administration involved were seen as ‘manageable challenges rather than substantial threats to religiousness.’\(^{47}\)

\(^{44}\) This summary is based on a figure appearing in Grills, N 2010, ““Believing” in HIV: the effect of faith on the response of Christian faith-based organizations to HIV in India’, DPhil, Oxford University, p. 20; see also the analysis in Vanderwoedt.

\(^{45}\) Vanderwoedt, p. 269.

\(^{46}\) Ibid.

\(^{47}\) Ibid.
relatively smaller amounts of church funding may also have helped to offset any risk to identity.

Another of Jeavons’ criteria is the extent to which religion shapes an organisation’s purposes and how these purposes are implemented. Vanderwoert’s study noted that the organisations examined ‘utilized service technologies that are widely used and accepted by “secular” providers within their respective fields of service.’\(^{48}\) The organisations were ‘quite deliberate in making use of the best available techniques for providing services, regardless of whether or not they were secular. The key criterion for selecting service approaches was the fit with mission and values rather than whether a particular approach had a religious or secular source or label.’\(^{49}\)

Jeavons also looks to inter-organisational relationships, that is, the extent to which religion informs those with whom the organisation interacts. It was noted in Vanderwoerd’s study that ‘Neither organisation demonstrated a propensity to explicitly prioritize religious criteria over others in selecting suitable partners. Rather, the primary guide in partnerships was the extent to which a proposed partnership could advance the organisational mission, regardless of whether that partner was identified as religious.’\(^{50}\)

What emerges is that it is very difficult to characterise organisational religiousness from external criteria. The organisations examined in Vanderwoerd’s study may have rated lower against some of Jeavons’ criteria, even though their openness and inclusiveness reflected strong religious convictions.

A more recent article by Jeavons has acknowledged this dilemma.\(^{51}\) He asks rhetorically: ‘what do we do with an organisation that is rooted in a religious tradition that sees all acts of service and compassion towards others, or all efforts to ‘mend the world’, as inherently religious – that is as acts of devotion or even prayer?’\(^{52}\) To be meaningful, any analysis must pay very careful attention to the theological understanding of how the organisation engages in the world. Another dilemma will arise with organisations that identify themselves as ecumenical in their outlook. Will this mean analysing the organisation in terms of a dominant or historic faith tradition, or by striving to find some other kind of theological common denominator?

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\(^{48}\) Ibid., p. 270.
\(^{49}\) Ibid.
\(^{50}\) Ibid., p. 271.
\(^{51}\) Jeavons, T 2004, ‘Religious and faith-based organisations: do we know one when we see one?’, Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, vol. 33, pp. 140–145.
\(^{52}\) Ibid, p. 142.
2.3.3 Vanderwoedt’s proposal

Vanderwoedt has proposed a quadrant for the examination of organisational religiousness (see Figure 2.2). The central horizontal axis reflects an organisation’s commitment to its religious mission and the efforts made to realise that mission. The intersecting vertical axis reflects the way in which religion influences organisational boundaries, from open systems to closed systems. This approach goes some way towards addressing the way different traditions approach social engagement. He claims: ‘This conceptualization is more useful and accurate … because it separates [the] organizations’ commitments to faith from the way in which they live out those commitments.’\(^{53}\) According to this method, some organisations may be equally committed to their faith but choose strategies that are more closed ‘because they reject other persons, organisations, or resources as inappropriate based on their perceived incompatibility with their religious beliefs. This does not make these organisations more religious, but simply indicates a different approach to realizing their faith commitments.’\(^{54}\)

Figure 2.2 Two dimensions of organisational religiousness.

![Diagram of Vanderwoedt's quadrant]

This highlights a serious limitation in the many and varied attempts to categorise Christian social organisations. The deficiency is that insufficient account is taken of the theological premise of the particular faith traditions in the way they relate to the world.

As one example, it is suggested that the theology underpinning many Roman Catholic social service institutions would be better expressed in Vanderwoedt’s approach. Curran has

\(^{53}\) Vanderwoedt, p. 277.

\(^{54}\) Ibid.
observed that ‘Catholic identity has never defined itself in sectarian terms as over against all other human or secular reality. Catholic always includes catholic with a small “c”. The catholic understanding involves and touches all reality. The Catholic theological tradition has always insisted on the basic goodness of the human and has seen the divine mediated in and through the human.’

This means there is a propensity within Roman Catholicism to work comfortably with more open systems, including using non-Catholic partners, resources and personnel. This is possible because ‘much of what is distinctive about Catholic identity can be accepted by others and is not necessarily unique.’ Curran, in examining the uniqueness of a Catholic identity, asserts that ‘Many non-Catholics can be committed to the mission of [an] agency and act according to its basic values and principles … These values are developed from a theological and faith perspective, but they are then embodied in concrete norms and values in a manner that can win assent and acceptance from persons outside the Catholic tradition.’

2.3.4 Implications for the proposed research

In his text, Jeavons notes candidly that the major differences in Christian religious traditions might affect his research. He warns that a Catholic undertaking the same study and focusing on Catholic organisations might see some things very differently. The conclusion drawn from this literature is that the role of theology in the development work of major organisations is best individually assessed and mapped. Focussing on externalities alone, such as measures of overt religiosity, may be misleading. A better approach is to map the distinctive theology of an organisation and then assess the impact of this theology on its work. This provides a second positive theoretical reason for undertaking the present research.

2.4 The exclusion of religion from development studies on theoretical grounds

There is a third body of literature which points to an under-representation in academic study of the role of religion in international development work. The main reason proposed to explain this deficit is the influence of modernity and secularism in shaping development studies as an academic discipline. While this may be historically true, there has been a

56 Ibid., p. 95
57 Ibid., p. 102.
58 Jeavons, T 1994, When the bottom line is faithfulness, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, pp. xvii, xviii.
resurgent interest in examining the role of faith within development studies since the year 2000.

2.4.1 Marginalisation of faith within development studies

At a theoretical level, Berger’s 2003 analysis of religious NGOs noted the ‘long-standing trend in the social and political science literature to overlook the role of religious actors in the public sphere.’\textsuperscript{59} In terms of development practice more specifically, it was Kurt ver Beek’s study that brought the issue of systemic bias to prominence in 2000. His research examined three of the world’s leading development journals for the period 1982 to 1998 and looked for keyword references to religion and spirituality, compared with other themes. His results are summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Number of articles with reference to listed keywords, by journal

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Development</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Development Studies</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Developing Areas</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
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Berger’s analysis shows that while development journals contained many references to issues affecting worldview and social structures, there was a conspicuous absence of articles dealing with the role of religion or spirituality within development.\textsuperscript{60} He described this failure as ‘anti-developmental’ because it weakened ‘the individuals’ and communities’ capacity to determine their own values and priorities,’ thereby devaluing ‘the very thing which may give people the strength and hope they need …’\textsuperscript{61} He concluded that this failure reduced the effectiveness of development interventions.\textsuperscript{62}

Some organisations claim that they avoid the topics of religion and spiritual belief because it is inherently sensitive and they have the potential to be conflictual or sectarian. However,

\textsuperscript{59} Berger, pp. 2–3.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., pp. 32, 39.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., p. 31.
ver Beek contradicts this reasoning, noting that at the same time they do not fear equally sensitive topics such as land reform or violence against women. In these areas, difference of opinion is seen not only as acceptable, but necessary and healthy.63

In 2004, Selinger authored a report in which she described religion as ‘the forgotten factor’ in development.64 This built on the earlier work of ver Beek. Her research focused on the web pages for the United Nations (UN), the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the World Bank. She found that there was very little content addressing the role of spirituality or religion in development.65 Importantly, she also noted that published material tended to ‘avoid religion in the construction and critique of development strategy.’66 The tendency to view religion instrumentally, as a convenient vehicle to deliver development programs, is an issue considered in this research.

King touches upon this theme in his 2011 article. He notes that the way development activity is reported excludes religious elements or the significance of religious issues. In his opinion, ‘Too often the development sector’s focus is inward. Its literature is most often both practically and theoretically field focussed. For example, studies may report the measurable health benefits of a specific nutrition project. Defined in these terms an organisation’s religious identity is relatively insignificant.’67 In his view, the purpose becomes merely ‘to report quantifiable results in industry approved language.’68 This kind of reporting is mechanistic and perfunctory. It has the effect of excluding any deeper consideration of the interplay between religious beliefs and development practice or outcomes.

Finally, in an article published in June 2009, Jenny Lunn overviews the role of religion, spirituality and faith in development from a critical theory perspective. She contends that the marginalisation of these areas within the academic literature has lasted six decades.69 She claims that this represents a risk to the world’s poor. Her strident conclusion is that ‘The systematic omission or devaluing of religion in scholarship is a form of cultural imperialism which could result in the reduced effectiveness of development research and potentially damaging interventions.’70

63 Ibid., p. 38.
65 Ibid., p. 525.
66 Ibid.
67 King, p. 23.
68 Ibid.
70 Ibid., p. 940.
2.4.2 The influence of modernity on development discourse

Esposito and Watson argue that the marginalisation of religion in development studies has come about in part because of the Western idea of modernity. This way of understanding dates back to the European enlightenment and the first scientific and industrial revolutions. It involves a high level of confidence in ‘objective’ science and the human capacity to overcome social problems. The dominance of economics and a mechanistic conception of nature and the universe are paradigmatic aspects of modernity. They argue that the rise of modernity has left little room for the transcendent. Against this background, religion can be seen as a ‘quaint, purely private and personal affair,’ a view ‘apparently widespread in western academia.’

In a similar vein, Tyndale argues that rationalistic conceptions of development have excluded the role of religious faiths in responding to the complex phenomenon of global poverty. She notes that multi-dimensional problems require multi-dimensional solutions. While recognition of a broader view of development may be overdue, Lunn observes that many Western scholars are trapped by their modernist views. They are ‘very uncomfortable about talking in public about belief and spirituality, which they view as private and personal.’ Leading development theorist Chambers agrees: ‘[development] Academics affect to abhor moralising and reward appearances of dispassionate scientific detachment and objectivity.’ The result has been a separation of religion from Western development scholarship. While sometimes this is presented as being out of ‘respect’ for local culture, Ver Beek claims that ‘the silent conviction [is] that science and development ultimately will allow people to leave behind their spiritual and “unscientific” beliefs.’

Selinger asserts that religion has been less significant sociologically since the 1920s. She asserts that the central idea underpinning this marginalisation in academic life is modernisation theory. This has been highly influential within the social sciences, including development studies. One indicator of this influence is the persistent focus on economic

71 Esposito, JL & Watson, M (eds.) 2000, Religion and Global Order, University of Wales, Cardiff, p. 18.
72 Ibid, p. 17.
73 Ibid.
75 Lunn, p. 940.
77 Ver Beek, p. 39.
78 Selinger, p. 524.
growth as the defining factor in ‘development’. In this context, Selinger notes the ubiquitous definition of poverty as those live on less than US$1 per day.

Max Weber has had a profound influence on sociological literature. Indeed, it can be argued that the effect of his influence has been to marginalise the role of religion in development. Weber defined the role of Christian religion as a private motivating force in terms of personal ethics. The so-called ‘Protestant work ethic’, for example, is conceived as a helpful impetus or condition for economic growth within capitalistic systems. This allows a place for religion, albeit a marginal one, within an overall rationalistic framework that places material gain at the centre.

Grills contends that these influences have been mutually reinforcing. The persistent exclusion of the role of religion from development studies has implied that this is an illegitimate subject for serious academic study. This exclusion has influenced thinking within the sector including key stakeholders, donors and governments. Foucault’s theory of the dominant discourse is particularly relevant. This theory posits that ‘power is created and transferred through unwritten belief systems (so called discourses), which define “truth” and “knowledge”’. A discourse is a broad term referring to a rubric of ideas, concepts and categories that explain a given phenomenon.

In terms of development theory, the discourse becomes powerful and self-legitimating, and it may discourage faith-based approaches and research. The unwritten rules that make up the dominant discourse may ‘pressure FBOs to modify their behaviour in order to adapt it to be consistent with the dominant discourse.’

Grills notes that secular donors from high-income countries have tended to avoid close engagement with FBOs and have in some cases been ‘FBO-phobic’. His research suggests that multilateral organisations, such as the UN and the World Health Organization (WHO), have difficulty engaging with FBOs because of their own profoundly secular identities: ‘They have Westphalian ideals which relegate faith to the private domain. The treaty of Westphalia stated that international politics would no longer be examined from a theological standpoint … The Westphalian ethos claimed that ‘logic’ and ‘reason’ would replace religion in providing order to world affairs. … These secularist underpinnings of the UN and the WHO

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79 Ibid., p. 540.
80 Clarke, M 2013, p. 3.
82 Ibid., p. 72.
created an environment where it was antithetical for them to substantively engage with the faith element of FBOs.\textsuperscript{83}

Where they did so, pressure was exerted to conform to the dominant discourse of the donor. Practically, this meant minimising or removing faith elements. According to Thomas, organisations such as the WHO operate according to strictly rational post-Enlightenment principles that must ‘reduce the world to what can be perceived and controlled through reason, science, technology, and bureaucratic rationality.’\textsuperscript{84} To gain credibility, legitimacy or funding in the secular development world, FBOs must operate in a way that is consistent with its secular discourse.\textsuperscript{85} Within the dominant discourse, ‘Faith-affected approaches are often considered unprofessional’\textsuperscript{86} and ‘consideration of the religious, the spiritual, or the sacred are perceived as non-scientific or even irrational.’\textsuperscript{87} In response to these perceptions, FBOs working in the field of development out of religious convictions may over time downplay the role of religion as a constitutive force in their own work.\textsuperscript{88}

2.4.3 The resurgent interest in faith and development

Since 2000, there has been renewed interest in the role that religion can play in responding to global poverty. This work was encouraged by the World Bank under the presidency of James Wolfensohn, who set up a small research directorate. Katherine Marshall,\textsuperscript{89} who led these efforts, has written extensively on the essential role that religious faith can play in overcoming world poverty, working closely with the World Faiths Development Dialogue.

On a global scale, Marshall notes that religious belief is more widespread and more intensely held than ever before. The predicted secularisation of the world during the modern era has simply not occurred. It is commonly estimated that 80% of the world’s population has

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\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p. 88.


\textsuperscript{85} Grills, 2010, p. 88.

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., p. 90.

\textsuperscript{87} One example identified is that of the Norwegian Mission Society. This organisation claims that its strength is its Christian holistic approach to development. Yet external funding sources ‘require it to separate out faith practices such as communal prayers and undertake pure development work.’ This pressures the FBO to secularize and ‘behave contrary to its cultural identity’. See Grills 2009, p. 515 and Hovland, I 2005, ‘Who’s afraid of religion? The question of God in development’, paper presented at DSA Conference, Milton Keynes 7–9 September, 2005.

\textsuperscript{88} Clarke, M 2013, p. 5.

a religious affiliation and worldview – and even higher percentages in developing countries.\textsuperscript{90} The most recent data suggest the figure is even higher – about 88%.\textsuperscript{91} It has been noted that ‘99.5% of people in Africa have some religious connection’.\textsuperscript{92} There is a ‘general realization that faith is a primary source of meaning for most communities in developing countries …’\textsuperscript{93} and that this should be respected.

Archbishop Rowan Williams has critiqued the tardiness of the development sector in facing up to this reality: ‘there has been a very belated recognition that the majority of the world’s population does have religious convictions and that to ignore these is to push against the grain …’.\textsuperscript{94} While many countries in the West have become increasingly secularised, that is not the case in developing world. Others have pointedly blamed the failure of previous development efforts on their narrow economic focus. Selinger argues that a key contributor ‘in explaining the failure of development is the absence of the recognition of culture, and more specifically religion, in development theory and practice.’\textsuperscript{95} The persistent failure of development projects has encouraged a new level of openness to explore whether there is a more positive role for religion.

Another realisation has been that churches (and other kinds of religious institutions) offer exceptional reach within developing communities. Religious institutions are located in every community, offer unrivalled rural access and are present in many of the world’s poorest contexts. Taken together, they represent the world’s largest distribution system.\textsuperscript{96} They are also often the only institutions that are left to survive in conflict-affected countries.\textsuperscript{97} With a triumphal tone, The World Conference on Religion and Peace in 2001 claimed that ‘Religious communities are without question the largest and best organised civil institutions in the world today, claiming the allegiance of billions of believers and bridging the divides or race, class and nationality.’\textsuperscript{98} It is clear that the scale of religious infrastructure represents a

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{90} Carbonnier, G 2013, ‘Religion and development: reconsidering secularism as the norm’, in Carbonnier (ed.), pp. 1–5, at p. 1. \textsuperscript{91} ‘Global data upend usual picture of Christianity trends’, Anglican Communion News Service, 20 March 2013, online at http://www.aco.org/acns/news.cfm/2013/3/19/ACNS5358, citing the work of religious demographer Dr Todd M Johnson. \textsuperscript{92} James, 2009, p. 8. \textsuperscript{93} MacLaren, D 2011, ‘Putting the faith back into development’, Eureka Street, 26 October. \textsuperscript{94} Williams, R 2009b, ‘Relating intelligently to religion’, The Guardian, 12 November, p. 1. This article was based on a lecture given by Rowan Williams to the Anglican Alliance ‘A Theology of Development’ in London, 2009, online at http://clients.squareeye.net/uploads/anglican/documents/theologyofdevelopment.pdf. \textsuperscript{95} Selinger, p. 524. \textsuperscript{96} Marshall, 2005b, p. 8. \textsuperscript{97} Ibid. \textsuperscript{98} Additionally, it has been claimed that ‘FBOs probably provide the best social and physical infrastructure in the poorest communities … because churches, temples, mosques and other places of worship are the focal points for the communities they serve’ (Kumi Naidoo of CIVICUS, quoted in James, 2009, p. 7).}
unique opportunity. For example, James reports that ‘one third of all AIDS patients in the world are served under the auspices of the Catholic Church’ and faith-based hospitals in Africa number over 50%.

Research suggests that religious institutions offer advantages not only in terms of reach, but also trust. A vast World Bank-sponsored study by Narayan, with over 60,000 respondents, concluded that ‘religious leaders and institutions were often the most trusted institutions in developing countries.’ For example, it has been reported that ‘approximately 75% of Africans trust their religious leaders.’ One reason for this is that religious institutions have values that are grounded in community, and local people are therefore more likely to trust FBOs than state bodies and NGOs. Religious institutions ‘are perceived to work for the public good and, in comparison with government agencies, it is believed that they are more sensitive to people in times of catastrophe, chaos, or conflict, are responsive to people’s needs and flexible in their provision, act with honesty and take distribution seriously.’ These factors have caused some development academics, like Hoffstaedter, to question the more traditional siloed approach to religion in development.

2.4.4 Utilitarian and instrumental perspectives about religion

There is a tendency to see religion in a highly compartmentalised fashion – that is, as one of several dimensions comprising society. Thomas warns that ‘We risk misunderstanding the global resurgence of religion if we apply a modern concept of religion to non-western societies.’ He argues that it is naïve and perhaps arrogant to ask non-Western societies to compartmentalise their lives and remove religion from the public sphere, which a Western view of development often requires. The research of Devine and Deneulin has pointed out that religion is inherently social and always embedded in wider contexts. It is a phenomenon.

100 Marshall, 2005b, p 8.
101 Narayan, D 2000, Voices of the poor: can anyone hear us? Oxford University, Washington DC.
103 Lunn, p. 944.
104 Ibid.
105 See also Hoffstaedter, G 2011, ‘Religion and development: Australian faith-based development organisations’, Australian Council for International Development, Research in Development Series, Report No. 3 at pp. 5, 7–8, for further examples of the reach and scope of religious infrastructure deployed in international development.
experienced in the social domain or lived within communities, not simply a matter of individual belief.108 Their research suggests that religion cannot be conveniently manipulated for externally imposed development goals.

Jones and Petersen have noted the tendency to see religion as something that stands apart from development. This normative assumption causes the sector to see religion in instrumental ways.109 King agrees, noting that the sector ‘most often simply uses religion as an instrumental addition to its current agenda.’110 This kind of thinking primarily sees religious institutions as a delivery channel. With this mindset, the type of dealings experienced by faith leaders and religious institutions will be transactional. Haar and Ellis argue for more nuanced, open-ended and thoughtful ways in thinking about the role of religion in development work, noting the difficulty the development sector has experienced in grappling with its complexities. That said, it appears their approach to religion in development is still largely utilitarian.111

The literature identifies a number of reasons why religious identity is suppressed in the interactions of development organisations. First, the historic marginalisation of religion within Western scholarship has led some organisations to be more reticent about this aspect.112 Second, King notes a ‘world culture’ perspective. He posits that ‘as international NGOs come increasingly into contact with governments, international bodies, and one another, they exhibit a general homogenisation of language, practice and organisation. The resulting culture is highly rationalized, production-orientated, and professionalized’113 This manifests in a general trend towards shared secularisation. According to this view, FBOs and their distinctive praxis are not excluded but are progressively eroded. It is noted, however, that some very large organisations, like World Vision, have managed to resist this tendency, making it a suitable case study for the present research.

A third perspective identified in the literature is that FBOs voluntarily suppress their religious identity. According to Wrigley, there is a taboo in talking about it which reflects not only a desire to fit in with professional environments, but a concern that a visible faith

108 Clarke, M 2013, op cit, states: ‘Religion … is not simply concerned with the private circumstances of an individual and their rightful relationship with a supernatural deity, but rather it has a social realm that has relevance for wider society’, p. 1.
109 Jones and Petersen.
110 King, p. 22.
112 King, p. 22.
113 Ibid.
identity may put off some donors. Most governments, multilateral funders and corporate donors regard development as a secular project. James sees this as a great challenge that must be overcome through education with the aim of helping donors achieve a positive engagement with FBOs – without them being afraid or dismissive of the spiritual dimensions of their work.

2.4.5 Explaining and maintaining an integrated values base

Narayan’s research shows that one area of potential advantage for FBOs is that they hold faith and development together in a way that is especially resonant in many developing communities. This is particularly significant, as the position of many Western governments and secular agencies is that there should be a strict separation between ‘faith’ and ‘development’. Such a separation would undermine this advantage of FBOs.

Hovland has alluded to this risk. The strict separation required by donors – which tries to divorce religious elements from ‘real’ development – may force agencies to deny their very foundation. Wrigley’s dissertation argues in a similar direction. She asserts that separating faith from life is theoretical and unworkable, and may deprive FBOs of their unique strength.

While there may be a comparative advantage in using a faith-based development model in some contexts, most Western governments want to see faith elements quarantined and sidelined to the maximum extent possible. According to James, they want to ‘engage with the institutional forms of faith (the religious institution), but remain suspicious about the spiritual dimensions of faith (belief in God).’ Not surprisingly, secular donors also seek a neat clinical separation between ‘pure’ development and spiritual elements. James’ helpful suggestion is to reconcile these tensions by calling for greater education and faith literacy among donors so that an impasse is avoided. He argues that carving up an integrated values base to accommodate a Western, dichotomised, view of reality may be a retrograde step. Rather than tear apart that integrated values base, a more effective way forward may be to explain it better.

The literature reveals virtually no material that seeks to link organisational theology with developmental work at the level of field practice. James suggests that donors need to

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116 James 2010, p. 4.
117 Ibid.
constructively engage with FBOs without being put off by spiritual elements. In short, ‘They need to become faith literate.’ To assist this process, he urges FBOs to accept the responsibility of articulating for themselves and others what their faith identity is and the way in which this will be operationalised in development work.

This is important, because the kind of enforced dichotomy that many governments and donors seek is impractical. It may also be difficult for local communities to understand separations that are alien to their psyche. Devine and Deneulin have pointed out that religion in some cultures is not about a set of abstract doctrinal or theological arguments that can be neatly quarantined. Rather, it is experienced as permeating and influencing everyday life: ‘The relationship between religious and non-religious worlds are deeply inter-penetrated, to the point of being hardly distinguishable.’

Finally, there are both public and operational benefits in ensuring coherence between what an organisation believes and what it does. Public education about a faith-based approach to development may be far better than suppressing religious identity. Wrigley notes that it may also protect organisations against the charge of pursuing a narrow sectarian agenda. Where advantages can be demonstrated, this will help assuage stakeholder concerns. Conversely, where disadvantages are revealed, this will equally help donors make informed choices.

**2.4.6 Implications for the proposed research**

This third body of literature has provided another set of reasons for undertaking the proposed research. Conducting research which sheds light on how a theologically informed approach actually contributes to, or poses risks for, development work will help close a significant gap. Moreover, such research is conducive to a more constructive engagement with FBOs and faith institutions, the preservation of an integrated values base in terms of their positive contribution to development outcomes, and greater transparency in the interests of donors and other stakeholders.

118 Ibid., p. 6.
120 Devine & Deneulin, p. 73.
121 James 2010 argues: ‘The benefit of doing this will be the opportunity to ensure coherence between what an FBO believes (their theology of development) and what they do (their organisational behaviour and programmes)’, p.7.
122 Wrigley, p. 23.
Before commencing the research, however, it is helpful to understand how FBOs accommodate some of the main theories of change prevalent in international development practice. This is discussed in the next chapter.
3. Theological Reflection on Prevalent Theories of Change

This chapter outlines four of the theories of change used by organisations in the international development sector. It provides important background and illustrates that the difference between faith-based and other approaches to development does not lie in their selection of a theory or theories of change. In fact, all of the theories of change outlined in this chapter can be adopted by Christian agencies. It is posited that it is other factors, such as characteristic theological motifs, which can lead to a distinctive praxis.

This chapter outlines four meta-theories of change that form the basis of practice for many organisations. The difference between these theories is found in their approach, which may (1) view change from a scientific rationalist or technocratic perspective; (2) emphasise community participation and empowerment; (3) focus on human rights; or (4) conceive of change as a non-linear process that requires a highly-contextualised, fluid and multi-disciplinary approach.¹

It is argued that a distinctly Christian idea of development can be served by all or any of these approaches. There may, however, be some limitations or qualifications placed on these theories of change when adopted and framed by a Christian development NGO.

These theories will be briefly overviewed and critiqued from a Christian perspective. A diverse range of literature will be discussed from the disciplines of theology, missiology and development studies. To illustrate some points, brief examples will be included from the World Vision evaluation reports analysed later in this research.

It is also argued that none of these common theories of change is definitive of how sustainable change happens in undertaking development work. There are additional relevant factors that surround any organisation when it is carrying out its work. The effectiveness of any theory of change will depend in part on commitment of staff, their mode of interaction, levels of trust within the community, acceptance of the organisation itself and community confidence in the development process. A theologically informed development praxis can impact on a number of these other factors, as demonstrated in later chapters.

3.1 Theories that emphasise rationality, science and technology as drivers of change

The first group of theories may be broadly labelled as scientific or technical approaches. These insist on careful analysis of the development context using scientific principles. Methodologies from both the pure sciences and the social sciences can be called upon. The proposed solutions to development problems will involve the application of particular technologies or scientific methods so that predicted effects can be overcome. Careful measurement, planning and controls are necessary, and there is a strong emphasis on measurement and evaluation to validate results.

It is trite to observe that modern science has done much to help humankind. Achievements in public health, medical science, water and sanitation, and agricultural production have all been very significant. It follows that Christians, who are commanded to love their neighbour, must be alert to the good that science can do. A suspicious or anti-intellectual approach will be unhelpful in discharging the fundamental obligation of a Christian. Accordingly, the Christian development theorist Bryant Myers asserts that ‘Any Christian understanding of transformational development must have space for the good that science and technology offer.’

Having said that, Christian scripture commands that God’s people are to give him primacy in terms of their allegiance and obedience. For this reason, science and technology represent gifts from God that can be used to serve him in the world, rather than providing an alternative source of hope and confidence. The placing of uncritical faith in science or technology to overcome all development challenges would itself be a form of idolatry.

The understanding of development as a discipline within the social sciences has brought many benefits. These have included the establishment of collegial networks, academic rigor and discipline in program design, the sharing of research, an emphasis on assessment and evaluation, and, in general, an appetite for empirically supported field investment. This healthy suite of professional norms is to be commended. That said, Christians may have a number of reservations about a scientific or technocratic approach as the primary driver of

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4 Ex 20:3.
5 For the Christian, this danger has existed from the earliest days of the Enlightenment. This was symbolized prophetically with the enthronement of the Statue of Reason in Notre Dame Cathedral in 1793.
development. The first is that the underpinning assumption that science is ‘objective’ or
‘neutral’ appears doubtful.

The Enlightenment claimed to offer a new plausibility structure based on ‘objective’
science. It was argued that scientific knowledge was factual, value-free and neutral. This
perspective has been contested. Harold Brown, author of Perception, theory and commitment:
the new philosophy of science argues that ‘Science consists of a series of research projects
structured by accepted presuppositions which determine what observations are to be made,
how they are to be interpreted, what phenomena are problematic, and how these problems are
to be dealt with. When the presuppositions of a scientific discipline change, both the structure
of the discipline and the scientist’s picture of reality are changed.’

Philosophers such as Thomas Kuhn and Michael Polanyi have also critiqued the notion of
‘objective’ science, and it has been observed that ‘what theories are accepted or rejected,
what facts are considered relevant or irrelevant, or what studies are deemed important or
ignored are dependent on one’s presuppositions, perspectives and values – on one’s
worldview or mindset.’

A second criticism is that the claims made for science have been overreaching.
Extravagant claims have been made about the ability of science to solve development
problems. The underpinning belief has been ‘that by the power of scientific reason humans
could conquer nature and enjoy happiness and health as if heaven was on earth.’ Yet the
results of scientific approaches, viewed as a development paradigm, have been mixed.
According to Christian missiologist Bosch, repeated studies over a 25-year period failed to
deliver any real progress: ‘The Enlightenment was supposed to create a world in which all
people were equal, in which the soundness of human reason would show the way to
happiness and abundance for all. This did not materialize. Instead people have become
victims of fear and frustrations as never before.’ The task for Christian organisations
involved in international development is to consider how to harness the substantial potential
benefits of scientific and technical approaches, while seeing through the hubris.

6 Brown, HI 1977, Perception, theory and commitment: the new philosophy of science, Precedent Publishing,
Chicago, p. 166.
7 Monsma, p. 118.
8 Berstein, R 1985, The restructuring of social and political theory, Methuen, London, p. 5. There the author
notes that that intellectual life was viewed as having passed ‘through the dark ages of theological, metaphysical,
and philosophical speculation, only to emerge in the triumph of the positive sciences.’
274.
One of the problems of scientific and technical approaches is that interventions may occur in a way that are not sensitive to local culture or appropriate for a given context. While the efficiency of science may suggest one path, Dayton has pointed out that this may be contradicted by the ‘hundreds of rusting tractors and broken water pumps that give their mute testimony.’\(^{11}\) It is posited that Christian FBOs should go about their work being especially mindful of the culture and capacities of the local communities where they work. When interventions occur in an isolated way, without a thorough and thoughtful consideration of the broader context, their success is least assured.

This criticism alludes to the tendency of science to be narrow and deterministic. Myers summarises: ‘Science helps us figure out how things work, but not why they work or what they are for.’\(^{12}\) It can be argued that purpose must be reintroduced as a category that is as basic to human development as clean water and nutritious food. Bosch argues that a new epistemology is needed such that technology is ‘confronted by a reality outside itself which does not depend on its canons of rationality and which therefore will not be subservient to its deterministic power.’\(^{13}\) The basic complaint is that technology can be a false god that speaks of power and efficiency, rather than care or responsibility.\(^{14}\) In short, many Christians argue that the linear application of cause and effect must be tempered by a spiritual worldview that includes the responsible use of power, sensitivity to culture and the human condition, and critical ethical overlays.

A related criticism is that science does not offer any self-contained moral framework. It is for this reason that universities and hospitals have ethics committees. The moral framework of Christian international development efforts will be informed by scripture, faith and theology. Not everything that is scientifically possible is good or desirable.\(^{15}\) For example, should a Christian development agency plant genetically modified crops, promote particular reproductive technologies or support certain high tech interventions? Scientific data can influence, but not determine these questions.

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\(^{12}\) Myers, p. 54.

\(^{13}\) Bosch, p. 355.

\(^{14}\) See Myers, at p. 21. There is also a risk that the Christian development organisation itself will be perceived by developing communities more as the champion of that false god, and less as a fellowship of humans offering God’s love in humility and service.

\(^{15}\) Albert Einstein’s lament seems especially resonant: ‘The release of atom power has changed everything except our way of thinking … the solution to this problem lies in the heart of mankind. If only I had known, I should have become a watchmaker.’
Finally, there are areas where science and the religious views held by the majority of the world’s population simply reach an impasse. Science and technology, as a theory of change, needs to find a constructive place within the broader frame of reference of the community. This is not always possible. Science cannot comprehend concepts like evil or love or compassion. It cannot address the unseen world. It cannot penetrate the mysteries of faith, such as prayer. It remains resolutely sceptical about revelation and miracles. It does not acknowledge God’s providence in history. It requires evidence to believe in the kingdom to come, and it balks at an afterlife or resurrection.

Science, on the other hand, can help to grow food and improve health and sanitation. Yet it does so without necessarily cherishing life. It can help explain the physical world in astonishing detail, but not its meaning. For this reason, Pope Benedict XVI counselled that science should be carefully mentored by faith: ‘From God's standpoint, faith liberates reason from its blind spots and therefore helps it to be ever more fully itself. Faith enables reason to do its work more effectively and to see its proper object more clearly.’\(^{16}\) Christians involved in development should continue to love God with all their mind, but on occasions that love may demand that science is reproached or tempered.

### 3.2 Theories which emphasise that social change occurs through participation and empowerment

A second theoretical perspective emphasises that social change occurs through contestation and negotiation. Proponents of this perspective support changes of structures, institutions and power relations that perpetuate poverty and social injustices.\(^{17}\) Change strategies employed include mostly participatory approaches that allow community members to take ownership of the change process.

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\(^{16}\) Papal Encyclical *Dues Caritas Est*, paragraph 28.

The work of South American educationalist Paulo Freire has been influential in shaping empowerment approaches. Freire coined the term ‘conscientisation’ to describe the process whereby people become aware of and address the power relations that oppress them. This work caused a major shift in emphasis directed at securing far greater empowerment for local communities. One intention was to help them break free from models that produced an entrenched dependency. Hughes summarises: ‘To be effective, the education of the poor must … be a means of empowerment as well as a simple transference of skills. Self-reliance must be the goal from the beginning. What this means for development is that much more attention is given to what the poor want rather than what they are perceived to need.’ Using this approach, the field worker is more a catalyst than service deliverer.

Development organisations have been slow to appreciate that authentic development cannot take place without a transfer of power. Freire, the pioneer of this thinking, saw it very much as an outworking of his Catholic faith.

Theologically, participatory approaches sit well with the Christian ethos. Boff has pointed out that when the poor are not involved in decisions which affect them, the final result is ‘eternalizing relations of dependency, and preventing the impoverished from becoming the subjects, the agents, of their own history.’ Christian development workers are likely to recognise the intrinsic good of approaches that get ‘community members to participate more fully in all that it means to be human.’ This kind of participatory community engagement may also help overcome the colonial legacy of ‘non-recognition of the other as other.’

While this theory may sound compelling, there has been enormous difficulty in practice in terms of getting development organisations to cede power to the communities they purport to serve. Chambers laments the dogged persistence of Western hegemony in development practice. He sees the reluctance to transfer power to communities as a matter of personal choice: ‘we are so trapped in search for universals which fit normal concepts and criteria, and which are part of our professional tools of trade, that we can easily not notice or discuss what stares us most in the face, the fact of individual personal choice of what to do mediates every

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18 The term ‘critical consciousness’ is also sometimes used. This concept was popularised in Freire’s book Pedagogy of the Oppressed originally published in 1970 (Freire, P 2007, Pedagogy of the oppressed, Continuum, New York.
19 Hughes, p. 13.
20 Bosch, p. 357.
21 Hughes, p. 16.
22 Boff, L 1992, Good news to the poor, Burns and Oates, Wellwood, p. 80.
24 Boff, p. xi.
action and every change. What is done and not done depends on what people choose to do and not to do, especially those with more power. This observation underscores the need for openness to personal transformation in undertaking meaningful development work.

Culturally, participatory approaches may be seen as less condescending. They assume that the poor may know something about what needs to happen to secure their own longer-term interests. Development agencies may proceed from the Western assumption that they know best. McLaren, speaking from a North American church context, is alert to this risk. He warns: ‘The US can so easily become an echo chamber. Western voices arguing with other Western voices about Western topics from a Western perspective.’ A development pedagogy that involves the development agency and the community in a true dialogue is one where there will be significant learnings on both sides. Truly participatory approaches will move beyond the asymmetrical flow of information that has helped perpetuate an unhelpful hegemony. Wrigley notes that FBOs have an especially important role to play in this regard because they are inclined to see people as ‘subjects of their own lives’ rather than ‘objects of development.’

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is not a theory of change, but it is a methodology very closely associated with participatory approaches. A development worker using this method engages with the community to try and identify those things that have worked well in the past. It is concerned with trying to identify strengths that can be built upon. This approach also resonates well with a Christian approach to development. Boff celebrates that, inescapably, ‘in every culture there will be buds, shoots of the reign, sacraments of grace, signs of the

Example 2. A helpful civic structure reported at almost all evaluation sites in this research were Area Development Plan (‘ADP’) community councils of one form or another. These councils provided a clear structure for communities to raise issues and priorities with World Vision, but also to bring different groups together within local communities. This helped to both build social capital and to communicate priorities. As one team leader said ‘We try to involve members of all stakeholders in the community through creation of an ADP Board. That gives a chance for all community partners to be part of the process, to define priorities, develop specific projects, [and to] be part of decision making processes and the implementation’ (Project Team Leader, Bosnia Herzegovina).

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25 Chambers, p. 2.
26 Brian McLaren, quoted in Rah, S-C 2009, The next evangelicalism: freeing the church from Western cultural captivity, IVP Books, Downers Grove IL, p. 125.
27 Wrigley, p. 9.
presence of the Word, and accents of the activity of the Spirit.  

Corbett and Fickert note that the tool of AI enables Christians ‘to identify the good gifts that God has placed in a community and to dream about how to use those gifts to fix what is wrong, thereby bringing greater witness to the realities of the coming kingdom.’

When entering a new community Christians may look for signs of God’s activity and presence: ‘The first missionary is the Holy Trinity [who is] always involved in self-bestowal on creation …’

Looking for the good things God has already done for others may also help Christians abandon their own cultural insularity.

Communities may, however, be less willing to identify for themselves those things that have been unsuccessful or unhelpful. Every culture is at once the ‘locus of the fervent acceptance of God’s self-communication, as well as the refusal of the same.’

They will reflect responses – positive, negative or ambiguous – to God’s prior initiatives. There will be elements requiring respectful challenge in all cultures, including the development organisation’s own. Truly participatory approaches do not mean remaining silent in order to avoid causing offence; they call for an open, honest, and at times hard dialogue. Rowan Williams asserts: ‘It is not an option simply to accept the specificities of a culture (religious or otherwise) that may actually be responsible for reducing the liberties or options that are available for other human beings.’

What participatory processes can guarantee, when undertaken in a genuine way, is treating humans with dignity. For this reason, participatory approaches will appeal to those Christian development organisations that seek to emulate the unconditional love of Christ. What participatory approaches cannot guarantee, however, is success. Fikkert and Corbett caution that ‘participation does not have the capacity to overcome the basic corruption in the human condition. Individuals and groups make bad decisions all the time!’

Human freedom includes the freedom to make mistakes – mistakes made with sincerity, or with selfish intent.

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28 Boff, p. 30.
29 Corbett & Fikkert, p. 136.
30 Boff, p. 23.
31 Ibid., p. 22.
32 Williams 2009b, p. 2.
33 Corbett & Fikkert, p. 147.
While greater levels of civic participation are welcomed, participation itself will not overcome broader moral failings: ‘Rarely do empowerment strategies make the links that could generate shifts in inner values strong enough to ensure that improvements in one area are not bought at the cost of damage done elsewhere.’

3.3 Human rights-based theories of change

Efforts to empower communities have often promoted communities’ awareness about their universal human rights, and they have involved working with communities to mobilise them in order to claim those rights. This approach was generally introduced by development organisations in the late 1990s. It posits that when human rights are understood and asserted at a local level, with a corresponding holding to account of duty-bearers, lasting change will result from a change in power dynamics. This approach has quickly gained traction. For example, The Department for International Development (DFID) in the UK has mandated a ‘rights based approach’ in all its programming.

Perhaps the most powerful critique though, is that a rights-based approach is a largely Western construct which, despite its stated objective of empowerment, seldom takes into account the views of developing communities. A Western view often sees human rights through a positivistic legal framework, reflecting personal rather than community entitlements. Rowan Williams among others see this as an imposition that has insufficient regard for local frames of reference.

In summarising the responses to a rights-based approach, the International Policy Network (in a report prepared using DFID’s own materials) concluded that ‘the approach does not appear to have resulted in an improvement of the condition of the poor.’ Elsewhere, the observation has been made that ‘there is no consistent correlation between the ratification of human rights treaties and improved health or social outcomes.’ Some think the time has come for a more fundamental reassessment. Batliwala argues that ‘there is clearly an urgent need, particularly among development assistance agencies, to broaden, deepen and nuance the understanding of rights themselves and of rights-based approaches, and particularly so at

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35 Williams 2009b, p. 3.
the level of action strategies. There are no magic bullets or fast tracks to social justice. It is
time to move away from formulas and rhetoric."³⁸

There is a range of opinions within Christian communities about human rights approaches,
ranging from cautious scepticism to optimistic embrace. A great strength of human rights
approaches is that they are directed at moving beyond charity and looking towards just and
lasting improvements in the life of the poor. The vision of the realisation of universal human
rights sits sympathetically with the vision of coming kingdom of God, where justice and
dignity is finally achieved for all people.³⁹

Christian development organisations will affirm God’s vision of justice, including
protection of the vulnerable and celebrating human freedoms. Human rights are a part of this
vision. However, the motivation for Christians comes from a fundamentally different place
from those advocating that purely secular human rights constructs be applied in social and
political life, even if the latter do have some positive effects. Rowan Williams believes that a
more enlightened approach entails ‘a readiness to question the kind of secular rhetoric around
development which would reduce the whole question to one of securing the formal liberties
that can be spelled out in terms of human rights; to question some of the unexamined
assumptions about power (political and ideological) that attach themselves to this rhetoric;
and to enlarge the definition of human well-being to take in the possibility of relation with the
transcendent.’⁴⁰

Christians assert that all human rights derive from the fact that all people are made and
loved by God. They are stamped with God’s image,⁴¹ and this instils everyone with an
intrinsic dignity. This is a crucial and foundational difference between a Christian and a
secular worldview. It is this underpinning belief in a shared humanity, derived from God,
which leads to a sense of mutuality and obligation. From the earliest times, Judeo-Christian
ethics have reinforced the idea of upholding the rights of the vulnerable. In the Old
Testament, there are repeated injunctions to God’s people to respect the rights of the widow,
the orphan, the alien, the debtor, the poor, and the oppressed, amongst others. This is
reflected in express commandments in the Deuteronomistic law, in the constant refrain of God’s

³⁸ Batliwala, S 2010, ‘When rights go wrong: distorting the rights based approach to development’, paper
published by Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, Harvard University, p. 7.
³⁹ Rev 21:4. It should also be noted here that the UN Declaration on Human Rights had significant Christian
input and reflects the Judaeo-Christian heritage. Further information about this can be found at
http://www.isaiahone.org/.
⁴¹ Gen 1:26–27.
prophets, and in the proverbs, psalms and wisdom literature. It is a common theme right throughout both Old and New Testament.

It is widely acknowledged by many FBOs that a Christian approach to the promotion of human rights will not be grounded in a secular, political agenda but in the life of Christ. There are some instances where Jesus seems to encourage the claiming of individual rights, for example, in the parable of the persistent widow. However, overall there is a greater emphasis on the call to his followers to live justly. The prophetic tradition is one example where duty-bearers are consistently held to account.

Berger explains that ‘In contrast with the rights based approach of many secular NGOs, the starting point for religious NGOs is the duty-orientated language of religion characterised by obligations towards the divine and towards others, by a belief in transformative capacities, and a concern for justice and reconciliation.’ In this way, religious NGOs ‘are more directly able to raise moral issues and tap into religious discourse, thereby fuelling a sense of moral duty, indignation or outrage, which makes change possible.’

This emphasis can flow from an understanding that humans are also made in the relational image of God. This is a central point of difference to the mainly legalistic interpretation of rights that a secular Western worldview promulgates. The Trinitarian Godhead – the very being of God – is understood by many Christians as an eternal and intimate community of self-giving and service. Biblical human rights are about fairness and right relationships. Humans are made in the image of God in order that they may serve others,

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42 Lk 18:1–8.
43 Berger, p. 18.
44 Ibid., p. 19.
and, according to Moltmann, participate with the Trinity in a kind of open system that extends to serving the whole world.\(^{45}\)

While Christians seek the rights of others, their own personal responses are open-ended. Christians will have an inherent bias toward preferring the needs of others. They are called to live sacrificially. Jesus Christ came to bring good news to the poor and disenfranchised.\(^{46}\) A biblical framework of human rights is therefore partially about a rescuing justice, which can be personally costly. Jesus illustrates this by not asserting his human rights on the Cross. He abandoned them in what Christians believe is the ultimate act of service for others. All followers of Jesus are likewise are called to die to self,\(^{47}\) and to go the extra mile.\(^{48}\) Amesbury and Newlands recall that one of the paradoxes of Christian faith is that ‘in Christ … God invests human life with dignity precisely by sharing in the suffering that human beings inflict on one another.’\(^{49}\)

A final observation is that there is an empty formalism that is sometimes associated with a more secular human rights agenda, which is unable to look beyond itself. That agenda is supposed to offer the rubric for discussing, and ultimately mediating, human rights. In theory, human rights will be realised by activities such as awareness raising, promotion and advocacy. In contrast, a distinctly Christian approach to human rights will be seen as animated and inspired by the loving Spirit of God. Ideally, it will unfold in power, prayer and love, with humility, and with the firmness of a servant heart. Some Christians also argue for a greater understanding of an ultimate human right: for each person to know that they are loved, valued, created and gifted uniquely by God.

### 3.4 Theories that conceive of change as an emergent, complex process

The fourth theoretical perspective conceives of change as ‘an emergent, complex, multi-directional, non-linear, fragmented and discontinuous process that is difficult to control, manage, or comprehensively understand from a particular vantage point … Change strategies emphasize the need for change agents to become “searchers” with communities, rather than “planners” for communities.’\(^{50}\)

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\(^{46}\) Lk 4:18.

\(^{47}\) Mt 16:24, 25; Mk 8:34, 35; Lk 9:23, 24.

\(^{48}\) Mt 5:41.


\(^{50}\) Boxelaar, Mackinlay & Dearborn, p. 4.
This perspective demands a more tentative approach to planning for and managing development processes. It challenges the idea that a development context can be comprehensively analysed and sufficiently understood to confidently map out a five-year development plan. Boxlear et al. recognise that development issues are often ‘wicked’, which means that the science on how to address these is contested, and solutions to problems require the input of a very diverse range of actors that often do not have a shared view of the nature of the problem, or how to address it.

This perspective highlights that a development context can only be partially understood prior to acting on it, and it therefore needs constant learning and adaptation to find a way through. Overall, development is recognised as a complex endeavour that demands the collective knowledge and initiative of a wide group. Accordingly, this understanding favours multi-stakeholder and partnering approaches. Participatory action research, and action learning methods are vital with this perspective.

A Christian theology echoes the fact that there is much that is complex and multi-directional. There is a brokenness, both within the world and within the human heart, that impacts every aspect of life, especially our relationships. Christians await the consummation of the whole of creation that will take place at the final renewal of all things. Until then, ‘all change is partial and incomplete – part of our journey toward God’s redemption of all things.’ The gospels do speak into the non-linear, complex nature of all of life by articulating a specific worldview that provides purpose and hope for the work of development.

The story of God coming into the world – the Incarnation – also provides the direction to work as ‘searchers’ with communities, to work together with people rather than ‘for’ them in a way that affirms their dignity as image-bearers of a relational God. This requires a posture of humility that values the insights of many. Tyndale notes that ‘If poverty itself is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, then the solution to it must also be multi-dimensional, and it is here that the faiths can make a contribution … by demonstrating some of the ingredients of

Example 5. Several evaluations referred to a process of active, prayerful discernment in which development workers would seek to hear God’s voice about the community’s needs, needs which they would experience in daily life. This kind of lived reflective practice may stand in stark contrast to some pre-conceived development projects.

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51 Ibid.
dignity and hope … self-esteem, and a sense of purpose.’52 Complex theories appreciate that knowledge does not rest with any one group but that contributions may come from anywhere. No one has all the answers. As many Christians would say, the opposite of faith is not doubt but certainty. Christians believe in a God who empowers and invites his followers on a daily, contextualised journey of faith, in which they receive and incarnate hope. Through humble seeking and attentive listening, the Christian works for the kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.

The kingdom of God has a ‘now-and-not-yet’ nature to it. The ‘now’ has been manifested in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. There are glimpses of it in the outbreaks of justice, peace and renewal. These stir up rumours of hope. They instil renewed faith that God is at work and point to new directions. Christian theology recognises that human efforts alone will never build the kingdom of God. Yet with the empowering Spirit of God, there is confidence that provisional human efforts will be transformed in a world where there is justice for all.53 This is the ‘not-yet’ nature of the kingdom.

3.5 Overview

This brief overview shows that Christian international development organisations are able to adopt any of the main theories of change. There are no fundamental conflicts. The central ideas of all these theories could be incorporated and deployed within their operational praxis. Some organisations will recognise some limitations, or will nuance and reframe these theories within their own understanding of Christian theology and scripture. Importantly, the difference between faith-based and other types of development organisations does not lie in their choice of a theory of change.54

The research will show that in the case of World Vision, a range of additional features, which are theologically informed, will mark out its development praxis as distinctive. These surround and imbue World Vision’s work, and contribute towards its success. These features are:

- a consistent, spiritually based interiority
- a strong people-centredness (including ideas about incarnational love) in personal interactions

52 Tyndale 2000, pp. 9–19, 17.
53 Wright 2007, analysing 2 Cor 15:58.
54 It is argued that religion is not a ‘missing link’ in development, it is an overarching frame or narrative which can incorporate the multiple visions of how change may occur in any given setting. See Jones & Petersen, p. 1302.
• a pervasive emphasis on positive inter-faith relationships, framed from the position of a participant/actor
• the exercise of influence, and the acceptance of inherent risk, by engaging with churches.

The next chapter sets out the background to World Vision as a case study, and the process used to articulate its organisational theology and map the influence of this theology on its development work.
4. Research Background and Methodology

The last chapter outlined the most common theories of change used by international development organisations. That review showed that Christian-based NGOs can readily adopt one or more of these major theories of change, and that the difference between faith-based and other approaches to development will be found in other areas. This chapter will describe a case study showing how characteristic theological motifs can affect development work and make it distinctive.

This research takes as its subject a leading international development organisation. It will attempt to record how its key theological beliefs contribute to, or pose risks for, its development work. This research will not seek to show that Christian faith-based approaches are generally superior to other development approaches. Such an enquiry would be problematic on many levels. A more helpful and realistic task is to identify some of the comparative advantages that a theologically informed approach to development may have in certain contexts. This process will provide an example of how faith actually works within the operational life of a leading FBO.

The thrust of this research is fundamentally qualitative. In particular, it is attempting to map in a systematic way how an organisation’s theological motifs can affect its development work. By observing and recording those connections this research seeks to close an important gap.

4.1 Why a case study on a single subject?

Case studies are especially suitable for qualitative research where ‘researchers are interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing’.\(^1\)

In the present case, the hypothesis is deliberately wide-ranging in order to discover the links between the organisational theology of a leading international development organisation and its development work and praxis. This kind of case study is revelatory. It is intended to reveal and interpret the connections between World Vision’s theology and its praxis. As mentioned earlier, the researcher has been granted access to a significant body of materials examining the integration of faith in World Vision projects. Yin notes that ‘When … investigators have … opportunities and can uncover some prevalent phenomenon previously

inaccessible to social scientists, such conditions justify the use of a single-case study on the grounds of its revelatory nature.\textsuperscript{2}

4.2 About World Vision

World Vision has been selected as the case study for this research. Strictly speaking, World Vision is not an entity, but a partnership of separately incorporated bodies that are mutually committed to combating poverty through international development work. The legal structure of World Vision can be described as a federation of international member entities that are bound together through a common purpose and philosophy. This structure is typical of a number of the largest global development agencies, including Oxfam, Compassion and Care.

World Vision offices in Western countries have the primary responsibility for fundraising to support the partnership’s development work. The four largest financial contributors in order are World Vision USA, World Vision Canada, WVA and World Vision South Korea. Collectively, a substantial contribution is also made by World Vision offices in Europe, where the largest individual offices are World Vision Germany and World Vision UK.

The responsibility for program design and execution rests with World Vision offices located in developing countries (‘national offices’). Typically, World Vision offices in Western countries retain some degree of control over program design to meet the legislative and quality assurance requirements of donors. Within that constraint, there is a general commitment to the principle of subsidiarity, with programming decisions kept as close to the local community as possible. There are consultative processes within the partnership to identify the greatest areas of development need and work out how funds will be allocated to different regions. Funds raised are remitted to national offices through the intermediary of World Vision International (WVI), a company that, among other things, performs treasury functions on behalf of the entire partnership.\textsuperscript{3}

World Vision has a highly systematised approach to its long-term development work. It uses standard methodologies and systems all around the world. At the heart of World Vision’s program structure is the Area Development Program (ADP). An ADP is a geographic location where a suite of development activities are facilitated by a local World Vision office.

Vision office on a long-term basis. The population of an ADP may range from 20,000 to 100,000 people. ADPs typically run for 12–15 years, and the project activities within it will be mostly funded through a child sponsorship model. While individual children are sponsored by donors in Western countries as a marketing device, the funds raised are in fact pooled and used to benefit the child’s whole community.

4.3 World Vision as a research subject

There are three reasons why World Vision was selected as a suitable research subject for this thesis:

- World Vision is both a well-respected development organisation and one that regards the Christian faith as central to its development work at an operational level
- The global scale of World Vision’s operations underscores the importance of this research and provides a helpful source of comparative data across different geographies and contexts
- The researcher’s access to internal World Vision data.

Each of these reasons is expanded below.

4.3.1 A reputation for quality work and an unambiguous faith commitment in operational life

World Vision has a reputation for achieving quality outcomes in its development work while maintaining its strong faith basis. According to King, it has earned an enviable reputation as an elite International NGO (INGO) managed efficiently by professional experts while remaining decidedly Christian.\(^4\) It is important that the research subject be both an effective development organisation, and clear and intentional about the role of faith in its work. Only where both features are present will it be possible to explore the connections between religious faith and the pursuit of development work.

There are many development organisations that have not maintained an emphasis on faith within their work. The phenomenon of ‘organisational drift’, in which Christian organisations slowly drift away from their faith foundations, is well documented.\(^5\) For many development

\(^4\) King, p. 25.
organisations, the role of faith has become more of a private motivating factor for a cohort of staff rather than a significant influence in daily organisational life.

With World Vision the position is substantially different. Its development work is ‘not simply secular development done out of Christian motivation, but an attempt to make development Christian.’ In contrast, some organisations have severed any formal connections with their Christian origins. World Vision has sought to actively maintain and reaffirm its Christian identity over more than 60 years because it sees this identity as central to its work.

While continuous, that identity has not remained static. World Vision was established with strongly evangelical roots in 1950 by Dr Bob Pierce, an American missionary in northern China and Korea. From those beginnings it has evolved into a development organisation rather than continuing as a missionary enterprise. World Vision has, over time, reinterpreted its Christian identity ‘as more humanitarian than missionary and more mainstream than religiously sectarian.’ In short, ‘World Vision’s story is not simply one of a small organisation encountering modernity, subduing its religious identity, and emulating secular methods in order to succeed. In fact, throughout its history, it is precisely the reflection and rearticulation of its religious identity that has helped World Vision transform its operations.’

As a partnership, World Vision has tried to affirm its sense of Christian identity by putting in place deliberate policies and organisational structures. In most national offices World Vision employs only Christian staff to undertake it development work, and in all offices it ensures that committed Christians occupy leadership positions. It strongly encourages the formation of staff in their Christian faith through participation in ‘staff spiritual nurture’ activities. Every World Vision national office has a person or department responsible for ‘Christian Commitments’ (‘CC’). CC is the department with specific responsibility for promoting World Vision’s faith policies and promoting the importance of Christian faith in the life and work of each office. Historically, this has meant encouraging staff to attend corporate devotions and providing a level of pastoral care for workers. In recent years,

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8 King, p. 24.
9 Ibid., p. 23.
10 Clause 12 of the Partnership Policy on Witness to Jesus Christ requires that every national office and partnership entity ‘includes a Christian Commitments section that defines contextually appropriate strategies for the spiritual nurture of staff, partnerships with churches and Christian witness’.

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however, it has also meant encouraging staff to think more reflectively about the integration of faith into development work.

As a result of this history, World Vision is able to meet an essential criterion as a research subject, namely, that it is unambiguously clear about the importance of Christian faith in its operational life, while being a respected development organisation within the sector.

4.3.2 Scale and location of operations

A second reason why World Vision is suitable for study is the size and scope of the World Vision Partnership. The Partnership recorded US$ 2.79 billion in revenue for its 2011 fiscal year.\textsuperscript{11} According to Carbonnier, it has the largest budget among humanitarian and development aid NGOs.\textsuperscript{12} It is important to understand the way in which World Vision’s theological emphases contribute to its development work when it is managing a vast global cash flow raised overwhelmingly by public donation. In most places, World Vision’s work receives strong financial supported from Christian churches. This stakeholder group also has a particular interest in knowing how World Vision’s theological beliefs and practices contribute to the development of the communities that it is trying to help.

World Vision’s theological motifs will be necessarily nuanced for local contexts, including in their application to particular development needs. The scale of World Vision necessarily means that it operates in many diverse developing country settings. Looking at these local differences will make the research richer and more valuable. It is noted that because World Vision uses standard methodologies and systems at an operational level, this will facilitate the task of comparison.

Countries from the following diverse contexts are considered in this research: the Balkans, the Middle East, Eurasia and Africa. Cameos of these contexts have been prepared to introduce the broader development context and World Vision’s work within it. The information is taken principally from World Vision evaluation reports and supporting interviews. These sources are able to provide a thumbnail sketch of the development landscape in each place.

\textsuperscript{11} WVI 2011, \textit{Accountability report} p. 6. The WVI 2012 \textit{Accountability report} lists Partnership revenue at SUS 2.67bn, p.14.
\textsuperscript{12} Carbonnier, G 2013, in Carbonnier (ed.), pp. 1–2.
4.3.2.1 The Balkans

Albania
Albania is an ex-communist state, which was the site of a war of independence with Kosovo. The government of Albania was strongly atheistic during communist rule, when religious institutions were proscribed or actively repressed. Since the fall of communism, Albania has emerged as a pluralistic society with competing Christian (Orthodox), Islamic and secular influences.

Major development challenges include the rebuilding of national identity, regaining confidence in public institutions, corruption and ensuring harmonious relationships in a pluralistic environment. Albania suffers from high levels of unemployment, emigration of younger people in search of better opportunities, an increasing material focus with increased exposure to the West, an entrenched mentality of state dependency, a lack of hope, injustice (especially towards minorities), poor-quality education, and a wide range of social problems including substance abuse.

Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bosnia and Herzegovina is also an ex-Communist society that has a history of inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflict. There are a number of development challenges, which present themselves in a variety of ways. These include cynicism and disillusionment, a general economic malaise, emigration, loss of industrial production, growing unemployment and a lack of social services.

Many in this community have found it difficult to move on in a constructive way since the end of the civil war with Serbia, which lasted from 1992 to 1995 following the breakup of Yugoslavia. Issues to be faced include unresolved trauma, institutional neurosis, learned helplessness, declining levels of trust in others, rising crime rates, selfishness, lack of community spirit, paternal reliance on government, nostalgic beliefs about the past, rapid urbanisation (especially around Sarajevo), rising unemployment, youth alienation, social passivity, fatalism, corruption, HIV/AIDS, and alcoholism. Society in Bosnia and Herzegovina reflects three main groupings: Muslim Bosniaks (44%), Orthodox Serbs (31%) and Catholic Croats (17%).

4.3.2.2 Middle East

Lebanon
Lebanon is another country used to war and civil conflict. Its system of government reflects entrenched sectarian groupings. There are wide disparities in wealth within Lebanese society,
which tends to reflect religious divisions. Poverty is widespread, and there is a sense of apprehension and uncertainty about the future. This is expressed in powerlessness and fear.

One challenge affecting development workers in this highly sectarian society is insularity and resistance to change due to religious traditions. There are also tensions along inter-ethnic and inter-religious divides, and the problem of post-war displacement and depression. There is a pressing need for psychosocial care for long-term displaced peoples. Communities report a lack of basic needs, minimal government services, lack of income, unemployment, seasonality of work, and dependence on remittances from relatives. There is a handout mentality, dependence on charity, and the need for constructive youth engagement.

4.3.2.3 Eurasia

Armenia

Armenia is an ex-communist state that suffered a major blow to its religious heritage during the Stalinist purges. Prior to the Soviet era, it had been invaded by a succession of empires – Greeks, Romans, Persians, Byzantines, Mongols, Arabs, Ottoman Turks and Russians. It evolved from being a powerful empire itself in the first century to being the smallest of the former Soviet republics. The Hamidian genocide killed up to 300,000 in the 1890s, and the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1917 resulted in 600,000 to 1.5 million deaths. More recently, conflict with Azerbaijan over the status of the Karabakh region saw 30,000 killed and up to 1 million displaced. This illustrates a long history of conflict and a suspicion of outside influences. Historically, the dominant Armenian Apostolic Church has been a source of national cohesion and identity, dating its origins to 301 AD.

Key development issues include high unemployment, the loss of industrial support provided by the Soviet regime and an exodus of people for economic reasons. The diaspora community is more than twice the size of the domestic population. Leaders complain of a loss of moral fabric within society, disillusionment, corruption, passivity and reliance on charity. World Vision started working in Armenia in 1988 after a devastating earthquake and has continued to provide development assistance. Armenia achieved formal independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. HIV and AIDS is a significant issue, partly because of the large number of workers living outside the country. There are significant enclaves of Muslims in some parts of Armenia.

Georgia

Georgia is an ex-communist state that was formerly part of the Soviet Union. In a similar way to Armenia, it has a dominant state church, the Georgian Orthodox Church (GOC), which
traces its history to 327AD. This church has been a powerful source of national identity, with some claiming that to be Georgian is to be Georgian Orthodox. The dark side of this dominance is the marginalisation of other religious groups (including smaller Christian denominations, regarded as ‘sects’) and strongly patriarchal influences. There is a particular need for religious tolerance in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region, where there have been sporadic conflicts.

The agricultural sector in Georgia is inefficient, and there have been periodic food security issues. Industry has suffered from the loss of support it enjoyed in Soviet times, and many factories lie empty and decaying. There is a widespread sense of hopelessness and depression. Poverty is experienced through unemployment and the lack of any income-generating opportunities. The government suffers from corruption, and social services are unreliable and inadequate to meet even basic needs. Against this malaise, the challenge of positive youth engagement is pressing.

Georgia is no stranger to conflicts, and there have been recurring civil conflicts in the Ingushetia region. Fighting also erupted in the early 1990s in the autonomous areas of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, displacing many people within Georgia. Sporadic incursions and mistrust have prevented the repatriation of up to 300,000, who live in camps for internally displaced persons.

4.3.2.4 African settings

Tanzania
World Vision has an extensive program in Tanzania that responds to a wide range of development issues. These include primary health care and the prevention of HIV and AIDS, improved agricultural practices, food security, and water and sanitation.

Some ADPs, like the one in Katero, operate in mixed Christian and Muslim communities. There is also a strong history of animistic beliefs and practices in some communities, including harmful practices and so-called witchcraft killings. World Vision’s programs focus on child rights, vulnerable children, women and children’s participation, inter-religious and inter-tribal harmony, HIV and AIDS, civic participation, business initiatives for women, development of small enterprises, and combatting early pregnancy and marriage. A clear difference from most other settings is the strong emphasis on resisting harmful animistic

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13 Goode, A 2010a, World Vision evaluation report: World Vision Georgia, Christian Commitments Programme, June, p.9. This was a consistent comment heard by the Georgia evaluation team.
14 In this thesis, the term ‘animism’ is used rather than African Traditional Religion (‘ATR’) for reasons discussed at section 8.2.3.1.
practices and the more overtly ‘spiritualised’ nature of many activities. The line between church and development agency, evangelism and civic formation, has sometimes been hard to draw.

Rwanda
Rwanda was the focus of sustained missionary endeavour for more than a century. About 94% of Rwandans self-identify as Christian, although beliefs can be shallow and ill formed. Uncomfortable questions have been raised about the nature of Christian belief in Rwanda in view of the widespread genocide of 1994.

World Vision commenced work in Rwanda in response to the genocide and has remained there in a development capacity. Prominent development themes are food security, economic development, primary health (including the impact of HIV and AIDS and access to clean water), sustainable agriculture, child rights, and the need for greater educational opportunities especially for girls. Overshadowing everything else, however, are the internal divisions within Rwandan society which reached their nadir in 1994. This explains the consistent focus on healing, peace-building and reconciliation in much of World Vision’s Rwanda programming.

Senegal
Senegal is predominantly a moderate Sunni Muslim country, which has been influenced by Sufi mysticism. Spiritual beliefs are inseparable from daily life and are prioritised by the community. It is a very open religious context. Of the total population, 98% say that ‘religion is very important in their lives’\(^\text{15}\) and 58% believe that ‘sacrifices to spirits or ancestors can protect them from bad things happening.’ There are many animistic beliefs and practices in Senegal.

An historic focus of World Vision’s work has been food security and access to clean water, and it has been reported that needs in these areas are now declining. Primary health, including HIV and AIDS and sanitation, remain a priority. There is an emerging emphasis on quality education, life skills and child rights. Many children are educated in a very limited way in Koranic schools or Daaras (a kind of madrassa) where only Arabic is taught. A related phenomenon is the ill-treatment of talibé, children who are exploited and forced to beg. There are also animistic beliefs and rituals, and an unhelpful reliance on traditional healers. Some projects have been aimed at preventing harmful traditional practices –

\(^{15}\) PEW Forum on Religion and Public Life 2009, ‘American views on religion, politics, and public policy’, online at http://pewforum.org/. This data shows a remarkable majority of people in African countries who state ‘religion is very important to me’.
specifically female genital mutilation, early marriage and harsher forms of corporal punishment.

Other development concerns include people migrating to Dakar, youth engagement, the moral formation of young people and increased inter-faith understanding. There is a general concern about the rise of radical Islam in the region.

In summary, World Vision offers a diverse range of contexts in which to explore how theological beliefs and practices inform its development work. The eight contexts described represent a mixture of countries which identify as Christian (Rwanda, Georgia, Armenia), mixed religious settings (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon, Tanzania) and strongly non-Christian (Senegal). Four countries were ex-communist (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Armenia, Georgia), and three had experienced genocides (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Armenia, Rwanda). Most had experienced wars or major internal civil conflicts in the last 30 years, the exceptions being Tanzania and Senegal. Some offices employed all, or virtually all, Christian staff (Armenia, Georgia, Lebanon, Rwanda, Tanzania) and the remainder a mixture. Senegal had a majority of Muslim staff.

4.3.3 Accessing internal World Vision data

A third reason influencing the decision to select World Vision as the case study was an important practical consideration. Through previous employment with World Vision Australia, the researcher was aware of a series of internal World Vision evaluation reports accompanied by supporting interviews. Briefly, these materials examined the Christian Commitment (CC) work and strategy in a number of countries. They represented an important body of work that had the potential to be re-examined using the research questions posed by this thesis. Written permission was granted to access these materials for research purposes, and an ethical clearance was obtained permitting their analysis. By analysing these materials in overview, it was hoped to glean insights of relevance to the development sector as a whole.

The final methodological consideration relates to the volume of data available. Reports were considered from eight countries, with roughly 250 records of interview and focus group discussions. It is unlikely that this volume of material, from this diversity of contexts, could have been generated by primary research in a timely way by an individual researcher. For reasons discussed in more detail below, the reports and interviews represented a rare opportunity to test the thesis with unusual depth.

Against this background, the methodology for this research is now outlined.
4.3.4 The methodology

The hypothesis that this research aimed to test can be stated as follows:

- there are theological motifs in World Vision’s work which can be articulated
- these motifs inform its development work in significant and particular ways.
- taken as a whole, World Vision’s approach to development can be considered cohesive and distinctive.

Two additional propositions are that:

- World Vision’s theologically informed approach to development may represent a comparative advantage or a source of risk in given contexts
- the application of World Vision’s theological frame will be nuanced to reflect local culture, religious traditions and development needs.

This hypothesis was tested in the following way.

4.3.4.1 Step 1

The first step involved the articulation of the key motifs framing World Vision’s development work. This work involved three actions occurring during 2011 and 2012.

The first action was personal reflection on this topic as an employee. Until mid-2012, my role was Chief of Mission for World Vision Australia (WVA), in which I led a small department carrying out theological research. One of my responsibilities was to provide theological reflection about the development work funded by WVA and comment on distinctive faith-related aspects of World Vision’s approach to development.

These distinctive features were able to be tested by seeking the input of key leaders within the World Vision Partnership. In 2011, I wrote an unpublished paper proposing the key elements of a theology of change for Christian international development organisations. While the paper was phrased in general terms, it clearly had World Vision in view. It was reviewed by the following personnel within the global partnership and then published on the WVA website:

- Tim Dearborn – Partnership Leader for Christian Commitments
- Valdir Steuernagel – Partnership Theologian-at-Large
- Tadeusz Mich – Director of Catholic and Intercultural Relations
- Bishop John Harrower – Board member, World Vision Australia
- Ruth Padilla deBorst – Director of Christian Formation and Leadership Development.
Their valuable comments were incorporated in the final version of the paper. While that paper was written mainly for devotional purposes, it provided the foundation for my articulation of World Vision’s theology of development.

At the same time, this work was continuously strengthened by a careful review of World Vision strategy and policy documents relating to faith issues. This review added one new theme, and refined and reshaped others.

In attempting to articulate the theology informing World Vision’s development work, I was especially mindful that elements of general Christian theology should be omitted. What mattered were those aspects of Christian theology that appeared to inform development work and practice in some way.

In completing this exercise I was also mindful that not all beliefs are reflected in official policy or guidelines. Even where they are, they may not be adhered to in practice or may be given a local emphasis. Some theological motifs of an organisation are best determined by its actions, structure, lived culture and commitment of resources.

Taking all of these factors into account, a list of eight characteristic motifs was generated. The rationale for this list, and supporting World Vision documentation where applicable, is provided in the next chapter. These motifs are listed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Characteristic motifs of World Vision’s theology

| A. | A biblically inspired holism and spiritual worldview |
| B. | Understanding work as ministry (vocation) |
| C. | Living for the Kingdom |
| D. | Standing against evil |
| E. | The imperative of inner transformation |
| F. | Promotion of a devotional culture |
| G. | Commitment to prayer and scripturally based resources |
| H. | A special relationship with the churches |

4.3.4.2 Step 2

Step Two involved capturing data that showed how those theological motifs informed World Vision’s development work.
This was done by reviewing a series of evaluation reports, commissioned by WVA, which examined the CC program and strategy of various national offices. The records of interview and focus group discussions which contributed to these reports were also examined. Again, a series of sub-steps were involved.

The first sub-step was to determine which reports to consider. The full list of evaluation reports, being all of the reports available at the time the research was conducted, appear in Table 4.2.

Three other evaluation reports were available for consideration but were excluded from this research for methodological reasons. The reports that were excluded, and their reasons for exclusion, are explained in Table 4.3.

As a research method, grounded theory can help analyse a wide variety of data. In the present case, the materials outlined provided a substantial dataset. Many of these materials relay the subjective experiences of individuals. As described in later steps, grounded theory provided a way of abstracting those subjective experiences into theoretical and causal relationships. The research process involved a deep ‘immersion’ in this data with a view to establishing connections, categories and sub-categories. In this way a key element of grounded theory could be satisfied, namely, establishing a higher level of abstraction than the data itself.16

Having determined the materials to include, the next sub-step was to interrogate them.

**4.3.4.3 Step 3: general coding of the dataset**

Content coding and grounded theory can work well in tandem, providing the coding is not used to test pre-conceived ideas in a highly positivistic way.17 Grounded theory is a method which generates theory from the discovery of patterned relationships, not simply the testing of *a priori* hypotheses. In this research coding was used only to establish research domains, which were then inductively analysed by building categorises and sub-categories within each of these areas.

At the outset I decided not to use word count methodology as a qualitative research technique. The present research is not looking at the number or pattern of word use to establish any concepts. On the contrary, it is looking to examine in a much more organic way how theological motifs inform development practice. The general coding of the dataset required very close textual analysis and did not rely on software search and retrieval. Where a

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17 Suddaby, p. 636.
text could be referenced to more than one motif, it was generally forced into one category or another. The choice of category was often made in the light of the context of the particular remark, including the tenor and direction of conversations, rather than on the specific words used within a sentence.

Table 4.2 Details of analysed World Vision Christian Commitments evaluation reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Report</th>
<th>Date Visited</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Contributing Writer(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina</td>
<td>18–24 May 2009</td>
<td>Robert Kilpatrick, Ashley Goode</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation report WV Bosnia and Herzegovina CC Programme Published July 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>1–10 June 2009</td>
<td>Andrew Newmarch</td>
<td>Robert Kilpatrick, Ashley Goode, Holta Trandafili (WV Albania)</td>
<td>Evaluation report WV Lebanon, CC Programme, Draft 1.518 Published November 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>11–21 April 2010</td>
<td>Andrew Newmarch</td>
<td>Ashley Goode</td>
<td>Evaluation report WV Armenia CC Programme, Draft 2.319 Published November 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>21–30 April 2010</td>
<td>Ashley Goode</td>
<td>Andrew Newmarch, Ekaterine Papadhopuli</td>
<td>Evaluation report WV Georgia, CC Programme Published June 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>7–31 August 2010</td>
<td>Ashley Goode</td>
<td>James Kesanta (WV Tanzania)</td>
<td>Evaluation report WV Tanzania, CC Programme Published October 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>21 August–3 September 2011</td>
<td>Ashley Goode</td>
<td>Bob Mitchell, Jean Paul Habimana (WV Rwanda)</td>
<td>Evaluation report WV Rwanda, CC Programme Published October 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18 Draft 1.5 of the evaluation report for Lebanon (Newmarch 2009) was accepted as the final evaluation document.
19 Likewise, Draft 2.3 of the evaluation report for Armenia (Newmarch 2010) was accepted as the final document.
Table 4.3 List of reports excluded from consideration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report</th>
<th>Date visited</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Reason for exclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>17–21 August 2008</td>
<td>Andrew Newmarch, Ashley Goode</td>
<td>This was a prototype exercise. Subsequent evaluation reports for Orthodox countries with a more consistent approach were available for analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>10–15 June 2009</td>
<td>Andrew Newmarch</td>
<td>This was a report based on very brief field visit. It contained insufficient field analysis to be of probative value. It was essentially an office review rather than a field program review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East and Eastern Europe Region Report</td>
<td>25–31 May 2009</td>
<td>Robert Kilpatrick, Ashley Goode</td>
<td>This was a strategic review conducted at a regional level, and not a country field-level study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.4.4 Step 4: inductive recognition of themes and sub-themes within more general categories

The goal of this research was to see how characteristic theological motifs inform the development work of a major development organisation. Inductive techniques were therefore necessary to penetrate these general categories and establish links within them. *Grounded theory* offered a helpful way forward.

*Why grounded theory?*

This method has its origins in Glasser and Strauss’ 1967 work *The discovery of grounded theory*. It seeks ‘to identify categories and concepts that emerge from text and link these concepts into substantive and informal theories.’\(^{20}\) Ryan and Bernard state that ‘grounded theory is an iterative process by which the analyst becomes more and more “grounded” in the data and develops increasingly richer concepts and models of how the phenomenon being studied really works.’\(^{21}\)

\(^{20}\) Ibid., pp. 278–79.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., p. 279.
As step four is the methodological heart of the research, it is appropriate to list in more detail the multiple reasons why ‘grounded theory’ was adopted as this study’s research method.

1. Grounded theory is a good way to analyse a large volume of data. There was a significant corpus of material to be analysed, and grounded theory offered a recognised and comprehensive system for doing so.

2. Grounded theory is a qualitative research tool, and the present research aimed to establish connections between characteristic theological motifs and development work and praxis.

3. Grounded theory is a way of constructing theory, not merely testing it. This is important because the research question has been framed in a deliberately broad way. The topic of how World Vision’s theology informs its praxis is a spacious one. A research technique was needed which, while highly systematic, was uncontrolled as to where the data might lead. The outcome of this process has been especially rich. The iterative process of coding, sub-coding and grouping produced 37 different ways in which World Vision’s theology informed its development work. By eliciting these linkages in an organic way, grounded theory helped to build theory while responding to the research question.

4. A strength of grounded theory is that it tends to let the data speak for itself. It is not constrained by a researcher’s original (and frequently narrower) conception of a research problem. This allows connections to be made which may escape a more pre-conceived treatment. The research did elicit a number of links that could not have been anticipated at the outset, as discussed in later chapters.

5. Grounded theory is an inherently reflective process. Many of the links between the data involved theological reflection between groups, sub-groups and across domains. Grounded theory is conducive to multi-layered critical reflection and can be well suited to applied theological research.\(^{22}\) The key to effective analysis lies in the interplay between the researcher and data, and it was found that grounded theory maintained a helpful tension between creativity and a rigorous system.

A very common approach to qualitative research in social science is to use a software program searching for key words or concepts, with the analysis based on word count or pattern. This would have been inappropriate for the present research. While grounded theory

\(^{22}\) For example, see Sensing, T 2011, *Qualitative Research: a multi-methods approach to projects for Doctor of Ministry theses*, Wipf & Stock, Oregon, 2011.
can examine data from multiple sources, word count approaches can be especially problematic. This is because word count ‘bears positivistic assumptions about the relationship between word frequency and meaning, most of which violate the interpretivistic assumptions of grounded theory.’

In addition, word-count techniques would have been a ‘blunt instrument’ in the present case, which involved concepts that could not be neatly identified or described. There was a concern that software would fail to pick up relevant data (or conversely, would have retrieved extraneous material). Earlier attempts at using software packages to interrogate the dataset proved this to be the case.

The application of grounded theory to this study

In this study, themes and sub-themes within each theological category were identified inductively by grouping together quotes and examples from the texts.

This was an intensive, manual process. It involved a line-by-line review of the materials pertaining to each theological motif. The goal was to establish inductively how that motif contributed to World Vision’s development work. Every substantive link between a motif and the organisation’s development work was recorded. In total, there were 450 links.

It was necessary to review records of interviews and focus groups, and the evaluation reports to which they related. The reason the reports were reviewed was to ensure that they were a fair and reasonable reflection of the primary materials. Secondly, some of the comments made in the reports were not based on interview material, but on the review team’s own personal experiences and observations. These insights were important too. A popular dictum of grounded theory is that ‘all is data’. However, to avoid double counting – that is, when a comment contained in a report could be traced to an interview or a focus group – only one link was recorded. The reference recorded was usually the one that most cogently or felicitously expressed the development link.

This was a manual process involving over 250 records of interviews and eight evaluation reports and it is possible that some links were missed. To mitigate against this risk, the whole process was repeated a second time. While it is inevitable that some links may not have been captured, the vast majority were.

At an early stage, the decision was made to not use NVivo software for data analysis. The entire research process for this thesis was inherently qualitative in nature and required the continuous exercise of fine judgements. The categorisation of the data and its inductive

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Suddaby, p. 637.
analysis was intensive and iterative. Initial judgements were frequently revised. It was found that the NVivo software, in particular its emphasis on word count and patterns, was not conducive for the reasons already discussed.

By the completion of Step 4, a list of connecting propositions had been built up within each theological motif. These were called topic codes. The final step was to assemble these in a comprehensive taxonomy showing the various ways in which each theological motif contributed to World Vision’s development work. The final taxonomy is reproduced as Table 4.4. Table A2 (Appendix D) lists all the connecting propositions and sub-propositions for each topic code.

**Table 4.4** A taxonomy of 37 topic codes linking World Vision’s theological motifs with its development work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Biblical Holism and Spiritual Worldview: Leveraging community goodwill from an existing spiritual worldview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Biblical Holism and Spiritual Worldview: Sustainability and community access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Biblical Holism and Spiritual Worldview: Program accentuation through holism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>Biblical Holism and Spiritual Worldview: Using spirituality to develop social meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Work as ministry: A relational/incarnational style of engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Work as ministry: Work as an expression of love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Work as ministry: Vocation over career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>Work as ministry: Long-term, sacrificial and committed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>Work as ministry: A sense of being supported by God’s presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>Work as ministry: Embedded organisational presence and commitment to subsidiarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Living for the Kingdom: A strong values base and a commitment to living it out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Living for the Kingdom: An emphasis on inter-faith respect and co-operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Living for the Kingdom: Standing against corruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Living for the Kingdom: Building hope and resilience in the present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>Standing against evil: Overcoming systemic injustice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>Standing against evil: Responding to the demonic/occult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>Standing against evil: Challenging harmful animistic practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Imperative of inner transformation: Using camps, Sunday Schools and specific programs to encourage inner change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>Imperative of inner transformation: Inner strength in times of crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>Imperative of inner transformation: Promulgating Christian morals and ethics through staff and general field interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>Imperative of inner transformation: Transfiguring inter-ethnic and inter-faith relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5</td>
<td>Imperative of inner transformation: Enquiry and conversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Devotional culture: Nurture and sustaining staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>Devotional culture: Encouraging quality field work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>Devotional culture: Building teams and a shared sense of mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>Devotional culture: Modelling respectful interfaith and interdenominational relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Prayer and scripture: The role of public prayer in validating community development work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2</td>
<td>Prayer and scripture: Prayer in building deeper community relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G3</td>
<td>Prayer and scripture: Prayer and discernment in operational life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G4</td>
<td>Prayer and scripture: Prayer and the locus of spiritual power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G5</td>
<td>Prayer and scripture: Use of scripturally based programmatic resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G6</td>
<td>Prayer and scripture: Support for developmentally focussed Christian publishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Special relationship with the church: Leveraging organisational influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Special relationship with the church: Leveraging personal influence of church leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Special relationship with the church: Reaching isolated areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>Special relationship with the church: Promoting developmental understandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>Special relationship with the church: Unity and co-operation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.4.5 Step 5

The research departed from classic grounded theory in one respect. In its classic form, grounded theory involves collection of data in a sequence until a point of ‘saturation’ is reached. This is the point where immersion in the data has elicited the patterned relationships
supporting the development of new theory. In the present case, the data consisted of a closed set which was examined in its entirety. While this corpus was more than enough to establish patterned relationships, the examination of the whole also enabled quantitative data to be produced for the entire set, giving an indication of the overall strength and distribution of the patterns.

This involved conducting a basic quantitative analysis of the links identified. While there were significant limitations attached to this exercise, the step was considered worth completing.

The quantitative analysis focussed on two areas. The first was identifying the most widely distributed links, namely, those data links appearing in most countries and regions. A second enquiry was to identify the number of supporting links for each Topic Code. This enabled a matrix to be prepared mapping the overall distribution and frequency of links (see Table 4.5). This analysis added to the picture by providing a general indication of prevalence and an indication of the distribution of links by regions. The strongest and most widely distributed links populate the top right hand corner.

Figure 4.1 presents much the same data in the form of a bar graph. However, it also shows the regional breakdown of links for each topic code.

**Table 4.5 A matrix showing the distribution and strength of individual links**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly supported 19 + links</th>
<th>H4(24)</th>
<th>F4(19)</th>
<th>C1(27); C2(29); C4(21); H1(38)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Well supported 8–18 links</td>
<td>G1(17); D3(10)</td>
<td>A3(8); B3(9); C3(8); E4(10)</td>
<td>A1(15); A2(18) A4(9); E1(12); E3(12); F1(10); F3(9); G5(11); H2(15); H5(15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor themes 0–7 links</td>
<td>D2(7); G2(7); G3(4) G4(4); G6(2)</td>
<td>B4(6); B5(6); E2(3); E5(3); H3(2)</td>
<td>D1(5);</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 region = a regionally distributed link
2 regions = a partially distributed link
3 regions = a well-distributed link
4 regions = a fully distributed link
Figure 4.1 Graph showing all links by topic code and region
It is important to note that there are limitations which affect this quantitative data. For example, there was a difference in the level of investment in producing the evaluation reports. Some involved interviews over a few days; others over several weeks, with many more interviews. The report for Tanzania had the greatest number of supporting interviews. The difference in the volume of data for each location has the potential to skew results.

Another limitation is that the interviews were not tightly structured. They were semi-structured, and in some cases, fluid. Different questions were asked from place to place. As a consequence, the links generated from this process are not amenable to a robust statistical comparison. Finally, it was apparent that the preparation of evaluation reports reflected an emergent process, with certain lines of questioning only appearing in later reports.

Having said that, quantitative analysis does provide a general indication of the strength of some themes. All reports were focussed on the ways in which faith was integrated into development work; all reports did provide a comprehensive picture of the internal life of each World Vision national office with respect to its Christian Commitment strategy, and all reports sought views from a range of staff and external stakeholders about the role of faith within development (with particular reference to World Vision’s own development work). In this light, a quantitative analysis of the links and their distribution was helpful in providing some general indications.

One possible way of strengthening the quantitative analysis was to weight the links observed from each country so that each link had an equal value. The problem with this approach is that there were too many variables, and links could relate unevenly to any topic code or motif. In the end, weighting was not considered an improvement.

**4.3.4.6 Step 6**

The next step was to provide a preliminary interpretation of the data for each topic code and begin to draw out some preliminary implications. Ryan and Bernard state that ‘The end results of grounded theory are often displayed through the presentation of segments of text – verbatim quotes from informants – as examples of concepts and theories.’¹ This was also the case for the present research. Generally speaking, there were excellent quotes to draw out the proposed linkages. A ‘snapshot’ figure is also provided in the preliminary analysis section for each topic code. This shows the number and breakdown of links by region in the form of a small bar graph.

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¹ Ibid., p. 280.
The data is presented in five chapters, in which some of the eight theological motifs are grouped. A preliminary analysis of the data is given in each chapter. The sequence for presenting the data is set out below.

- Chapter 6: **Motifs expressing holism**: World Vision’s holistic and spiritual worldview, and the imperative of inner transformation
- Chapter 7: **Vocational motifs**: understanding development as ministry, and the promotion of a devotional culture
- Chapter 8: **Values motifs**: Living for the kingdom, and standing against evil
- Chapter 9: **Foundational faith motifs**: the role of prayer and scripture
- Chapter 10: **Ecclesial motif**: special relationship with the church.

4.3.4.7 Step 7

In parallel with the above process, the dataset was also examined for evidence of risks posed for World Vision’s development work within each theological motif. This data is reported and interpreted in a self-contained chapter (Chapter 11). The bulk of the data links concerning risks emerged from one motif, World Vision’s special relationship with the church.

4.3.4.8 Step 8

This step considered, in the light of the data presented, whether World Vision’s approach to development was coherent and distinctive because of its theologically informed practice. This was done by examining and mapping the inter-relationships between each item in the taxonomy. An evaluation was made about whether, as a whole, a distinctive and coherent approach had been established.

4.3.4.9 Step 9

This step built on the preliminary analysis contained in Chapters 6 to 11, and drew out the broader implications of the research. These implications were grouped in two main areas: the general implications for the sector and specific implications for development practice.

4.3.4.10 Step 10

The aim of this step was to provide a concluding overview and identify some areas for further research.
4.3.5 Some specific methodological issues

Having outlined the methodology used to test the thesis, several issues need more detailed consideration. The first is the suitability of World Vision evaluation reports to test the thesis.

4.3.5.1 Suitability

There can be a risk in taking documents prepared for one purpose and using them for another. It is important to explain why the World Vision reports were suitable for this research. The reports were prepared at the request of national offices seeking to review their CC strategy. The basic idea was to explore the ways in which Christian faith was integrated into the life and work of the particular office, and how it might be improved. This reflected a more general trend emerging within the partnership to view Christian faith as an asset to be integrated into all aspects of development work. The 2011–2014 Global Christian Commitments Strategy has as its first strategic goal the reinforcement of World Vision’s Christian identity. The intended outcome is that ‘All World Vision strategies and programmes demonstrate the integration of World Vision’s Christian identity …’.\(^2\)

This can be contrasted with the more traditional approach, which viewed the role of Christian faith in the partnership from a compliance lens. Reports prepared along these traditional lines were used to test items that could be easily measured. These included the percentage of personnel who self-identified as Christians, the number of church partnerships, or the number of staff attending devotional activities. This inculcated an ‘audit’ approach to CC rather than engaging more reflectively in considering the role of faith in a positive and integrated way in carrying out development work.

The evaluation reports that formed the foundation for the research adopted this more recent approach. They looked at the way in which faith has been integrated into development work and made recommendations as a matter of organisational strategy about how this could be strengthened. Each report reflected a move away from a ‘compliance’ view of Christian faith to seeing faith as an asset in carrying out development work. For this reason, the reports raised the kinds of questions that are helpful for the present research. The fact that hundreds of links could be identified shows that these were a very fertile body of material.


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4.3.5.2 Tendentiousness

The reports were prepared by departments within WVA with a philosophical commitment to affirming the role of faith within development. Moreover, the individual authors are known to be people committed both to the Christian faith and to working in development. It follows that there is a risk that the reports serve a personal or organisational agenda. There is also no basis to assess whether the particular contexts examined can be considered typical or representative of World Vision practice in general.

The reports do appear to be reasonably well written and structured. There are some comments and recommendations which are pro forma, but overall the reports have a professional though not academic tone. Appendix A contains a statement by Mr Ashley Goode. He was an author or co-author for each report. It explains the process he went through in commissioning and producing each report.

There is much to commend the reports in terms of their probative value. Extensive ‘key informant interviews’ (KIIs) or ‘focus group discussions’ (FGDs) were included in support of each report. These elicited a very large amount of useful data. Having examined each KII and FGD in detail, the reports are well supported by the data. A full list of KIIs and FGDs is set out in Appendix B.

The primary note-taker has confirmed that an explanatory statement was made immediately before the commencement of KIIs and FGDs to the effect that all information was sought on an anonymous basis for strategy and research purposes, and that no identifiable comments would be disclosed in any report. The records do contain comments highly critical of World Vision in some instances. There was considerable data pointing out the risks of a faith-based approach to development, especially in terms of relationships with the church. This is reported in Chapter 11.

A strength of the evaluation reports is that they each sought information from sources external to World Vision. This enabled the triangulation of some research themes. Triangulation is a process of seeking multiple voices or angles when looking at a research problem. Seeking multiple perspectives, especially those outside the subject under review, may provide a more robust and comprehensive picture when those views are compared. A range of views is conducive to a ‘thicker’ and more trustworthy analysis. The dataset did reflect multiple viewpoints and a wide range of sources.\(^3\)

\(^3\) Sensing, pp. 72ff.
Overall, the KIIs and FGDs reflected a greater number of external than internal voices. Table 4.6 shows the proportion of internal and external interview sources for each report. In mixed-faith settings, the external voices included representatives of other faith groups.

**Table 4.6 The proportion of internal and external data sources in each evaluation report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of KII/FGD/other data-gathering sessions</th>
<th>Number from Internal Sources*</th>
<th>Number from External Sources*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*An Internal Source is defined as a World Vision employee or group of employees. External sources typically included community representatives, church leaders, leaders of other faiths, and personnel from other NGOs.

Having said that, the impartiality of some of the external sources could have been affected by World Vision’s general presence within a community. This may have been regarded as a benefit. Some church or community leaders may also have viewed World Vision as a potential source of funding for programs. Influences of this kind could not be tracked in the formulation of the dataset, but it is important to acknowledge that they may have existed. It should equally be noted that the object of the reports and interviews was to explore ways in which faith was integrated in development work, and not specifically to obtain feedback about World Vision as an organisation.
Some themes did not require external corroboration. This was especially the case with vocational motifs. One research theme was to explore the idea of development work as a faith-inspired vocation or ministry. On this front, the KII and FGDs provided direct evidence, painting a vivid picture of internal organisational life and what World Vision staff believe is the impact of this life on their own work. While personal beliefs are not proof of an impact, when such beliefs are consistently held by a large number of personnel in different places, then a strong premise may arise.

A fundamental research goal of this thesis was to illustrate how intentional reflection on an organisation’s theology can provide a rubric to examine its impacts, both positive and negative, on development work. The case study of World Vision proved to be an excellent example of this process. It provided a very clear picture, in a range of different settings, about the nature of those connections and raised key implications for other FBOs and the sector.

4.3.5.3 Reflexivity and bias

Reflexivity is an important concept in most forms of qualitative human research. The theory of reflexivity proposes that the researcher can never be entirely independent from the subject matter under review. It challenges earlier research in sociological methods which posited that ‘objectivity’ could be achieved by approaching the subject matter with a sufficient degree of detachment. It is recognised that the presence, power, techniques and tacit agenda of the researcher may all intrude upon the research and alter the truth under investigation. Reflexivity seeks to explore any feedback loops affecting the research being carried out. It demands that the researcher explore ways in which their own involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs that research. 4

One question that arises is whether a person with an active Christian faith can be sufficiently independent to undertake research exploring the role of theological motifs within an important endeavour like international development? I would answer this question ‘Yes.’

For decades, the study of human life maintained the appearance of objectivity. It was claimed that by exercising great care in the design and execution of human studies, especially ethnographic or anthropological studies, a truly objective view could be obtained. This was necessary because to be credible research needed to be ‘scientific’, and to be scientific it needed to be at arms’ length from the researcher. Research infected by subjective

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considerations was considered tainted and often had a pejorative connotation. Results could be impugned as imaginary, illusory or unverifiable.

More recently, it has been acknowledged that all research is necessarily reflexive. In grammar, a reflexive verb is one that has the same subject and direct object. In research it is now recognised that ‘because scholars are human beings, the study of human life is always and inescapably reflexive.’\(^5\) The researcher cannot leave themselves entirely out of the picture: ‘If we obtain the appearance of objectivity by leaving ourselves entirely out of our accounts, we simply leave the subjective realities of our work uncontrolled.’\(^6\) An egocentric predicament therefore arises: all knowledge is ultimately subjective and culturally located, and thus has the potential to be self-justifying. In particular, in the field of religious studies disinterest is constantly urged on scholars, but disinterest is impossible.

It is relevant to recall that for most of the twentieth century, the orientation of the academy was set firmly against religion. Jones and Petersen summarise: ‘The narratives of modernisation and secularisation that shaped the social sciences for most of the postwar period saw religion as a conservative and traditional force, destined to withdraw and disappear from public life as part of societal progress towards an increasingly modern society.’\(^7\) Other commentators were blunter. \(^8\) The impact of modernity was to relegate religion to the private sphere. Religious beliefs were seen as superstitious and unscientific. In addition, the academy saw itself striving against an old world order of European elites and repressive economic and political structures, which were often associated with and defended by the churches. The sociological literature reflected that contest.

At times there has been pressure to disavow or disassociate from any religious position. Norman Malcolm has stated: ‘In our Western academic philosophy, religious belief is commonly disregarded as unreasonable and is viewed with condescension or even contempt. It is said that religion is a refuge for those who, because of weakness of intellect or character, are unable to confront the stern realities of the world. The objective, mature, strong attitude is to hold beliefs solely on the basis of evidence.’\(^9\) Those who have the nerve to own up to their religious convictions in scholarship can be ‘given the appearance of deviance within the

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\(^6\) Ibid., p. 294.

\(^7\) Jones & Petersen, p. 1292.

\(^8\) For example, Wallace stated: ‘The evolutionary future of religion is extinction … Belief in supernatural powers is doomed to die out, all over the world, as a result of the increasing adequacy and diffusion of scientific knowledge’ (Wallace, AFC 1966, Religion: an anthropological view, Random House, New York, p. 265).

scholarly consensus. The end result has been to conflate disbelief with taking an objective or scientific stance.

In a seminal article, Hufford points out that holding to a 'scientific gospel' or arguments against the Divine is not a neutral position. No worldview can ever be impartial on matters of ultimate concern. Accordingly, every scholar will have personal beliefs, and the persistent bias of the academy against religious viewpoints must be acknowledged as itself a viewpoint. The argument for ‘methodological atheism’ serves to advance one culturally loaded belief as dispassionate neutrality, while unfairly asking scholars who do have religious convictions to confess to bias.

This leads to the question of how faith-based researchers of religious topics should proceed with their enquiries. This researcher has accepted the counsel of Hufford. The position taken is that the researcher should openly acknowledge his or her religious convictions and then proceed with a scholarly voice, tone and methods: ‘If impartiality in belief studies cannot consist of having no personal beliefs, then impartiality must be a methodological stance in which one acknowledges one’s personal beliefs but sets them aside for scholarly purposes. Recognising that each of us has a personal voice, for research purposes we choose to speak instead with our scholarly voice.

There is a risk that when a scholar presents conclusions which are congenial to their personal religious beliefs, that those personal beliefs have influenced the research findings. However, to assume that this is necessarily the case is unwarranted. Good scholarship and critical research may have produced those same conclusions. It is noted that in some cases it may be an advantage to have an active faith in conducting research on faith-related topics. A person of faith may see and observe things that make less sense to others, or they may gain the confidence of people reporting about their own faith and convictions.

Helpfully, grounded theory as a research methodology explicitly recognises that the researcher will approach their work laden with biases, and therefore insists on a self-aware, open and careful posture. Suddaby observes: ‘… in grounded theory, researchers must account for their positions in the research process. That is, they must engage in ongoing self-reflection to ensure that they take personal biases, world-views, and assumptions into account while collecting, interpreting and analysing data.’

10 Hufford, p. 304.
11 Ibid., p. 303.
12 Ibid., p. 298.
13 Suddaby, p. 640.
As part of this accountability, it remains important for readers to be aware of any potential for bias, and for this reason a disclosure of personal beliefs and circumstances may assist in evaluating this research.

With this discussion in mind, I make the following disclosures.

**4.3.6 Disclosures**

- I am a middle-class Anglo-Saxon male, who is an ordained minister.
- I was formerly employed by World Vision in a semi-theological role.
- I led a department that helped produce two of the reports that are considered in this thesis, and I was involved in conducting fieldwork for one of the eight reports.
- I am no longer employed by World Vision and have no financial or other connection with it.
- I am using the reports and interview material by permission.
- I have given no undertakings and ceded no control over the research to World Vision in any way.
- The only obligations accepted are to provide WVA with a copy of my PhD thesis, and to code interviewees so as to preserve their anonymity.

In terms of my approach to this research, I have made a point of including data that may be unhelpful to the thesis. I have recorded relevant comments critical of World Vision as the research subject and its methods, and I have included a chapter on the risks to development work arising from World Vision’s theologically informed approach. Overall, I have tried to keep the tone scholarly and descriptive, and not argumentative. A generous use of direct quotes has been made to avoid an unnecessary layer of interpretation.

The next chapter seeks to outline and explain some of the key motifs of World Vision’s theology.
5. An Articulation of Characteristic Theological Motifs of World Vision

It is an ambitious task to attempt to articulate key theological motifs of an organisation as geographically and contextually diverse as World Vision. It is possible because the members of the World Vision Partnership have agreed to uphold common policies about Christian faith and after 60 years of interaction, a distinctive faith-based culture has emerged. In this chapter, eight key motifs of World Vision’s organisational theology are explained. This list has been arrived at after a review of key policy and strategy documents, personal reflection, and input from senior faith leaders within the World Vision Partnership.

The first motif is a commitment to an integrated and spiritual worldview. A related idea is the importance of inner transformation. These two themes together express something of World Vision’s holism.

5.1 Motifs expressing holism

5.1.1 An holistic worldview, including the spiritual

The first characteristic motif of World Vision’s theology is that it has a broad and integrated worldview. This represents a broader base from which to frame some of the theories of change outlined in Chapter 3, which concerned themselves mainly with physical, civic or juridical foci. In contrast, World Vision describes itself ‘as a Christian humanitarian organisation concerned for the physical, social and spiritual needs of people.’¹ This is explained in official policy in these terms: ‘Holistic ministry. In the midst of sin, suffering and injustice, holistic ministry participates in God’s intervention in all aspects of life leading to spiritual and social transformation. We affirm the value of all our ministries as witnessing to God’s love for the poor and oppressed. Without meaning that spiritual change automatically leads to material blessings, World Vision understands that poverty and injustice involve the interdependency of the material, social and spiritual dimensions of life.’²

The phrase that captures this concept in daily life within the World Vision Partnership is ‘transformational development’. At the time the reports were written, ‘Transformational Development Indicators’ were used to track progress on a broad range of development

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² Ibid, clause 4.
indices, including spiritual criteria. The Board of WVI confirmed in 2011 that ‘Development without a spiritual dimension is poor development, and poor development neither empowers people nor produces sustained change.’

When the life of Christ is examined, a holistic vision of ministry emerges. The biblical picture of salvation is as ‘coherent, broad and deep as the exigencies of human existence.’ The restoration of human community is one foundational aspect: ‘in contrast to Western society’s emphasis on the autonomous individual, Christianity sees each human life as profoundly inter-connected with others in a series of overlapping relationships.’ When salvation is viewed only in personal individualistic terms, a narrow, anaemic and unbiblical picture emerges. Missiologist David Bosch explains: ‘In a world where people are dependent on each other and every individual exists within a web of inter-human relationships, it is totally untenable to limit salvation to the individual and his or her personal relationship with God. Hatred, injustice oppression, war, and other forms of violence are manifestations of evil; concern for humanness, for the conquering of famine, illness and meaninglessness is part of the salvation for which we hope and labour.’

Salvation involves the restoration of relationships and communities, even nations. Going even further, scripture indicates that God’s plan of salvation also extends to the physical world and non-human elements of creation. The apostle Paul explicitly teaches that all of creation is groaning with anticipation, waiting for the time when it will be renewed.

World Vision’s understanding is consistent with the view that it is ‘a false anthropology and sociology to divorce the spiritual or personal sphere from the material and social.’ Jesus never made such distinctions. In his ministry there is no demarcation between saving from sin and saving from physical affliction. One constant reminder of this is the frequent use of the same verb in the New Testament texts to describe both occurrences. Former World Vision Vice-President for Development Bryant Myers complains that it is only a deep-seated

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3 From the background material to the Affirmation of Christian Witness (WVI 2011b).
4 Bosch, p. 400.
5 In this regard, human community can look to the eternal self-giving love of the Holy Trinity as its inspiration. This is what it truly means to be made in the image of God. Gen 1:26–27.
7 Bosch, p. 397.
8 Rom 8:22.
9 Bosch, p. 10. It is noted that anthropology and other social sciences recognize the critical role of religion in human culture and society. Culture is holistic. It is a system of elements which are interrelated and interconnected.
10 The verb σώζω, to save, is translated variously in English as to heal, to deliver, to make well, to survive and to bring safely – among other uses.
captivity to a Western worldview that tries to force such a separation. Writing in a Latin American context, theologian Boff links the physical and spiritual even more bluntly. In speaking about the material deprivation of poor communities he warns: ‘Unless we attack this kind of poverty directly, in the name of Jesus and the apostles, as a challenge to evangelization, we shall be mocking the poor, by handing them an opiate religion, a religion which answers their cry for help with cynicism.’

5.1.2 The importance of inner transformation

This second motif is not a contradiction of holism, but an illustration of an indispensable aspect of it. An older World Vision publication puts it this way: ‘To restore our humanity completely is to restore us in the image of our Maker … To carry out “development” which does not potentially lead to a re-established relationship with the Ruler of all the universe is to carry out development that is sub-Christian.’ A commentator from TEAR Fund, an organisation with a similar ethos, puts it this way: ‘in the last analysis, no theory of practice that ignores our relationship with God can give us a true picture of what meaningful human life is.’ The Christian hope is for ‘the reign of God in the whole created order, including ourselves.’

The work of World Vision recognises that sustainable change is simply not possible without changing the way power is exercised in human relationships and in the world. In this respect, the human heart can represent a stubborn development challenge. God’s Spirit is needed to teach humans how to exercise power in godly ways, to uphold the dignity of others, and to give and receive forgiveness where there is error. World Vision recognises that this kind of internal transfiguring can have a profound impact, which is possible because ‘in Jesus Christ, God gives us new capacity to live according to God’s will and ways.

When people learn to live more closely as God intended, this can lead to social and cultural liberation. According to Brueggemann, this lies at the heart of the gospel and represents the goodness of the good news: ‘The gospel is the news that distorted patterns of power have been broken: the reception of the gospel is the embrace of radically transformed

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11 Myers, p. 7.
12 Boff, p. 56.
13 Ed Dayton in Steward, p. 89.
14 Hughes, p. 2.
patterns of social relationships." This kind of deeper transformation contrasts with shallow pietism or more formulaic approaches to evangelism.

The idea of inner change is an important impetus for World Vision’s development work. Interestingly, the concept of personal transformation is starting to find its way into more mainstream development discourse. Eminent development theorists Michael Edwards and Gita Sen argue that development practitioners must acknowledge that ‘personal or inner change and social or outer change are inseparably linked.’ They argue that increased cooperation between humans underpins all sustainable development, and this requires fundamentally ‘something different’ in the practitioner’s inner experience. Support for this view can come from surprising sources. A noted atheist in a column in The Times has observed: ‘In Africa Christianity changes people’s hearts. It brings a spiritual transformation. The rebirth is real. The change is good … Those who want Africa to walk tall amid 21st century global competition must not kid themselves that providing the material means will make the change. A whole belief system must be supplanted.’

Roman Catholic theologian Groody believes that ‘Sometimes personal liberation involves helping the poor to change the way they think about themselves, especially when they see their conditions as fate, or worse, as divinely ordained.’ In a similar vein, development theorist Paulo Freire speaks in terms of the ‘conscientization of the poor’, by which he refers to the fact that ‘if the poor do not change their self-perception, they will never be free.’ World Vision theologian Jayakumar Christian, who is the National Director of World Vision India, frequently refers to transcending the ‘marred identity’ of the poor. A conversion on this level means ‘rediscovering the original design of creation in which people are called to be free, dignified, and loving human beings.’

While many Christians acknowledge a general responsibility to explain their faith, proselytism remains problematic. The Christian gospel is one of grace. Pope Benedict XVI

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17 Brueggemann, W 1993, Biblical perspectives on evangelism: living in a three-storied universe, Abingdon, Nashville, p. 34.
18 Edwards & Sen, p. 39. While not arguing from a Christian perspective, they do note that: ‘The goal of personal change must be a conscious and explicit element in all that we do’ and that even the socially committed will be unsuccessful if they ignore the inner basis of change’ (pp. 44 & 41 respectively).
19 Parris, M 2009, ‘As an atheist, I truly believe Africa needs God’, The Times Online, 8 January.
20 Groody, p. 185.
21 Ibid.
22 See, for example, Christian, J 1999, God of the empty-handed: poverty, power and the Kingdom of God, Marc Publishers, Monrovia, p. 147.
23 Groody, p. 186.
24 It is not correct to define ‘proselytism’ as meaning any activity which may lead to conversion. It refers to violence, coercion, manipulation, or incentives being provided to induce someone to change their faith position.
has counselled: ‘Charity, furthermore, cannot be used as a means of engaging in what is nowadays considered proselytism. Love is free; it is not practised as a way of achieving other ends.’

There are numerous World Vision policy documents outlawing proselytism or unethical witness. These include the partnership’s policies on Partnerships with churches (clause 9), The ministry policy on interfaith relations (clause 20), Principles to guide formation of national policies on spiritual nurture of children (clause 10), and the Management policy on Christian Commitments in emergency responses and disaster management (clause 17).

While it may be possible to coerce or manipulate people into the Christian faith, it is deeply offensive to try. To do so may produce a harvest of insincerity, and it would certainly constitute a repugnant betrayal of a worldview which rests on unconditional love. Tim Dearborn, the World Vision Partnership Leader for Christian Commitments, has said that: ‘If people or power must be manipulated in order to get them to embrace one’s values and convictions, then the values are not of much value and the convictions not very commendable.’

Boff has been highly critical of the compulsion used to spread Christian faith in much of South America. He deprecates the wholesale disregard for human dignity that resulted in the ‘destruction of otherness.’ Poignantly he asks, ‘Can we say that there was an evangelism here?’ World Vision policies reflect a strong awareness that unethical methods can subvert its message and desire for real transformation.

This background leads to a critically important question. If World Vision is implacably opposed to proselytism of any kind, how does it work towards the inner transformation that it regards as essential? There are several aspects to this. First, World Vision sees its role in spiritual nurture as ‘primarily supportive and facilitative, expressed through partnerships, especially partnerships with churches, as well as through the character and witness of staff, other ministry partners and volunteers.’

It claims that ‘Generous love is the best witness to the God in whom we believe.’

Second, World Vision urges staff to maintain a humble, serving posture which resists the temptation to judge. ‘We believe that faith in Christ and salvation are a work of God the Holy

28 Ibid., p. 17.
29 WVI 2010b, Principles to guide formation of national policies on spiritual nurture of children, clause 9.
30 WVI 2006, clause 1.
Spirit. God alone is the judge. Therefore we reject all human judgment of others’ salvation.’

With this in mind World Vision works ‘knowing that God is already at work among all people,’ although how this happens is often unclear.

World Vision staff are urged to pray for the communities in which they work, hoping they would experience profound love in Jesus Christ and not some shallow caricature of it. Mature Christian staff will have an acute understanding that their faith is an embodied faith and their personal actions speak most clearly about what they truly believe. Christians, ideally, will always be willing to give an account of the hope they cherish within them, in a spirit of respect and love, and pray for opportunities to share what they believe. The background material in World Vision’s Affirmation of Christian witness records unambiguously ‘the hope that our work will contribute to people becoming followers of Christ.’

It is noted, however, that World Vision does witness by word in response to community-initiated enquiry and in its engagement with churches: ‘We speak freely about our experience of the love of God encountered in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. We believe the gospel of Christ and the coming of God’s Kingdom are good news for all people. We’re not ashamed of our faith, and we welcome dialogue with community members about the will and ways of God. We want all people to experience God’s love .’ In this way, the injunction of Australian theologian Peter Adam is satisfied: ‘Incarnation without verbal revelation means a dumb incarnation of uninterpreted presence … There is no reason to be content with a notion of incarnation which is only personal or sacramental, and which does not value verbal revelation in Christ’s ministry … verbal revelation is part of Christ’s incarnate ministry, and … incarnated ministry should also include incarnated words, the message of the Gospel.’

World Vision conducts many training and other programs that inculcate strong civic values. While these may be helpful and constructive, such courses are not a substitute for faith in the living God. Socialising a set of good values is not enough for World Vision. These values need to be brought to life in changed patterns of behaviour. World Vision believes this can happen when the relational claims of the Creator God are taken personally

32 Ibid., clause 2.
33 1 Pet 3:15 is an important text here.
34 WVI 2011d, FAQ section.
36 John Perkins puts it this way: ‘What separates Christian community development from other forms of social change is that we believe that changing a life or changing a community is ultimately a spiritual issue’ (Perkins, J 1993, Beyond charity: the call to Christian community development, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, p. 80).
and seriously. World Vision staff are frequently left with the mystery of not knowing the beginning or end of the work of God’s Spirit, especially within other faith traditions. However, this does not stop the organisation from pursuing the goal of inner transformation through all available ethical means.

5.2 Vocational motifs

5.2.1 Understanding work as ministry

The unifying feature of every Christian ministry is the knowledge that it is Christ who is served. This is what transforms work or activity into a ministry. Jesus Christ both pioneers and calls. He leads the way. Karl Barth affirms that ‘the action, work, or activity of Christ unconditionally precedes that of the human called by Him …’

Faith-based development organisations which take this seriously will try and inculcate a ministry understanding among staff and offer a facilitative work environment.

The idea of following Jesus Christ is well captured in World Vision’s Mission Statement. This seminal document affirms that ‘World Vision is an international partnership of Christians whose mission is to follow our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in working with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice and bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God.’ Again, the Ministry Policy on Witness to Jesus Christ echoes this priority: ‘Because the key to Christian witness lies first in the hearts and minds of World Vision staff and only then in our work, it is our policy that World Vision staff are committed to Jesus Christ and have the spiritual, relational and professional skills required of their position’ [emphasis added]. Commitment to Jesus Christ is the prerequisite, professionalism a co-requisite.

World Vision is an organisation that seeks justice and mercy for the poor because it is led to do so in its service to Jesus Christ. There is abundant scriptural assurance about Christ’s affinity with the poor. Matthew’s gospel teaches that Jesus’ own identification with the poor is so close that serving the poor is equated with serving Christ himself.

New Zealand theologian David Flett puts this elegantly by saying that ‘The Christian community’s holy distance from the world is her active existence in solidarity with those for whom God has decided.’ It is salutary to remember that the purpose of God’s election is to enlist Christians

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37 Karl Barth, quoted in Flett, p. 261.
39 Flett, p. 234.
in his service. It can be nothing else. When that service is withheld, election loses all meaning. 40 Ministry is not about parochialism or privilege, or any notion of presumptive blessing. It is primarily understood as service.

Believing that it is Jesus Christ who is served through human efforts may change the outlook for many World Vision staff. Ideally, staff will not conceive what they do as simply service delivery, the application of professional skill or even a commitment to work alongside the poor. If World Vision is successful in recruiting and inducting staff according to its official policies, they will understand their work as a Christian ministry which primarily serves and follows Jesus Christ.

Understanding work as a ministry can imbue a strong sense of passion. This is because it connects a person’s job with their deepest personal motivations. Some commentators believe that this can have a profound impact. For example, Rick James in his research on development NGOs makes reference to the ‘extremist commitment’ of Catholic nuns. Their commitment was said to come from a deeper place than mere humanitarian values: ‘The nuns in particular were working from a sense of calling not career. They displayed extraordinary, long-term commitment. They coped with incredible difficulties in a sacrificial way. “Even when you are having an awful time in Soweto watching necklace killings you go on.” They expected testing and suffering and accepted difficulties with humour. They were in a different league to career-orientated NGO workers.’ 41

This research will show that there are a number of World Vision staff who see their work in highly sacrificial terms as a kind of faith commitment. This is consistent with the World Vision policy requirement to ‘Develop spiritual nurture and Christian formation [with] emphases on the reality of sacrifice, endurance, resilience and suffering in Christian life and witness.’ 42

In many places World Vision hires non-Christians because there are insufficient Christians available or for other good reasons, such as compliance with local discrimination or labour laws. However, the preferencing of Christian staff in recruitment remains official World Vision policy, especially for leadership positions. 43 Senior staff often have ‘spiritual leadership’ built in as a Key Performance Indictor for their roles. The fundamental reason for

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40 Bosch, p. 18.
42 WVI 2009b, clause 2.7.
43 WVI 2006, clauses 20 and 21.
this is the idea that work at World Vision is seen as a ministry, not simply a job, and the expectation is that leaders as ‘culture bearers’ will lead by example.

Understanding work as Christian vocation may also affect notions of personal accountability. This observation is not intended to disparage the contribution of those non-Christians who work for World Vision and are highly committed and skilled in their work. Christians must never indulge feelings of superiority; they must repent of them: ‘Faith should not be used as a weapon for exercising control, nor to encourage judgmental, exclusive, and intolerant attitudes.’44 It is the case, however, that when an employee has an active Christian faith they may frame the concepts of accountability and service differently. This is because of the understanding that, ultimately, it is God who is served through one’s personal efforts.

Strategic Objective 2 of the Global Christian Commitments strategy 2011–14 recognises the need ‘To equip staff for Christ-centred life and work through Christian formation, leadership development, spiritual nurture and care.’ The first expected output is that ‘All offices implement programmes for the Christian formation of staff, so staff are able to express World Vision’s Christian identity and commitments in their life and work.’ This goal recognises and reinforces the embodied nature of Christian faith. The remarks of Pope Benedict XVI seem especially resonant: ‘With regard to the personnel who carry out the Church's charitable activity on the practical level, the essential has already been said: they must not be inspired by ideologies aimed at improving the world, but should rather be guided by the faith which works through love (cf. Gal 5:6). Consequently, more than anything, they must be persons moved by Christ’s love, persons whose hearts Christ has conquered with his love, awakening within them a love of neighbour.’45

One way of helping support staff in their calling is through the organisation’s devotional life.

5.2.2 Promotion of a devotional culture

To help staff seek to follow Jesus in a daily, contextualised way in their work requires teaching, encouragement and spiritual replenishment. For this reason, at World Vision there is a strong emphasis on its internal devotional life. Scheduled corporate devotional times are a defining feature of World Vision’s culture worldwide, and they are considered the sine qua non for the effective spiritual nurture of staff. In restrictive contexts, such as some Islamic contexts where freedom of religion is curtailed, World Vision policy requires that a special

44 James 2009, p. 20.
45 Benedict XVI, Papal Encyclical Dues Caritas Est paragraph 33.
accommodation is made ‘for Christian worship and spiritual nurture by providing resources, time and training for Bible study, prayer, fellowship and pastoral support in order to better equip our staff and carry out our particular mission as an organisation.’ Scheduled devotional activities during work hours is usually the primary way this is achieved. While attendance is not compulsory, it is always strongly encouraged.

Devotional times vary in length and frequency. Typical ingredients include worship or worshipful reflection, a time for corporate prayer, and a teaching or motivational address usually in the form of a homily or sermon. Importantly, corporate devotions will be highly contextualised. In East African national offices, devotions are usually at least one hour in length, and are held three to four times a week. These are very vibrant gatherings, with singing and praise-filled worship, in keeping with local culture. By contrast, in Georgia, where most of the staff are affiliated with the GOC, devotions will be more liturgical in flavour, are held fortnightly, and will be led by an invited Orthodox priest. This is because the Orthodox tradition requires that public prayer should be offered through a priest.

In most places, external speakers, typically local pastors or clergy, will be regularly invited to take part. They will usually be asked to address the staff on a topical issue or Bible passage. At other times, senior World Vision staff will lead the proceedings. Sacraments are not offered at devotional times because this would create confusion regarding the role of the churches and out of respect for different denominational understandings. World Vision policy documents affirm that it ‘can never be a substitute, competitor or replacement for the Church’ and they stress its over-riding ecumenical ethos. Part of World Vision’s mandate is to ‘encourage reconciliation and cooperation among diverse Christian churches and organisations’ and to emphasise ‘what unites us, rather than what divides us.’ Shared devotional opportunities are one way of understanding others better.

In field settings, devotions also take place at local ADP offices, with the responsibility for preparing and leading these times shared among staff. Visiting staff from other offices are also frequently prevailed upon to lead devotions. In my personal experience the reasons for this vary. Sometimes it is to simply to follow standard protocol; at other times it is the desire to hear fresh thoughts, or even to test the faith commitment of the visitor.

46 Taken from clause 2.5 of the policy document ‘Interfaith relations’ (WVI 2009b). See also the policy document ‘Witness to Jesus Christ’ (WVI 2006), clause 26.
48 Ibid. See also WVI 2006, clause 9.
In mixed-faith settings, the conduct of corporate devotions can have particular challenges. Here there may be a tension between seeking to affirm the Christian identity of World Vision and supporting its Christian staff, while not wishing to exclude or make non-Christian staff feel judged. An interesting range of local compromises and innovations have emerged. The voluntary nature of devotional times means that staff from other faiths may sometimes attend as an expression of collegial goodwill or to learn more about World Vision’s underpinning Christian beliefs.

While the fundamental purpose of corporate devotions remains Christian spiritual reflection, there are also opportunities for teaching, especially on topical themes related to World Vision’s development work. This kind of thematic exploration can help draw out and establish common ground with other faiths. In mixed-faith settings, this has helped to bring staff together and build cohesion.

5.3 Values motifs

5.3.1 Living for the kingdom

The theological concept that links an integrated and holistic worldview with serving Christ in ministry is the idea of living for God’s kingdom.

The kingdom was at the centre of Jesus’ life and ministry. It is sometimes forgotten that his call to repentance, which tends to have a more familiar ring, did not occur in a vacuum; it was made squarely in the context of the coming reign of God.\(^\text{49}\) The kingdom of God was the most consistent and pronounced theme of his teaching.\(^\text{50}\) In the synoptic gospels (Mark, Luke and Matthew), more attention is given to this topic than any other.\(^\text{51}\) The kingdom motif was present in Jesus’ proclamations, in his parable teachings, in the beatitudes, in his expository discourses, in the apocalyptic material, as well as other sources.

Jesus’ life of actions also speaks about this anticipated reign of God. There is eloquent testimony about the kingdom in his miracles, his relationships with the poor and the outcast, and his indignation and anger at injustice. Most profoundly, the promised hope of this kingdom is vindicated in the person of the resurrected Christ. World Vision derives from

\(^{49}\) Why do we repent? Mark provides the answer in 1:14: ‘Because the Kingdom of God is at hand!’

\(^{50}\) Norman Perrin notes: ‘The central aspect of the teaching of Jesus was that concerning the Kingdom of God. Of this there can be no doubt …’ (Perrin, N 1967, Rediscovering the teaching of Jesus, Harper and Row New York, p. 54. Cox echoes ‘It was the heartbeat of his life, his constant concern and pre-occupation’ (Cox, H 2009, The Future of Faith, HarperOne, New York, p. 48).

Jesus Christ its ‘holistic understanding of the gospel of the kingdom of God, which forms the basis of our response to human need.’

The Christian teaching about the kingdom of God is that God was unhappy to leave the world in its fallen, sinful and sub-optimal state. He sent Jesus to redeem all of creation and inaugurate a new and completely righteous reign over all things. While God’s reign or kingdom has broken into the world, it will not be fully consummated until some point in the future, often believed to coincide with the return of Christ. Christians are called to live as signs and incarnated expressions of the kingdom, recognising that God’s reign has begun while also anticipating the fullness of what is yet to come.

World Vision aspires to reflect the eternal values of the kingdom of God – such as peace, justice and love – as a present expression of an unfolding reality. It answers the question ‘What does it mean for World Vision to be a “Christian” humanitarian organisation?’ by saying: ‘It means that we follow Jesus Christ and work with the poor and oppressed, promoting human transformation, seeking justice, and bearing witness to God’s will for the quality of human life God intends for all people to enjoy. The Bible calls this the Kingdom of God.’

While some would regard values like peace, justice, love, responsibility, respect and reciprocity as indistinguishable from universal human values, World Vision sees them ‘as values of the Kingdom of God expressed in Scripture.’

World Vision’s Ministry policy on witness to Jesus Christ most clearly expresses the obligation to live for the Kingdom of God in daily life. It declares that: ‘Through the work of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit, God’s reign is experienced in the present. We believe that God suffers with the poor and oppressed, and the grace and mercy we have received from Jesus Christ compel us to share in the suffering in the world. Evidences of God’s reign are seen wherever people show compassion to those who suffer, relationships are reconciled and people live with dignity, justice, peace and hope.’

At the same time this policy recognises that the final outworking of God’s kingdom will be when he comes and makes his home among his people in the renewed earth, which is his

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52 From the explanation of World Vision’s core value ‘We are Christian’.
53 Reformed theologian Jurgen Moltmann has written extensively about how the promise of God’s coming kingdom should impact the lived present. He developed the term presentative eschatology to describe this relationship: “Presentative eschatology” means nothing else but simply “creative expectation”, hope which sets about criticising and transforming the present because it is open towards the universal future of the kingdom’ Moltmann, 1967, p. 335.
54 WVI 2011d, FAQ section.
55 WVI 2010b, clause 15.
56 WVI 2006, clause 3.
eternal home. It offers this reassurance: ‘We anticipate a future when all creation is restored and suffering and evil are defeated’ [emphasis added]. The ultimate reign of God over all things corresponds to the Old Testament notion of *shalom*. This Hebrew word refers to the transcendent peace of God, which is achieved when the whole created order sits in its proper place and relationship before God. Boff captures this well by saying, ‘Biblically it signifies the totality of God’s creation redeemed and organized on the criteria of God’s loving design. The reign represents the comprehensive politics of God, to be implemented in the history of the cosmos, of nations, of the chosen people, and in the depths of each human heart.’

Living for the kingdom is reflected in World Vision’s strong policy emphasis on peace, reconciliation and respectful interfaith relationships. For example, the *Ministry policy on interfaith relations* states: ‘We believe that God loves all people and wills that all people flourish. Therefore we … relate to them with compassion and without discrimination as an expression of God’s love. As followers of Jesus Christ we accept our responsibility to contribute to the common good of society regardless of race, creed or gender.’ Strategic Objective 5 of the *Global Christian Commitments strategy 2011–2014* is to ‘Encourage interfaith cooperation for the well-being of children.’ The intended outcome of this goal is that ‘Broad and deep relationships with people and organisations of other faiths are built so that religiously fuelled tension is decreased, cooperation on behalf of the well-being of children is increased, and respect for the Christian faith is deepened.’

An important understanding for World Vision in its development work is that God’s kingdom will be established on earth, not in heaven above. The New Testament does not teach that ultimate hope is found in the immortal soul of the redeemed ascending to God in heaven for an afterlife commencing upon death. This popular but mistaken view is gnosticism. The Christian teaching is that the redeemed inherit a renewed, transformed earth at the time of a general bodily resurrection. Walter Wink emphasises that ‘The gospel is not a message of personal salvation from the world, but a message of a world transfigured, right

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57 This is captured in some of the most beautiful and expressive verses in scripture: ‘And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away’ (Rev 21:3–4).
58 Boff, p. 32.
59 Clause 2.
God’s eternal kingdom will reign on earth forever. The many profound implications of this teaching are explored in NT Wright’s *Surprised by hope*. It is clear that Christians need to care for this world which is loved by God, and which is the ultimate home for both God and humans.

Jesus taught his disciples to pray about this in the Lord’s Prayer. This is very telling. The first intercession it contains is ‘Thy kingdom come, on earth …’ This confirms that the home of the Christian’s calling and sanctification is in the present time and place. Christians constantly enlist themselves in the service of God’s kingdom whenever they pray this prayer. They commit themselves ‘to initiate, here and now, approximations of God’s reign.’ The biblical picture we are given is of a God who graciously invites his people to have an active, participatory role as he builds the promised kingdom. When World Vision urges its staff to live for the kingdom of God, it commends ‘a process of change that affirms the joint roles of God and humans.’ The fullness of Christian salvation consists in the reversal of the consequences of human sin, which will be demonstrated in acts of co-creation at the prompting of God. And that process of change involves working towards the comprehensive vision of shalom in all its dimensions.

Implicit in this understanding are two features that form the bedrock of World Vision’s approach to development. The first is the conviction that God is the ultimate change agent, and World Vision staff are working towards a God-inspired agenda. The second is that its development work takes place within God’s overarching redemptive metanarrative for all creation. This provides powerful theological assurance.

NT Wright identifies 1 Corinthians 15:58 as an important biblical text in this regard. Development workers know how frustrating and complex their work can be. The very best efforts of agencies like World Vision can seem weak and inadequate. This verse is at the end of a dense passage about the fullness of resurrection life. The passage boldly assures that workers in God’s service should stand firm: ‘Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.’

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61 Wright 2007.
62 Mt 6:10.
63 Bosch, p. 397.
64 Ibid., p. 35.
65 Myers, p. 15.
66 Wright 2007, pp. 204–205.
Somehow, God takes those efforts offered in the service of his kingdom, no matter how inadequate they may seem, and transforms them for his eternal purposes.\textsuperscript{67}

5.3.2 Standing against evil

Evil signifies the absence of the reign of God. It refers to everything that opposes God’s will, debases his creation or dehumanises people. An orthodox Christian faith recognises the reality of evil, which impacts our world. Any development paradigm that does not take a realistic account of evil will, by definition, be inadequate. World Vision policy looks forward to a time when ‘all creation is restored and suffering and evil are defeated’.\textsuperscript{68}

There are different understandings about how evil influences the world. Some approaches stress ‘structural’ evil, such as oppressive systems, others more personalised manifestations of evil, and still others highly speculative understandings. While there may sometimes be disagreements about the ‘how’ of evil, there is broad agreement within every catechism of the Christian church about its present reality. This includes its broader social impact.

World Vision sees itself as standing in the prophetic tradition denouncing all systems that hold people captive and diminish their humanity. There are many structural and corporate manifestations of evil that rob people of their fullness of life. Developing country debt, child trafficking, slavery, child labour, institutional corruption, military aggression, ethnic ‘cleansings’, land seizures, gender discrimination, and unfair global trade terms represent some of many possible instances. The Christian faith requires the denunciation of all that destroys or takes away life; anti-gods by whatever name must be challenged.

The clearest expression of World Vision acting prophetically against evil is in its global commitment to advocacy work. At times it has challenged the evangelical movement to become more socially engaged and has even been critical of its support for some aspects of American foreign policy seen as detrimental to the interests of the poor.\textsuperscript{69} In the last decade, World Vision has become notably more active in seeking to influence public policy on a range of social issues. Most World Vision offices have advocacy departments or personnel. One recent policy expression on this topic is from Principles to guide formation of national policies on spiritual nurture of children. It states that ‘Where a child’s well-being and rights

\textsuperscript{68} WVI 2006, clause 3.
\textsuperscript{69} King, 26.
are endangered through harmful cultural or religious practices we advocate and respond with partners, children and communities to stop or reform these practices.\textsuperscript{70}

In relation to more personal understandings of evil, Myers complains that the modern story of the West has simply no answer.\textsuperscript{71} He suggests that development practitioners need to overcome their blind spot in terms of the spiritual world.\textsuperscript{72} It is interesting that the developing world does not share Western sensibilities around this issue. Myers reports that ‘The poor often live in fear of an unseen spiritual world of curses, gods, demons and ancestors’\textsuperscript{73} which may have a deep, ongoing, and destructive impact on their lives. It follows that ‘accepting local worldviews uncritically is sometimes a source of poverty, not an answer to it.’\textsuperscript{74}

Christian theology affirms that evil has been conquered in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that evil must, in the final analysis, yield to the reign of God. The power of prayer in responding to evil is a matter of general acceptance within the Christian faith. The famous dictum of philosopher CS Lewis also offers some useful guidance: ‘there are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.’\textsuperscript{75}

It is suggested that where a Christian development organisation is uninformed about this topic, it will be delinquent in taking its work seriously. On the other hand, a preoccupation will mean missed opportunities for positive change. World Vision has published two books that have shed some light on this topic: Bryant Myers’ \textit{Walking with the poor} and an important work by Indian theologian and National Director Jayakumar Christian titled \textit{God of the empty-handed}.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{70} Clause 14.
\textsuperscript{71} Myers, p. 91.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., p. 69. See also Christian, ch. 7, for a fuller explanation of the powers and principalities against which development work must contend.
\textsuperscript{74} Myers, p. 99. See also Batchelor, P 1993, \textit{People in rural development}, Pasternoster Press, Carlisle, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{76} Christian.
5.4 Foundational motifs

5.4.1 A commitment to prayer and scripture

Karl Barth claims that ‘Only as God justifies it, does mission continue to exist.’ The constant seeking of God through prayer and in scripture enables a Christian development organisation to renew and re-centre itself upon the God who first called it into being. This is essential to instil a godly confidence about its work and direction. World Vision’s strategy and policy documents give an appropriate emphasis on these foundational motifs.

Strategic Objective 6 of the Global Christian Commitments strategy 2011–2014 is to ‘Contribute to a global movement of prayer among our staff and churches for child well-being.’ The intended output from this goal is to ‘Nurture a culture of prayer in World Vision, so all offices engage in regular, intentional and focussed intercessory prayer and also mobilize prayer among our community partners.’ The World Vision Draft Christian Commitments protocols require that within the organisation, ‘Prayer and discernment are integrated in our work, and adequate resources are developed and allocated to support the enhancement of corporate prayer.’

Prayer is reflected in the daily life of World Vision in many ways. Staff are encouraged to pray about their work, and prayer meetings are scheduled in many offices. It is not unusual for Christian staff to pray briefly before meetings or even during meetings as seems appropriate. World Vision appointed a Global Director of Prayer Ministries in 2007. Together with her staff she prepares prayer guides for use throughout the Partnership and encourages strategies to enhance the prayer life of individual World Vision offices.

While prayer is an ongoing feature of World Vision’s corporate life, there is one day per year when the entire Partnership ceases all usual activities for dedicated prayer. Staff Prayer Day occurs on 1 October each year at sites around the world. Where possible, offsite venues are selected to provide an atmosphere of retreat. The entire staff gather for a day of prayer and reflection about the needs of World Vision and the communities which it serves.

The different kinds of prayer used in the Partnership include intercession, prayers of invocation, thanksgiving and contemplative prayers. Intercessory prayers bring before God the needs of impoverished communities. A prayer which has become emblematic of World Vision’s commitment to others is attributed to Dr Bob Pierce, the founder of World Vision:

77 Barth, translated from the German and quoted in Flett, p. 107.
78 James, 2009, notes that ‘Prayer expresses a human dependence on God’ (p. 14).
79 WVI 2011c, p. 3.
‘May my heart be broken by the things which break the heart of God.’ Prayers of *invocation* invite the Spirit of God into World Vision’s development work, from the most straightforward intervention to the most complex. Prayers of *thanksgiving* acknowledge the action and responsiveness of God. These prayers are essential in building deeper faith and trust. In addition, *contemplative* prayers are conducive to building a culture that is both discerning and reflective about its work practices.

It is important that a proper understanding of prayer is disseminated in World Vision’s corporate life. Prayer is misunderstood when it is seen as a magic spell, a divine guarantee or an insurance policy. It should be seen primarily as an act of obedience by God’s followers. It would be wrong to demand that God act in particular ways that conform to our human will. To do so would speak not of faith but faithlessness. World Vision tries to encourage prayer as a regular discipline within work-life. This emphasis follows the example of Jesus’ own life. There is something very compelling about the Son of God’s own need to pray.  

There are also a variety of spiritual disciplines that can be used in World Vision’s development practice, including study, theological reflection, fasting, meditation and discernment. There is a danger of neglect or embarrassment about these kinds of practices as organisations strive, in an uncritical way, for greater professionalism. This kind of separation of sacred and secular is unwarranted and unbiblical. Myers observes that ‘Few development workers understand prayer and fasting as tools for human transformation or for working for justice.’ Moreover, ‘God and God’s revelation are banished from our social analysis …’ World Vision tries develop a culture where the disciplines of the Christian spiritual life become an embedded part of its praxis, and not a curiosity, an afterthought, a veneer or an exception.

If prayers animate the work of World Vision, then scripture is its foundation. World Vision has a high view of scripture. The Statement of Faith set out in the constitutions of World Vision entities says ‘We believe the Bible to be inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.’ Jesus frequently quoted the Jewish scriptures in order to teach, challenge, inspire and bring fresh understandings. World Vision likewise sees scripture as having a broad foundational role ‘to strengthen value formation, leadership development,

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80 The Apostle Paul also implores the followers of Jesus Christ to: ‘Rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances; for that is God’s will …’
80 1 Thess 5:16–18.
81 Myers, p. 11.
82 Ibid.
empowerment for justice and advocacy, and witness to the good news of the Kingdom.’ World Vision’s Strategic Mandates states that ‘We will continuously strive to connect our work to its Biblical foundations.’ Partnership policy affirms ‘the importance of the Bible in our own life, and in fulfilling our Mission in development, relief and advocacy.’ This policy explains: ‘We believe that the Bible has a profound impact on the identity, dignity and purpose of all people. The Scriptures are integral to our work in transformational development and the empowering of children, families and communities. To make the Bible accessible to people in projects related to World Vision is an important component of our work and of our witness.’ There are many ways this is expressed, including publishing Bibles and related materials, collaborations with Bible Societies and Scripture Unions, the preparation and dissemination of Bible studies throughout the partnership, and the development of programmatic responses with clear biblical foundations.

5.5 Ecclesial motif

5.5.1 A special relationship with the churches

World Vision has a carefully nuanced relationship with the church. It sees itself as part of the church in some senses and apart from it in others. In its ministry to the world’s poor, oppressed and marginalised, it stands in continuity with the mission of the church. World Vision policy states ‘World Vision understands itself to be part of the one universal Church with a particular calling and ministry to serve the poor in the name of Christ.’ Having said that, ‘it does not see itself as a competitor of the Church nor as a substitute for it.’ It does not administer the sacraments or other rites. World Vision policy requires that its personnel should be actively involved with a local church, not only to contribute to its ministry and receive pastoral care and Christian formation but also to ensure there is no confusion of identity.

World Vision has moved from its evangelical roots to embrace all expressions of the Christian church within a broad Trinitarian theology. It has taken deliberate steps to reach out to the Roman Catholic communion, including establishing a secretariat to deepen relationships. It has also appointed personnel representing a broad range of faith traditions in

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84 Ibid.
85 WVI 2002.
its senior CC leadership. For example, the Director of Ministry Integration at World Vision is a Romanian Orthodox Priest.

Christian theology recognises the church as God’s lasting community of hope and salvation, and the primary means by which God acts locally. In all development contexts, local churches will know their community better than World Vision. An expected output of the Global Christian Commitment strategy 2011–2014 is the mobilisation of churches to work towards child wellbeing in local contexts.87 In many developing country contexts, churches are an important part of the social infrastructure and will remain so. An important role for World Vision is to help churches build capacity and nurture theological and developmental understandings.

World Vision aims to train up ‘Church leadership in development programmes [and] deepen church involvement in holistic ministry.’88 The leadership and moral authority of local churches can be an invaluable asset. At other times it can also pose certain risks and obstacles, as this research will highlight.

A relationship of accountability between the church and World Vision will recognise their responsibilities to each other. Moltmann has noted that the church strengthens its apostolic character when it engages with organisations that have the capacity and gifts to deliver ministries like international development.89 World Vision can enliven the conscience of the church and mobilise resources that can help the church in its mission. The natural bond that World Vision has with churches stems from a common faith and many shared understandings. It is able to provide moral support, encouragement, advice and friendship. This relationship may also provide room for challenge and critique. The posture World Vision maintains is to ‘work humbly with and in the service of the Church in all its expressions in order to contribute to the fulfilment of God’s mission in the world.’90 For World Vision, its close relationship with the churches sets it apart from other organisations within civil society with which it has dealings.

In an overall sense, World Vision benefits greatly from its engagement with churches. The churches can help World Vision remain faithful to its mission, its staff to grow in discipleship, and bring community needs to its attention. Local pastors and clergy often participate in World Vision’s devotional life and act as local representatives in developing

87 WVI 2011–2014, Objective 3 and outputs.
88 Ibid., Objective 3, output 2.
90 WVI 2002.
and implementing projects. Through relationships of trust, World Vision and churches can ‘enrich each other as both make unique contributions to Christ’s mission.’

In Western countries, World Vision has a particular task in educating churches about poverty, social justice and the challenges of international development. One of the partnership’s key strategic mandates is to ‘Influence the conscience of the church towards acting holistically for the benefit of the poor and the children.’ Many churches still fail to appreciate God’s unfailing solidarity with the poor and the impact of decisions taken in the West on impoverished communities. Archbishop Rowan Williams puts it this way: ‘we are not trying to solve someone else’s problem but to liberate ourselves from a toxic and unjust situation in which we, the prosperous, are less than human.’

Some churches have even been seduced by a different kind of gospel. Rah insists that ‘The Western white captivity of the church means that capitalism can be revered as the system closest to God and the consequent rampant materialism and consumerism of the capitalist system become acceptable vices.’ Koyama cautions sharply: ‘Man is supposed to eat bread. But what if bread eats man?’ A challenge for World Vision is to maintain its close relationships with the churches with the kind of integrity that requires it to confront positions that are potentially harmful to the poor. One example is the emergence of the so-called prosperity gospel, in which Christian faith is promoted primarily as a vehicle for material blessing.

In some places where World Vision works there are very few, if any, churches. In these contexts, the responsibility of World Vision may be to explore how it can best strengthen nascent or struggling Christian communities for the longer term. At the same time, World Vision has a detailed policy on Interfaith Relations and will work without any hesitation with other religious communities in ways that are welcoming, respectful and co-operative. However, its respect for those faiths, and its own, prevents World Vision from attempting to

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91 WVI 2003, clause 2.
92 Objective 1.5.
93 Williams 2009a, p. 5. Williams’ emphasis.
94 Rah, p. 50.
95 Cited in Myers, p. 89.
96 Sharpe, M 2013, ‘Name it and claim it: Prosperity gospel and the global pentecostal reformation’, in Clarke, M 2013, pp. 164–179. Sharpe states that Prosperity Gospel has two key ideas: ‘The first is that God is a benevolent deity who wants believers in His son Jesus Christ to be socio-economically prosperous, as well as healthy in body and soul. Second is the idea that believers can actively claim as a kind of covenanted right this-worldly abundance’ (p. 164). This is often seen as a fundamental betrayal of the theologia crucis (theology of the cross) at the heart of Christianity by making idols of money and self.
97 WVI 2009b.
assimilate all manner of beliefs. It will not commit resources to promote another faith or its institutions.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to articulate some of the key theological motifs and faith-related practices of World Vision. To recap, eight motifs have been identified by reviewing policy and strategy documents, by an iterative process of personal reflection as a former senior employee, and by seeking input from World Vision leaders. The motifs are:

- **1–2 Motifs expressing holism**
  - A spiritual and holistic worldview
  - The imperative of inner transformation

- **3–4 Vocational motifs**
  - Understanding work as ministry
  - Promotion of a devotional culture

- **5–6 Values motifs**
  - Living for the kingdom
  - Standing against evil

- **7 Foundational motifs**
  - A commitment to prayer and scripture

- **8 Ecclesial motif**
  - A special relationship with the churches

This chapter is of foundational importance to this research. Having identified eight characteristic motifs, the dataset was coded according to these categories. Each domain was then inductively analysed to explore how these particular motifs influenced World Vision’s development work. The next six chapters report the results of this analysis.
6. Data and Preliminary Analysis: Motifs Expressing Holism

In the next five chapters, the data gathered from the research is presented. Each topic code is outlined and briefly analysed. Quotes from the data that illustrate each proposition or sub-proposition have been selected. In selecting quotes, attention has been paid to the geographic or regional diversity of the data. A listing of all the connecting propositions and sub-propositions for each motif is provided in Appendix C.

In Chapters 13 and 14, an analysis of the data will be undertaken in overview, with the major implications of the research being presented as a whole.

6.1 Biblical holism and spiritual worldview

6.1.1 Topic code A1: Leveraging community goodwill from an existing spiritual worldview

This topic code shows that World Vision’s development praxis leverages community goodwill towards its spiritual worldview in a range of settings. This connection was well supported and distributed (Figure 6.1). The way this occurred varied, and some counterintuitive results were observed.

In Christian nations/regions there was a natural sympathy for the work of World Vision as a Christian organisation. This finding was unsurprising.

In a strongly Maronite area of Lebanon, the advantage was expressed in terms of World Vision’s knowledge of how to interact with the local community: ‘because we are Christians it is easier for the community to accept us compared to others. As Christians we know what to do and how to approach the community.’¹ In Rwanda and Tanzania, the leverage was based on the perceived authority of the Christian faith. For example, ‘the Christian faith is

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¹ FGD with Bcharre ADP, Lebanon.
 accorded a high degree of moral authority and the general populace is positively disposed towards Christian teaching. Christian faith therefore has the potential to be harnessed in development activity at a grassroots community level. \(^2\) The data suggested that in Christian areas this was a comparative advantage over other agencies: ‘Other organisation like Oxfam can also do a lot of activities but they face many difficulties compared with World Vision because [WV] is more acceptable by the community …’ \(^3\)

More surprising was the support in some Muslim and mixed areas for World Vision’s underpinning spiritual worldview. The data suggested that a theistic worldview was a definite advantage. Women from an ADP stated that in doing development, it is ‘Important to have faith. Christian or Muslim doesn’t matter.’ \(^4\) In Senegal, a Muslim staff member explained that when going into a strongly Muslim community the Christian organisation can assert with integrity: ‘We have way to follow what God wants.’ \(^5\)

The data for Senegal was especially interesting. Senegal is an open theistic society that has no cultural history of the Enlightenment or modernity. In such a society, the evidence indicated that development messages needed to be framed theistically to be received and understood. For example, one Imam, when questioned whether belief in God is important to development, replied: ‘Not important [but], VERY important. God created us to live in good conditions. We are not in a good condition, so we cannot separate God from development. God is the origin of development. Without faith I cannot believe in the development because God shows the way that faith is in the heart of development.’ \(^6\) World Vision staff expressed the view that when an organisation has no faith position it is more difficult for it to communicate its work. It is ‘easier to speak to people of faith if you have a faith, even if it is different.’ \(^7\)

An important qualification is that the organisation’s underpinning faith must be taken seriously. The data indicated that serious Christians are readily respected as people who pray and as People of the Book. There is a tendency to equate Christian faith with the lifestyle of former French colonialists, which were often far from devout. However, once a Muslim sees

\(^3\) KII with ADP Manager 2, Tanzania.
\(^4\) FGD with women from an ADP in the Beirut area, Lebanon.
\(^5\) KII with a senior DME Advisor, Senegal – a Muslim.
\(^6\) Imam’s emphasis; KII with Muslim Leader, Kaffrine, Senegal.
\(^7\) KII with a senior operations manager, Senegal.
that World Vision is about prayer and spirituality, then a Muslim will say ‘now we can do business together’.8

6.1.1.1 Preliminary analysis

It is unremarkable that Christian communities should have a sympathy towards the work of a respectful, ecumenical agency. What is more remarkable is that communities within theistic societies may have stronger resonance with an organisation from another faith when compared with a secular agency. This contradicts the standard argument that religion is a source of division between people and that secular agencies have the advantage of being more ‘neutral’. This ‘neutrality’ may be undercut by an inability to frame development messages in an authentic way in theistic terms, and this may impact their effectiveness. For example, one staff member commented that ‘religious leaders respect WV more than for money. It’s more for their approach in the community. WV puts faith in front of everything … WV does not come to deceive them. Many NGOs come but don’t have impact in community.’9

In particular, in moderate Sunni Muslim contexts it appears Christian organisations can be well received. This is because there is a sense of place for Christians within Muslim belief, some common theological premises and a mutual respect for devout adherents. It is doubtful, however, whether organisations like World Vision would be as well received in fundamentalist settings that emphasise religious difference.

6.1.2 Topic code A2: Sustainability and community access

World Vision’s concept of development reflects broad community-based biblical notions of salvation, rather than an emphasis on personal evangelism. The data gathered illustrated how this provided an acceptable basis to gain long-term access to communities of other faith traditions.

Several communities were initially suspicious about World Vision’s agenda, but acting transparently and respectfully towards the local community helped to allay fears. Some predominantly orthodox Christian communities also required reassurance. Careful explanation was sometimes needed upfront to overcome initial concerns about a presumed evangelical agenda. This was a well-supported, well distributed connection (Figure 6.2).

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8 KII with a senior national office executive, Senegal.
Careful explanation may help to overcome initial concerns and gain access to communities. The evaluation report for Albania relayed this anecdote: ‘In one ADP there was a well-known Muslim area that had apparently been difficult for other agencies to work with. The new ADP manager called a meeting to introduce World Vision. To his surprise, WV Albania was welcomed and embraced, the main reason being that they had taken the time to care; this overrode any distrust about their Christian identity. The lesson in this circumstance was that being transparent and having the right motive was conducive to entry into a strong Muslim community.’

In other contexts the data suggested that World Vision’s demonstrated conduct over time made the difference. While some in these communities were initially anxious about proselytism, ‘as time went on and as we continued working with them we found that they just live their Christian values and that they are not looking for Muslim converts.’ In more cautious environments a proven track record was needed before any engagement. This anecdote was reported from Senegal:

Medina Gounass is a town in the Kolda region of southern Senegal. It has a strong Islamic leader of a particular sect. In 2000 when World Vision came to the region the town’s political and religious leaders said they did not want WV to work there as they thought we would start to convert the town and bring problems. From 2002 WV started working in all other areas of the region except this area. In the last few years the political and religious leaders in the area have seen how WV works in the surrounding areas and the changes happening. They have sent some delegations to our office asking if WV can now come into this area. We haven’t had the opportunity to do this yet but are now considering this for the future.

In one context, World Vision’s operations suffered from an unfortunate bureaucratic legacy. World Vision Lebanon commenced operations at an early stage in the Partnership’s more evangelical history. It was necessary to obtain a license to operate, called a decree, from the government. This license stated that World Vision’s purpose was ‘to preach’. This has been

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11 Comment from a Sheikh, Interview with Muslim Leaders, Mswaki ADP, Tanzania.
12 Comment from a senior operations manager, Senegal.
deeply unsettling for communities seeking to engage with World Vision in aid and development, and it has been difficult to explain away. It has caused some communities to suspect that World Vision has a secret agenda. Apparently, there is no simple way to update the paperwork.

There was no evidence that World Vision did seek to proselytise within the traditional meaning of that verb. That is, in none of the eight countries examined did World Vision make its development assistance conditional upon a faith response of any kind. Emphatic statements were made about this. For example, a respected Muslim staff member in Kaffrine confirmed: ‘I have been in World Vision for 15 years and not seen proselytism.’\(^{13}\) Nevertheless, it is equally clear that World Vision does on occasion lend support to community activities of an overtly spiritual nature.

This is not a contradiction. Community fear about proselytism does not mean that an organisation must deny its inherent religious character. It does mean, however, that it should ensure the way that it uses its influence is ethical. It may be reasonably supposed that every self-respecting FBO will hope that others will take an interest in its beliefs. The issue is whether unethical methods are deployed to gain adherents. There was no suggestion in any of the World Vision reports of favouritism in communities on religious grounds, and there was ample evidence to the contrary. This moving admonition was illustrative: ‘My prophet Jesus gave me two commandments. Love God, and love neighbour. When I come here I don’t see Muslim or Christian, I [just] see people God says to love.’\(^{14}\)

However, there are always important questions of tone and style in maintaining good community relations. On this front, World Vision’s operations in Tanzania were problematic. The evaluation report noted its tacit support for local ‘crusades’. This had the potential to be divisive and contentious.\(^{15}\) Notwithstanding, Muslim leaders reported that ‘we came to learn that they are doing community development to all community members regardless of their faith.’\(^{16}\)

**6.1.2.1 Preliminary analysis**

A kingdom-orientated, holistic understanding of God’s expressions of salvation is of foundational importance to World Vision. This enables it to establish common ground with

\(^{13}\) KII with a senior DME Advisor, Senegal – a Muslim.

\(^{14}\) KII with a Pastoral Carer, Senegal.


\(^{16}\) Interview with Muslim Leaders, Mswaki ADP.
communities from other faith traditions. The vision of health, restoration, prosperity and peace – presented as aid and development – is one which transcends religious difference. It is also a vision that speaks authentically to World Vision’s key theological drivers.

It appears that World Vision is ethical in the way it provides assistance. There was no evidence of discrimination or favouritism. In one context, however, World Vision positioned itself in ways that were clearly insensitive.

If World Vision made verbal proclamation of the gospel a programmatic activity, this would place its presence within many communities at risk. A commitment to biblical holism enables World Vision to do a great deal of good, while enabling it to respond transparently to community-initiated enquiry about its beliefs. Programmed evangelism, however, would be alienating and threatening for many communities.

A final comment is that the concern about winning converts also exists within Christian Orthodox communities, where evangelical denominations may be seen as ‘sects’. In this regard, World Vision’s evangelical heritage can raise significant concerns that, in the contexts examined, have been successfully assuaged.

6.1.3 Topic code A3: Program accentuation through holism

World Vision sees its commitment to a spiritual worldview as enhancing the value of physical interventions. This is because physical interventions occur within a broader narrative of change that engages community relationships, ways of living and religious convictions.

The underpinning faith commitment of World Vision supplies an overarching narrative for its suite of activities. Physical interventions are not ‘disembodied’ from the religious convictions of staff or the communities they serve. This well-supported partially distributed connection (Figure 6.3) was most clear in African settings.

At a basic level, the data supported a programmatic holism that included spiritual matters: ‘WV’s intervention touches the physical and social aspects of communities and what is more … the spiritual
aspect. However, there was more to it than this. The data suggested that World Vision exhibited a kind of holism, where its impact exceeded the sum of the parts. There was an amplification at work. In Tanzania it was reported that ‘All community members reflected on the value of development interventions; they cannot be understated as they address real needs and bring much hope. Attention to the spiritual doesn’t replace or supplant the physical requirements of food, water and shelter, but greatly amplifies the value of them.’ The data suggested that the reported amplification occurred when both the staff and the community experienced a coherence between actions and beliefs.

Connections were made between the organisation’s programmatic activities and staff members’ personal spiritual beliefs. This provided a consistency between home/personal life and work-life. For example, it was observed that ‘Spiritual nurture is to pray to God in my work. To take care of children, to take care of their needs, to supply people’s needs.’ In a similar way, ‘Events such as the healing of sick children were seen to be the result of both appropriate medical care and God responding to the prayers of WV Rwanda development staff.’ For some, a holistic worldview informed their entire approach to development: ‘Development is not a matter of assets, rather of relationships. Food security and education are not enough – the essence of life is more than this … A person needs pure conscience, peace with self and others, and relationship with God. This [will be] reflected in a sharing [of] resources so that all the community prospers.’

The strongest resonances occurred when the community shared, or at least respected, World Vision’s faith narrative. Here the spiritual emphasis was not an optional extra, but the very basis of sustainable change. For example, an ADP Manager in Senegal observed that ‘Christian Commitments plays a big role in children’s education. Development and faith must go together. If you work with people who believe in faith, you cannot just give them money and hope they survive. With fear of God they will manage money better. Faith gives the necessary foundation for all we do.’

6.1.3.1 Preliminary analysis

The overwhelming majority of the developing world has a theistic worldview. In some geographies the expression of faith is an overt part of daily life. The link between faith and

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17 Interview Analysis, community group representative, Albania.
18 Goode 2010b, p. 18.
20 Goode 2011a, p. 18.
21 KII with Zone Manager 1, Rwanda.
life in many African settings appears inseparable, and it is perhaps unsurprising that the data for this topic code was mainly drawn from this region. If an organisation working in such settings does not have a spiritual worldview, a question is raised about how its long-term development work can be authentically framed in a manner that resonates with the community.

For individual staff recruited on the basis of religious faith, there is an expected coherence between their own beliefs and the organisation’s programmatic actions. The data strongly suggested that the ability to draw on personal spiritual practices, like prayer, connected staff with their work at the deepest level. In this way World Vision’s specific religious identity became an asset in furthering the organisation’s goals. Several communities examined were also able to do their own theologising; in particular, they were able to take World Vision’s activities and programs and incorporate them within their own faith narrative. In other contexts where that resonance was not as clear or strong, this advantage may not apply.

6.1.4 Topic code A4: Using spirituality to develop social meanings

This topic code drew connections between World Vision’s spiritual worldview and the (re)creation of social meaning and identity. This was especially relevant in post-communist settings. Because World Vision pursues a vision of development that seeks to normalise spiritual activities in communities, it can help to build social meaning and may reconnect people with their heritage. This well-supported and well-distributed connection (Figure 6.4) was based mainly on data emanating from the Balkans and Eurasia.

This data provided evidence that faith is important in building identity and belonging. This is an important development issue, especially in contexts where there has been major social dislocation or change. This was true of all the ex-communist settings. Examples of comments made were ‘every human must have faith in something’ and ‘Faith is hugely important. Your identity is your faith’.

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22 FGD with Inter-religious Council Youth Group, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
23 KII with a senior national office executive, Lebanon.
World Vision placed an emphasis on ‘organizing activities, even interfaith ones, to help people to see the importance of faith in normal life in community.’\textsuperscript{24} One staff member drew this contrast: ‘Since I’ve been working for UNDP [the United Nations Development Program] I can make a comparison: UNDP just helps people by giving them some kind of material things, while WV beside material thing also gives faith to people, [showing] how to live.’\textsuperscript{25} The analogy was made that World Vision provides both the ‘hardware’ and the ‘software’.

The data suggested that the importance of rebuilding faith institutions may be harder for people in the West to understand. A senior leader from the Armenian Apostolic Church drew this contrast: ‘In the West Christianity is seen as a private faith but in the East it is a community way of life. Westerners have to understand the East. Faith helps to make a community. The destruction of Armenia is the destruction of faith. Development programs to promote community life have failed because they have ignored the church and the role of faith as the centre of the community.’\textsuperscript{26}

A second source stressed that a person’s faith identity and their national identity can be coterminous. To build up one is to build up the other. ‘During communism the people were not allowed to express their faith, but now there is a distinct sense of recovering their identity and a societal returning to the church.’\textsuperscript{27} Elsewhere it was remarked: ‘Once we have change in the church we will have change in society; the two are inseparable. To separate is a Western way of thinking. If we see change in the church we will see change in society.’\textsuperscript{28}

6.1.4.1 Preliminary analysis

World Vision sees the restoration of faith as important in providing meaning, identity and belonging. It is therefore happy to facilitate processes that normalise spiritual activity within communities. Consistent with its holistic worldview, it sees this as developmentally important. In ex-communist countries this connection was especially resonant. As a Christian organisation, World Vision has no difficulty in working with churches of all kinds to help build them up. However, a limitation on World Vision is that it will not allocate resources to promote another faith. It is likely that development organisations operating out of other faith traditions could be similarly well placed in other contexts.

\textsuperscript{24} FDG with Poro and Oshetime villagers, Albania.
\textsuperscript{25} KII with a team leader from the Lasva ADP, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
\textsuperscript{26} KII with a senior leader from the Armenian Apostolic Church.
\textsuperscript{28} KII with Apostolic priest 1, Armenia.
Importantly, it seems unlikely that organisations operating from a secular basis would invest time or money in building up churches or faith institutions as a developmental priority. While they may engage with them for tactical purposes, to seek to build them up for their own sake would be incompatible with their ethos. In this regard, it is suggested that there is a gap between strongly secular models and their ability to meet a full range of development needs. The data showed that in some contexts the church was inseparable from society and not a divisible component. In those places World Vision’s approach of deep engagement with the church was found to be resonant and community centred.

6.2 Imperative of inner transformation

World Vision’s emphasis on inner transformation is not a contradiction of a holistic spiritual worldview. It is an illustration of one aspect of it.

6.2.1 Topic code E1: Using camps, Sunday Schools and specific programs to encourage inner change

This code gathered together data that illustrated how World Vision uses camps and Sunday School programs to encourage inner change. It was abundantly clear that World Vision pursues its vision of development by using specific faith-based activities that bring about inner transformation and deepen faith formation. While the curricula were Christian or based on Christian teachings, people from all faiths would participate. This connection was well supported and distributed (Figure 6.5), drawing on examples from the Balkans, Lebanon and Eurasia.

World Vision runs some youth camps directly and at other times helps sponsor children to attend camps organised by churches or FBOs in partnership with it. For example, in Albania, ‘There are some churches or FBOs that organize summer camps on their own. It is so special for kids to go and participate in these kinds of camps. These camps are very successful. I have seen children that have changed. God has
been told to them.” It appears that some camps do have a soft evangelical agenda, and that this may in turn impact wider families. In Lebanon it was reported that ‘Families change first (brothers and sisters of immediate family). This grows systematically. Parents report a difference in children after camps.’ The data indicated that parents were well informed about the nature of camps and were largely unconcerned as they saw how the camps benefitted their children, especially as a valuable recreational experience amid a bleak landscape. In Armenia, ‘Parents of children have certainly been keen on these camps and the children have learned about their heritage, their church, their God and been given an opportunity to have fun and learn personal skills.’

World Vision’s work in Armenia placed great emphasis on its Sunday Schools and faith-based summer camps. Amongst other things, ‘We want children to learn about friendship. About discipline and scheduling of time, about caring for others and loving God.’ These activities are seen as developmental because they improve self-confidence, connect people with their heritage, inculcate ethics and morals, impart community spirit, provide relevant social skills, and build personal and social meanings. In Georgia, the summer camps can be described as an example of applied holism: they imparted important social skills and had a strong educational component in terms of ethical teaching, Christian education and faith formation.

The promotion of Sunday School programs in Armenia and Georgia were an important part of CC work. However, the term ‘Sunday School’ needs qualification: ‘it’s actually extra-curricular teaching (on any day) done by the church, supported by WV, but called “Sunday” because it sounds more Christian.’ For example, in Tavush ADP there are actually different clubs operating within the framework of the Sunday Schools supported by WV. The activities covered include drawing, design, embroidery and carpet making, computer, English language, wood-engraving classes and spiritual discussions. Some of the deeper faith discussion was optional and could be attended with parents.

In Georgia, this kind of programming also had a holistic emphasis. Staff commented that ‘Our strength is helping vulnerable people – material, physical but also spiritual.’

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29 Emphasis added, FGD with Vlora ADP Staff, Albania.
30 KII with representatives of the St Paul Movement – a Roman Catholic community ministry.
32 KII with CC personnel, Armenia.
33 FGD with Samtskhe-Javakheti summer-camp students, Georgia.
34 Final Analysis Meeting, 20 April 2010.
35 KII with a director of a community-based organisation, Armenia.
36 FGD with NO Staff, Georgia.
a seamless blend of civic and Christian formation. There was no hesitation in raising moral and ethical issues with participants, from a Christian lens, and results were described as transformative: ‘Relationships have changed. Eyes are shining. The children have different feelings. One street kid said she will not cheat the customers.’

6.2.1.1 Preliminary analysis

This connection raises the question of the difference between community development and soft evangelism. The idea of ‘development’ may take on different meanings depending on who is undertaking it. Measured in terms of outcomes, there does seem to be a case for the kind of discipleship activities described. A broad range of educational, ethical and civic responsibilities were effectively inculcated through these programs.

A question is raised of whether faith formation is a valid methodology in doing development, or whether it is repugnant to it because of the overtone of religious conversion. World Vision would argue that the embedding of religious convictions, when entwined with a strong developmental ethos, is a way of securing sustained change. While this may be true, critics would argue that the introduction of any kind of evangelical emphasis places the idea of ‘development’ at risk. This is because it confuses the agenda and unethically links community benefit with religious adherence.

6.2.2 Topic code E2: Inner strength in times of crisis

This was a partially distributed minor theme (Figure 6.6). The data was slight, but suggested a role for World Vision in offering an inner strength in times of crisis. The connecting proposition was that religious faith can provide a realistic and readily available alternative to Western models of psychosocial care in traumatised communities. Typically, these are the types of communities where World Vision works. World Vision’s close relationships with churches, FBOs and interactions with its own staff may help to provide this type of care.

37 KII with a Sunday School teacher, Batumi, Georgia.
There were a few brief references alluding to this link from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Georgia.

The evaluation report for Bosnia and Herzegovina referred to the work of la Cava, Lytle, Kolev and Clert, noting that ‘Certain conditions of youth vulnerability in South East Europe – including trauma, depression, and drug addiction – require instruments which cannot be provided by demand-driven or family support models.’\textsuperscript{38} In other words, moving beyond the jargon, in impoverished communities Western style models of professional clinical care and follow-up are unrealistic. The report recommended ‘spiritual intervention to meet the hunger for values and purpose in life.’\textsuperscript{39}

It was observed that ‘People don’t have psychological help, so [a] relationship with God is helpful.’\textsuperscript{40} This theme was alluded to in several places but was not well developed. Given World Vision’s understanding of the sustaining presence of God and its commitment to modes of pastoral care, this was surprising.

There was one reference to WV arranging care through Sunday School activities in camps for internally displaced persons in Georgia. The care provided for these rural internees was well received and led to other developmental programs. A question arises for World Vision, not touched upon by the data, about how it would feel about referring adherents of other faiths to their own religious leaders for pastoral care and nurture in times of crisis. Even-handedness would require this.

\textbf{6.2.2.1 Preliminary analysis}

There may be scope for World Vision to make better use of a potential comparative advantage in this area. As an organisation, it commonly works in locations that have experienced trauma of one kind or another, and it professes to seek close relationships with churches. World Vision may therefore be well placed to provide or facilitate pastoral care using established networks. It is possible that World Vision personnel do provide this kind of care personally, or make referrals through their own personal faith-related networks, instead of going through a formal World Vision program. A potential synergy exists here, which warrants further exploration.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p. 25.
\textsuperscript{40} WV HR Coordinator, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
6.2.3 Topic code E3: Promulgating Christian morals and ethics through staff and general field interactions

This well-supported and well-distributed connection (Figure 6.7) shows how World Vision pursues its development work by promulgating Christian morals and ethics in training programs and through field interactions. It was similar in several respects to topic code E1.

The connection stresses the inextricable link between the inner and the outer. It posits that moral formation is the basis of social transformation. Every personal transformation is seen as contributing to societal transformation. Under this approach, sustainable development cannot be separated from personal attitudes and behaviours. On the contrary, it must start with those attitudes and behaviours. This contradicts the view that development happens as a series of external, disembodied interventions. The data indicated that in mixed contexts, World Vision looked to both Christian and Muslim faiths as a source of morals and ethics to bring positive social change for children.

The necessity of a moral framework was plainly stated: ‘Without God in our lives, people would literally eat each other.’ Less dramatically, a Roman Catholic sister stated that in a depressed post-soviet world, ‘We have learned lying and cheating and things that are wrong. Most adults have suffered and that is their foundation … We are on about reinstating moral values; faith needs to enter the private lives of people. Transformation will not happen otherwise. This faith needs to be internalised.’ And in Senegal, this neat summary of World Vision’s approach was given: ‘true development without faith is not possible. We need faith – it is at the centre of all we are. Development has to change the inner person, not just the surrounds.’

There was evidence of transformation based on moral formation. As a result of WV’s programs, ‘children have learned responsibility’, ‘because of WV’s work drop-out rate in

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41 FGD with Bkerkacha village community, ADP Bchare, Lebanon.
42 KII with a sister from a religious order, Armenia.
43 Goode 2011b, p. 32, and KII with a CC Co-ordinator, Kaffrine, Senegal.
schooling is reducing’, and ‘youth are more confident to make right decisions, pinpointing what is right and wrong.’ In Georgia, youth clubs and family clubs were singled out for praise. Parents identified positive changes in attitudes, including a supportive approach towards the poorest children, less teasing, increased responsibility, reduced fighting and greater fairness.

In East Africa, moral formation meant supporting a conservative social agenda through church and mosque teaching. The ‘flavour’ of moral teaching in Tanzania and Rwanda stressed conservative cultural habits like not drinking or smoking tobacco or marihuana. At times, even the language was different: ‘When pagans receive Good News they will leave sins, for example, drunkenness, and then they can help in development by helping others to overcome as they did.’ It was repeated that ‘People show faith through good deeds for example when they stop drinking alcohol.’

6.2.3.1 Preliminary analysis

This topic code raised some interesting questions about the role of moral formation in undertaking development work. It is clear that World Vision believes that inner change is as important as external physical interventions, and it seeks to pursue this theme as part of its development model. There was evidence that moral formation did bring about changes in younger people, although it was not possible to measure the sustainability of those changes. In East Africa, moral formation meant the promotion of a conservative social agenda which seemed quaintly old-fashioned and out of step with Western ideas that elevate personal freedoms. However, the social problems in these contexts were very serious – including substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and crime – and the inculcation of conservative morals may have helped address these problems.

A question was raised about the meaning of development and the role of moral formation within it. In particular, the difference between general values-based training and moral formation based on religious principles was put into sharp focus. It is suggested that the personal relational claims of faith and the social reinforcement by co-religionists and religious institutions may help to embed change. Other kinds of training do not necessarily involve the same sense of external accountability, and they may have less traction in strongly religious communities.

44 KII with non-Christian community leader, Beirut, Lebanon.
45 Goode 2010a, p. 17.
46 FGD with an ADP Rebero Inter-church Committee and ADP Committee, Rwanda.
47 CC Evaluation, ADP Staff, Kisongo Makuyuni ADP, Tanzania.
6.2.4 Topic code E4: Transfiguring inter-ethnic and inter-faith relationships

The data suggested a particular emphasis on transfiguring inter-ethnic and inter-faith relationships as an aspect of inner change. This well-supported partially distributed connection (Figure 6.8) drew on data from Rwanda and Bosnia and Herzegovina, two countries that have experienced genocide in recent history. The evaluation report for Rwanda noted that ‘Beneath the long shadow of the genocide, all development effort must be regarded as tenuous without internal change.’

This connecting proposition is a specific application of a more general principle. The report for Bosnia and Herzegovina forcefully made the point that a transformed society requires transformed individuals and you cannot have one without the other. This sentiment was echoed in Rwanda: ‘The critical thing now is how many hearts have changed. That is what is needed for transformational development.’ It was explained that the problem of ‘sustainability starts within – the outside is just a consequence of what’s happening within.’ The example was given of a hospital that can be built today but torn down tomorrow in civil unrest.

For World Vision, conflict was considered holistically as a spiritual issue. The CC Strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina says: ‘We see issues of the inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflict, justice, and the need for reconciliation also as spiritual issues, and the strategy seeks to address these.’ A senior executive claimed that it is necessary to discover a personal faith, and when kingdom of God values are embraced there will be renewed peace within communities. In a comment evocative of Karl Rahner, it was stated that every person does ‘need to find Christ, but [he] may not need to be named as such.’

The data laid down a particular challenge for World Vision staff, who often work side-by-side with colleagues of different ethnic or religious backgrounds. It was stated that ‘You

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48 Goode 2011a, p. 5.
49 KII with Zone Manager 2, Rwanda.
50 KII with a senior national office executive, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
cannot give what you don’t have’, meaning that WV staff have a particular responsibility to set an example by seeking and living out personally transformed lives.51

6.2.4.1 Preliminary analysis

This connection places a high value on relationships and longer-term inward change. Where inner transformation takes place, this will find its practical expression in the way people live with each other. The contexts from which the data was sourced highlight this as a necessity.

While inner change is of critical importance, it can be hard to measure. Development is sometimes understood in terms of the reporting of industry-approved results in industry-approved language. Christians would claim that forgiveness and reconciliation are a work of the Spirit within a person’s heart. This kind of language is alien to professional understandings of development.

The socialising of ‘universal values’ – such as dignity and respect – in community training programs may be very beneficial. So may many secular methodologies in resolving conflict. In theistic communities, however, when abstract concepts are taken and framed as an expression of personal faith, they may take deeper root. Even in contexts where personal faith is shallow, religious tradition may be a repository of persuasive authority.

Religion is sometimes rightly identified as a source of division between peoples. If this is so, then improved theological understandings may help people to live together in respectful ways. Ultimately, however, inner change is just that – an interior kind of development challenge. The evidence suggested that religious and spiritual convictions can have an essential role in prompting self-reflection and regeneration.

6.2.5 Topic code E5: Enquiry and conversion

World Vision’s emphasis on faith-based inner transformation may lead to non-coercive religious dialogue and conversion. While conversion to the Christian faith is not a planned objective of World Vision’s development work, it is sometimes anticipated by staff. This connection was a partially distributed minor theme (Figure 6.9).

There was no evidence in any evaluation reviewed of World Vision setting out with the direct organisational intention of winning converts. It did not include evangelism within any of its programming. The closest was its support for the camping programs discussed at for topic code E1 above. The bulk of the data suggested these camps were conducted in an ethical manner with full disclosure to parents of all faiths. Although World Vision Tanzania

51 KII with a senior national office executive, Rwanda.
lent its support to highly evangelical churches which would in turn run crusades, this support was a step removed from World Vision.

It was observed that in some contexts, explicit attempts to evangelise may be self-defeating. ‘The first thing about our goal is that we are not here to make Christians. This approach will not work in Lebanon. This will have the opposite effect.’ Having said that, the data indicated that faith sharing does occur by invitation. ‘Despite all problems, Christians seem happy, others see it, and ask why?’ The nuanced position for World Vision was ‘to show love (not preach like missionaries), and know how to explain what we do, and who we are.’ A similar approach was taken in Senegal: ‘we give the witness of our life … When people ask whether you are Christian or Muslim you can expose your faith. So we create conditions for people to ask questions.’

There was strong evidence of many staff deepening their faith after commencing work with World Vision. This was in part a function of World Vision’s devotional culture. This sometimes meant Muslims becoming better Muslims.

6.2.5.1 Preliminary analysis

A deeper and ongoing commitment to a religious faith will be developmental when that faith upholds communitarian values. In theory, it means that the convert will seek to uphold the interests of others and their level of personal commitment will increase. Conversion experiences are, by definition, profoundly transformative. They can bring gifts, experience and resources into the service of God and neighbour.

It is noted that World Vision’s commitment to holism does not preclude verbal witness, but this is usually limited to responding to community-initiated inquiries. While World

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52 KII with representatives of the St Paul Movement.
53 KII with representatives of the St Paul Movement.
54 FGD with national office staff, Lebanon.
55 KII ADP Manager 3, Senegal.
56 Goode 2011b, p. 5.
Vision seeks to engage churches primarily for developmental reasons, it does recognise the churches’ general commission to evangelise and it may indirectly support these efforts.

6.3 Conclusion

There was no dissonance observed between the holistic motifs expressed in World Vision’s theology of development and its field practices. World Vision’s holistic and spiritual worldview directly influenced its work in four clearly identifiable ways. Its commitment to inner transformation was also consistently and solidly supported by the evidence. These features point to a distinctive approach to development.

Important ethical questions are raised when religious views are used as an asset to bring about social change. There is always a need to be sensitive to power dynamics in poor communities, especially those which are vulnerable or have experienced trauma. The use of religious themes for developmental purposes may lead to subtle pressure to adopt the religion in question. Nevertheless, religious views can be pervasive within communities, a strong part of local traditions and the foundation of social ethics. In these circumstances it may seem strange to not leverage religious views as a developmental asset, especially if the community so leads.

The next chapter presents the data relevant to World Vision’s vocational motifs.
7. Data and Preliminary Analysis: Vocational Motifs

This chapter examines the evidence from the reports which links the vocational motifs present in World Vision’s theology with its development work. The data will show that these motifs are very powerful drivers. The bulk of the evidence is in the form of personal first-hand accounts from World Vision staff and volunteers. Some of these accounts display a deep emotional and spiritual commitment.

Vocational drivers are concerned with the personal motivations and understandings of work, not the organisation’s corporate values in a more abstract sense. The first motif reported on is understanding work as a ministry.

7.1 Understanding work as a ministry

7.1.1 Topic code B1: A relational/incarnational style of engagement

World Vision pursues its development model through a highly incarnational and relational style of engagement. This comes from the understanding by staff that their work is a ministry. The effect of engaging in this way is to build respect and trust in communities. This was a well-supported and fully distributed connection (Figure 7.1).

A highly relational approach was supported by data from each region, and this was a point of distinction from other agencies. In Albania, the comment was made that ‘Even my friends tell me that you Christians have a type of attitude that distinguishes [you] from the rest, particularly the fact that you are lovely and caring people.’\(^1\) While all organisations would provide benefits of one kind or another, not all would provide friendship. Unlike other organisations, World Vision did not simply

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\(^1\) KII with an ADP Education Coordinator, Albania.
provide resources and training. Our staff ‘are not just working as WV staff but … as human to human.’ The data in some places linked this relational approach to effectiveness. For example, in Tanzania it was observed that ‘Our loving approach and commitment to people … are the main reasons that caused impact.’

The data indicated that the source of this relational style of engagement was personal faith. Staff in Rwanda observed that ‘We reflect Christ in the communities … All activities we do, we do from a Christian perspective, taking the example of Jesus. In living with the poor, and in not separating people, He gave them value. We take the image of Him.’ In Lebanon the same connection was made: ‘In some areas WV’s approach which has faith as a driver has generated much goodwill. There is a special relationship between staff and community.’

This data highlights the difference between contracted service delivery and a personal, relational commitment.

### 7.1.1.1 Preliminary analysis

A fundamental point emerges with this topic code and the next. Religions have a high coefficient of commitment. They motivate action through an emphasis on compassion and service, and a sense of human interconnectedness. When an organisation recruits staff with a religious motivation, it can tap into the deepest of personal motivations.

The idea of Christian ministry contradicts the standard management theory. That theory supposes that the misalignment between personal and organisational goals is bridged in the recruitment process by bargaining over remuneration and conditions. While these are not unimportant, many prospective employees will seek out a Christian organisation because they already perceive an alignment between their own personal goals (sometimes expressed as a sense of ‘call’) and the objectives of the organisation.

When World Vision refers to its work as ministry, it helps to capture this synergy. Thomas Jeavons notes that ‘at the heart of the Christian conception of ministry is the idea that it is intensely and essentially personal … To ask people to be involved in the ministry of a Christian service organisation, then, is to ask them to bring their gifts, their personal

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3 FGD with NO Staff, Georgia.
4 KII with ADP Manager 3, Tanzania.
5 FGD with ADP Buliza staff, Rwanda.
6 Emphasis added; KII with a senior humanitarian and emergency assistance manager, Lebanon.
attributes as individuals and as believers, to that work.\textsuperscript{7} This close alignment between personal and organisational drivers can produce a dedicated and passionate workforce.

The data is especially significant when one considers that non-material aspects of caring for others can be under-valued or ignored in secular charity and social service.\textsuperscript{8} Community support is about more than material provision. The most effective support will offer a relational framework. ‘Our staff are really committed to showing love, not just giving stuff.’\textsuperscript{9} This data is important because it is consistent with the research findings of the British Organisation for NGOs in Development (BOND), the UK peak body for the development sector. Research commissioned by BOND has concluded that ‘The quality of an NGO’s work is primarily determined by the quality of its relationships with its intended beneficiaries.’\textsuperscript{10} This has clear implications ‘requiring re-consideration of existing systems and the development of new ways of working.’\textsuperscript{11}

\textbf{7.1.2 Topic code B2: Work as an expression of love}

The connection here is closely related to the last topic code. In formulating the taxonomy, it was debated whether this connection should be recorded separately or presented as an aspect of personal incarnation and relationship. In the end, the number of links that specifically referred to love in World Vision’s work justified a separate category. The connecting proposition is that when field staff conceive their work as an expression of love of God and neighbour, this resonates positively in communities and earns their acceptance.

This was a well-supported fully distributed link (Figure 7.2). It is noted that if topic codes B1 and B2 were combined, they would rank as one of strongest connections.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure7.2.png}
\caption{Topic code B2 \hspace{1cm} Well-supported, fully distributed link.}
\end{figure}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{7} Jeavons 1994 p. 70.
\item \textsuperscript{8} Ibid., p. 50.
\item \textsuperscript{9} KII with a senior humanitarian and emergency assistance manager, Lebanon.
\item \textsuperscript{10} BOND report prepared by Keystone 2006, \textit{A BOND approach to quality in NGOs: putting beneficiaries first}, p. vi.
\item \textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. vi.
\end{itemize}
A point of distinction from some agencies was that World Vision undertakes its work with love. In Albania this simple distinction was observed by a local pastor: ‘The non-Christian motive is dollars, [but for] World Vision Albania it is love.’ This opinion was shared in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where ‘There was a consensus of opinions that WV staff are frequently seen as caring and loving, providing something above and beyond what other secular agencies may do.’ In Tanzania, ‘World Vision is perceived by community leaders to ‘do their work in love’ above what more secular agencies do.’

There is a risk of the data here being self-serving. History is replete with instances of religiously motivated work that is judgmental, moralising and divisive. What matters are the values that are accented within organisational life. It appears from the CC programs reviewed that World Vision had a clear emphasis on incarnating love. An important aspect was an intentional blindness to the religious identity of beneficiaries within developing communities. Similar quotes came from two different parts of the world. In Senegal it was observed that ‘My prophet Jesus gave me two commandments. Love God and love neighbour. When I come here I don’t see Muslim or Christian, I [just] see people God says to love.’ And in Lebanon: ‘Through Jesus, we know how to love and help each other, not just do religion. When I am in a Muslim community, I can forget that I am Christian so I can connect and love them.’

This loving ethos was also understood as a very personal commitment and challenge. In Georgia, a manager summarised this as a choice: ‘It is a personal belief and mission to work here … to help people without any conditions.’ In Rwanda, where there has been a dreadful history of civil unrest, this meant providing an example. We must ‘Measure ourselves against the measure of love we have for others. We have to start with ourselves – if we don’t love each other, how can we love in our work?’

7.1.2.1 Preliminary analysis

Love is a powerful and universal driver. Any act of love can be an encouragement and a source of hope, and the value of human empathy in undertaking development work should not be underestimated. A Christian understanding of love demands full commitment to God

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12 KII with a pastor from Vush, Albania.
13 Kilpatrick & Goode, p. 17.
14 Goode 2010b, p. 19.
15 KII with a Pastoral Carer, Senegal.
16 KII with Sponsorship Officer 2, Lebanon.
17 KII with a Humanitarian and Emergency Assistance Manager, Georgia.
18 FGD with NO staff.
and others. In a development context, the commandment to love one’s neighbours may require not only a solidarity with communities but also a desire to achieve the best possible ministry outcomes on their behalf. The Christian faith asserts that God is love, and to show love is to point to God. In this way, many World Vision staff understand their work as a kind of living witness.

It is posited that engaging with communities in a loving way aids the development process. When the approach is loving, this is conducive to learning. Such an environment is more likely to be marked by listening, respect, trust and a sense of reciprocity. A mature Christian understanding of love will not simply reflect compassion but also pose questions of justice.

The data for topic codes B1 and B2 suggest that love may be expressed as an outworking of faith, but it must be acknowledged that this is not its only source. Humanitarian principles may also arouse loving responses. However, working for a Christian development organisation with an explicit ministry paradigm implies a permission for staff to be openly loving in addition to being professional and competent. ‘[There is] love and compassion within us and we are sending this message along [with] our work within the communities we serve.’

### 7.1.3 Topic code B3: Vocation over career.

There were nine links where staff indicated that they saw their work as a vocation rather than a career. The connecting proposition is that World Vision recruits and develops staff members who see their work in these terms because it results in a deeper commitment that is expressed at field level. This was a well-supported partially distributed connection (Figure 7.3).

A clear difference was expressed between working for World Vision and other types of organisations. ‘I used to work in another

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19 F&A (Finance and Administration) Staff FGD, Tanzania.
organisation. And it was just a job for me.\textsuperscript{20} ‘The way a Christian does his/her development work is very different from secular staff. We serve Christ. It’s a ministry.\textsuperscript{21} Similarly, in Tanzania it was stated that what mattered was sense of calling rather than the desire for good pay or per diems.\textsuperscript{22} There were a number of similar statements.

Many World Vision offices require a reference from the job applicant’s priest or pastor as part of the recruitment process. It was observed that being professional and well-qualified was not, of itself, considered sufficient to compensate for a lack of faith in East African offices. It was said that while skills could be taught, faith could not be so readily acquired. In these offices, active Christian faith is seen as an inherent and non-negotiable job requirement. While the nature of World Vision as a Christian organisation was emphasised in all offices, adherence to Christian faith for non-leadership positions was not required in all places.

\textit{7.1.3.1 Preliminary analysis}

A person takes a job in consideration of the pay and conditions and because they need it. A vocation is different. A vocation is about taking gifts and experience and bringing them into the service of others out of a sense of calling. A vocation is less a choice and more a personal conviction. Therefore, a vocation is likely to involve a deeper level of commitment and a sustaining passion for the longer-term. This will enhance World Vision’s workforce and benefit communities.

The idea of vocation was not unique to Christian staff, with some Muslims framing their own work experience in similar terms. There were reports in Senegal and Bosnia of Muslims being strengthened in their faith as a result of working for World Vision. It appears that the idea of vocation transcends a particular religious faith tradition.

The added value of ministry for Christians was captured elegantly in the Rwanda evaluation. It was explained that the idea of work as ministry ‘involves a “felt” relational claim by God upon the development practitioner which then informs their work; at its fullest this claim will transmogrify development activity into lived worship.’\textsuperscript{23} The understanding of vocation enabled some staff to accept hardships and sacrifices with equanimity, as discussed for the next code. Importantly, the data does not show that people from other types of development organisation do not see their work in a less committed way. What it does show

\textsuperscript{20} KII with a Sponsorship/Office Administrator, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
\textsuperscript{21} FDG with Robero ADP Staff, Rwanda.
\textsuperscript{22} KII with Zone Manager, Tanzania
\textsuperscript{23} Goode 2011a, p. 19.
is that employees with deep religious convictions may look to FBOs as a way of giving expression to their sense of vocation.

7.1.4 Topic code B4: Long-term, sacrificial and committed

This topic code grouped data relating to the sacrificial and committed nature of work understood as ministry. For many staff, the acceptance of hardship was part of their understanding of work as ministry. The committed and long-term nature of their engagement helped communities to build trust and respect for World Vision’s development work. This was a minor partially distributed connection (Figure 7.4).

Parts of Senegal were a ‘hardship posting’, and it provided good data that illustrated this aspect of the connection. Staff at one remote area stated that ‘many tried to work in World Vision but many have left because they feel disconnected from families; those who remain really believe in God to help them survive and stay therefore they are excellent witnesses in their communities’.²⁴ The evaluation report observed that ‘Other NGOs (where there are any) will come and go, whereas WV staff are seen as more “loving and caring”, especially those who live in the communities and suffer the same conditions and challenges’.²⁵ Sacrifice was also sometimes expressed in terms of staff refusing higher-paid jobs and choosing to remain with World Vision.²⁶ It is noted, however, that anecdotally World Vision staff were well paid compared with smaller agencies. A useful summary comment, because it came from an external source, was that ‘The difference between FBOs [and other development organisations] is in the attitude and seriousness in which they do what they do’.²⁷

²⁴ FGD with staff, Sine ADP, Senegal.
²⁵ Goode 2011b, p. 22.
²⁶ Kilpatrick & Goode, p. 19.
²⁷ KII with a Human Rights Advisor, UN Office for West Africa, Senegal.
7.1.4.1 Preliminary analysis

Effective development work can require a long-term commitment to live with communities. This is part and parcel of World Vision’s incarnational approach. These communities are sometimes located in remote, impoverished and fragile settings. To be willing and able to meet this challenge means that work must be seen as more than a job. By understanding work as ministry or vocation, World Vision staff have a better chance of sustaining their presence and having an impact.

The next topic code expands one aspect of this endurance.

7.1.5 Topic code B5: A sense of being supported by God’s presence

This code grouped those links where staff reported a sense of God’s presence in their work or the ability to invoke spiritual strength in a temporal way through prayer. The connecting proposition was that these attributes flowed from a self-understanding by staff of their work as ministry and this strengthened and sustained them in their work. While this was relevant to ‘hardship’ settings, it was also important for other contexts. This was a minor partially distributed connection (Figure 7.5).

The kinds of comments made included ‘God is around us and supporting us,’²⁸ ‘God is the one who enables our work,’²⁹ ‘God is real and He is our helper in the society that surrounds us,’³⁰ and ‘God’s light enlightening the whole world, [is] present in any community.’³¹ There were also references to starting activities in prayer to invite God’s guidance and to help achieve expected results.

7.1.5.1 Preliminary analysis

A personal understanding of God’s presence in challenging contexts is a vital pastoral assurance for World Vision’s staff. The active spiritual nurture of staff will help them

²⁸ KII with a WV Administration Manager, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
²⁹ KII with an HR officer, Tanzania.
³⁰ ADP Staff, Kisongo Makuyuni, Tanzania.
³¹ KII with a senior national office executive, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
maintain prayerful and discerning lives. It may also help instil the kind of spiritual resilience and acuity needed under World Vision’s development model. This resonates with World Vision’s understanding of being Christian: ‘[it] means submitting our individual lives in every aspect of life as an organisation to God in Jesus Christ in utter reliance on the power and guidance of God’s Spirit.’

There are also some strong theological emphases here. World Vision recognises that God is the ultimate change agent in the world. Its model of development involves connecting with God’s broader redemptive purposes and his existing presence within communities. An active spiritual life is necessary to live out this understanding.

7.1.6 Topic code B6: Embedded organisational presence and commitment to subsidiarity

The connecting proposition here is that World Vision’s understanding of its work as ministry requires it to have an embedded organisational presence within communities and a commitment to the principles of subsidiarity. There were 17 quotes attributed to this well-supported and fully distributed connection (Figure 7.6).

The first series of quotes were about World Vision’s organisational presence in terms of duration. World Vision operates through an ADP in a developing community for a standard period of about 12 to 15 years. This is a substantial period of time, and the duration of an ADP may be extended. The data suggested that World Vision appeared to ‘to love [the community] better because it was in it for the long haul and not just short term like others.’ In Armenia it was stated that ‘during the earthquake, [the] strength of WV was in staying for the long term, not short term as most others did. People see you stay for years and develop trust.’ In some places, however, it may take years of

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33 FDG with NO staff, Kigali, Rwanda.
34 Observation of a WV Armenia staff member during an interview with a representative of the Armenian Bible Society.
relationship building before any work can begin. A regional CC director declared: ‘It took us 15 years of working with Imams before they would say ‘please, can you come and help us.’”

Commitment is expressed not only through duration but also the embedded nature of World Vision’s presence. There were several quotes supporting this idea: ‘World Vision is … part of us,’ Just being in the Lebanese community is a big deal,’ ‘People must feel that World Vision is part of their daily life …’ and ‘we live with community members in their villages.’ One of the clear advantages of locating development facilitators within villages is that they can observe up close the hidden needs within communities – for example, the treatment of the disabled.

The data drew a sharp comparison between development organisations that would visit communities for short-term projects and those with an enduring and continuous presence. Scepticism was expressed in the community about some secular NGOs that ‘exist in words only’ whose ‘money often does not get to the most vulnerable’ and which maintain only a head office far away in the capital city. On the other hand, World Vision’s operations in Rwanda were contrasted favourably as ‘walking closer with communities, seeing families, spending time with children … and … walking the talk.’ Similar views were expressed in Tanzania and Senegal.

A final theme from the data was the support expressed for the idea of subsidiarity. This principle asserts that decisions should be made as close to the local community as possible, because this is consistent with their participation and empowerment. World Vision’s embedded ministry model facilitated this. For example, in Lebanon it was observed that ‘In future the National Director wants the local ADP’s to take responsibility for spending Christian ministry funds in their own area. The National Director has big dreams for faith and development and wants peace-building, reconciliation, and interfaith devolved into ADPs.’ In Tanzania it was reported that World Vision is ‘different because we live with the community … we share plans, budgets, collaborate in the implementation and realize results together.’

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35 Private conversation with evaluators that occurred in preparation for the Senegal evaluation.
36 FGD Kuqan village community representative, Albania.
37 KII with a senior national office executive, Lebanon.
38 KII with a representative of the Armenian Bible Society.
39 FGD with ADP staff, Mswaki ADP, Tanzania.
40 Goode 2011b, p. 23.
41 FDG with No staff, WV Rwanda, and KII with Zone Manager 2, Rwanda.
42 KII with senior national office executive, Lebanon.
43 ADP Manager 3, Tanzania.
7.1.6.1 Preliminary analysis

World Vision’s commitment to understanding its work as ministry has organisational and personal implications. This topic code drew together important corporate links relating to where World Vision works, the duration of its engagement, the embedded nature of its presence and the way it operates.

It is easy to have a commitment to community participation and empowerment at an abstract or rhetorical level. For that to be meaningful requires a long-term presence and engagement. Where development agencies are city-based visitors, a level of mistrust can arise. Living with communities brings first-hand insights, a lived empathy, moral support and a greater reciprocity. The data reflected a level of cynicism by World Vision’s faith-based development practitioners towards other models involving reduced community contact.

7.2 Promotion of a devotional culture

7.2.1 Topic code F1: Nurture and sustaining staff

This topic code grouped data that showed how World Vision’s internal devotional life, including scriptural reflection, contributed to its development work. It does this by providing a structured mechanism to nurture and sustain staff. The data showed that support gained through devotional activities also helped to provide substantial motivation and encouragement. This was a well-supported and distributed link (Figure 7.7).

Devotional activities stress the spiritual nature of World Vision’s work. Inner spiritual strength is seen as essential to carry out development tasks. These devotional activities ‘contribute to increased staff’ awareness and consciousness of God’s presence and provide ‘access to information which helps your inner self.’ In Tanzania it was stated: ‘Sometimes we come feeling stressed and demoralised, but when we attend morning devotions we are...

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44 KII with a humanitarian and emergency assistance coordinator, Rwanda.
45 KII with a CEDC (Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances) program manager, Georgia.
Staff reported a wide range of personal and social attributes built through devotional activity, including strength, wisdom, power, unity and hope. This shared devotional life provided support especially for those staff living away from their families. In particular, the pastoral role of prayer in this context was highlighted: ‘It’s vital. Prayer is needed to live within community.’

This data suggested that World Vision’s suite of devotional practices were well appreciated and regarded by staff as necessary and distinctive. While other development organisations might view these kinds of activities with mild embarrassment or derision, the point was made unapologetically that ‘World Vision is a Christian organisation – it isn’t Care or Save.’

Bible exposition and reflection formed a routine part of devotional life. There were two important aspects supported by the data. First, scripture provided a source for work-life reflection: ‘We have a commitment as WV staff to work with community, to be inspired by the Bible and to apply it to everyday life.’ Likewise, in Georgia it was reported that ‘We do Youth Bible Curricula classes for national office staff. These are conducted by lay people under authority of the church. We used to do these monthly, now every fortnight. There is actually a high demand from staff; those who have been trained are very appreciative.’ Secondly, there was an element of team- and skill-building: ‘Sharing the Word of God helps build each other up. It involves becoming a model of what is being shared about. For example, if the devotion is about peace, then staff will try and instil peace in their activities that day.’

7.2.1.1 Preliminary analysis

World Vision sees its staff engaging in a faith-based vocation. This requires regular and structured mechanisms to nurture staff in that understanding. The data showed that World Vision offers contextualised devotional programs that will help staff derive inner spiritual strength for their work-life. One example of this contextualisation is the co-opting of Orthodox priests to assist with devotional activities in Eurasian contexts.

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46 FGD with ADP staff, Mswaki ADP, Tanzania.
47 KII with Zone Manager 2, Rwanda.
48 KII with a senior national office executive, Georgia.
49 KII with a senior HEA manager, Lebanon.
50 KII with a senior program manager, Georgia.
51 FGD with Robero ADP Staff, Rwanda.
A key output from these devotional activities is to build personal attributes that are helpful when serving within communities. Another important role for devotional activities is to reinforce a distinctive culture and a sense of community.

Bible study and reflection is an important feature of this devotional life. The Christian faith, which underpins all World Vision’s ministry, is a revealed faith. In epistemological terms, sacred scripture is seen as revealing the character and redemptive purposes of God and providing a window into the life of Jesus Christ. For many staff who seek to follow Jesus, biblical reflection is therefore an essential source of truth and meaning. It is an open question of how much of the responsibility for spiritual nurture should fall to the church rather than World Vision, and the amount of time and resources that should be allocated to activities of an inherently religious nature.

7.2.2 Topic code F2: Encouraging quality field work

This topic code reflected data that established a link between the quality of World Vision’s ministry and its devotional activity. The devotional life of World Vision contributed to the quality of its work in four clear ways: values formation, commitment to excellence in field outcomes, an emphasis of personal accountability and encouraging personal integration between faith and work. This was a well-supported fully distributed link (Figure 7.8).

Values formation and devotional activities were inextricably linked. ‘We are a Christian NGO. We participate in devotional times and other spiritual nurture activities. For staff, it is very important to know the Christian values. They respect them in their daily work through their work with community.’

For Muslim staff too, devotions reinforced the organisation’s values. In Georgia, a contrast was drawn between devotional activities that emphasised values and dogma. ‘Change will come with spiritual nurture of staff … not

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52 Persiana CC coordinator, Albania.
religious teaching limited to tradition. [What matters] is the establishment of values such as love, care, encouragement.  

The commitment to quality was reinforced: ‘I like that after attending devotions you can go and reflect. It reminds you of why you do the job and how to do it better.’ Inevitably this would involve ‘a merge of professional skills and personal beliefs.’ In some places devotions would also involve the distribution of scripturally based materials to staff relating to real-life issues such as corruption and social change.

A heightened sense of personal accountability was a direct result of devotional activity. In Armenia it was reported that ‘ADPs and staff commitment have grown tremendously. They have grown in spiritual understanding and values. They are more serious about their work and are asking deeper questions of effectiveness and sustainability.’ One staff member gave this personal account ‘To be honest, when I started I just wanted to do my work, to do a good job but now my faith has deepened and that means I feel more obligated and more responsibility to do my job better. I’m almost suggesting that people of faith are more accountable.’ In Rwanda, devotional times were also directly linked to stewardship and accountability principles.

A final theme was the purposeful integration of devotional teaching into daily work-life. Devotional teaching would often engage staff in critical thinking about the best way to do things. In Rwanda, the longer-term integrative benefit was alluded to: ‘the accumulation of devotions gave a lot of teaching to draw on in daily work.’ Consistently, the evaluation report noted the strong emphasis ‘on seeing faith more than just a religious activity or an expression of personal piety, but as something which directly informed the daily life and work.’ This was also a strong feature in Senegal.

### 7.2.2.1 Preliminary analysis

Devotional activity was not seen as tangential or an extracurricular option for pious staff. Rather, the evidence showed consistent and strong connections with World Vision’s work. Those connections were most pronounced in Eurasia and Africa. Other types of development

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53 KII with a senior program manager, Georgia.
54 Emphasis added; a Muslim finance staff member, Elbasan ADP, Albania.
55 KII with an advocacy manager, Lebanon.
56 KII with a People and Culture Officer, NO, WV Tanzania.
57 KII with CC personnel, Armenia.
58 FGD Gyumri staff, Armenia.
59 KII with a humanitarian and emergency assistance coordinator, Rwanda.
60 FGD with Robero ADP staff, Rwanda.
organisations may be motivated by strong humanitarian principles. A practical difference, however, is that there is no routine cultural practice comparable to World Vision’s devotional program that can be used to embed those principles within work-life. In fact, religious and philosophical positions tend to be seen as a private matter, with no proper place in a work environment. These motivations may therefore not be reinforced within a corporate culture. World Vision, on the other hand, has a distinct advantage in being able to explicitly and openly link its development work with the private motivations of staff. It has a consistent body of faith-based teaching and established rituals and practices for reinforcement. In this way, a community of belief is established and maintained.

7.2.3 Topic code F3: Building teams and a shared sense of mission

The connecting proposition for this data is that World Vision’s internal devotional life contributes to its development work by building stronger teams and a shared sense of mission. This was a well-supported and distributed link (Figure 7.9). The data was strongest in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Lebanon.

The data showed that devotional activities made a strong difference to teamwork and staff care. It was reported that staff began to connect on a spiritual level. Corporate devotions ‘awake somebody’s feelings that they are made by God, by developing a sense of self, by improving everyday relationships with colleagues, by encouraging kindness, and by reinforcing that you are here with a purpose.’ Reflecting together ‘increases team-building and effectiveness.’ ‘Reading and studying what Jesus wants has been great. Devotions that included team building with a biblical basis were very interesting. [This] gave us power, especially before big events. Prayers to Jesus gave us courage.’

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62 KII with a Faith and Development Coordinator, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
63 Paraphrasing of a KII with a WV Administration Manager, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
64 KII with a Program Officer, Beirut area, Lebanon.
65 KII with Sponsorship Officer 2, Lebanon.
expressed that attending devotions positively ‘influences our performance in the field’ by helping staff feel better supported.66

7.2.3.1 Preliminary analysis

This topic code highlighted an important point. An organisation’s work will be strengthened when staff have a unified vision and strong teams to carry it out. Devotional activities are vital in promoting both. This is consistent with general research into development organisations. Rick James from the International NGO Training and Research Centre conducted research on the distinctiveness of FBOs in 2009. He concluded that ‘organizations are more effective if they have a clear identity and their beliefs and values permeate throughout their organization.’67 Jeavons’ study of effective American FBOs in the aid and development sector likewise noted that the coherence of the culture, at a level of substance, was essential.68 In other words, where an organisation’s identity is clear and embedded, the more effective it is likely to be.69 Sharing a faith identity or similar faith ideals can be a potent asset. Conflicts are likely to be reduced where employees have shared cognitive premises leading to a more cohesive culture. Devotional activities help reinforce those premises.

It is noted that while the World Vision data was very positive, there are many examples of Christian workplaces that are highly dysfunctional. They can be judgmental, excluding, legalistic and full of sectarian tension. It is important to understand the data here as providing an example of an especially cohesive and helpful and environment, and not as supporting a more general proposition that FBOs are necessarily superior workplaces.

7.2.4 Topic code F4: Modelling respectful interfaith and interdenominational relationships

This topic code covered the use of devotions and devotional activities to model respectful interfaith and interdenominational relationships. The connecting proposition to emerge from the data was that the intentional modelling of an inclusive and respectful devotional culture provided a positive example for staff and the broader community. This illustrated what World Vision aspired to in its development work. Devotions were found to be a safe place to learn

66 KII with a Sponsorship/Office Administrator, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
69 James 2009, p. 20.
about others and show respect. This was a strongly supported and well-distributed connection (Figure 7.10).

This connection was well articulated in the Tanzania report. There the attention to interfaith/denominational harmony ‘has created better staff unity, an understanding of each other and various expressions of faith, and has provided a model for communities/persons outside World Vision. This was verified by FGDs with various community members who spoke highly of World Vision staff and the example they provided.’

For Muslim staff, devotions enabled them to receive and reflect on the values spoken about in a natural way. It was also reported that devotions helped ‘promote greater sensitivity to religious difference, and has encouraged some Muslim staff to embrace their own faith with greater diligence and seriousness.’

The data came largely from contexts where there has been sectarian conflict. In offices with all-Christian staff, like Lebanon and Tanzania, the focus was on interdenominational cohesion. In Lebanon, it was of great interest to staff to hear speakers from different Christian traditions explaining or presenting material from their perspective. This contrasted with the more evangelical style of devotional activity from an earlier era that did not sit as easily with Christians from a variety of more traditional backgrounds.

Tanzania was another context where sectarian differences have been a source of conflict in the general community. Community leaders noted that ‘there was a time that the government had to put police on to make sure that people didn’t interfere when one church was conducting a public preaching ministry or seminar, but these days such forces are not necessary because there is peace and understanding among denominations and religions.’

World Vision was able to help reinforce cohesion by running a devotional program that focussed on orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy. The data showed that World Vision’s model

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70 Goode 2010b, p. 11.
71 For example, see the comments made by Elbasan ADP staff, Albania.
72 Goode 2011b, p. 5.
74 FGD with Community Leaders, Magole ADP, Tanzania.
did penetrate the local community, with the observation being made that World Vision’s ‘individual staff are Christian by their different denominations, [yet] united by mission and vision.’\(^{75}\)

In mixed Christian and Muslim staff settings, World Vision’s devotional program deliberately accented those common theological beliefs between Christians and Muslims that underpin its development work. There were efforts made to be inclusive in devotions, including a careful and appropriate use of shared prayer.

For example, the learning opportunity of inclusive devotions was highlighted in Bosnia: ‘This office (Zenica) does devotions every Friday. On those sessions we are trying to find links between different religions and speak about that. Learning about others is a very great opportunity and helps us to make some connections with each other and also helps people to develop their view of life. In my previous experience I have never had chance for that and I find it very useful for me.’\(^{76}\) It was apparent that some Muslim staff enjoyed engaging with something Christian, but not the church. Devotions provided a safe environment to learn.\(^{77}\)

Efforts were made in Senegal to make at least some devotional activities accessible to Muslims. This was important because a majority of staff were Muslim in some places. ‘We don’t force anyone to come, but some Muslims do. We do structure some devotions for Muslims. They appreciate that we are people who pray and read the Book. They respect us more for this than secular.’\(^{78}\) Occasionally Muslims led devotions in some places: ‘they will share on what is common between us, sharing words from the Bible and Koran, and we pray together.’\(^{79}\)

Common prayer is permitted by World Vision policy when it is carefully undertaken. Sensitivity is required, especially when Christians are praying in a mixed audience. To refer to ‘Jesus as Word of God is acceptable, but not as Son of God.’\(^{80}\) It is also acceptable to pray in the name of Jesus, and to use The Lord’s Prayer and Muslim Fatiha.\(^{81}\) While World Vision does not permit its resources to be used to promote another religion, it certainly does seek to actively establish common theological ground in conducting its development work. Muslim staff reported that World Vision had a way to serve the Prophet through its development activity.

\(^{75}\) FGD with Community Income Generating Groups at Kisongo/Makuyuni ADP office, Tanzania.
\(^{76}\) KII with an ADP Team Leader, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
\(^{77}\) KII with a senior national office executive, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
\(^{78}\) Goode 2011b, p. 12.
\(^{79}\) KII with a senior manager for ministry quality, Senegal.
\(^{80}\) KII with a Pastoral Carer, Senegal.
\(^{81}\) Goode 2011b, p. 31.
An important but basic point underpinning many interviews in that the Christian faith is known and has a recognised status within Islam. The Islamic faith claims successive revelations from God, first to the Jews in the Torah, later through the Prophet Jesus, and ultimately and definitively through the Last Prophet, Mohammed. Broadly, Christians are acknowledged as an Abrahamic faith and are referred to in the Koran as a ‘People of the Book’. The data suggested that this status helped World Vision to effectively position itself in its development work in some Muslim contexts.

7.2.4.1 Preliminary analysis

This topic code highlighted that World Vision’s devotional life was a source of cohesion for surrounding communities. It enabled staff to get to know each other better and to model respectful interfaith and interdenominational relationships. World Vision’s devotional program does increase the faith-literacy of staff about other religious traditions, as recommended by some commentators. The majority of World Vision staff are drawn from the surrounding community; their participation in its devotional program enables them to take back a positive example to their family and friends. There was also the direct example of staff of different faiths or denominations working side-by-side within communities in their development work.

It appeared possible for World Vision to conduct devotional activities in an inclusive manner in mixed-faith communities without compromising its core Christian beliefs. This required a level of intentionality, sensitivity and careful design. It was possible to accent those shared theological motifs relevant to World Vision’s work and to pray together using acceptable forms which did not offend or embarrass. A great benefit of World Vision’s devotional program is to show that it is serious about faith in communities that place a high value on this. This gained kudos and goodwill for World Vision’s work.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter has focussed on vocational motifs present in World Vision’s organisational theology. The data has showed that the ways these motifs inform its work are profound. These motifs can speak to the deepest personal motivations of World Vision’s staff.

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These kinds of connections are intentionally nurtured by the organisation. It has been demonstrated that World Vision’s devotional program is important in sustaining and motivating staff. It is also used to shape and emphasise values to focus on quality and accountability, integrate life and work, build unified and stronger teams, and model respect across different faith traditions. These aspects are a distinctive and potent feature of its development praxis.

The next chapter will examine how the values motifs present in World Vision theology are reflected in field data.
This chapter examines how two theological motifs concerning World Vision’s values are reflected in its work. The evaluation reports and interviews provided a rich source of data that could be used to explore this theme.

At the outset it is appropriate to note that a chasm can exist between those values that may be upheld as statements of corporate intent and those that a developing community actually perceives and experiences. ‘Words don’t count as much as living Kingdom of God values.’

The data illustrated that where an organisation’s lived values are resonant within a developing community, the work of that organisation will be better accepted.

A key emphasis in World Vision’s work is its commitment to live for the kingdom of God. Evidence was sought which showed how this commitment to ‘live for the Kingdom’ specifically informed World Vision’s development practice. A second motif, ‘standing against evil’, in many ways states a corollary. The data established some strong and distinctive connections.

8.1 Living for the kingdom

8.1.1 Topic code C1: A strong values base and a commitment to living it out

The first connection was that World Vision staff were committed to a suite of ‘Kingdom values’ in their daily activities and the demonstration of these values underpinned the acceptance of its work within communities. This was a strongly supported and fully distributed connection (Figure 8.1).

A broad suite of values emerged from the data and it is impossible to reference every adjective or descriptor. The following is a brief sample. Values mentioned included empowerment and working for justice, respect and acting in good faith, and exercising love and care. A Muslim leader observed that ‘Christianity is a religion of forgiveness and love’

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1 KII with a senior national office executive, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
2 FGD with Ministry Quality (MQ) staff, NO, Tanzania.
3 FDG with Poro and Oshetime villagers, Albania.
4 KII with Sponsorship/Office Administrator, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
and that ‘the mission of World Vision is very well accepted in the community.’ Parents in Tanzania identified love, joy, trust and hope as synonymous with World Vision’s work.6

The data showed that World Vision was practical and active in communities, and this hands-on approach might itself be considered as a value. It was said that ‘we are not preaching, our work is preaching for us’ and that the true Christian is ‘the one who follows Christ – a person with deeds that portrays the Christian life.’8

Some direct links were made in the data between World Vision’s values and developmental outcomes. The importance of modelling behaviours was stressed in several places, especially ‘the Christian values of peace, reconciliation, forgiveness and trust.’9 In Georgia, the inculcation of Christian values such as love, caring for one another and encouragement were seen as essential to move beyond the Soviet legacy of dependency. These values were considered to be necessary in the acceptance of personal responsibility.10

In Armenia it was plainly stated that ‘We can’t imagine any real development without Christian values …’11

There was one dissenting voice: ‘It is not being Christian which guides our work, it’s being humanitarian.’12 This comment seemed to suggest that faith is largely irrelevant and kingdom values are indistinguishable from universal humanitarian values.

The data showed, however, that not all development organisations reflected substantially the same values, or any particular values. In Tanzania, it was suggested that the community commended World Vision’s work because ‘we are living Christian values that are very distinct. Other people are not doing it.’13 World Vision in Albania was described as different.

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5 KII with a non-Christian community leader, Beirut.
6 Group Discussion with Registered Children’s Parents, Katerero ADP, Tanzania.
7 FGD GyunrisStaff, Armenia.
8 F&A FGD Tanzania.
9 Kilpatrick & Goode, p. 27.
10 Senior program manager, WV Georgia.
11 FGD Gyunri staff, Armenia.
12 KII with a Program Officer, Beirut area, Lebanon.
13 Emphasis added; FGD with ADP staff, Mswaki ADP, Tanzania.
from other NGOs because it had a steadfast focus on values. Likewise in Lebanon, it was stated that the difference between a FBO and a secular organisation is that faith-values make a difference.\textsuperscript{14} Staff in Georgia claimed that ‘we have some values which increase our leverage over other agencies when working with the community and collaborating with the church. [This] gives us “extra salt” …’\textsuperscript{15} The particular values leading to this alleged leverage were not identified. Further, some of these statements may need to be discounted as coming from World Vision enthusiasts.

A second point of distinction is that World Vision’s values were not seen as vague or abstracted, but were expressed as a lived faith commitment that was part of a broader religious narrative. There was an expectation that staff ‘learn how to live their faith.’\textsuperscript{16} For World Vision, being a Christian organisation was ‘about practicing Christian values and trying to follow the rules of Christ.’\textsuperscript{17} The community saw it as ‘working according to God principles …’\textsuperscript{18}

\textbf{8.1.1.1 Preliminary analysis}

World Vision upheld a suite of kingdom values, although most of the data came from internal sources. Its proactive style of practical engagement may itself be described as a value. To this could be added its embedded, relational ethos (discussed elsewhere). It is clear that there is an overlap between many kingdom values and what are commonly referred to as universal humanitarian principles. However, the data indicated that not all development organisations displayed the same values or commitment to them.

Kingdom values are enlivened by a personal faith commitment. The idea of organisational values existing as some kind of floating abstraction should be disabused. Values are conveyed by a consistent pattern of personal interactions that gives them substance and meaning. Where demonstrated values positively resonate within a community, then the development organisation’s work is more likely to be accepted. The data supported values formation as a development tool, and one way to achieve this was by modelling the desired behaviours. This principle was illustrated by the next topic code.

\textsuperscript{14} KII with a senior HEA manager, Lebanon.
\textsuperscript{15} KII with a program manager, Georgia.
\textsuperscript{16} KII with a senior national office executive, Georgia.
\textsuperscript{17} FGD, Idjevan staff, Tavush ADP, Armenia.
\textsuperscript{18} FDG with Poro and Oshetime villagers, Albania.
8.1.2 Topic code C2: An emphasis on interfaith respect and co-operation

This category grouped data illustrating one particular value, namely interfaith respect and co-operation. World Vision’s ‘kingdom’ values place a particular emphasis on building trust and understanding between different religious groupings. The building of harmony and co-operation within communities helps World Vision to achieve sustainable development. This was a strongly supported and fully distributed connection (Figure 8.2). There were 29 underlying links, making this the second-strongest connection in the analysis.

The commitment to interfaith understanding was framed in different ways. For some it rose out of an understanding of our shared humanity. Christianity ‘is about Christian values – Jesus values. Getting the wider picture about the world. All creatures are children of God, all brothers and sisters.’

Others saw the commitment as a matter of hospitality and friendship. It was reported that some World Vision bases would regularly convene meetings of Christian and Muslim leaders ‘not only for teaching, but just to be together’. Still others saw the commitment arising from an orthopraxy that transcended different faith traditions. For example, a consistent finding in the evaluation reports was the role of World Vision in acting as a unifying agent in bringing Christian and Islamic leaders together into locally adapted development collaborations. These collaborations involved capacity training in various aspects of development, including training about HIV and AIDS, gender, education and interfaith dialogue itself.

The data illustrated that World Vision is well positioned to bring about greater interfaith and interdenominational understanding. As World Vision is not aligned to any one Christian denomination and it has a practical and applied focus in its work, it provides a platform for engagement between different religious groupings. The following examples illustrate some of the methods used:

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19 KII with a WV Administration Manager, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
20 KII with Muslim Leader, Kaffrine, Senegal.
• **Roundtable discussions** – World Vision offices in Armenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina used inter-religious round table discussions as a way of building understanding and strengthening civil society.²¹

• **Informal contact** – World Vision brokers and provides facilities for informal contact. For example, ‘If I meet Muslims leaders today I can shake hands and discuss meetings, but I could not do it 5 years ago. Here in this room with World Vision we can meet Muslims and talk, we could not do it in past. Through World Vision we as Christian and Muslim leaders meet, can pray together in Jesus’ name, and be accepted and work together.’²²

• **Summer camps** – ‘These summer camps are run by an ecumenical organization with Pentecostal, Baptist, Lutheran, Armenian Apostolic and Georgian Orthodox Church board representation. The various leaders are all trained together, including seminary students, providing fertile soil for understanding the “other”’.²³

• **Youth projects** – For example, Project Yakaar is a youth-focussed training scheme that tries to instil civic and ethical responsibilities. In doing so, it ‘seeks to build the capacities of WV staff and partners to increase inter-religious actions and to develop models and best practices for jointly engaging religious leaders to work together.’²⁴

• **Inclusivity in general programming** – In Tanzania there was repeated praise for World Vision being inclusive and non-discriminatory in all its general programming. ‘We are really thankful to ADP staff because they do not segregate anyone; they treat both Muslims and Christians equally.’²⁵

World Vision’s understanding of the primary importance of religion within community means that it is well placed to facilitate interfaith dialogue. As a faith-based agency seeking to do development work, it has a vested interest in the topic. The evidence suggested that other types of agencies might approach this topic from a distance. They may regard religion as a private matter or something to be repudiated, or they may feel that their own secular underpinning does not enable them to engage religious institutions in the same way. In contrast, World Vision is well positioned and has a clear theological imperative to broker good relations as a faith-based participant/actor.

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²¹ Kilpatrick & Goode, p. 27; Newmarch 2010, p. 17.
²² Goode 2011b, p. 22.
²³ Goode 2010a, p. 17, and see KII with a representative of the Evangelical Baptist Church, Georgia.
²⁴ Goode 2011b, p. 6.
²⁵ Quote from a FGD with Muslim leaders, Magole ADP, Tanzania – one of several comments.
An important aspect of this topic code is the way World Vision seeks and uses shared or overlapping religious values with Muslims to provide a common platform to engage staff and communities. Twelve quotes from three different countries were noted that affirmed this approach.

This level of inclusiveness is possible because of the overlap in values between Christianity and Islam as two Abrahamic faiths. In terms of shared values, the strongest data came from Senegal. The common ground was described in the following terms:

- World Vision’s Christian identity means ‘trying to do good as God teaches.’

- One imam noted that many of World Vision’s core values are represented in Islam: ‘All prophets God sends teach good … I have many books relating to Christian values and I enjoy reading them. Each of us can share his faith with the other without hurting them.’

- ‘In World Vision Senegal, Muslim and Christian staff unite around a shared goal, the well-being of children. Muslims are happy to be associated and work in World Vision because of the positive values that align with Muslim values.’

- Christian people help ‘Muslims understand how to serve God and help others, in terms of relationships, love of children, and protection.’

Common ground was also built through the shared identity of religious figures. These quotes came from Muslim respondents.

- ‘We are all followers of Jesus.’

- ‘Muslims pray to Jesus because he is a prophet and Mary because she is sacred.’

- ‘If a Muslim wants to pray to Jesus, that is ok.’

- ‘we [Muslim staff members] walk as Jesus Christ walked with the poor people.’

8.1.2.1 Preliminary analysis.

World Vision has a strong commitment to promoting respectful interfaith relationships. The theological imperative behind this value is its commitment to live in anticipation of the kingdom of God. God’s reign on earth will not be achieved by disparagement, violence,
mistrust or suspicion. Nor will God be glorified by these kinds of attitudes. World Vision policies adopt a careful and nuanced position. They prohibit staff from judging the salvation of another, while acknowledging Jesus Christ as the ultimate revelation of what God is like. This provides a firm basis to uphold the integrity of key Christian beliefs, while providing room to positively engage with people of other faith traditions.

World Vision’s relational posture, its understanding that all peoples reflect the image of God, and its emphasis on orthopraxy are all important bases from which to build closer interfaith relationships. The data showed that a wide range of initiatives and methods were deployed to build these relationships. The volume of data indicated the importance of this theme. Critically, World Vision was able to successfully build strong interfaith relationships because it had a theological driver to do so. The data suggested other kinds of organisations do not enter the discussion in the same way. Overlapping values and a shared Abrahamic heritage helped to build closer relationships with Muslims. This observation is consistent with the work of Haynes, which suggests that religious organisations can have inherent advantages when it comes to conflict resolution.34

8.1.3 Topic code C3: Standing against corruption

This topic code gathered data relating to one particular value – World Vision’s opposition to corruption. This connection could have equally been located in the next section, which deals with World Vision’s stand against evil. Corruption is a major impediment to development in many countries. It exists in many forms, including the misuse of influence, cronyism, nepotism, bribery and the lack of merit-based decision-making in commercial dealings.

World Vision’s kingdom-based values contribute to development by standing firmly against corruption. Christian ethics, at a minimum, require honesty, openness and fairness. This well-supported and partially distributed link (Figure 8.3)

drew on data that was gathered in three countries and which indicated World Vision’s firm
stance. Corruption was clearly an issue in most of the contexts examined, and it is mentioned
in the background material for most of the reports. The narrow distribution of responses
probably reflects the ad hoc nature of the questions.

World Vision Albania was singled out for high praise. ‘Perhaps the greatest Christian
witness observed and evidenced in this evaluation was the high standing of World Vision
Albania because of its professional standards. These standards implicitly stood against the
corruption that is rife throughout Albania.’ The example was given of people who tried to
bribe the organisation but gave up when they eventually saw that it ‘was different from the
usual.’

The data from World Vision Rwanda provided this personal account: ‘As an Area
Development Plan manager, I was tested. The local Mayor tried to bribe me. He said to me
“all this money for these projects, and you let it slip through your fingers?” He said you could
offer food for work, pay less, and keep a percentage for yourself. I had to tell him this was
against my beliefs and that World Vision didn’t do this sort of thing.’ The data from
Tanzania was indirect, with the organisation’s stand against corruption being reflected in
devotional content and Bible studies.

8.1.3.1 Preliminary analysis

An organisation that takes an unequivocal stand against corruption will receive strong
community support in many developing contexts. Taking such a stand models good
behaviour and builds trust. While many community members may oppose corruption, it may
be accepted fatalistically as an inevitable part of life. When an organisation models a
different approach, this can unlock community goodwill. The data from Rwanda suggested
that staff saw their ethical behaviour as a way of ‘blessing’ a local community, and in
Albania the staff were described by the community as ‘correct people’ worthy of trust.
There was limited data to indicate whether FBOs were more trustworthy than secular
organisations in relation to the issue of corruption. It is hypothesised, however, that FBOs
may be perceived as less corrupt (whether they are or not), consistent with the general data
that they are viewed as serious and ethical in their work.

35 Newmarch & Goode, p. 23.
36 ADP Team Leader, Albania.
37 KII with Zone Manager 1, Rwanda.
38 FGD Kuqan village community representative, Albania.
It is noted that there are no compelling studies in developing countries that show any definitive causal relationship, either positive or negative, between religious belief and corrupt behaviour.\(^{40}\) While it is a reasonable (and intuitive) assumption that personal commitment to religious ideals like honesty and fairness – and a belief in divine sanctions – would militate against corruption, this is not necessarily the case. The causal factors appear to be very complex, including personal economic factors, the type of behaviour in question, the way kinship loyalties are expressed, the type of religion involved, the level of social opprobrium attached to particular types of conduct and the general prevalence of corruption within society. The data show only that some informants regarded World Vision’s religious foundation as militating against corruption, thus providing a link to one of its theological motifs. Whether its religious positioning does in fact reduce corruption would require a detailed separate study.

**8.1.4 Topic code C4. Building hope and resilience in the present**

The data for this topic code pointed to an important connection between World Vision’s faith-based development model and the building of hope in developing communities. That hope came through the consistent expression of kingdom values in the present and the community’s understanding that World Vision’s work was part of an overarching narrative about God’s love. This theme is of foundational importance. Development requires resilience, and resilience requires hope. This was a strongly supported and fully distributed connection (Figure 8.4).

People need to have a level of confidence about the future. When despair or fatalism take hold, development work becomes very difficult. Cynicism and community disengagement make it very hard for projects to be effective. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was reported that ‘Without hope, no intervention will be effective nor sustainable.’\(^{41}\) There is a multi-layered connection between a faith-based approach to development and the inculcation of hope. Part of this is about living

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\(^{41}\) Kilpatrick & Goode, p. 14.
out kingdom values like love, care and encouragement, which may build trust with the
development agency and its staff.

The data suggested, however, that the placing of an agency’s work within a religious
narrative was also important. Comments made in communities included ‘God gives me hope
for the future,’^42 ‘We just have trust in God and hope that sometime it will be better’^43 and
‘Faith gives people hope.’^44 Furthermore, the disciplines of faith can build a kind of stoic
endurance. The data from Lebanon illustrates this: ‘Faith is about commitment, we shouldn’t
give up at the first struggle. Religion is about obedience and patience …’^45 A quote from the
capital Beruit echoed: ‘God is aware of our lot and looks after the poor. God is testing us,
that’s why we are patient.’^46

The particular way in which kingdom values built hope within communities differed
according to the context. The differences were striking. In Senegal, a predominantly Muslim
context, World Vision’s focus on living out kingdom values challenged the prevalent idea of
insha’Allah. The idea of insha’Allah is that God wills our present circumstances, thus
fatalistically precluding any action for change. This notion can be used to avoid personal
responsibility and can ‘cause a sense of apathy …’^47 After exposure to World Vision’s work,
the imams spoke (unknowingly) in the language of empowerment. They stated that ‘When
World Vision leaves we will teach about encouraging people to support each other, especially
the poor’ and ‘Getting a federation from the community together to do what World Vision
does.’^48

In post-communist settings, the restoration of kingdom values was seen as vital to
restoring hope. Many communities have a damaged psyche, an engrained dependency and a
sense of passive resignation. For example, the evaluation report for Bosnia and Herzegovina
states: ‘In the post-communist period people to behave like somebody else will solve their
problems.’^49 A more detailed explanation came from Armenia:

Development is not just economic; it is much more than that. We have been under
communist propaganda for 70 years and the church has been severely damaged as the
propaganda has changed the mindset of generations, especially subsequent generations.
This propaganda has established an atheistic generation and our values have been
completely changed. Right now Armenia is in a state of transformation and we see

^42 WV HR Coordinator, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
^43 FGD – Sokolac Community, ADP Krivaja, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
^44 FGD with youth from the Ain El Remmeneh Area, Lebanon.
^45 FGD Bkerkacha village community, ADP Bchare, Lebanon.
^46 FGD with women of ADP, Beirut area; These notes have been put in the first person for ease of expression.
^47 KII with an evangelist from SIM, Senegal.
^48 FGD with ADP Ndiognick Religious Leaders.
^49 Kilpatrick & Goode, p. 11.
development as the process to restore values. We do this as an organisation and support churches to restore values. The result will be people who will have values to serve their country and neighbours. It is easiest to start with children as they have not been affected as much.50

Senior clergy in Armenia expressed the view that the Soviet regime almost destroyed national and spiritual identity. A national leader stated that he saw the key to national reconstruction as re-establishing the moral authority of people. The essential task was moral formation leading to renewed hope.51 This observation echoed the comments of one theorist: ‘To survive, all societies need a minimum moral sense; acts of mercy are best done by the citizenry and not by an impersonal welfare state. Education, value formation and the use of power are approaches to changing social behaviour; but even more important than these is the ability to constructively engage structures, help communities to resources their own needs within their own context, and nurture a strategic minority that will create a presence and a voice in public space on behalf of the poor.’52

The promotion of kingdom values are essential to this kind of moral renaissance. In Albania, there could have been no clearer evidence of the need to instil hope at a community level than the local names chosen for each of the six ADPs:

- ‘Friendship and hope’ Vlora ADP
- ‘Partners for hope’ Elbasan 1 ADP
- ‘Together for a brighter future’ Elbasan 2 ADP
- ‘Better world for children’ Lezha ADP
- ‘Joyful and prosperous future’ Librazhd ADP
- ‘New beginnings’ Kurbin ADP.

In Rwanda, a strongly Christian context, hope was instilled by World Vision staff and community leaders explicitly modelling trust in God. This produced a sustaining hope at the community level. There were two detailed explanations given for how the personal example of World Vision staff translated to hope at a broader community level.

In the first example, an ADP staff member explained the connection this way: ‘WV serves the most vulnerable, often the very poor. As conditions slowly improve in the community, the worker, who is a Christian and from a Christian organisation, credits God for this. This

50 FGD, Idjevan staff, Tavush ADP, Armenia.
51 KII with Prelate from the Armenian Apostolic Church.
encourages the community to trust God and to hope in God. In the second example, from the same FGD, humility was the key: ‘The community has development problems beyond the understanding or capacity of the worker. The worker then calls a meeting with the community. The worker does their very best to try and resolve as much as possible together with the community. The worker will then “commit the rest to the Lord in prayer.” This illustrates to the community that the worker trusts God with difficulties and uncertainties. This encourages the community to do the same, and this builds hope.

In Tanzania, however, hope was of the ‘stoic endurance’ variety. It was stated that ‘last year we cultivated our lands but the rains did not fall and we did not get enough harvests. But we are planting again this year having faith in God that He will bring enough rain and a good harvest will be realised.’

8.1.4.1 Preliminary analysis

Hope is critical for development to succeed. There is a correlation between World Vision’s commitment to living out kingdom values and the inculcation of hope. Exactly how this happened varied according to the context. Several different connections were noted.

In some contexts, the example of lived Christian values enabled the community to break through fatalism or cynicism and engage with development work. This included one Muslim context where fatalistic views about the will of God were common. For other communities, both Christian and Muslim, the overarching religious narrative of World Vision’s work seemed to help inculcate a kind of stoic endurance. In ex-communist settings, kingdom values played a central role in the moral (re)formation of communities. In East Africa, the modelling of thankfulness and trust by World Vision staff was instructive for the broader community.

While the ways in which hope is formed may differ, the necessity for hope is hard to gainsay. Almost anything can be endured when there is hope. The evidence showed that World Vision’s commitment to living for the kingdom and the broader narrative of its work provided an incubator for hope.

53 FGD with Robero ADP staff, Rwanda.
54 Ibid.
55 FGD with Pastors’ Committee, Magole ADP, Tanzania.
8.2 Standing against evil

Living for the kingdom has its corollary in standing against evil, as anything that dehumanises and diminishes the fullness of life must be opposed. It has been observed that ‘The modern idea of development may be seen … as the secular translation of a millenarian belief, once general in Europe, concerning the construction of a perfect world. Inherent in this thinking are an aspiration to eliminate evil in all its forms from the earth …' When it comes to influencing public policy and claiming human rights, this process has been framed in the development lexicon as advocacy. For World Vision, it also retains more direct spiritual conceptions.

8.2.1 Topic code D1: Overcoming systemic injustice

This topic code was based on data showing World Vision’s activism against specific forms of injustice. In one sense, the raison d’être of World Vision is to overcome the evil of poverty. However, the connecting proposition here is somewhat narrower, grouping data that illustrates World Vision’s stance against systemic injustice. This was a minor well-distributed theme (Figure 8.5).

The typical way World Vision would stand against injustices was through localised and targeted advocacy. One area of advocacy was the rights of the disabled. In Albania, it was reported that World Vision facilitated action at the local government level to obtain infrastructure improvements for people with disabilities. In particular, greater physical access was sought for disabled children to public institutions. Churches were enlisted to agitate for change, together with other sympathetic organisations, and an influential report was written. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the focus was on justice for an ethnic minority: ‘It is important to work with other communities in order that people

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56 Haar & Ellis, pp. 354–355.
57 ADP Manager 1, Albania.
change their minds and accept Roma people as equal. Already we have some result, people started changing their behaviour and that is great impact.58

A more common theme was advocating for the rights of children. In Tanzania, this understanding was often theologically framed, from within both Christianity and Islam. In one instance, a Children’s Committee had been set up. This, of itself, was an example of the promotion of the rights of a vulnerable group. Specifically, the FGD with the Children’s Committee from the Kisongo Makuyuni ADP revealed how faith and rights were intertwined:

- One child stated: ‘we are children and have rights, desires, wishes and opportunity to worship God and please God as human beings.’
- A second girl shared the way the story of Esther in the Bible was used to claim rights to education and protection from female genital mutilation (FGM) and early marriage.
- One Muslim boy ‘shared a story from the Quran which encouraged other children to pursue education no matter what the cost …’

In Senegal, data pointed to World Vision’s facilitation of practical advocacy. This was especially evident in those issues relevant to youth and children’s clubs. The foundation for that advocacy was an appeal to the principles of either the Christian or Islamic faiths. Issues confronted in this way included children being taken out of school early, under-age girls being married off to older men, sons working the fields instead of pursuing an education and the dangers of mistreatment of children by marabouts.59

8.2.1.1 Preliminary analysis

Increasingly, the World Vision Partnership sees itself standing within the prophetic tradition, naming and challenging systemic injustices evident in local contexts. The data showed evidence of World Vision taking action on a range of issues, but most especially children’s rights. This was appropriate for a child-focused organisation. There was also evidence of World Vision facilitating structures so that children’s voices could be heard. In Africa, it was more common for advocacy messages to be framed as an appeal based on religious principles.

Churches were usually enlisted to support advocacy efforts. As will be highlighted elsewhere, however, this was unfamiliar territory for some churches. The dominant paradigm of many churches was to think in terms of compassion and charity rather than justice. This

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58 KII with an ADP Team Leader.
59 Goode 2011b, p. 19. Marabouts are Koranic teachers who sometimes exploit their pupils by treating them very harshly or forcing them into street begging to raise funds.
opens up a significant opportunity for World Vision to challenge traditional thinking and act as a broker in collaborations to bring about change.

8.2.2 Topic code D2: Responding to the demonic/occult

Evil was sometimes recognised in cultural practices, particularly those associated with the demonic or occult. The data suggested a connection between World Vision’s development work and resistance to dehumanising practices associated with this kind of phenomena. This was a regionally distributed minor theme (Figure 8.6). In some respects, it was difficult to distinguish this topic code from the animistic influences and practices considered in the next code.

These kinds of cultural practices are largely unfamiliar to many Western audiences, except perhaps through sensationalised or fictionalised accounts in the media or as the subject of lurid entertainment. The kinds of practices referred to were referenced in the evaluation report for Tanzania. These included references to child sacrifice, mutilation carried out by shamans, child killing, beliefs about people with HIV or AIDS being ‘bewitched’, demonic possession, mutilation and ‘cuttings’.60

One thing that children fear is ‘Traditional sacrifices where parents take children to traditional healers for some cuts in their bodies’.61 The evaluation conducted in Tanzania revealed that in the past, ‘there were many instances of people killing others due to superstitious belief especially in Mwanyangula village.’62 There was also a reference to the killing of elderly women suspected of witchcraft in Mbongwe village.63

There were two direct references to exorcism/deliverance involving World Vision. When a pupil was believed to be possessed by evil spirits, government officials called on a World Vision staff member to ‘rebuke’ those evil spirits because he was assumed to have the

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60 Goode 2010b, p. 19, with reference to demonic possession, p. 33.
61 FGD with registered children at Makuyuni Primary School.
62 KII with a Pentecostal pastor from Nyasa area, Tanzania.
63 FGD Pastors’ Committee, Nyasa ADP, Tanzania.
requisite skills. A second case was referenced in Rwanda. There an ADP Manager stated: ‘This woman had trouble with an evil spirit. She was having nightmares about a serpent that kept coming at midnight. It was driving her mad, and she had moved house several times. I got called upon. I went to her house, prayed for her, and she was totally healed.’

It is difficult to know how to respond to these accounts. It appears that World Vision staff attribute some phenomena, in least in part, to the direct influence of evil: ‘to kill one Tutsi child in a church with a machete because of government intimidation and encouragement was certainly an act of evil. But to then go on and slaughter a whole roomful of 40 children – with the blood and screaming and physical effort that would involve – can only be described as demonic.’ It is precisely at this juncture that any rational analysis is strained.

### 8.2.2.1 Preliminary analysis

This topic does involve the empirical, in terms of a straight reporting of what was said and claimed. However, it moves beyond the empirical because it implies activity and behaviours that are beyond rational analysis. A spiritual worldview necessarily recognises a broader range of influences. All the world’s major religions explicitly claim this. The data from Tanzania claimed that some behaviours and phenomena are attributable to a malign spiritual influence. World Vision responded to this in terms of its own spiritual frame of reference.

### 8.2.3 Topic code D3: Challenging harmful animistic practices

This closely related topic code was based on data about World Vision’s attitude to specific animistic practices. The connecting proposition is that World Vision’s view of development seeks to overcome animistic or mystical practices that it regards as harmful to personal and community wellbeing. This was a well-supported regionally distributed link (Figure 8.7), which drew on data from Senegal and Tanzania.

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64 KII with Zone Manager 1, Tanzania.
65 KII with Zone Manager 2, Rwanda.
66 KII with a senior national office executive, Rwanda.
In Tanzania, the evaluation report stated that ‘[the local] People see themselves engaged in constant struggles with spirits, other humans, and supernatural and natural forces that surround them.’ It was reported that the more evangelical ethos in that country is partly related to overcoming a debilitating history of witchcraft killings, superstitions and fears. Some of the reported practices included: not drinking water from some wells to avoid being bewitched, taking children to traditional healers rather than hospitals and not building houses with iron sheeting on the roof out of fear of possession. World Vision was also said to discourage aspects of local culture, such as certain traditional dances, ‘which were contributing to adultery, rape, and the spread of HIV.’

There was extensive reference to traditional beliefs in Senegal. These included references to the presence of demons; the wearing of bracelets, charms or amulets to ward off evil spirits; enslavement to ritual practices and fetishes; the abandonment of arable land affected by a devil; use of magic healers known as ‘sanbody’; children who stated they were scared of spirits, demons and ‘mud people’; and a variety of cultic rituals and traditions.

These rituals were performed in secret and were said to ‘weigh very, very heavy in the community …’ One study cited in the evaluation report indicated that 58% of Senegalese believe ‘sacrifices to spirits or ancestors can protect them from bad things happening.’ The influence of these practices and beliefs was reported to be oppressive. In Tattaguine it was described this way: ‘These people worry “If I leave the spirits, they will kill me”.’

The data showed that World Vision discouraged animistic practices by actively cooperating with Muslim leaders and institutions. It was stated that ‘the issue is not Christian vs. Muslim, it is overcoming animism and syncretism.’ As one imam put it, ‘most people in Senegal are Muslims or Christian, it doesn’t matter which one as long as they have faith.’ This meant mainstream religion, not traditional beliefs. The real problem was described as overcoming fear at the community level. In terms of specific development challenges, ‘Lack

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67 Goode 2010b, p. 32.
68 KII with ADP Manager 2, Tanzania.
69 FGD ADP staff Nyasa ADP, Tanzania.
70 FGD with Registered Children’s Parents, Nyasa ADP, Tanzania.
71 FGD Pastors’ Committee, Nyasa ADP, Tanzania.
72 KII with a Pastoral Carer, Senegal.
73 Ibid., and a KII with an evangelist from SIM, Senegal.
74 KII with a pastor from Kaffrine, Senegal.
75 KII with a senior DME Advisor, Senegal (a Muslim). This illustrates the kind of very direct connection that can exist between animistic beliefs and agricultural production.
76 FGD with religious leaders, Tattaguine ADP, Senegal.
77 Goode 2011b, p. 11.
78 FGD with religious leaders, Tattaguine ADP, Senegal.
79 KII with a senior operations manager, Senegal.
of food, rights, justice and health are seen as a direct result of evil and spirits – the root cause of all poverty in their worldview.\textsuperscript{80}

\subsection*{8.2.3.1 Preliminary analysis}

World Vision’s approach to development does not view local culture uncritically and it will stand against those aspects that it regards as harmful to the developing community. It will share a common ground with human-rights approaches in relation to a range of matters such as FGM, gender inequality and child protection. However, World Vision’s approach to development goes further by objecting to a range of religious and cultural practices considered to debilitate communities through fear and superstition. While World Vision upholds freedom of religion, it actively discourages certain animistic practices and will form community coalitions against them. In its view, this approach helps people experience fullness of life.

The data indicated the impossibility of segregating faith and belief from daily development challenges. It was clear that people in Senegal do not separate physical, economic or social issues from the spiritual side of life. Their worldview is a highly integrated one. This poses a methodological problem for development organisations that have a secular, modern worldview as their basis of operation. Such organisations may be unable to grapple with community development in a more holistic and integrated way, addressing the linkages between all aspects of wellbeing.

The data was highly consistent with the description of African Traditional Religion (ATR) described by Alolo and Connell in their largely sympathetic account.\textsuperscript{81} This current research has adopted the terminology of ‘animism’ because it was the term used in World Vision reports on this subject. It is acknowledged that the term ‘animism’ may be problematic for some readers because it has negative or pejorative connotations.\textsuperscript{82} A preferable term may be ATR. However, it is contested in the literature whether such a thing as ATR exists.\textsuperscript{83} While some say ATR covers multiple religions, others say they are all just variants on the same basic theme.\textsuperscript{84} A glaring deficiency is that there is scarcely any empirical research looking at

\begin{footnotes}
\item Goode 2011b, p. 27.
\item Ibid., p. 142.
\item Ibid., p. 145.
\item Ibid., p. 146.
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the role of ATR (or its variants) in development, especially as there are up to 100 million adherents in Africa.\textsuperscript{85}

It is likely that the strong prejudice against ATR is based on colonial, missionary and anthropological reports from the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries. This prejudice has led to dismissive attitudes and marginalisation.\textsuperscript{86} In contrast, Alolo and Connell’s fundamental point is that ATR is notable precisely because of its ordinariness as a religion rather than its bizarre or lurid aspects. It is claimed ATR performs a legitimate and proper function in the ordering of society.

However, it is not denied that ATR can be associated with witchcraft, sacrifice and muti killings, although media reports may be exaggerated because they play to public prejudices.\textsuperscript{87} Alolo and Connell are very open in pointing out that the use of development buzzwords like inclusion and indigenous rights ‘tends to suspend the often contentious meanings and problematic consequences of such actions.’\textsuperscript{88} It is clear that ATR does emphasise ancestors and spirits of the departed as exerting influencing the present world, and arcane rituals are involved to invoke these forces for good or evil.

It is stressed here that the term ‘evil’ is not being applied to another belief system as a whole. World Vision stands against dehumanising cultural practices, as these are inconsistent with its kingdom values and its expansive vision of human freedom and wholeness. I do not claim as a researcher, and nor has World Vision claimed, that every aspect of ATR is dehumanising. Rather, World Vision is opposed to certain debilitating practices closely associated with ATR, and it is these practices that have been specifically referenced in the data.

As has been pointed out, ATR is ordinary in the sense that it seeks to explain daily life by reference to an invisible spirit world with transcendent influences. In that sense it is similar to many other religions.\textsuperscript{89} It may also be the victim of theological bias. Christian conceptions of God look to God’s unchanging character and revelation as a stable source of morals and ethics. ‘God’, as conceived in ATR, is often disinterested in the mortal world and may even be seen as hostile to it. Spirits and ancestors, especially the more recently departed ‘living dead’, are the adjudicators of ethical, legal and moral problems. In this unwritten, less-

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., p. 138.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., pp. 142–145.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., p. 151.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p. 141.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., p. 161.
structured and localised belief system, this dispersal of responsibility has led to understandings of ATR as anarchic or amoral.  

8.3 Conclusion

World Vision brings kingdom values to its development work framed as part of a broader faith narrative. The data supported World Vision staff embodying these values within an ongoing pattern of personal interaction. This approach prevented its values from being a meaningless abstraction. There are strong emphases on building respectful interfaith relationships and standing against corruption as part of living for God’s kingdom. An especially important theme developmentally was building hope within communities. This was achieved through a variety of means appropriate for each context.

Resisting evil is the direct corollary of seeking the reign of God. For World Vision, this involves systematic advocacy against local injustices. These efforts were framed as an appeal to the Christian or Muslim faith in African settings, which involved church collaborations in most places. Naming and challenging the demonic was also a part of World Vision’s ministry, moving it beyond the rational. World Vision also aligned itself firmly against animistic practices where they were seen as presenting risks to personal and community wellbeing. This placed it firmly at odds with the cultural relativism incipient in some post-modern development theories. Those defending ATR noted that the terms *inclusion* and *indigenous rights* could be problematic in terms of what they might actually mean.  

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90 Ibid., pp. 149, 152–53.
91 Alola & Connell, p. 141.
9. Data and Preliminary Analysis: Foundational Motifs

Two important theological motifs of World Vision are its organisational commitment to prayer and the high value it places on the use of scripture. These features are axiomatic for an organisation that seeks to follow Jesus. Earlier topic codes, especially those relating to the work of World Vision staff as a ministry, stressed the importance of prayer and scripture in devotional life. The present inquiry, however, examines how these foundational motifs are specifically reflected in the field work of World Vision. A variety of connections were supported by the data, some of which were unexpected. The first such connection was the role of public prayer in the social validation of community development projects.

9.1 Prayer and scripture

9.1.1 Topic code G1: The role of public prayer in validating community development work

This topic code assembled data from the African settings which showed that public prayer has a vital role in providing ‘legitimacy’ for development projects in many communities. Quite apart from their transcendent value, such prayers provided important social validation for World Vision’s work. They also modelled organisational trust in God to the local community.

Typically, World Vision staff and community representatives would pray for the success of a project at its launch. They would also commence and close public meetings about development projects with prayers. The community would participate in these prayers and usually add their own. At critical junctures in the life of a project, both World Vision staff and the community would come together and pray. There were also multiple references to World Vision starting activities such as meetings and seminars with prayer. This was understood by the community as a marker of an organisation that took God seriously, earning greater acceptance for its work.

This was the strongest regionally distributed connection, with 17 links (Figure 9.1). This data suggested that in Africa, there can be an expectation of public prayer in communities which is linked to the acceptance of an organisation’s work. Importantly, prayer is seen as a way of merging and interconnecting the physical and spiritual dimensions of community
This is very much part of the African psyche, which does not attempt to privatise faith and separate it from activities which take place within a community or social setting. Against this background, the expectation of public prayer is explicable.

This expectation, however, may embarrass some development organisations. Modernity holds that the expression of faith should remain a private and personal matter. The evaluation report for Rwanda observed that when a representative of a secular agency would initiate a project without public prayer, this engendered a degree of community suspicion. In contrast, World Vision was seen to be different from many NGOs because it started its work with prayer. An ADP manager explained in detail how this benefited World Vision: ‘When a Development Officer goes into the community with the intention of talking about a potential new project, and starts the meeting with public prayer about the project, this gains immediate respect. You get instant credibility. It shows you’re serious. The community is serious about God, and if you pray to God about the project, it shows you and your organisation are serious about God too. You will be respected and listened to. They will say to themselves: “This person is one of ours”.’

Similar data was reported in Tanzania. In Senegal, which is a predominantly Muslim context, the same expectation of public prayer was present. The data suggested that prayer had a symbolic role, showing the local community that the organisation respected God and was committed in its faith. Not only were public meetings started with prayer, but also meetings with the technical service branch of government.

9.1.1.1 Preliminary analysis

The implications of this connection are serious. Effective development requires the ability to engage meaningfully with the local community. Many communities in Africa openly and

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1 Goode 2011a, p. 19.
2 Ibid., p. 18.
3 KII with ADP Manager 4, Rwanda.
4 KII with ADP Manager 2, Rwanda.
5 KII with a Base Manager in Senegal.
publicly express their faith in God and may expect others to join in their expressions of piety. The vast majority of people living in the majority world have a theistic worldview. In Africa this percentage is even higher. It is unsurprising that some communities will want to commit their development projects to God and that public prayer is the cultural means by which this happens.

Some development organisations will not be able to authentically satisfy an important community expectation about their work. Their ethos may downplay or discredit the role of faith in public life, and this may create barriers to trust or engagement. It is noted that it is possible that in some types of religious contexts, not raised by the data, World Vision may be unable to participate in religious activities that it regards as problematic.

9.1.2 Topic code G2: Prayer in building deeper community relationships

This topic code grouped data about the practice of World Vision staff praying with community members about their personal needs. The connecting proposition is that World Vision helps achieve its development aims by building closer links with communities through shared personal prayer. This establishes a deeper level of trust with members of the community. This was a minor regionally distributed theme (Figure 9.2).

Persons seeking prayer open up their personal lives, exposing their needs and vulnerabilities. For World Vision staff to pray with community members, often in their homes, implies a high level of trust and respect. Prayer of this kind deepens personal relationships. World Vision staff in Rwanda explained it this way: ‘we have [the] opportunity … to pray in our work and as we do so the community welcomes us more – they see that we have the same values and so they trust us more.’ It was asserted that this kind of prayer unites staff with beneficiaries. It ‘makes us feel we are one, brothers and sisters. We carry each other’s burdens.’

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6 FGD with ADP Buliza Staff.
7 KII with ADP Manager 3, Rwanda.
The locations for this kind of prayer were varied. There were several reports of praying for children at ADP offices. Sick children would be brought to receive prayer from World Vision staff. More significant, however, were prayers that took place within private homes. The data showed that in Muslim communities, too, World Vision staff would often pray with sick people at their home by invitation. The data indicated that Christian prayers were seen as powerful and efficacious. Invitations to pray with Muslims at home were also co-related to the perceived devoutness of World Vision staff.

9.1.2.1 Preliminary analysis

Effective development requires the trust and respect of communities at a deep level. Prayer with community members in theistic societies can be a way to build this kind of trust. Religious faith is the primary worldview for most people living in developing communities. To be asked to pray with a member of the community is a significant step in building deeper relationships. In some communities, there is an expectation of doing so.

The data showed a willingness of Muslim community members to seek private prayer with World Vision staff. This suggests that for some community members, an overarching faith in God was more important than a particular Christian or Muslim affiliation. Sometimes this kind of prayer would take place behind closed doors.

This data did raise important questions for organisations that do not operate from a faith basis. In Rwanda, which was an overtly Christian context, it was explained that ‘Families in need will always ask you to pray with them. If you don’t, or hesitate, that would bring a big doubt. The family will think “If this person is not committed to God, they can’t be committed to us”.’ Organisations that are not able to respond to prayer requests in these environments will be at a disadvantage. For example, those agencies which see a diminished role for religion in development, or see the expression of faith as a purely personal or private affair, may face community hesitancy or suspicion. Conversely, a willingness to engage in private prayer may unlock community goodwill towards the organisation and its staff.

The demand for private prayer by communities seemed to be an African phenomenon. These communities were more overtly and publicly expressive about their faith. By contrast, the public expression of faith in ex-communist settings was more restrained, and in orthodox

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8 For example, interviews from Mswaki ADP, Tanzania.
9 KII with a CC Co-ordinator, Kaffrine, Senegal. This observation was also supported by the comments of the CC Manager in Senegal.
10 KII with ADP Manager 2, Rwanda.
settings prayer was frequently understood as involving clergy in more traditional liturgical settings. This may help explain the absence of comparable data from these places.

9.1.3 Topic code G3: Prayer and discernment in operational life

This topic code was based on data showing the importance of prayer and discernment in organisational life. In particular, the data showed that in some places World Vision’s development model involves sensitising itself to community needs through prayer and discernment. This is consistent with the view that World Vision sees God as the ultimate change agent in the world and development work as a process of aligning with his purposes.

This regionally distributed minor theme (Figure 9.3) drew on data from Africa.

The evidence showed that prayerful discernment was undertaken for different reasons. Good stewardship was one of the reasons offered. Prayerful choices were considered necessary so ‘that God blesses the limited resources so that they will have maximum effect.’ A related reason was prioritisation in needs. It was asserted that ‘Without prayer you cannot solve problems, we would be overwhelmed by the poverty. We need prayer to prioritise what to do.’ In one case, a programmatic failure was attributed not to lack of experience but to a lack of prayerful discernment. It was reported that the necessary discernment sometimes took place within the context of spiritual nurture activities when ‘we can thank Him and find out what to do.’

9.1.3.1 Preliminary analysis

While these examples from Africa were clear, there was no evidence reported from other regions regarding the active role of prayer and discernment in programmatic decision-making. It may be that there is a perceived tension between more systematic corporate processes, such as professional design methodologies, and having recourse to apparently more uncertain practices such as prayer. There is a tension here that has not been adequately

11 FGD with ADP Buliza staff, Rwanda.
12 KII with Zone Manager 2, Rwanda.
13 FGD with ADP staff, Tattaguine, Senegal.
resolved. Well thought-out design tools and evidence-based methodologies are seen by World Vision staff as a gift which can be used in God’s service, yet it remains unclear how prayerful discernment informs or refines decision-making processes. A potentially valuable kind of prayerful reflection is that which seeks to gain the benefit of the community’s own discernment about its development needs and possibilities. There were general comments supporting this broader kind of engagement in several locations.

It appears that World Vision remains committed to fostering an active role for prayerful discernment in its decision-making and has made this a strategic priority. It is suggested that reflective practice is essential both to organisational learning and effective development. For a Christian development organisation like World Vision, ongoing prayerful discernment lies at the heart of building a reflective culture. This should speak to its identity and praxis. Taken as a whole, the data suggests that World Vision has a long way to go in achieving its stated objective.

9.1.4 Topic code G4: Prayer and the locus of spiritual power

Another way that World vision uses public prayer in its work is in its efforts to overcome animistic practices perceived as damaging to people’s wellbeing. The data with this minor regionally distributed theme (Figure 9.4) was confined to Senegal and Tanzania, where such influences were present. The connecting proposition is that World Vision uses prayer to identify God as the source of its authority, which has a particular significance in seeking to overcome animistic practices.

A feature of animism is

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14 The kinds of practices included referring sick people to ‘sanbody’ or traditional healers for illnesses needing serious medical attention, ‘cuttings’, fetishes, oppressive cultic practices (the belief that ‘If I leave the spirits, they will kill me’) (FGD with Religious Leaders, Tattaguine ADP, Senegal), refusing to drink from certain wells, not building houses with iron roofs (for fear of spirit possession), not farming arable land (so as not to offend spirits), and stigmatising vulnerable groups. Lesser concerns were the wearing of charms or the participation in rituals to ward off evil spirits.
the belief that spirits inhabit the natural world in a very pervasive way.\textsuperscript{15} Plants, animals and even inanimate objects are believed to have a soul or spiritual essence. The spirit world is understood to have a direct impact on the daily life of humans. Most commonly, these spirits comprise the spirits of ancestors, including the ‘living dead’, being more recently departed relatives.\textsuperscript{16} Spirits can be offended and may be invoked through ritual to exercise influence over human affairs. For the animist, life can be a complex negotiation of competing spiritual influences. Malign spiritual influence may be seen as the explanation for misfortune, and arcane or esoteric practices are required to appease or deflect their influence.

The significance of public prayer by World Vision staff is to indicate its own source of power. In Senegal, ‘the action of a World Vision staff member who prays before anything he or she does says much more than “I am a good Christian or Muslim” – it actually says “this is where I get my strength or power from (that is, dependence on God).”’\textsuperscript{17} The locus of power is of central importance to the animist. World Vision may be seen as a powerful, impactful organisation, and prayer is used to identify the source of its spiritual power. The evaluation report for Senegal stated that ‘To misunderstand the importance of “power” to the animist, and of “prayer” in addressing power issues, is to misunderstand what is really needed in such highly syncretistic contexts.’\textsuperscript{18}

Prayer is also used in private contexts. World Vision staff ‘will pray with people in their homes, will educate about causes of illness and will ask people to remove voodoo fetishes from their homes which link the family with traditional healers.’\textsuperscript{19} The object is to enlighten communities about the real causes of illness and other presenting issues. This is achieved by presenting a coalition of science and potent monotheism.

\textbf{9.1.4.1 Preliminary analysis}

Development is about promoting the sustained wellbeing of communities. Religious viewpoints and ideologies may have detrimental impacts.\textsuperscript{20} In the present case, animism may cause communities to not seek proper medical attention and to engage in self-harm, misapply

\textsuperscript{15} The term ‘animism’ has been used as per the WV evaluation reports, noting that some commentators prefer the term African Traditional Religion which may have fewer pejorative connotations.
\textsuperscript{16} See Alolo & Connell, p. 149. ‘The spirits of the living dead are regarded as ever-living, ever-watchful beings that possess the power to both help and harm their living relatives.’
\textsuperscript{17} Goode 2011b, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{19} KII with ADP Manager 3, Tanzania.
\textsuperscript{20} The history of the Christian church reveals a litany of detrimental impacts: sectarian purges, inquisitions, witch-trials, persecutions, violent territorial conquests, and myriad abuses of power.
scarce resources, abandon arable land and stigmatise vulnerable people such as widows. World Vision rejects cultural relativism and opposes practices that it sees as harmful.

Prayer is of central importance in indicating World Vision’s source of spiritual power. This matters to the animist, who may see life as a contest of competing spiritual forces. It is equally important for World Vision to demonstrate its faithfulness to God. Therefore, public prayer identifies God as its source of ultimate hope; constant deferral to God in prayer indicates that technology and material assets are gifts to be used within a relationship of service to God and are not a substitute for it.

9.1.5 Topic code G5: Use of scripturally based programmatic resources

This topic code grouped data showing that World Vision uses scripturally based programmatic tools to pursue its vision of development. The private use of the Bible for personal formation and devotional purposes has already been considered. The focus with this topic code was the public or applied use of biblically based programmatic tools. This connection was well distributed and supported (Figure 9.5).

Two flagship tools developed by World Vision’s CC department are called Channels of Hope (CoH) and Youth Bible Curricula (YBC). These received frequent attention in the data. CoH is a three-day teaching program directed specifically at religious leaders. The premise of the program is that religious leaders have a significant influence on developing communities and can shape opinions concerning people with HIV and AIDS. A biblically based teaching program has been formulated to challenge the stigmatisation and marginalisation of people affected by HIV and AIDS. It relies on a ‘train the trainer’ methodology, with those who have been trained enlisted afterwards. A version of CoH has been developed for use by Muslim leaders. World Vision did not develop the Koranic teaching element component of the program – this component is delivered separately by Muslim religious leaders.

The same methodology has been used as the basis of a separate program called Channels of Hope for Gender (CoHG). This training course also targets religious leaders to challenge
their thinking about gender equity and the specific issue of domestic violence against women. Underpinning the program are biblical and theological arguments about the role of women that provide a basis to critique traditional paradigms and cultural practices.

The anecdotal evidence arising from the reports was that these programs have been highly successful. For example, World Vision initiated CoH cooperation with the Armenian Apostolic Church in 2002 and began with training its seminary students. This has had a long-term impact. Some of those students are now accredited trainers in CoH as well as being priests.\(^{21}\) One priest explained the effect this way: ‘People start to recognize [people with HIV and AIDS] in the community and to help them. Previously, the HIV infected never came to church, but now they do come for spiritual nurture and their needs. They now trust the church. For me I didn’t know what it meant to be HIV/AIDS, but now I understand much better (including way of transmission etc). When understanding came, trust started to appear. AIDS people invited us into their homes.’\(^{22}\)

An example of the impact of CoHG was provided by a Lutheran leader: ‘In my culture we do not take women seriously, neither do we consider their advice … I have been convicted to give space to my wife to make a contribution in matters that are important to us. I have been challenged to love and accept my wife as she is.’\(^{23}\) The data indicated that CoHG has become a well-regarded program. It was referred to positively at a meeting of church leaders in Kigali, and comments affirming this program were made by inter-church committees at ADP level.

The YBC is a topical Bible-study program directed at adolescents in Orthodox countries. It explores contemporary issues from a biblical perspective, with strong practical application. This program has received strong endorsement within several Orthodox communions. The objective is to engage youth to take their faith seriously as a source of moral and ethical formation. The curriculum is linked to social and developmental challenges. Most orthodox communions do not have a strong tradition of thematic small group Bible study, and the program is innovative in this sense.

The anecdotal evidence from the reports was that YBC was having an impact. The program brought people in touch with their cultural heritage and provided a developmental focus by extrapolating social consequences.\(^{24}\) In Bosnia and Herzegovina, children in the community reported that ‘Our feelings towards other people have changed. We are more

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\(^{21}\) Newmarch 2010, p. 21.
\(^{22}\) KII with Apostolic priest 3, Armenia.
\(^{23}\) Senior Church Leader, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania.
\(^{24}\) Newmarch & Goode, pp. 19–20.
patient, kind and have more faith. We could read how people behave in different situations, so we are trying to be the same.’25 A senior church leader confirmed that ‘In regard to the YBC, this has been very good. It goes beyond the knowledge and to practical application. It is teaching the children to think of others outside their faith community and what they need to be doing for them. Like the Good Samaritan.’26

This program is also used in Armenia and Georgia, including with street children where it was reported to have had a strong impact. The essence of its success was claimed to be the restitution and growth of spiritual values.27

One final inquiry was whether the dataset furnished any evidence of the direct use of scripture in developmental ways. There was a single reference to this from Rwanda. There, an ADP Manager reported: ‘I will take my Bible to meetings with families or communities. I will point out to a person a Scripture that is relevant to the presenting development issue. I will sit down and say: “Read this passage”. For example, if the issue is caring for HIV/AIDS sufferers, I might show a passage to do with Jesus’ compassion for the disabled, or the powerless, or women or lepers or whatever. I would ask, ‘What do you think we should do?’”28 This type of direct approach implies an existing consensus within the community about the authority of the Bible.

9.1.5.1 Preliminary analysis

The data showed that scripturally based resources were used programmatically in two main ways. The first was to leverage the authority of scripture with Christian leaders. This occurred by presenting training programs dealing with important development themes. These programs were able to challenge traditional views by resorting to alternative biblical and theological understandings.

The second method focussed on values formation within Orthodox contexts. This targeted younger people by addressing topical material from a biblical framework. Importantly, this approach also sought to work in conjunction with churches and church leaders. In one overtly Christian African context, there was evidence of the direct use of scripture by World Vision staff in developmental ways.

The underlying issue raised by this topic code is the source of authority within communities. For some communities, that authority is based on scripture as mediated through

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25 FGD with children Sokolac Community, Krivaja ADP, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
26 KII with an Archdeacon from the Orthodox Church, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
27 KII with Apostolic priest 2, Armenia.
28 KII with ADP Manager 2, Rwanda.
trusted religious leaders. For Muslim communities, that authority is based on the Koran as interpreted by imams. Appeals within strongly religious communities for behavioural change based on other sources of authority may be less compelling.

9.1.6 Topic code G6: Support for developmentally focussed Christian publishing

This topic code picked up data about World Vision’s activity in publishing faith-based material to support its development work. This was a minor regionally distributed theme (Figure 9.6). It will be noted from references cited in earlier chapters that World Vision has supported the publication of the works of development practitioners consistent with its Christian faith-based ethos. Bryant Myers’ *Walking with the poor* and Jayakumar Christian’s *God of the empty-handed* are two significant books constantly referred to by World Vision development staff.

In the course of reviewing the reports from Eurasia, two examples were found of World Vision seeking to publish materials to explain or promote its view of development. In Armenia, this kind of publishing was done in collaboration with the Armenian Bible Society. The kinds of topics addressed included literacy, ethics, heritage and culture. This raises interesting questions about the fusion of developmental goals with the promotion of religious viewpoints. For World Vision, this seemed an entirely natural path to follow.

In Georgia, a particularly innovative project was spoken about. There a program manager stated: ‘We have discussed producing a booklet with the church using the Bible and saint’s lives to show that the disabled are real people and not suffering due to sin or shame. The booklets will be given to churches to be used in teaching and discussion.’29 An initiative of this kind – publishing a book drawing on the lives of saints – reveals that World Vision has moved well beyond its reformed and evangelical heritage.

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29 KII with a Program Manager, Georgia.
9.1.6.1 Preliminary analysis

The desire to publish biblically based materials that are useful in promoting or pursuing development is consistent with World Vision’s view that its ministry rests in a foundational way on Christian scripture. It is also consistent with its self-understanding of its work as standing in continuity with the mission of the church.

The underlying issue is the source of World Vision’s identity and authority. While World Vision is a development organisation operating within a largely secularised profession, its core identity coheres around the foundations of Christian faith. The Christian scriptures are accorded a special status as a repository of truth, and its decision to publish biblically based materials on development issues reflects this emphasis. This does not imply that World Vision is anti-intellectual or sceptical about secular-based development research. What it does show is that World Vision also seeks to use its own sacred sources as it seeks to understand and pursue its development agenda.

9.2 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated that prayer, in addition to its private devotional value, has a public and symbolic role in World Vision’s development work. These aspects are very significant in World Vision’s work and represent a value that is additional to any transcendent value. The symbolic role of prayer had a special resonance in Africa, with almost all examples coming from this region. This result may reflect cultures that are more openly expressive of faith in daily life. The inability to meet expectations about public prayer was identified as a potential drawback for some organisations.

Some important programmatic tools were directly based on scripture, and World Vision also facilitated the publication of biblically based materials on development themes. These reflected World Vision’s understanding of the foundational authority of scripture. The programmatic initiatives had strong resonance in some communities and were used strategically by World Vision in its engagement with churches and church leaders.

This conveniently introduces the final motif, World Vision’s special relationship with the church.
10. Data and Preliminary Analysis: Ecclesial Motifs

The final theological motif considered is World Vision’s special relationship with the church. World Vision’s policy documents show that it sees itself as a partnership of Christians whose ministry stands in continuity with the church’s mission to the poor. An aspect of this ministry is to remind the church about Jesus’ affinity with the poor and disenfranchised. Scripture teaches that Christ’s identification with the poor is so close and strong that to serve the poor is to serve him.\(^1\)

Working with churches may mean many different things. It may involve speaking prophetically into the life of the church. It may mean leveraging its institutional structures, authoritative voice and geographic reach. It may mean enlisting its members as agents of change. It can mean building up its collective developmental understandings, motivating and inspiring, and influencing its theological positions. It may also mean working together as project partners, co-creating within communities, nurturing staff, enhancing devotional life and receiving critique and challenge. This motif sourced more data than any other theme.

In addition, as will be highlighted in the next chapter, working with churches has many attendant risks. For World Vision, however, its relationship with the church is primarily a matter of identity. It sees itself as part of the church family. This is part of the reason why its work is framed as a ministry and not merely a community service or humanitarian effort.

10.1 Special relationship with the church

10.1.1 Topic code H1: Leveraging organisational influence

This topic code focuses on leveraging the organisational influence of the church. This is a broad theme with a number of sub-elements. The way this influence was leveraged differed according to geography and the nature of the local church within each setting. This fully distributed connection had 38 supporting data references, making it the strongest connection in the analysis (Figure 10.1).

\(^1\) Mt 25:40.
The data showed that each World Vision office had personnel with dedicated responsibility for CC work, which included the specific task of establishing and strengthening relationships with Christian churches. Some personnel involved in this work were described as being of the highest calibre, and they represented a strategic risk to national offices because their connections were so strong and deep. The competency, networking ability and hard work of church relationship personnel attracted high praise in several evaluations. For example, ‘WV Armenia has a good relationship with churches. The key to this relationship has been as much a personal investment as an institutional one. The manager … has worked extremely effectively to find key players in the church structures and to promote WV as a reliable and strategic partner.’

In Eurasia, the work of CC personnel in building church relationships is remarkable when set against the evangelical heritage of World Vision. In strongly orthodox countries like Armenia and Georgia, evangelical churches are regarded as a ‘sect’. Therefore, the very strong partnership World Vision enjoys in these countries ‘suggest their efforts to overcome their partner’s fear and misconceptions have been effective.’

A strong relationship will require contacts at different levels within church organisations. For churches with an episcopal or centralised administrative structure, relationships are needed with senior bishops and officials to enter into agreements and exercise a guiding influence. The data showed that World Vision had close relationships with the established churches in Armenia and Georgia, right up to the level of their most senior clergy. Several were willingly interviewed as part of World Vision’s evaluation process.

Effective relationships are also needed at a local level where programs are implemented. Taken as a whole, the evidence showed that there were good connections with local priests and pastors, with most ADPs having an Inter-Church Committee or a Pastors’ Committee of some description. As one example, it was reported that World Vision in Albania had

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2 Newmarch 2010, p. 22.
established relationships with many church partners: ‘They have linked to the major Christian groupings, that is, Orthodox, Catholic and evangelical groupings. Within the Orthodox and Catholic churches, more particularly at the local level, there is a good relationship with WVA and a good understanding of who we are, what we are doing and why we are doing it.’

In most cases World Vision was able to maintain an ecumenical balance in its church relationships. The exception was Lebanon, where church partnerships were mainly with ‘like-minded’ churches that tended to be more evangelical in their leaning. All offices reported good working relationships with the Roman Catholic Church. There was no evidence of reticence to engage with World Vision by any church, although some had relationships in place with other denominationally based development agencies.

One reason for wanting to engage with churches is their position of influence within civil society. Working constructively with churches provided World Vision with both the means and opportunity to further its developmental goals. In some places, this was about exercising social influence. For example, in Albania it was reported that the ‘Church has a part to play, giving hope, faith, values and good examples.’ Staff in Lebanon stressed that the ‘Church is definitely at the centre. If World Vision wants anything to happen, it will call/negotiate with the church first. Social change needs to be done through the church.’ In places like Rwanda it was noted that ‘there is no question that the church is the most pervasive, trusted and well-functioning institution in Rwandan civil society’ and that ‘It is impossible to conceive of undertaking meaningful long-term development in Rwanda without engaging with the churches.’

In other places, there was a blurring between the church as an actor within civil society and the church as civil society. In particular, the data for Armenia and Georgia suggested that it was difficult to meaningfully disentangle the church from the broader culture or society. This is partly a function of the extraordinary history of their national churches, which date back to the fourth century.

For example, the report for Georgia notes the almost total identification between the broader society and the GOC: ‘To be Georgian, you need to speak Georgian and be Georgian Orthodox.’ Similarly, in Armenia it was claimed that ‘The church is the place of national

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4 Newmarch & Goode, p. 20.
5 A senior operations manager, Albania.
6 FGD with ADP Bcharre Staff, Lebanon.
7 Goode 2011a, pp. 14, 6.
8 Goode 2010a, p. 9.
identity.' It is true that the Armenian Apostolic Church is the most pervasive religious institution in the country, with 93% affiliation. It also enjoys an ‘exclusive mission’ under the Armenian Constitution to the people of Armenia. The reality, however, is that in both Georgia and Armenia there are smaller religious minorities from other denominations and some adherents of other faiths.

The extraordinary influence of these national churches represents a unique opportunity for World Vision. The advantage was clearly explained: ‘The Church is very close to community. It is often more trusted than government. It is critical that we work with them. Very few, if any, other international NGOs work with church … Partnership with church has helped our development work because [the] church is well trusted in community. If you work with the church you are trusted as well.’

It was reported that the community is generally suspicious of outside organisations so the endorsement of the GOC is especially important. This was confirmed at the community level. It was reported that ‘World Vision is the only NGO we like because the patriarchate is involved.’

In a society with no state church but a strongly Christian culture, it was reported that it is difficult to achieve development outcomes without engaging with the churches. Rwanda was a case in point. The combined Rwandan churches minister to about five million people every Sunday. It was claimed that ‘if you want to send a message, you must pass it through these channels. … People believe a message coming from the church is coming right from God.’

The data showed that the church in other parts of East Africa, including Tanzania, is also held in very high regard by the local community.

One important aspect is the longevity of the church in terms of its continuing influence. A senior executive at World Vision explained the position succinctly: ‘The Church is an institution that has endured the test of time, but World Vision will come and go, so let’s train and get alongside the church …’ This underscores the need for the church to communicate messages which are conducive to development goals. This is discussed at topic code H4 below.

In Senegal, the data identified a more significant role for the church even though it was a minority religion in that country. Comments were made suggesting that the churches generally could adopt a more holistic and socially active role. There was a passivity that

9 A senior bishop of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Armenia.
10 KII with a senior program manager, Georgia.
11 KII with an HEA Manager, Georgia.
12 FGD with Family Club and Sunday School parents, Dimi Shool, Katuasi, Georgia.
13 KII with Zone Manager 2, Rwanda.
14 KII with a senior national office executive, Rwanda.
characterised many churches in Senegal, which tended to focus on internal pastoral concerns, rather than engaging in social programs or advocacy. Despite this, a senior executive explained that his vision for the churches is to ‘be the light and salt to their communities … for holistic ministry.’ For World Vision, this meant encouraging churches to understand their role as extending beyond evangelism or simply tending the flock to ‘reaching out and helping in communities.’

A final type of influence of World Vision on churches was indirect and came about because of the role of World Vision staff within congregations, especially in small communities. Their presence did more than swell the numbers, providing a benefit through cross-fertilisation. There were ‘Many churches of different denominations showing appreciation … for the wealth of theology and missiology they brought.’ Where World vision staff were congregants for an extended period, this could influence the thinking of the church on a range of issues.

10.1.1.1 Preliminary analysis

As a whole, the data showed that World Vision made consistent and concerted efforts to work through churches of all varieties. It has been reported that ‘faith organisations play major roles in communities and together constitute the world’s largest distribution system.’ World Vision is strategically aware of the pervasive influence of churches within some developing communities and its attempts at relationship building were generally successful. At a practical level, World Vision was able to leverage the influence of churches, while also encouraging them to think differently about their own role within society. In qualitative terms, World Vision’s relationships with churches were described as less episodic or instrumental, in contrast to those NGOs which would see the churches merely as a convenient delivery channel for their programs. World Vision’s relationships were based on ongoing friendships which saw World Vision as a steady ally. An emphasis here is that World Vision sees development as something that does not happen apart from religion, but hand-in-hand with it.

Networks of participation are required to get people involved in building their community. It has been bluntly observed that: ‘it is simply a fact that religion generates networks of

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15 KII with a senior executive, WV Senegal.
16 Ibid.
17 KII with a Roman Catholic Church leader, Kaffrine, and Goode 2011b, p. 16.
participation that are far stronger, more lasting, and more committed than secular civic organizations are capable of.\textsuperscript{19} Social capital is disproportionately important to the poor since they lack any other forms of capital, such as financial capital or human capital in the form of educational opportunities. For this reason, religious institutions have a special role to play. They can provide material support and act as an engine room for both civic and political participation, which in turn generates other forms of capital. Religious leaders are often the gatekeepers who can unlock this potential, and this introduces the next topic code.

\textbf{10.1.2 Topic code H2: Leveraging personal influence of church leaders}

In addition to forming partnerships with churches, World Vision also seeks to leverage the influence of individual church leaders. This makes sense for World Vision because these figures tend to be highly trusted within developing communities.\textsuperscript{20} This was a well-supported and well-distributed connection (Figure 10.2). The data indicated that there were at least three different aspects to the way in which World Vision’s developmental aims are furthered through religious leaders. In some cases, all three aspects were present in the same community.

The first aspect was the use of religious leaders to obtain a kind of multiplier effect. This involved training religious leaders about particular developmental issues and encouraging them to spread the key messages among their congregational networks. This enabled World Vision to access an important communication channel that would be difficult to replicate. For example, in Tanzania it was acknowledged by a World Vision manager that ‘We are carefully using faith leaders to help us do development work in the community … we involve faith leaders to help us in educating their respective believers, who are members of the households we want to target.’\textsuperscript{21} It was noted that ‘The

\begin{figure}
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\caption{Figure 10.2 Topic code H2
Well-supported, well-distributed link.}
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\textsuperscript{19} Ivereigh, A 2011, ‘Religious faith builds a civil society in a way secularism does not’, \textit{The Guardian}, 29 September.
\textsuperscript{20} There are occasionally exceptions to this, as pointed out in the next chapter when discussing the risks of dealing with the church and its leaders.
\textsuperscript{21} KII with ADP Manager 4, Tanzania.
essence of working with churches or religious leaders is making us different. Other NGOs are not using this strategy.\textsuperscript{22} The reason other organisations were not doing this was unclear.

A second aspect was using the personal endorsement of an authoritative figure to give a developmental message added credibility. The strongest examples came from East Africa. The report for Rwanda noted that ‘Pastors are often considered the “voice of God” in local contexts.’\textsuperscript{23} Specifically, it was asserted that church leaders have a stronger voice than government officials, the local mayor or secular NGOs. One ADP Manager claimed that ‘If the pastor calls a public meeting to talk about an issue, everyone will come. The community thinks pastors are “men [sic.] of God” and should therefore be listened to. On the other hand, if a local government representative or a secular NGO calls a meeting, not so many will turn up. The government recognises the power of the Church and relies on the Church to get its key messages across.’\textsuperscript{24} A similar reaction was reported in Armenia. There, the level of engagement and trust in a community HIV and AIDS project was not high. However, it was reported that ‘when we included Father Simeon as part of the training, the interest and participation increased.’\textsuperscript{25}

The manner of endorsement was not always verbal, sometimes taking the form of symbolic action.\textsuperscript{26} The first example is from an imam, but could be equally applicable to a church leader. In Senegal, an imam reported an instance where he suspected someone had died of AIDS but no one was willing to touch the body, thereby preventing the funeral from taking place. The imam, who had been trained in HIV and AIDS by World Vision, agreed to go and do the funeral. This action ‘was a big testimony and created new relationship between this Imam and the family to the dead person’\textsuperscript{27} A good example of symbolic endorsement from within Christian circles came from Georgia, where a World Vision health professional spoke about the action of ‘the Patriarch who blessed a new AIDS centre to promote condom use for AIDS sufferers, for people’s protection, even though this isn’t something [the Patriarch] would normally do.’\textsuperscript{28}

A third aspect involved training religious leaders to be more pastoral in their response to developmental issues. This was important, especially in contexts like Eurasia, where church

\textsuperscript{22} KII with a relief and grants manager, NO, WV Tanzania.
\textsuperscript{23} Goode 2011a, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{24} KII with ADP Manager 2, Rwanda.
\textsuperscript{25} FGD, Idjevan staff, Tavush ADP, Armenia.
\textsuperscript{26} Kessler & Arkush give an example of symbolic action in which a Christian bishop visited the work of Islamic Relief in Sudan and was so impressed by it that he made a personal donation. This was a powerful gesture in the Sudanese context (p. 9).
\textsuperscript{27} Goode 2011b, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{28} KII with a Public Health and HIV manager, Georgia.
leaders were an important source of information for the general public. A prevalent attitude in Georgia is ‘If I have a question, I go to the priest.’ Against this background, it is important to educate the clergy in terms of both their developmental and theological understanding. For example, the report for Georgia noted that ‘many [priests] still believe HIV/AIDS is punishment from God.’

There were consistent reports from Tanzania indicating that priests and pastors had changed their attitudes from judgment and stigmatisation of people with HIV and AIDS to a much more compassionate understanding. The data from Bosnia and Herzegovina also referenced World Vision’s important work at the ADP level in moderating the views of a Roma evangelical priest who was previously against any kind of tolerance.

10.1.2.1 Preliminary analysis

Religious beliefs are a primary frame of reference for the vast majority of people living in developing communities. Religious leaders are in a privileged position of trust within communities. They serve as teachers, custodians of tradition, pastoral carers and persons exercising important cultic responsibilities. The data showed that World Vision was aware of the influence of religious leaders and sought to actively engage them in a variety of ways. These included accessing target communities through religious leaders, seeking their explicit endorsement for programs and developmental messages, and improving their pastoral awareness and responses.

The messages of churches will at times be presented with a moralism that would be regarded as offensive or condescending in the West. Nonetheless, this tone is resonant with a large part of the world’s population, and it has been successfully deployed in bringing about social change. The data showed that World Vision was able to engage with Christian leaders as a credible friend. It was able to work with Islamic leaders, too, on the basis of shared values and a demonstrated commitment to work sensitively within their communities. Critically, over time the view of churches has changed, and sometimes softened, because of their engagement with faith-based development NGOs over the longer run. This is discussed at topic code H4.

29 KII with a Program Manager, Georgia.
30 Goode 2010a, p. 18.
31 KII with a Sponsorship/Office Administrator, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
10.1.3 Topic code H3: Reaching isolated areas

This topic code gathered data suggesting that World Vision utilises the geographical networks of churches to extend the reach of its work. This differs from previous codes, which showed that World Vision engages churches and church leaders to reach congregants within project areas. This code is concerned with additional geographic penetration by leveraging the church’s ongoing presence in remoter areas. There were only three references supporting this minor theme (Figure 10.3). This may reflect the fact that some of the countries involved in this research were relatively small (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Lebanon) or that World Vision’s own operations were well dispersed within larger geographical regions.

Nonetheless, two examples of extended geographic penetration were presented by the data. The first was from Georgia, where World Vision would train priests from remote villages. It was reported ‘We have 30 Channels of Hope field workers who will train the priests in villages, particularly those who live in the mountains as they only visit Tbilisi [the capital city] irregularly (about once every 5 years) and don’t understand new ideas.’\(^{32}\) A second example was from Tanzania. It involved World Vision supplying bicycles to members of Pastors’ Committees so that those pastors could reach further into the field with their work. It is unclear to what extent the messages delivered to the outlying communities were evangelical rather than developmental, or a blend of both.\(^{33}\)

10.1.3.1 Preliminary analysis

Churches or faith institutions can represent a rare permanent presence in remote or widely dispersed areas. The use of wider church and pastoral networks to access remote communities with developmental messages may represent a unique opportunity. One of the reasons people congregate at places of worship in these locations is for the purpose of receiving teaching. As a Christian organisation, World Vision may have an advantage in being able to identify and access these broader church networks.

\(^{32}\) KII with a Public Health and HIV manager, Georgia.

\(^{33}\) Goode 2010b, p. 15.
10.1.4 Topic code H4: Promoting developmental understandings

The data indicated that World Vision played a valuable role by encouraging the church to think critically about development issues. This helped encourage a practical and community-oriented vision of mission for the church, and in some places it helped to balance out a more pietistic or ritualistic ecclesiology. The data for this topic code was strong but only partially distributed (Figure 10.4). It appears this theme was not fully developed in the earlier reports. The strongest data came from Eurasia and East Africa.

It was noted in Armenia that World Vision played a valuable role in supporting a new generation of priests. A key initiative that World Vision encouraged was Round Table discussions to try and educate clergy about social challenges. The objective was ‘to suggest that the work of social diakonia is part of everyday work of the priest.’\(^{34}\) In Georgia, where the national church reflected an ancient traditionalism, it was noted that World Vision has a role in imparting a ‘western view for the new generation … [which] creates more free thinking.’\(^{35}\)

The reports for Rwanda and Senegal asserted that theological understandings and development themes were often mutually reinforcing, even inseparable. Qualitative material from interviews and discussions revealed the strong impact of an applied faith in bringing about change in communities, particularly in overcoming more harmful practices from the past.\(^{36}\) This introduced an important strategic focus for World Vision, namely the pursuit of its development aims by participating in theological education at various levels. This was seen as a way of shaping long-term influence.

In the report for Armenia, numerous issues were identified where World Vision could make a significant contribution through theological education. These included ‘corruption in society, unemployment, people movement e.g. men and women having to work outside the country, the role of the church in emergencies, psycho-social trauma, domestic violence,'

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\(^{34}\) KII with a WCC Round Table representative, Armenia.
\(^{35}\) KII with a Georgian Orthodox Priest, Kutaisi, Georgia.
\(^{36}\) Goode 2011b, p. 5.
conflict resolution, the role of fathers.' Priests seemed generally interested in exploring the diaconal aspects of the church’s mission, noting that ‘World Vision has skills and it is good to learn from them.’ In Tanzania, there was extensive evidence of community training involving faith leaders on a diverse range of issues such as health, HIV and AIDS and agricultural production. In Senegal, reference was made to influencing pastors while in training, but those initiatives were embryonic.

The data indicates that some World Vision offices see it as their role to teach clergy to accept greater social responsibility. This was expressed through training in practical and behavioural skills. As a result, the community ‘saw that the church and the priest had a developmental role; a demonstration of holism.’ According to the Armenian report, World Vision was taking a practical stance to enhance the ministry of the priest and to make it relevant, not just ritualistic. Part of the impetus for change was driven by World Vision’s own example. One Roman Catholic nun reported that ‘They shamed us with their dedication.’

The data revealed how World Vision contributes to development by helping to instil pro-development shifts in theological understanding through long-term church engagement. While there were some indications of this in the data from Armenia, it was most evident in the material from Rwanda.

Rwanda is a strongly Christian country in terms of the cultural expression of Christian faith. It was also the scene of one of the worst genocides of the last century. This led to evaluation questions about the reconciliation of Christian faith with genocide and whether the close interaction between the churches and development agencies since 1994 had altered theological beliefs. This data was especially instructive. The following quotes report a major shift in theological outlook, suggesting that the church is now more noticeably concerned with this life rather than the afterlife:

• ‘Our previous way was lacking understanding – Preaching “going to heaven” is not good for the poor – The gospel is becoming more credible [through community development]’

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37 Newmarch 2010, p. 23.
38 KII with Apostolic priest 3, Armenia.
39 Goode 2011b, p. 17.
40 Newmarch 2010, p. 23.
41 KII with a sister from a religious order, Armenia.
42 FGD with ADP Buliza Inter-Church Committee and ADP Committee, Rwanda.
• ‘if individual expressions of salvation are prioritised, for example, personal ‘decisions for Christ’, then development work may be seen as secondary or ancillary to this higher or greater purpose’\textsuperscript{43}

• ‘Development workers and church leaders both reported that the nature of the Good News had changed in Rwanda since 1994. The emphasis had shifted from a gospel of personal, individualistic salvation – which had been preached from the pulpit for decades – toward a gospel embracing expressions of God’s salvation within the whole of community’\textsuperscript{44}

• On the one hand, ‘the genocide destroyed the country,’ but on the other hand ‘[it] opened Rwandans eyes for a holistic ministry’\textsuperscript{45}

• ‘it was reported that formerly people with HIV/AIDS would be stigmatised and excluded within community. There was a strong tendency to judgment which reflected a narrow pietism based on conservative sexual ethics. This had changed substantially as the community gained a greater understanding of broader elements of the gospel such as compassion, reciprocal love and social inclusion.’\textsuperscript{46}

\textbf{10.1.4.1 Preliminary analysis}

World Vision sees its mandate as one that involves holding the church to account in effectively caring for the poor. This involves encouraging churches to think critically about development issues and working with clergy in their understanding of diaconal responsibility. In some World Vision offices, its work extended to ministerial formation through training programs. This seemed to be a highly strategic move.

The data suggested that long-term partnerships with development organisations can also alter basic theological understandings. In particular, the evidence from Rwanda pointed to fundamental shifts in the content of the gospel since the genocide. The data attributed this shift in part to exposure to faith-based development organisations. This data is of significance, because Jones and Petersen have pointed out that there is little discussion within the resurgent academic interest in faith and development about how development has affected religious institutions.\textsuperscript{47} The data indicates that theological shifts within churches can occur organically as the result of longer-term interactions with FBOs. This leads to a broader and

\textsuperscript{43} Goode 2011a, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p. 19.
\textsuperscript{45} FGD with church leaders, Kigali, Rwanda, 2011.
\textsuperscript{46} Goode 2011a, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{47} Jones & Petersen, p. 1300.
more strategic question about the use of theology as a development tool: how can theology serve the interests of the poor by supporting good development, and what can be done respectfully to accelerate critical shifts in understanding within churches and religious institutions?

10.1.5 Topic code H5: Unity and co-operation

This code drew together data which pointed to World’ Vision’s role in drawing together coalitions of churches for developmental purposes. This kind of co-operative action modelled World Vision’s desire for unity and collaborative action in the general community. At a very practical level, it was also conducive to the efficient and consistent delivery of developmental messages across a range of denominations. This was a well-supported and distributed connection (Figure 10.5).

Several evaluations noted the role of World Vision as a broker or unifying agent among churches, which then led to developmental co-operation. This was a strong theme in the reports for Albania, Armenia, Rwanda and Tanzania. In Albania, the data suggested that World Vision presented as an organisation which was respected because it had no hidden agenda or denominational bias. This enabled it to become a significant unifier amongst churches and positioned them to advocate on behalf of the broader community. This helped to boost to the reputation of the churches in general.48

At a local level, there was consistent evidence of collaboration through ADP inter-church committees. The data showed that this dissipated a competitive spirit between churches. For example, in Rwanda it was stated that ‘We are much closer now. We used to be in competition but now we collaborate and work together. This provides an excellent example for the country.’49 This effect was repeated in Albania. Before, there was ‘a kind of competition for project proposals but now we are coming together and doing the project together.’50

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48 Newmarch & Goode, p. 23.
49 FGD with ADP Rebero Inter-Church Committee and ADP Committee, Rwanda.
50 KII with representative of the Church of Gospel Fellowship, Albania.
Part of the reason for World Vision’s success is its firmly ecumenical stance. This has enabled it to act in an even-handed way. A good example was the camping program in Armenia, which was run by World Vision in conjunction with evangelical denominations but with the Armenian Apostolic Church invited to attend and participate. The data reported that ‘the summer camps have strengthened the relationship between the two [the Armenia Apostolic church and the Evangelical church] and has brought much more unity’.

Acting in an open and transparent manner also has avoided suspicion: ‘We don’t have any misunderstandings with World Vision – there have been with others. I appreciate the way that World Vision has no intention to preach or create a new denomination.’

The data showed that World Vision was able to act as an honest broker because it did not get caught up in doctrinal controversies. The nature of its work as a development agency enables it to focus on issues of Christian orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy. This has helped it to transcend dogmatic differences while at the same time upholding a clearly Christian motivation and ethos. It has also enabled representatives of different churches to come together because of their shared interest in development. For example, it was reported that in a setting of mixed religious leaders, ‘a priest can think of development, it’s not theology or doctrine so we can discuss and share [the] same values.’

The evaluation report for Tanzania noted the consistent finding across all ADPs visited that World Vision acted as a unifying agent among churches. It did this by bringing churches together in locally adapted collaborations that emphasised capacity training in areas like HIV and AIDS, gender and interfaith dialogue. This steady focus on orthopraxy has enabled churches to come together in a lasting and constructive way. This is remarkable in some contexts of intense historical interdenominational rivalry.

10.1.5.1 Preliminary analysis

The data affirmed that World Vision takes seriously its ecumenical positioning and self-understanding as an expression of the broader church. This has enabled it to broker constructive and less competitive relationships between churches at both national and local levels. The enhanced co-operation between churches has served as a good example within developing communities. It has also harnessed and co-ordinated developmental resources and

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51 FGD with Tavush Evangelical church and church leaders, Armenia.
52 KII with a senior leader of the Armenian Apostolic Church.
53 Goode 2011b, p. 17.
54 Goode 2010b, p. 13.
messages. Openness and transparency were affirmed as critical in building longer-term co-operative relationships.

The emphasis on social action and orthopraxy is very important in World Vision’s work. It offers a corrective to churches that are more ritualistic or pietistic in their faith expression. This can provide an important way for churches to work together, displacing the more divisive focus of dogma. In turn, this helps unlock the spiritual and human capital within diverse congregations for the broader social good.

10.2 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the data relating to the last theological motif of World Vision. The data has confirmed that World Vision’s relationship with churches has a special significance in terms of both its own identity and the shape of its development practice. In short, World Vision conceives of development as something that needs to happen together with religious institutions rather than apart from them. At a fundamental level, its view of development recognises that social and personal meaning in the developing world is strongly correlated with religious belief. Working with and through churches is an appropriate strategy for World Vision and its natural constituency. There are many practical benefits of pursuing these relationships.

The last five chapters have set out the many and varied positive contributions to arise from World Vision’s theology when tested against the dataset. This process has revealed direct, strong, embedded, and at times, unexpected influences on its development work. While the data tended to be largely positive about World Vision’s work as a FBO, this is not the whole story. There are significant risks to arise from its theology, especially its emphasis on working with the churches, and the data relating to this topic is explored in the next chapter.
11. Data and Preliminary Analysis: 
Risks from World Vision’s Theology for its Development 
Work and Practice

The next task is to consider the risks associated with the organisational theology of World Vision that were raised by the data. The chapter begins by first considering the overarching risk of insularity, given that World Vision may be more heavily influenced by its religious convictions when compared with other types of development organisations. This presents a risk of not making evidenced-based program choices or behaving in ways that may be seen as less developmental out of religious motives. The chapter then considers the risks associated with some of the specific theological motifs. The data indicated that the vast majority of the risks concern World Vision’s relationship with the church, and this area receives most attention. The chapter concludes by briefly considering how World Vision can respond to these risks.

11.1 Overarching risk: developmental compromise based on insularity or religious conviction

All organisations have a worldview, whether acknowledged or not. Each worldview has limitations that inhibit developmental outcomes. Organisations with a scientific focus may see development as a series of mechanistic or technical fixes. Economic approaches may reduce development work and communities to a series of crude economic measures. Human-rights approaches may promote an individualistic agenda in non-Western settings where rights are mediated through community-based structures. Secular organisations may not be able to engage with religion as the primary source of meaning for the majority world. As Tim Dearborn from World Vision has pointed out, the moment a development worker steps out of their air-conditioned Land Cruiser, a statement has already been made about technology, wealth and power.\(^1\) In this light, the risk of development being inhibited because of the organisation’s core positioning should not be seen as unique to FBOs. It is a risk that all organisations need to consider.

The data gave the impression that World Vision did generally conform to accepted development norms. There was a strong focus on sustainability of change and exit strategies,

\(^1\) A comment made during private conversations.
and World Vision’s characteristic ADP model was aimed at exiting communities within 15 years. Downward accountability towards communities was evident in its highly consultative approach, fostering of local participation structures and its policy (within the reported contexts, at least) of encouraging staff to live within the developing community. In many ADPs, there was a strong focus on cross-cutting themes such as women’s empowerment, income generation and disability. This was reflected consistently in the programming at ADP level. The data showed that World Vision understood poverty as a function of complex systems and appreciated the highly contextual nature of the work.

World Vision did seek to address the systemic causes of poverty through its advocacy. While its organisational intentions were clear, it was limited in places because of its emphasis on working with churches. Some churches were stuck in a charitable mindset, were socially passive and unaccustomed to any form of advocacy or activism. Churches were also sometimes slow to engage in the development process and could be resistant to innovation or new paradigms. These elements are discussed under the risk of church relationships below.

As a whole, the reports suggested that World Vision was able to focus on evidenced-based programming. It has strong policies on the design, monitoring and evaluation of projects, and these were referenced in passing. However, a better test was to seek specific examples of potential conflicts between religious sensibilities and the attainment of development outcomes.

Two examples were identified of potential clashes. In each case, World Vision was able to make choices that better enabled the attainment of development outcomes. In the first case, World Vision was able to raise awareness of condom usage as a means of preventing HIV transmission. In Rwanda it was reported that at first some churches were against the Channels of Hope for HIV program, ‘especially teaching on the use of condoms, but when they found out we were not promoting this as such they came to like it.’² Similarly, in Tanzania, World Vision training that explained how the use of condoms prevented HIV and AIDS went ahead even though this was a sensitive issue for the Roman Catholic church.³

A second example concerned the selection of the methodology used in peace and development work in Rwanda. World Vision in Rwanda promoted a flagship Healing Peace and Reconciliation (HPR) Program which was used in partnership with implementing churches. It is significant that this program was developed using methodologies from the

³ The evaluator briefing for the 2010 Tanzania Evaluation included the findings of the previous Katero ADP Evaluation, 2007, where this issue was discussed at page 13.
social sciences, outside Christian circles. This spoke to the willingness of World Vision to use secular methodologies when they were superior. The ability to select and use relevant conceptual and theoretical frameworks has been identified as a priority to improve the development performance of Christian FBOs. The data suggested that World Vision was able to meet this challenge. The full section of this interview is reproduced because of the rich insights it offers:

Interviewer: What was the problem HPR was trying to respond to?
ADP Manager: The Church, especially the Roman Catholic Church, was using unhelpful, even damaging techniques, in trying to respond to genocide perpetrators who voluntarily came forward. For example, a perpetrator desiring reconciliation within the community, or personal restoration, would approach the local priest and confess. He might say something like ‘Father, I committed murders during the genocide, and I’m feeling guilty about it, and what can I now do to move forward?’ The priest would say something like ‘Well, if you turn up at church next Sunday and make a public confession of your guilt, then forgiveness may be possible.’ So the perpetrator would do exactly that. The problems of this approach were very significant.

Interviewer: What were they?
ADP Manager: Sometimes people would be re-traumatised. Sometimes the affected families were not ready to forgive. The family survivors had no way to know if any repentance was genuine, since they hadn’t had any direct involvement in discussions with the perpetrator. There may have been an expectation of immediate forgiveness, or pressure to forgive, when no-one was ready for that. A big problem was also shock. Rwandan society is notoriously secretive. Surviving family members usually had no idea precisely who it was that murdered their loved ones. The sudden revelation by the perpetrator would throw community relationships into disarray. The disclosure of murder by their friends or neighbours would be very hard to deal with. The basic problem is that forgiveness is not instant for either the perpetrator or victims. It requires a process. The steps in that process are bereavement, emotional management, and finally, forgiveness itself.

Interviewer: Was the HPR process based on a biblical or faith model?
ADP Manager: No, but the Church was a key supporter and partner. But the program itself was based on secular principles.

Interviewer: What kind of thinking went into it?
ADP Manager: It was based on psycho-social disciplines, and expert counselling techniques. Most especially it drew heavily on the history of the country, and it was highly contextualised – so the project would be adapted to respond to the level of violence and other factors in the particular area. The Church was very happy to accept it. They could see the benefit of it. It was a better way to serve God and his people. The HPR methodology involved better timing, sequence, contextualization, training and better results. Most especially, it recognised that healing was a process.

Interviewer: Was it essential for the Church to be involved at all?

5 KII with ADP Manager 1, Rwanda.
ADP Manager: Yes, it was, because of the influence of the Church within Rwandan society.

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Interviewer: I want to go back to what the Church thought of it [HPR], if I can.

ADP Manager: The Church was very happy to endorse this. It didn’t matter that it was secular rather than a faith-based program. The reason is that basically everyone in Rwanda is a Christian, so they will privately go away and do their own contextualisation in terms of Christian faith anyway. For example, people implementing this in churches would probably think about the story of Jacob and Esau, who were estranged, or Jesus’ compassion for those on the outside, or whatever, because that’s entirely normal. The great advantage of HPR is that it provided really useful tools and a structure – which the Church just didn’t have. Faith might prompt or inspire reconciliation, but the program offered a helpful way to take things forward.

This interview indicated willingness, in this instance at least, to prefer techniques that were effective over those which were faith-based.

The risks from the data that can be associated with each theological motif are now outlined.

11.2 Risks associated with non-church topic codes

11.2.1 Risk of partner disengagement due to removal of faith content

Topic code A1 explained that World Vision could benefit from existing community goodwill towards its spiritual worldview. It follows that attempts to remove faith elements from programming may result in disillusionment by staff or such communities.

There was some evidence of attempts to filter out the faith-related elements of programs. This came about at the instigation of Western support offices within the World Vision partnership. Those offices were anxious to ensure that the projects they funded did not proselytise and generally reflected a more secular approach to development. Such requests also reflected a dichotomous worldview in which faith and development activity were treated as separable, causing offence and resentment at a local level.6

Even within FBOs there can be a tension between Western donor offices and local field offices in terms of their faith emphasis. The data from the Rwanda evaluation was instructive.7 For example, a Senior Program Manager noted ‘World Vision Australia’s aversion to faith.’ He said that he cannot have matters relating to faith and spiritual life in reports because of AusAID requirements. It was claimed that ‘World Vision Australia has

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6 Williams (2009a, p. 2) cautions: ‘Attempts to bypass … local rationales for action or change invariably produce resentment and puzzlement.’

7 Similar examples were given in Senegal.
told me that “faith is personal” … and not to report and feedback on Christian Commitment ministry or faith in development. Anything with a connotation of church or faith gets a line through it.’

The data from other interviews confirmed that the reporting of activities was a sensitive issue. A Zone Manager noted that ‘with some Support Offices we need to be wise in our communication, like Australia.’ Later he stated that ‘With Australia, the question is how to “baptise” it!’ When asked specifically ‘Can you do [the desired activities] in a way that does not cross ethical boundaries?’ he replied ‘I need to repent here. I have done things and altered communications to make sure we can do it and not lose funding.’ On the topic of praying for sick children, which frequently happens, it was emphasised that a report has never been produced that ‘mentions prayer as important or a reason for healing. The report will talk about other reasons, such as hospital. Prayer is minimized in reporting.’

This type of filtering may be seen as insensitive and dismissive of the local worldview. While World Vision Rwanda personnel felt confident to work around the issue by editing out any problematic references, this did point to an underlying cynicism about the perceived anti-religious views of Western regulators and support offices. Very similar data was reported in Senegal.

11.2.2 Risk of overt evangelism

While World Vision espouses a commitment to biblical holism, there is always a risk that enthusiasts employed by it will engage in overtly evangelistic activities in sensitive contexts. This could compromise World Vision’s relationship of trust with the local community and place its operations at risk. This risk is most closely associated with topic code A2, which dealt with biblical holism and the sustainability of access to communities.

There was evidence from Lebanon that ‘Some activities proselytise, Muslim kids are encouraged to convert, and the distribution of Bibles in mixed communities can send the wrong message.’ In Senegal and Bosnia and Herzegovina, a clear caution was sounded by communities although no instances of problematic activities were reported.

The most confusing context to read was Tanzania. There, it was reported that World Vision supported the activities of churches with a strong focus on revivalism. In this way, it

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8 KII with a Ministry Quality Executive, VW Rwanda.
9 KII with Zone Manager 2, Rwanda.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 FGD with ADP Buliza staff, Rwanda.
13 KII with a senior humanitarian and emergency aid manager, Lebanon.
was one step away from direct evangelism. The kinds of activities engaged in included distributing Bibles and hymn books, training Sunday School teachers, church re-construction and sponsoring a Pastors’ Committee with an evangelical agenda.\textsuperscript{14} It was reported that a World Vision generator had been supplied to allow the ‘Jesus’ film to be screened publicly.\textsuperscript{15}

Despite this, there was no actual evidence of proselytism in the technical sense of that word. That is, there was no indication of development assistance being made conditional on religious affiliation or the hearing of a religious message. On the contrary, the evidence was in the opposite direction. It was unambiguously reported:

- ‘We have not seen any favouritism to people on the basis of religious beliefs in WV projects’\textsuperscript{16}
- ‘as time went on and as we continued working with them we found that they just live their Christian values and that they are not looking for Muslim converts’\textsuperscript{17}
- ‘We know that WV is a Christian organisation, but it does not discriminate against people.’\textsuperscript{18}

There were several other references on similar lines.

\textbf{11.2.3 Risks from being too exclusive in employment}

This risk was most closely associated with topic code C2, which concerned World Vision’s emphasis on interfaith respect and co-operation.

This was a particularly difficult issue for World Vision to negotiate. On the one hand, there were developmental advantages to be gained from the hiring of non-Christian staff. For example, hiring more non-Christian staff could leverage developmental advantages in mixed communities by fostering greater understanding, demonstrating goodwill and modelling positive working relationships. In Lebanon, it was reported that ‘If 60% of population is Muslim and we want to do more interfaith, we could do more. But we are 99% Christian staff. We need to be more diverse; if not, we are sending the wrong message. However, this message will not be well liked.’\textsuperscript{19} In some contexts, this could also cause resentment. ‘World

\textsuperscript{14} FGD with Pastors’ Committee, Megole ADP, Tanzania.
\textsuperscript{15} FGD with Pastors’ Committee, Nyasa ADP, Tanzania.
\textsuperscript{16} KII with Muslim religious leaders, Katerero ADP, Tanzania.
\textsuperscript{17} Comment from a sheikh, FGD with Muslim Leaders, Mswaki ADP, Tanzania.
\textsuperscript{18} FGD with Registered Parents, Mswaki ADP, Tanzania – including Muslim parents.
\textsuperscript{19} KII with a senior advocacy manager, Lebanon.
Vision is doing community development work without discrimination of [sic] Muslims, but they do not provide equal opportunity in recruitment of staff.\textsuperscript{20}

On the other hand, a risk with this approach is the dilution of the organisation’s Christian identity by including too many non-Christians in leadership positions. It might lead to an overly permissive or subjective interpretation about what it means to be a Christian organisation, ultimately diluting its distinctive development praxis.\textsuperscript{21}

11.2.4 Risk of being culturally insensitive and imperialistic

This risk was associated with World Vision’s firm stance against occult and demonic practices and its efforts to overcome animistic practices. These were reported at topic codes D2 and D3.

It is clear that World Vision does not accept local culture uncritically, and it makes judgments about religious belief systems, or aspects of them, which are incompatible with its own worldview. This may be seen by some as disrespectful to local culture and a form of religious imperialism. This risk has been identified from discussions in the Senegal and Tanzania reports.

Nevertheless, World Vision has a broad view of development that recognises the influence of spiritual beliefs and phenomena which it regards as malign or oppressive. This understanding motivates World Vision to challenge influences that it sees as debilitating, harmful or dehumanising.

11.2.5 Risk of unethical activities leading to religious conversion

This risk was associated with topic code E1, which concerned inner transformation using camps, Sunday Schools and other specific programs. World Vision sponsors camps that are attended by vulnerable and impressionable groups, such as young people from highly impoverished backgrounds. These camps are a rare opportunity for social recreation and skills acquisition. The strong desire to attend could then be misused to pressure people into religious conversion whilst participating.

There was one quote identifying this risk. Some staff complained that ‘Summer camp is about taking kids to evangelism.’\textsuperscript{22} However, the weight of data suggested that World Vision Lebanon was exercising appropriate care and restraint. One camp is no longer funded,

\textsuperscript{20} Comment from a sheikh, interview with Muslim Leaders, Mswaki ADP, Tanzania.
\textsuperscript{21} Kilpatrick & Goode, pp. 8, 26.
\textsuperscript{22} FGD with CC Committee, Lebanon.
probably ‘because the Christian content was too intentional and not developmental enough.’

Most families have no objection and allow their children to attend with a clear knowledge of the program: ‘The program is made available to children of all faiths, the program content is explained to families and adult community members are invited to chaperone the children to guarantee the integrity of the World Vision briefing. Community members interviewed were universally pleased with these activities and believed that their children learned and changed as a result.’

Some of the strongest advocates for the camps were Muslim parents.

In Armenia, the ethical issue was whether the camps and Sunday Schools exposed vulnerable children to conversion by evangelical ‘sects’. Again, the data supported appropriate care and restraint. These activities required informed parental involvement and choice. The Summer Camps were open to all members of the community and were led by volunteers from both Apostolic and evangelical communities. Topics were agreed upon in advance to establish common ground. Finally, there was no evidence of any benefit beyond participation in the camp itself.

11.2.6 Risk of faith-based psychosocial intervention with some denominations

This risk concerned topic code E2. It identified a positive role for psychosocial intervention by faith-based agencies to help build inner strength in times of crisis. However, the risk is that the value of the intervention may depend on the particular theological approach employed by those intervening.

There was one reference alluding to this risk. For example, certain Orthodox traditions may be unhelpful in a psychosocial sense in times of crisis because of too much reliance placed on prayers of ritual penitence, thereby engendering feelings of worthlessness in already traumatised persons. Brief reference was made to this possibility in the evaluation report for Georgia.

The vast majority of risks arising from the data, however, concerned topic code H1 and H2. These topic codes dealt with leveraging the influence of the church and church leaders. A summary of these risks are set out in Table 11.1. These risks are now examined in detail.

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11.3 Risks of leveraging relationships with the church and its leaders

11.3.1 Risks concerning the passivity of the church

There were 25 data references attributable to these types of risks.

The data indicated that some churches resist becoming a critical prophetic voice within their society and are largely ineffectual in responding to issues of systemic injustice. This was a particularly strong theme in Rwanda and Senegal. It was noted with regret that ‘Rwanda’s history reveals that many people were killed in the churches, that church leaders were involved in state matters, and that a significant number of church leaders colluded with the militias to murder their congregations.’ Despite this terrible history, there was still reluctance on the part of the church to embrace its call as a prophetic voice.

The report for Senegal also indicated that the local church was very passive, noting that ‘they are not part of solution yet.’ Senior manager complained that ‘The church doesn’t come out of its corner.’ A UN Advisor added this sharp criticism: ‘The Church dives into “safe zone” only, which is infant behaviour instead of [addressing] hard core issues. Many issues of justice are not on the church table.’ Likewise, in Lebanon it was noted that ‘The Church doesn’t respond to advocacy, if they do, it’s only in terms of charity.’

Another risk for World Vision was partnering with churches that were stuck in a charitable mindset. The report for Armenia reported that ‘The challenge for World Vision is to promote a different way of thinking. Given the strong tendency of religious institutions towards charity, there is little incentive to divert energy towards another approach.’ This creates a real dilemma for agencies that promote a strength-based community development model in which communities are encouraged to more be self-reliant. It was reported that partnering with the GOC could be problematic because of its engrained tendency towards charity and lack of innovative approaches.

Churches operating in a charitable mode were prone to handouts. It was noted that ‘We don’t do them [church partnerships] well. We tend to make it a give-away program.’

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26 Goode 2011a, p. 16.
27 Ibid., p. 30.
28 Goode 2011b, p. 15.
29 KII with a senior executive, Senegal.
30 KII with a UN Advisor, Senegal.
31 KII with a senior advocacy manager, Lebanon.
32 Newmarch 2010, p. 10.
33 Newmarch 2010, p. 11, see also p. 16.
34 Goode 2010a, p. 19.
35 KII with a senior national office executive, Lebanon.
approach can fuel demand, produces little long-term benefit and often exacerbates an entrenched dependency. It can also leave the church open to exploitation. It was cynically observed that ‘For as long as the church supports the people with clothes and things, the church grows, if not, it decreases.’ The struggle for the church was to learn another way.

Part of the problem appears to be that many churches have only ever known charitable models and have depended on charity themselves for survival. It was stated that ‘The first missionaries taught us [the churches] to receive but not to give. They did not teach the African church.’ Some churches in minority contexts resembled a chaplaincy for their membership rather than a light to society. For World Vision, the challenge was to help these churches to become more socially engaged.

A particularly risky practice for World Vision was entering into church relationships in the form of passive funding arrangements. These types of arrangements provided minimal influence and were rarely conducive to good developmental outcomes. This was a particular issue in World Vision’s Lebanon office.

The data showed that handing out cash grants to churches to conduct small projects is problematic. It helped to fuel a perception of World Vision as a funding source rather than a true development partner. Where church partnerships were not clearly tied to developmentally related field activity, this would suggest some kind of an ulterior motive. These types of relationships confused the organisation’s identity and purpose.

There is an inherent tension between development and more explicitly evangelical understandings of ‘mission’. In some places, ‘We appear to have been more like mission partners than development partners and therefore the type of partner has tended to be quite limited. At one level this may have exacerbated suspicion of World Vision as an evangelical organisation “fishing in the neighbour’s pond”.’ The data indicated that that passive donor arrangements with churches are fraught for a variety of reasons and all partnerships should be connected with mainstream developmentally orientated programming.

11.3.2 Risks relating to ecumenism

Fourteen data references fell under this category.

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36 KII with a church pastor, Albania.
37 FGD with ADP Tattaguine religious leaders.
38 KII with a senior operations manager, Senegal.
40 Newmarch 2009, p. 15.
In some places, World Vision faced the risk of trying to balance its ecumenical relationships in an even-handed way. In Armenia and Georgia, this was a difficult exercise where there were dominant state churches. World Vision’s development work in these places depended in many ways on maintaining good relationships with the established church, but it needed to do so in a way which did not leave minority church communities feeling excluded or marginalised.\(^\text{41}\) An added complication is that evangelical churches can be regarded as a ‘sect’ with an agenda of conversion.\(^\text{42}\) In some places ‘there is evidence of violence, hatred, and ridicule perpetuated by church leaders towards minority religious groupings.’\(^\text{43}\) While the evangelical background of World Vision was initially viewed with suspicion, it has over time been welcomed as ‘a reliable and trusted partner.’\(^\text{44}\) In Georgia, ‘World Vision so far has not had to consider whether they would partner with a minority group in the same way it has partnered with the Georgian Orthodox Church. Some have raised concerns that the GOC might not look favourably on this, particularly as these groups have been marginalized by society or the GOC.’\(^\text{45}\) This may pose a challenge at a future time. Others disagree: ‘It is traditional in our blood that we have respect for other denominations, we don’t oppress them.’\(^\text{46}\) It does appear that World Vision is alert to the heresy of *philetism*, that is, the identification of Christianity with a particular nationalistic outlook.\(^\text{47}\)

A related issue was presented in Lebanon, where ‘as far as the established churches … are concerned it is the Orthodox and the Catholic churches who are Christian. Indeed, the evangelical minority is regarded as a sect and is therefore regarded with some suspicion, ostensibly because they are seen as coming to convert.’\(^\text{48}\) It appears that in Lebanon, World Vision has not been able to transcend its evangelical heritage. There was a tendency for

\(^{41}\) The GOC is particularly anxious about the ‘sects.’ It has been reported that ‘observers point to a general hardening of attitudes on both sides (of Evangelical-Orthodox dialogue) throughout much of Eastern Europe; those advocating any kind of engagement are liable to come under attack from their co-religionists as well as those on the other side of the fence’ (Grass, T 2010, ‘Dialogue between evangelicals and orthodox: past, present and future’, *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies*, vol. 27, p. 191; referred to in Goode 2010a).

\(^{42}\) The GOC and the Armenian Apostolic Church see themselves as having a legitimacy based on their antiquity, national dominance, and rich cultural heritage. Other expressions of Christian faith may be seen by these groups as unnecessary and even subversive of religious and social cohesion. It is against this background that other denominations may be labelled as ‘sects’.

\(^{43}\) Newmarch 2010, p. 11.

\(^{44}\) KII with Apostolic priest 3, Armenia.


\(^{46}\) KII with a priest from the GOC, Tbilisi, Georgia.

\(^{47}\) Newmarch 2010, p. 24.

\(^{48}\) Newmarch 2009, p. 7.
church partnerships to be mainly with like-minded churches.\(^4^9\) The Christian Commitment partnering is primarily with Evangelicals, but the country is 60% Muslim and 40% Christian. Of these [Christians] 60% are Maronite, 10% are Orthodox and only 2–3% are Evangelical. So partnering in Christian Commitments is not representative of the wider church denominational spread.\(^5^0\)

The implications can be very serious. The incidence of poverty in places like Lebanon is tightly correlated to various religious groupings, and perceived favouritism has the potential to undermine credibility, organisational integrity and program acceptance. Religious groupings are part of the bloc mentality throughout the whole country, and World Vision needs to engage across the board and collectively to have effective partnerships. This extends to partnerships with other faith groupings.

At times, trying to maintain harmonious ecumenical relationships can be intense. The data did raise one instance of a loud public argument at one of the summer camps between representatives of two different denominations.\(^5^1\) The comment was made that ‘We don’t see Evangelicals as teaching the wrong things, just doing the wrong things [proselytising].’\(^5^2\) Against this background World Vision has the unenviable task of trying to act as an honest broker.

### 11.3.3 Risk of partnering with churches which are politically or nationally aligned

World Vision’s engagement with churches must be approached critically and with discernment. Alignments with organisations using religion for nationalistic or political purposes may be damaging to community cohesion and discredit the partner organisation and its work. There were six data references to this risk, mainly from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The CC Strategic Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina noted that ‘Religion in this country is strongly identified with ethnicity (Serb/Orthodox, Croat/Catholic, Bosniak/Muslim), and in some cases religion is used as an expression and tool of nationalism.’\(^5^3\) Consistently, in the field work it was reported that ‘Religion is very much connected with nationalism and that is a huge problem.’\(^5^4\)

\(^{49}\) Ibid., p. 15.
\(^{50}\) KII with a senior advocacy manager, Lebanon.
\(^{51}\) KII with a sister from a religious order, Armenia.
\(^{52}\) FGD with Tavush Evangelical church and church leaders, Armenia.
\(^{54}\) KII with a Team Leader, Krivaja ADP, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
The data from Georgia was realistic: ‘politicians use churches for self-promotion and their own agendas …’ In Rwanda, with its troubled history of genocide, there was also a sober warning. The evaluation report noted that ‘The church has not fully embraced its prophetic calling, and risks being co-opted by government if it fails to maintain a healthy, critical distance.’ In these contexts, World Vision’s partnering with churches may require very careful consideration to avoid the risk of co-option.

11.3.4 Risks relating to doctrine

Another category of risks were those church partnerships which aligned World Vision unhelpfully with certain church doctrines. There were five data references under this heading. A case in point was the risk of so-called prosperity doctrine for development work in Africa.

The evaluation report for Rwanda cautioned that prosperity teaching ‘appears to undermine the positive role of Christian faith in doing effective development. The individualistic, materialistic, and pietistic thrust of prosperity teaching appeared to present a serious threat to the communitarian ethos underpinning much development work.’ Similar sentiments were expressed in Senegal: ‘While prosperity teaching has an obvious attraction to people who wish to escape from the grind of poverty, it may equally lead to frustration and disillusionment if material aspirations are not quickly satisfied.’

Overall this risk appears real. One of the main criticisms of prosperity gospel teaching is that ‘[it] exploits growing numbers amongst the world’s most vulnerable populations, taking in tithes from the poorest and offering in exchange only false hope and inflated promises of miracle healings and untold economic abundance.’ It is also charged with promoting selfishness and diverting attention away from the lasting and structural causes of their deprivation, and community-based responses. On the other hand, there may be some benefit to be gained in that prosperity teaching may be conducive to individual empowerment and hope, the promotion of self-worth, entrepreneurship, financial management and certain associated virtues.

Another risk for World Vision was being too closely associated with churches that were stridently evangelical in their positioning. This had the potential to associate World Vision

55 KII with a CEDC Program Manager, Georgia.
56 Goode 2011a, p. 16.
57 Ibid., p. 6.
58 Goode 2011b, p. 31.
59 Sharpe, p. 174.
60 Ibid., pp. 175–76. Can a parallel perhaps be drawn with Max Weber and the so-called ‘Protestant work ethic’, which he argued undergirded the development of capitalist economies?
with socially divisive activities in sensitive contexts. The strongest data came from Tanzania. In particular, World Vision’s involvement with ‘crusading’ churches was regarded as ‘highly contentious in multi-faith (especially Muslim) context.' Associated risks included confusion about World Vision’s identity, a lack of transparency and tacit pressure being applied in vulnerable communities. A similar concern was raised in Albania: ‘if we are too closely aligned to pushy practice, World Vision Albania might be subject to negative feedback and even violence.’

11.3.5 Risk of engaging with churches with no real capacity to be self-critical

There were five references under this category. This risk is heavily influenced by the ecclesiology of some churches. For example, the GOC believes that the church is holy, having always been guided by the Holy Spirit, and that it is therefore, in one sense, perfect. It is certainly an innately conservative institution and very conscious of its historic, even defining, importance within Georgian society. These factors instil great caution in considering any agenda for change. There is a risk of partnering with the church when its strongly pietistic, priest-centric and mystical beliefs give it a largely inward focus. Despite this, it was reported that the GOC showed ‘a determined willingness to embrace development (particularly that of FBOs).’

There was some similar data from Armenia, where change was understood by some priests in terms of liturgical practice or personal pietism rather than broader notions of community development. When pressed, some priests struggled to relay any substantive evidence of change in the broader society. There is also risk in being aligned with anti-developmental attitudes and patriarchal ideas about the role of women, and there was one data reference to this risk with the GOC.

11.3.6 Risk of becoming involved with religious leaders who are disreputable

There were two data references to this risk, which in some instances could be related to the risk of political co-option. In one community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there was a reference to the loss of trust in a religious leader who was accused of misusing his position. More worrying was the report from Armenia that ‘Many of the leaders of church are former

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63 Goode 2010a, p. 11.
64 KII with Apostolic priest 1 and colleague, Armenia.
65 FGD with Kalesija Community – ADP Majevica.
KGB or party officials. It will take time for these people to digest what they have learned from seminary training and promised to do … It will take three generations to bring real change.\textsuperscript{66}

11.4 Responding to the difficulties of church relationships

This chapter has presented a comprehensive suite of risks, some of which may appear overwhelming. This poses something of a dilemma for World Vision. At one and the same time, church relationships represent a major potential strength and source of very significant.

It should be remembered that World Vision does not partner only with churches, although it will always explore the possibility of doing do. It may choose to partner with other NGOs and actors within civil society. This gives it some overall flexibility in mitigating the risk of particular church relationships. Mature judgment will be required in any given context.

The data, taken as a whole, may reinforce the need for World Vision to engage more deliberately and intensively with churches, rather than stepping back from them. The most prevalent set of risks were those relating to the passivity of churches. Part of the mandate of World Vision is to help churches to re-imagine a broader, more deliberate, developmentally focussed form of social engagement. The kind of change needed is most likely to come from long-term education, mutual respect and friendship.

One way World Vision helps to mitigate risks is by employing CC staff of high calibre. Several of the evaluations made specific reference to the quality and skills of these personnel. It is posited that further research may also help World Vision in establishing clear protocols that help inform its engagement with churches. The object of such research would be to maximise the significant developmental advantages of church relationships while minimising the attendant risks.

11.5 Closing remarks

Christian FBOs engaged in development occasionally wrestle with the question of their religious identity when seeking to effectively respond to particular development issues. The data indicated that World Vision did not allow church sensitivities or its faith-ethos to prevent the most effective types of responses. This approach included the use of condoms in its training about HIV and AIDS, and it was able to use superior non faith-based methodologies in its peace and reconciliation work within a strongly Christian context.

\textsuperscript{66} KII with a sister from a religious order, Armenia.
Table 11.1 Breakdown of data references for topic codes H1 and H2 by specific risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Code</th>
<th>Number of Data References</th>
<th>Category of Risk</th>
<th>Nature of Specific Risks with Number of Data References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Risks concerning passivity of the church</td>
<td>No critical or prophetic voice (10)(^{67}) Charitable mindset (7) Too socially passive to be effective development partners (3) Problematic, passive funding arrangements (6)(^{68})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Risks relating to ecumenism</td>
<td>Risk of marginalisation of minority groups/sects by established or state churches (8)(^{69}) Risk of WV offices failing to engage in an even-handed way (4)(^{70}) Tension in ecumenical action/activities (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Risks of being co-opted</td>
<td>Engaging with churches which are nationally or politically aligned (6)(^{71})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Risks relating to doctrine</td>
<td>Alignment with prosperity teaching (3)(^{72}) Risk of divisiveness because of overtly evangelical positioning (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Inability to be self-critical</td>
<td>Engaging with churches with no real capacity to be self-critical or accept change (4)(^{73}) Patriarchal and anti-developmental attitudes (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Risk of becoming involved with disreputable church leaders</td>
<td>Misuse of position (1) Ex-KGB church leaders (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{67}\) Most data came from Rwanda and Senegal.  
\(^{68}\) Most data from Lebanon, probably reflecting a local office issue.  
\(^{69}\) Most data from Georgia and Armenia.  
\(^{70}\) Most data from Lebanon, reflecting a local office issue.  
\(^{71}\) Most data from Bosnia and Herzegovina.  
\(^{72}\) The references were from Rwanda and Senegal.  
\(^{73}\) A particular issue in Georgia and Armenia, possibly related to orthodox ecclesiology.
While the data did present risks associated with several topic codes, most of the risks identified were associated with World Vision’s relationships with churches. It is abundantly clear that those relationships offer significant potential advantages in pursuing development goals, but they may also have a shadow side. These relationships must not be pursued in a hasty or uncritical manner. World Vision’s highly skilled Christian Commitment staff have helped to mitigate risks in the countries examined, but it is suggested that further research with the object of developing clear protocols for engagement with churches would be beneficial. In particular, long-term committed relationships with churches may help incubate the kind of attitudinal shift needed in key areas. However, the possibility of exiting persistently unfruitful or problematic relationships must remain open.

The data relevant to the thesis has now been presented.
12. Analytical Overview: Has the Thesis Been Established?

The purpose of this chapter is to assess whether the data has established the thesis. World Vision is the case study for this research and the conclusions expressed in this chapter relate to it. During the course of the analysis, however, the data has raised important implications about the role of FBOs and religious faith within development work, as well as broader implications for development practice. These will be discussed in greater detail in the next two chapters. The task at hand is to consider whether the thesis concerning World Vision has been validated.

This chapter is structured by revisiting each element of the thesis, which is now restated. The thesis proposed:

- World Vision has a characteristic theological motif that can be articulated.
- These motifs inform its development work in significant and particular ways.
- Taken as a whole, World Vision’s approach to development can be considered cohesive and distinctive.
- It is possible to identify potential advantages and disadvantages arising from this faith-informed approach to development work.
- The application of World Vision’s theological motifs will be nuanced to reflect local culture, traditions and development needs.

12.1 Has it been possible to articulate characteristic theological motifs of World Vision?

This question is answered in the affirmative. It has been possible to outline some of the key theological motifs that can be regarded as characteristic of World Vision. These have been identified and explained in Chapter 5. The elements identified are well supported by World Vision partnership policies, practices and partnership leaders. They are also reflected in current strategies.

An argument may be made for additional items to be included in that collection of motifs, or for a different emphasis to be given. It appears, however, that any theology of development for World Vision is likely to include most of the elements identified in some form.
12.2 Does this theology inform World Vision’s development work in particular and significant ways?

This question can also be answered in the affirmative. The selection of motifs did serve as a useful platform to examine the development work and practice of World Vision. The dataset was inductively analysed against these topics, and many points of connection were identified.

In terms of impact, it was possible to identify 37 different types of connections and organise them within a comprehensive taxonomy. Each of the eight motifs of World Vision’s organisational theology influenced the regions examined in some way. An important research focus for the future is to build on that taxonomy as more data becomes available from other countries.

It has been possible to draw one overarching conclusion: the selected motifs of World Vision’s theology are not distant from its operational life. The reason for this is that World Vision appears to take its faith foundations seriously and continues to invest in them. This is evidenced by several features. First, World Vision has personnel and resources dedicated to examining the role of faith in development. Second, it has a well-established internal devotional life which links to its fieldwork. Third, it recruits mature Christians into senior leadership positions in all offices. Finally, it sees ‘Christian Commitments’ as an important aspect of its overall ‘ministry’. The fact that World Vision has produced the reports and interviews that form the basis of this research indicates a strong interest in exploring the relevance of religious faith within development.

A contrast can be made here with those organisations where there is a distance between religious beliefs enshrined at a formal or constitutional level and their day-to-day operations. The increasing secularisation of many ‘Christian’ organisations involved in providing community services is a well-documented phenomenon, which is sometimes referred to as ‘mission drift’. There are many reasons for this drift that cannot be essayed here. The evidence from this research suggests that World Vision has not experienced a drift in its faith positioning in terms of its field work, and that its organisational theology continues to directly impinge upon its development approach in significant ways.

Some of the connections between World Vision’s theology and its field work are of foundational importance. They cover aspects such as gaining access to communities, the motivation of staff, building hope and resilience within communities, mobilising against the causes of systemic impoverishment, changing the way people relate with one another, leveraging community goodwill, the inculcation of values and ethics, and working more
effectively with faith-based institutions. These are not peripheral matters. They speak to an organisational theology that provides a firm foundation for the organisation’s work.

12.3 Can World Vision's faith-informed approach to development work be described as distinctive and cohesive?

In terms of distinctiveness, many of the activities and types of programs undertaken by World Vision will be no different from other types of international development organisations. At a superficial level, the casual observer may be tempted to regard World Vision as looking very similar to other large international development agencies. While it is true that World Vision is represented in all the usual sectors – HIV and AIDS, literacy, microfinance, water and sanitation, public health and agriculture – the data suggests that World Vision does frame its work differently and has some different methodologies and points of emphasis. It is suggested that there are four aspects that mark it out as distinctive. These are not presented in any order of importance.

The first aspect of its distinctiveness is that there is a consistent spiritually based interiority in the way it goes about its work. While World Vision does seek to carefully embrace scientific and technological advances within its work, its ultimate locus of truth is the revelation of God. It seeks to take the ‘light from the enlightenment’ but it is not captive to modernity.

This spiritually based interiority overarches all aspects of World Vision’s work, and it has been included as a distinctive feature because of this pervasiveness. Spiritual resources are recognised alongside human and economic resources. The spiritual dimensions of life are given an openness and legitimacy within public organisational life. This affects work patterns, project design and community relationships.

Some aspects of this spiritually based interiority include the emphasis on understanding work as vocation or ministry, which is reflected in recruitment decisions. This is reinforced through structured devotional times. There is a consistent emphasis on personal formation for staff and civic formation based on religious ethics and values. Camps and training programs are intended to be personally transformative. The way people relate with each other may involve an awareness of rights, but also inner regeneration. Religious motifs about hope are transmitted through actions and, sometimes, words. Discernment has a role in the organisation’s work. Prayerfulness is encouraged, and there is a strong centring on Christian values. There is an understanding among staff about working for God’s kingdom. In some
contexts, malign spiritual influences are confronted. Christian staff are urged to serve the church and Muslims are invited to reflect on shared religious values.

Secular organisations may encourage critical reflection based on universal values, human rights and the attainment of justice. The key difference, however, is that such organisations do not see these emphases as a response to God. It follows that there are no devotional or other spiritually based rituals in the workplace to mobilise staff and encourage reflection about these themes. Secular organisations do not explicitly link internal formation and exterior change in the same way, and they may tend to adopt corporate rather than religious norms within organisational life.

A second point of distinction is that there is a strong people-centredness within World Vision’s praxis. There was abundant evidence that World Vision’s approach to development work involved not only well thought-out projects, but a solidarity within communities. Fully distributed connections included adopting a relational/incarnational style of engagement (B1, 13), understanding work as an expression of love (B2, 12) and living out a strong values base (C1, 26). World Vision can say, without any trace of embarrassment, that its work involves not only the provision of moral support and empathy but also the communication of love.

This distinctive may stand as a corrective to rationalistic approaches, which may be more concerned with the theoretical aspects of project design or the clinical efficiency of an intervention. Even the language of ‘intervention’ can be jarring. A relational, incarnational approach will focus on changes organically from within, involving a full participation. An ‘intervention’ in this light may mean something very different.

A third distinctive feature of World Vision’s approach to development is its consistent emphasis on working for interfaith harmony, and the way in which it responds to this theme as a participant/actor. A large number of topic codes addressed this issue in one way or another.

The data recognised that existing community goodwill could be captured by framing messages theistically and staff behaving devoutly (A1, about seven relevant references). Topic code A2 revealed that programmatic evangelism would be seen as disrespectful and insensitive (A2, about 15 references). Interfaith respect and co-operation was recognised as a stand-alone kingdom value. This fully distributed link had the second-highest number of individual references (C2, 29). World Vision’s theological emphasis on inner-transformation was centered on transfiguring both inter-ethnic and interfaith relationships (E4, 10). The devotional life of World Vision made concerted efforts to model respectful interfaith and interdenominational relationships, setting an example to staff and the broader community.
Finally, World Vision’s relationship with the church featured a strong emphasis on practical ecumenism, orthopraxy and interdenominational dialogue (H5, 15). Taken as a whole, this consistent emphasis was a distinctive feature of World Vision’s development approach. It accounted for nearly 100 individual data references.

This distinctiveness is not only in terms of quantitative strength, but also the qualitative nature of the engagement. World Vision has a theological imperative to respond to this issue and therefore approaches the topic from the position of a participant/actor. Secularism has tended to regard religious belief as a source of conflict that has needed to be moderated or controlled. More positively, World Vision has responded to the challenge of modelling respectful interfaith relationships as an FBO. It has been able to approach the subject with the conviction of having a vested interest, and by appealing in an authentic way to Christian theology and sacred sources.

The data as a whole pointed to World Vision’s ability to form faith alliances for developmental purposes in a range of areas. It can be argued that ultimately harmonious interfaith relationships must be addressed from within. In Christian circles, World Vision has been well placed to offer leadership and example, and it has done so through many initiatives. The data suggests that it has been able to act as a credible and trusted friend.

A final distinctive of World Vision’s approach to development is that it sees itself as inextricably involved with the church. This reflects its theological understanding that its work is an expression of the church, in the broadest sense of the word. This relationship represents its greatest strength. The data was consistent with the growing literature that recognises the influence of religious institutions and faith leaders within developing communities. The leveraging of organisational influence of the church was the strongest of all topic codes (H1, 38). Leveraging individual church leaders also rated strongly (H2, 15). Qualitatively, World’s Vision’s relationship with churches was less instrumental or transactional, in some cases taking on a more organic, longer-term relationship (H4, 24). The data showed that World Vision engages with the churches with a generous ecumenism, and it seeks to impart developmental understandings by close relationship and theological engagement.

World Vision’s distinctiveness in terms of its relationship with churches is also marked by the acceptance of significant risks. The data suggested that the vast majority of the risks attending World Vision’s model of development are concerned with its relationship with churches, in particular the need to make fundamental attitudinal shifts. This may make the case for a deeper and more careful engagement with churches rather than a stepping back.
In summary, the strongest distinctives of World Vision’s approach to its development work are:

- a consistent, spiritually based interiority
- a strong people-centredness (including the incarnation of love) in its development praxis
- a pervasive emphasis on positive interfaith relationships, framed from the position of a participant/actor
- the exercise of influence, and the acceptance of inherent risk, by engaging with churches.

Together these features embody a distinctive approach. In terms of the research data, they are largely reflected in the top right-hand squares of Table 4.5. These represent some of the strongest links both qualitatively and quantitatively.

In terms of cohesiveness, this was assessed by looking out for connections between topic codes. Preparing the taxonomy was an iterative process and fine judgements were sometimes required. As the taxonomy was being prepared, the links between the various topic codes were noted and these have been captured and described in the table set out in Appendix E.

The second column of this table shows that there are strong inter-relationships between the various topic codes. These connections are very pervasive. This suggests that the theological motifs and the topic codes that sit under them should be viewed as a whole. They function as a comprehensive suite of inter-related themes. The data indicates that World Vision’s approach to development is cohesive as well as distinctive.

12.4 Does the data indicate some possible areas of comparative advantage?

The data did point to some areas of possible comparative advantage for World Vision. While each of these areas requires further detailed research and analysis, there was enough evidence to indicate the nature of the potential advantages. Some of the key themes are listed below, together with one or two supporting quotes.

World Vision is more acceptable in some faith-centred communities because it is an organisation that espouses a faith commitment. This is consistent with the general data showing that most communities in the majority world have a theistic worldview and that this is a primary source of meaning. Secular agencies may not be seen as more neutral, which is sometimes portrayed, but as more alien within a theistic worldview.
• ‘Other organisation like Oxfam can also do a lot of activities but they face many difficulties compared with World Vision because [it] is more acceptable by the community …’¹

• It is ‘Easier to speak to people of faith if you have a faith, even if it is different.’²

World Vision tries to work in a less transactional way with churches and faith groups. A more organic relationship means that World Vision is able to co-create development projects with them, and influence their development theology over time.

• ‘In the last 20 years WV has really helped to change the environment of faith; it’s exceptional to think that family clubs and AIDS training could be run through the church.’³

World Vision offers love in the way it deals with people. At World Vision, its commitment to professionalism has not been at the expense of the communication of love. A faith-based organisational environment may be more ‘permission-giving’ in terms of expressing loving solidarity with communities. Organisations conforming to standard corporate norms may be less conducive.

• ‘Our staff are really committed to showing love, not just giving stuff.’⁴

World Vision enjoys a high co-efficient of commitment from its religiously motivated staff. This is captured and reinforced through its internal devotional programs.

• ‘We care. It is not just a job. We do something good and it feels good to do it.’⁵

• ‘I like that after attending devotions you can go and reflect. It reminds you of why you do the job and how to do it better.’⁶

World Vision tends to live with communities on a long-term basis, and this builds trust compared with other models of engagement.

• ‘We are different because we live with the community, these other organisations visit only and go back to their offices or hotels. We are very close to the community; we share plans, budgets, collaborate in the implementation and realize results together.’⁷

¹ KII with ADP Manager 2, Tanzania.
² KII with a senior operations manager, Senegal.
³ KII with Apostolic priest 2, Armenia.
⁴ KII with a senior humanitarian and emergency assistance manager, Lebanon.
⁵ KII with a Sponsorship/Office Administrator, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
⁶ A Muslim finance staff member, Elbasan ADP, Albania.
⁷ ADP Manager 3, Tanzania.
World Vision has high standards of ethics because of religious convictions reinforced through internal rituals.

- ‘We don’t steal, we are ethical, and they also think they are being blessed somehow by being served by Christians.’

World Vision has a vested interest in promoting respectful interfaith relations because it has a theological imperative to do so. It also is well placed because of its ecumenical stance to promote initiative among a range of churches from ‘within the tent.’

- ‘We can do more than a non-FBO [or] a single denomination. Secularism says faith [is] not important.’

World Vision is able to embrace a broader model of development that recognises the importance of spiritual aspects of life. It has a worldview more resonant with the communities where it works.

- ‘true development without faith is not possible. We need faith – it is at the centre of all we are.’

World Vision offers hope because its work is placed within a religious meta-narrative which tends to resonates with many communities. The evidence indicated that moderate Muslim communities in the regions examined were able to frame this in terms of serving the Prophet and doing his will.

- ‘people are de-motivated and lacking hope, and therefore need attention to spiritual aspects of life.’

The thesis has affirmed a number of potential sources of comparative advantage arising from World Vision’s development model. It is stressed, however, that specific research work will be required to verify and quantify these connections.

12.5 Has the data highlighted risks and disadvantages of World Vision’s approach?

The data equally pointed to a significant risks and disadvantages. These have been set out in Chapter 11, and most relate to the risk of passivity of churches as development partners and the need to engage with churches in a very thoughtful and critical manner. Churches can have
theological positions that are inimical to aspects of development, and they tend to be very conservative institutions which are resistant to change.

The data does not support disengagement from churches. On the contrary, it supports a more careful management of risks. It can be argued that organisations like World Vision have an important role to play in building their capacity and providing developmental input and respectful challenge.

12.6 Were World Vision’s theological motifs nuanced in relation to local culture and tradition?

The data indicated that World Vision’s theology was applied in a way that was nuanced to meet the local context. Some of the more prominent examples are set out below.

Two of the regions examined, the Balkans and Eurasia, comprised countries that had formerly been part of the Soviet Union. The data from these contexts showed a need to overcome a sense of widespread and entrenched hopelessness. A critical part of this process was the promulgation of kingdom values, which had dissipated within the general community during Soviet times. In these contexts, World Vision’s emphasis on building strong relationships with churches and inner transformation were critical. These theological elements enabled the promotion of ethics and civic values through camps, training and Sunday School programs.

In Eurasia, the Orthodox churches had been savagely repressed during Soviet times. The data showed that the dominant state churches in Armenia and Georgia were inextricably bound up with their citizen’s sense of national identity. World Vision’s close relationships with these churches helped to restore civic values, normalise spiritual activities within community and contributed to an increased sense of purpose.

In Georgia, there was evidence of World Vision adapting its internal devotional practices to accommodate Orthodox cultic tradition. This involved co-opting an Orthodox priest to attend corporate devotions because prayers are offered through the priest within that tradition. Consistent with the surrounding community, the vast majority of staff were Georgian Orthodox. This is a significant move given World Vision’s reformed and evangelical heritage.

In Africa, the data suggested that the expression of faith was significantly different from Western culture. One important aspect was the African psyche, which was unwilling to make
a separation between religious faith and daily life.\textsuperscript{12} Another related aspect was the open, visible expression of faith within communities. This represents a contrast with Western countries, which tend to treat faith as a personal choice belonging to the private sphere. World Vision was able to relate to communities in a way that gained greater acceptance for its development work. It did this by engaging in public prayer with the community about its projects and praying with community members about their personal needs. This included in Muslim settings. Not all development organisations could meet these community expectations.

Africa also provided contexts where animistic and occult practices were prevalent within communities. World Vision responded to the debilitating impact of these beliefs by actively standing against practices considered harmful and forming coalitions with Muslim leaders. Combating evil in Senegal and Tanzania meant engaging in more overtly spiritual practices.

In East Africa, where many churches are strongly evangelical or Pentecostal, World Vision’s theological emphasis on inner transformation included the promotion of a conservative social agenda. It also involved providing tacit support for evangelical campaigns, which were potentially divisive in mixed-faith settings.

In several countries that had experienced genocide within recent times, there was evidence of an appropriate emphasis on peace and reconciliation work as an aspect of inner transformation. Those countries were Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Armenia.

This collection of examples suggests that World Vision’s organisational theology was nuanced in different ways to meet local conditions. The African settings contrasted most starkly with the other regions. This is clearly reflected in the number of topic codes represented in the left hand column of Table 4.5. This column covers topic codes that were represented in only one region. Items such as responding to demonic influence, occult practice, public prayer and prayer with community members are represented here. These links show how a broader theological motif can be nuanced to meet local conditions or culture.

\textbf{12.7 Summary}

The thesis as postulated has been affirmed in all respects.

Chapter 5 enabled the thematic articulation of key elements of World Vision’s organisational theology. The interrogation of the dataset then enabled the inductive mapping

\textsuperscript{12} Bornstein, E 2005, \textit{The spirit of development: Protestant NGOs, morality, and economics in Zimbabwe}, Stanford University Press, Stanford. She notes that ‘In African Christian faith, the realms of the spiritual and the material cannot easily be separated: development is both spiritual and material’ (p. 49).
of how those theological motifs were specifically reflected in its development work in a range of contrasting settings.

At a general level, World Vision’s organisational theology does impact its development work and practice. The 37 connections made within the taxonomy indicate how that theology plays out in particular ways. As a whole, the connections amounted to an approach to development that was both distinctive and cohesive.

The data has allowed some potential areas of comparative advantage to be identified, as well as some inherent risks. These represent an important focus for future research. Overall, World Vision’s organisational theology is nuanced to meet local conditions, and clear examples were identified of how this has occurred.
13. Implications:
General Implications of the Research

Since its inception, development as a profession has been heavily influenced by modernity. Its canons aspire to strengthen and sustain human society and help people all over the world to experience fullness of life and opportunity. As a profession, development deals with people; more particularly, its focus is on people living in the majority world for whom religion is of central importance. Historically, however, international development as an academic discipline has tended to marginalise religious viewpoints. The data analysed in this thesis confirms that the significant gaps in understanding about the role of religion in development must be closed. In particular, the research highlights a number of important implications for the role of theology in development and the surrounding literature.

13.1 Theology reconsidered as a development asset

An implication of this research is that Christian theology should not be seen as something that necessarily stands apart from development. It is not simply a source of motivation for a cohort of Christian development practitioners. Nor is it inimical to development scholarship to consider how Christian theology informs the work of specific agencies.

Although some of the world’s largest faith-based development organisations have been engaged in development work for more than half a century, scant attention has been paid to how their theology influences their organisational objectives. There has been an assumption of influence and benefit, which has seldom been tested. Plant argues: ‘My contention is that in spite of half a century of post-war development and relief – and two millennia of charitable service – the churches and their agencies are still theologically unsure of why they do what they do.’\(^1\) In his view, a regrettable consequence ‘is that the rich resources of Christian theology fail to have much if any discernible bearing upon the policies and practices of church based development agencies. Christian theology has available to it a palate of rich colour; but many Christian development practitioners, in making social justice their only rationale, seem content to paint in monochrome.’\(^2\) The goal of this research has been to go deeper, as Plant has suggested. It builds on theological motivations for development work.

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\(^1\) The details I have are: Stephen Plant, S n.d., ‘Does faith matter in development?’, paper prepared for Wesley House and St Edmund’s College, Cambridge University, p. 3.

\(^2\) Ibid.
and examines how diverse theological motifs inform the attainment of an organisation’s social purpose.

The last century has seen the emergence of a corporatised era. A great deal of global development work occurs through NGOs, and many of these include FBOs. These corporate structures have their own identity and culture and, in the case of FBOs, distinct theological emphases. Examining how Christian theology informs the development work at an organisational level moves the theological analysis from an abstract or high-level to an applied or concrete level.

As an organisation, some clear themes were identified which are characteristic of World Vision’s theology. The taxonomy, which was compiled inductively from coded data, showed how eight characteristic motifs informed World Vision’s work as a development organisation. Thirty-seven different connections or links were observed. This is important information, because it shows how different theological emphases can influence development work.

The data also showed how some theological positions posed risks for development work. Several examples were referenced in the data. Some clear risks included:

- how programmatic evangelism can limit access to communities or stir up conflict
- how a commitment to work through churches can mean engaging with organisations often stuck in a charitable mindset
- how more liberal ideas about staffing can promote inclusion but dilute organisational distinctiveness.

These brief observations indicate that an organisation’s theological positions are not neutral, and they influence development work in both positive and negative ways.

13.1.1 Organisational effectiveness and fidelity

I have concluded that there is a significant benefit for faith-based development organisations in becoming more self-aware about the way in which their theology informs their work and provides a basis for social action. A mapping method may help this process by associating risks and benefits with particular theological motifs. Such a process may provide a basis for reflection that ultimately improves an organisation’s effectiveness.

There is very little evidence of development organisations undertaking serious theological reflection about their work. One encouraging development has been the AusAID-funded Church Partnership Program (CPP) in Papua New Guinea (PNG). The case study report on
this program describes how this project has provided a forum for different church denominations to overcome differences of opinion in their work. The AusAID report noted: ‘This result has been particularly evident in the articulation of the Theology of Development which refers to the dialogue around the core religious rationale that motivates and guides all seven churches and the partner Australian church-based NGOs in their development work.’ In this case, the clarity of theological understanding resulting from that dialogue provided the basis for the churches’ ongoing co-operation.

It is argued that an organisation’s leadership should be aware of the theological foundation or faith modality expressed in its constitution. In this context, the phenomenon of organisational drift has been noted at points in this research. An FBO should be able to articulate its key theological understandings and how these affect its work. At times, this may require an honest ‘reality check’, because operational practices and activities may differ greatly from formal policy positions. Is an organisation remaining true to its theological convictions, and are these motifs helpful in fulfilling its aims? Some organisations will have a clear organisational theology that motivates and supports the attainment of its social objectives; for others, those theological rationales will remain unclear. It is possible for organisations that have ‘drifted’ to hold formal theological positions that may be irrelevant, anachronistic or inconsistent with present operations.

A culture of honest reflection and transparency will help governors to better do their job. Ideally, the board and senior management of a development FBO will seek to more carefully articulate and understand its theological positions as a source of both strength and risk. This kind of reflective process is part of achieving the ‘faith literacy’ that James has spoken of. This will add to the body of shared learning, which in turn may benefit other organisations.

13.1.2 Theological engagement and anti-developmental views

The detailed studies of demographers of religion has shown that religious belief is growing especially in the Global South and that religious beliefs are a basic prism through which people engage the world. This raises an important question: what if those religious beliefs include beliefs that are anti-development? Religious beliefs may be sexist, parochial,

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4 James 2010, p. 2.
5 For example, the work of Dr Todd Johnson, from the Centre for the Study of Global Christianity.
6 For example, Belshaw has noted that ‘The general ethos of the dominant religion may be ‘conservative’ and anti-reform’ (p. 5).
judgmental, excluding, stigmatising or discriminatory. These attitudes may be an engrained part of the inherited culture.

This presents a challenge for Christian development FBOs. Where these kinds of beliefs are part of the inherited social milieu, there may be an opportunity to present fresh biblical or theological understandings. The best examples from the data concerned Christian attitudes to people with HIV and AIDS and the subordination of women through traditional gender roles. World Vision’s Channel of Hope programs sought to tackle these issues on the basis of scripture and theology. It is noted that there is a range of opinion within most religious traditions, and some opinions will be more conducive to the attainment of development goals than others.

It must be acknowledged, however, that an honest reconciliation of views will not always be possible. Nevertheless, a faith-based development agency may be able to isolate points of difference or identify areas of consensus that can serve as a platform for development activity. The existence of particular attitudes that may be regarded as anti-developmental within some faith traditions is not a valid reason to avoid or disparage the role of religion in development. On the contrary, it may provide a strong reason to engage. Sidestepping contentious issues does not change opinion; a well-constructed theological appeal might.

There was evidence of this happening within the dataset in relation to people with HIV and AIDS. There, the position in some communities moved from judgment and stigmatisation to acceptance on the basis of longer-term theological reflection.

### 13.1.3 Linking religious teaching with development goals

The world of Christian theology offers a set of values that are highly resonant with many development principles. One view is that it is remiss not to take advantage of this. In most parts of the majority world, religious teachings form the basis of morals and ethics that can directly influence community attitudes.

Belshaw and others have noted the general ethic of altruism found in most of the world’s major religions. However, there are other foundational values that are also resonant with development work such as solidarity, love, justice, trust and hope. The existence of such values within religious teaching may represent a significant asset in undertaking development

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7 Matthew Clarke notes that while it is easy to find examples of stereotypes of religion as male dominated and hierarchical there are also examples ‘where religious faith stands firmly in the corner of the oppressed and disadvantaged and where social justice is a core tenet’ (p. 11).

8 It has been stated that ‘Christianity and most other world faiths stress a variant of the ‘golden rule’ (treat others as you yourself wish to be treated) as a guide to social relationships’ (Belshaw, p. 4).
work. A strength-based approach to development will look for those assets that exist within a community which can be harnessed to help achieve development goals. Although a community’s faith and theology are not normally thought of in this light, they may prove to be a significant asset in providing impetus and direction for development initiatives. Sustainable development can only happen if people build on and from their own resources. For the majority world, these include spiritual resources. Specifically, Christian theology has the potential to be the basis of many programmatic tools.

The New Testament contains the earliest authoritative written depiction of the emergence of the Christian faith. While there are critical hermeneutical issues in interpreting the life of Jesus, there are many general themes that are referenced in scripture which may have strong resonances within development contexts. Some instances worthy of further consideration are briefly listed:

- The way Jesus is depicted as welcoming and valuing children arguably speaks to the rights of children.
- Jesus’ defiance of patriarchal cultural norms indicates a different understanding of gender relationships.
- Interdependence and inclusion appear to be modelled in the strong communitarian values of the earliest faith communities.
- Organised, non-discriminatory food distributions, such as those described in the Book of Acts, may anticipate later humanitarian principles.
- When Jesus speaks and acts prophetically, this focusses attention on advocacy as a potential way of overcoming injustice.
- By touching the lepers, Jesus resists the stigmatisation of a disadvantaged minority.
- The injunction to care for widows and orphans provides a reminder about human obligation towards the most vulnerable.

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9 Haar & Ellis, p. 353
11 Mt 19:14.
13 Acts 2:42–47.
15 Mt 23:23–24.
16 Mk 1:40–42; Mt 8:3.
17 Jas 1:27.
Scripture also contains accounts of Jesus affirming the humanity of the disabled and welcoming the outcast. He appears to heal in multiple ways and on multiple levels. There are repeated challenges to the wealthy and the powerful, which have been championed by the social justice traditions in the church. Especially topical are broad biblical motifs that speak about stewardship of resources and care for the environment. Similarly, in a world of transmigration, we recall that Jesus’ own story includes the experience of being a refugee family, and we note his confronting teaching about who is our neighbour. Furthermore, his disciples are commanded to live simply and are mobilised as a kind of agile social movement. While Jesus is sometimes depicted as engaging in acts of symbolic protest, he does not indulge in retaliatory actions. Peace-building is praised, forgiveness is commanded, and Jesus (arguably) supremely models reconciliation in his death and resurrection. There is also a rich body of teachings about justice, inclusion, honesty and hard work.

Overarching all of this is the constant refrain about the coming kingdom of God, in which all things will be put right. This is a powerful vision – of an alternative future – providing encouragement to the persecuted, the oppressed and the disenfranchised. And the image of Jesus, lived in firm solidarity with those on the margins, may model what it means to incarnate hope among the vulnerable.

18 Concern for people with disabilities was one of the prominent notes of Jesus’ earthly ministry. Persons with disabilities become witnesses for Christ, his healing of their bodies a sign of the spiritual healing he brought to all people. Mt 9:5ff.
19 Mk 7:37; Mk 10:46–52.
21 Lk 18:18–23.
22 Rom 8:22–24, Ps 24:1, Deut 10:14, Gen 2:15.
23 Mt 2:13–14; Le 10:25–37.
24 Mt 10:7–10.
25 For example, turning over the tables of the moneychangers in the Temple (Jn 2:14–15). Mt 26:52.
26 Mt 5:9. Shawn Flanigan, who is a commentator usually concerned at the potential for religious actors to exacerbate conflicts, gives the following positive example of where Christian faith helped to resolve conflict. She reports: ‘In the mediation process between the Nicaraguan government and the native peoples in the civil war in the 1980s, Mennonite negotiators focused on Christian ideals such as service, acceptance of suffering, the harvest or righteousness that awaits those who sow in peace, and the holy role of the peacemaker. Throughout negotiations, both sides turned to this religious symbolism to help create bridges …’ (Flanigan, S 2013, ‘Religion, conflict and peacebuilding in development’, in Clarke, M 2013 (ed.), p. 259.
27 Colo 3:13; Mt 18:21–22; Mt 6:12.
28 Col 1:20; 2 Cor 5:18–19.
29 Lk 4:17–21.
30 Mk 2:15–17.
31 2 Cor 8:21; Prov 6:16–20; Phil 4: 8–9; Jn 8:32.
33 Mt 5:3–10; Rev 21:3–5.
34 Mt 9:10; Isa 58:10.
What do these resonances imply? It is suggested that where a community has an affiliation with the Christian faith, this may itself be a latent asset in pursuing development goals. While understandings of Christian faith in many parts of the world may be narrow or shallow, there can be a willingness and openness to learn more. In some contexts, there is also a high level of civic participation in the form of regular church attendance. It follows that an applied Christian faith has the potential to be a strategic ally in undertaking development work in selected contexts. Having said that, the hermeneutical challenges must not be downplayed, because there are egregious examples where scripture has been misused to support patriarchal, discriminatory or triumphalist agendas.

Researchers such as Haar and Ellis identify four areas where religious beliefs may intersect, sympathetically or otherwise, with development goals: conflict prevention and peace-building, governance, wealth creation and production, and health and education. One example they cite, drawing on Christian faith principles, is the work of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is ‘based on the idea that long term reconciliation depends crucially on religious notions of reconciliation and healing, even in the absence of formal justice.’ Another is the reintegration of child soldiers into society in Sierra Leone by rituals within charismatic Christianity which are evocative of traditional initiation ceremonies.35

The work of Haar and Ellis also provides examples that are resonant with development themes based on traditional spiritual beliefs. As the teachings of other faiths may also support key development themes, it seems neglectful to not explore those points of intersection which may be conducive to the attainment of development goals.

13.2 What type of organisation is World Vision?

The data highlighted that existing approaches to the categorisation of FBOs were of limited use when it came to World Vision. The research has demonstrated that it is unsafe to rely on external criteria alone when attempting to classify a development FBO. Attention must be paid to the theological understandings of the organisation and the particular settings in which it operates. This underscores that individual case studies are required to more meaningfully penetrate FBOs.

35 Haar & Ellis, pp. 357–58.
13.2.1 Typologies

Chapter Two outlined some of the methods used to classify FBOs and highlighted the difficulty of classifying World Vision according to the general categories proposed by Sider or Clarke. For example, Sider’s ‘faith-centred’ or ‘faith-affiliated’ categories would apply to World Vision’s East African offices because staff cannot opt out of devotional activities or religious elements. Staff are required to affirm religious beliefs or practices, and religious content underpins some programmatic responses. However, World Vision could not be described as fully ‘faith permeated’ because even in places like Rwanda, non faith-based methodologies were used and in some cases were given preference. Support was also received from secular donors and more secularised support offices, posing dilemmas in how their activities would be reported.

Clarke’s typology also had some difficulties. The ‘active’ category seemed to best describe World Vision. Under that category, faith provides an important and explicit motivation for action and in mobilising staff and supporters, and it plays a direct role in identifying, helping or working with beneficiaries and partners. There is no discrimination against non-believers and the organisation supports multi-faith co-operation. This seems apt for most World Vision offices. However, in some offices it was clear that religious faith was the ‘principal’ or ‘overriding’ motivation for action and in mobilising staff and supporters, suggesting the ‘exclusive’ category. However, World Vision’s non-discriminatory policies and non-evangelical agenda seemed to rule out both the ‘persuasive’ and ‘exclusive’ options.

Nor was Jeavon’s index particularly helpful. This focussed on visible external features of organisational life, such as hiring policies. In some places World Vision has a more open hiring policy, yet in others it is completely closed to non-Christians. The reasons are partly theological, but also reflect more pragmatic considerations. For example, in Senegal, where the vast majority of the surrounding population was Muslim, it was impossible for World Vision to satisfy its personnel requirements by recruiting Christian staff alone. In the Balkans, however, where this would have been possible, the organisation chose to recruit a balance of Christian and Muslim staff because this was conducive to achieving its development goals. In contrast, in Tanzania practically all staff were Christian even though World Vision worked in a mixed-faith context. In Georgia and Armenia, the surrounding populations were overwhelmingly identified as Christian, limiting recruitment options. This diversity shows that the decision to hire Christian staff may express little about the inherent nature of the FBO.
The willingness to partner with non-Christian organisations was also another unsatisfactory criterion. Although World Vision partnered with Christian churches in all settings, it also worked very effectively and co-operatively with the leaders of Muslim communities in mixed-faith settings. In Senegal, it even formed loose coalitions with Muslim leaders and mosques against animistic practices. It would be a mistake therefore to see World Vision as operating in a closed or narrow way.

In one context, Tanzania, World Vision tacitly supported the local churches in their spiritual crusades while not evangelising itself. However, in other contexts, like Bosnia and Herzegovina, World Vision hired Muslim staff and sought to develop devotional programs accessible to people of both faiths. These would draw on shared beliefs and values. In Senegal, staff reported their pleasure at working for World Vision as a way of serving Jesus – however, this included Muslim staff who sought to serve Jesus as the Prophet!

In short, it is risky to draw conclusions about the inherent nature of an FBO based on ‘objective’ external criteria. A deeper understanding of the local context is needed to form any reliable opinions. The difficulties were exacerbated by the fact that World Vision is a partnership of entities, operating in diverse global settings, rather than a single entity in an assumed setting. This suite of factors supported the decision to examine World Vision by way of an in-depth case study.

The data also painted World Vision as an organisation that has adapted over time. In the settings examined, it had managed to reach beyond its own evangelical roots and learned how to partner with the Orthodox and Catholic churches. World Vision did not present as an insular organisation, having incorporated prevalent theories of change into its own development praxis and made good use of standard methodologies. While it clearly respected its own sacred sources, it did not disparage secular techniques or methods.

13.2.2 Literature about World Vision

World Vision is a prominent development organisation that has attracted the attention of several researchers. It is appropriate to consider briefly the implications of the research for the literature published about World Vision itself. The most detailed analysis of its work was conducted by Bornstein. Her research focussed on World Vision’s operations in Zimbabwe, a context not dissimilar to other strongly culturally Christian contexts in East Africa like parts of Tanzania and Rwanda.

The present research was consistent with a number of findings by Bornstein:
• World Vision staff were engaged in what she described as ‘lifestyle evangelism.’ This involved living a life in the manner of Christ instead of ‘providing access to Christianity through preaching or publishing Bibles, World Vision employees introduced Christianity through a style of life encompassing material and religious ideals embodied in development.’ This is also consistent with Dalaibuyan’s description of the work of World Vision in Mongolia.

• World Vision promoted a loving, incarnational praxis, noting that its staff would live in a similar manner within developing communities.

• In Africa, religious belief is deeply and intractably integrated in daily life: ‘In African Christian faith, the realms of the spiritual and the material cannot easily be separated: development is both spiritual and material.’

• World Vision has a committed long-term view of development.

• World Vision adopted a holistic approach to development: ‘Faith … was not an appendage: it was an aspect of development that framed the work done.’ For World Vision, ‘economic development was a primary objective, yet development applied to the whole person: the full human material and spiritual.’

• World Vision’s methods unify people in terms of church relationships: ‘The most significant change in this community since working with World Vision has been the movement to bring people from different denominations together. This was repeatedly emphasised …’

There were, however, some differences. For example, while there was a strong focus on internal devotional and prayer life, for Bornstein this could have a strongly negative connotation. The faith commitment of World Vision staff could be called into question and become a matter of adverse judgment or discipline, which could be misused as a way of exerting power. It also functioned as a staff performance criterion. No similar data was reported in the evaluation reports, although it is highly likely that in those places where an

37 Bornstein, p. 50.
38 Ibid., p. 52.
39 Dalaibuyan.
40 Bornstein, p. 49.
41 Ibid., p. 53.
42 Ibid., p. 50.
43 Ibid., p. 49.
44 Ibid., p. 56.
45 Jones & Petersen, p. 1301, also make this point in reference to Bornstein’s work.
active Christian faith was considered mandatory in recruitment, that the vitality of that faith would be revisited in periodic staff reviews.

Clarke has relied on Bornstein’s work to accuse World Vision of ‘overt proselytism.’\textsuperscript{46} The evidence for this claim appears to be that World Vision set up evangelism committees at project sites in Zimbabwe and engaged in the kind of ‘lifestyle evangelism’ described in the first bullet point above. However, Borstein notes, and Clarke also acknowledges, that non-Christians are not excluded from any development activities or assistance. It is therefore not entirely clear in what way World Vision has behaved unethically. It is possible that World Vision engaged in proselytising activities of a kind not involving the discrimination or restriction of access to development programs.

The evangelism committees described by Bornstein follow a similar pattern to the pastors’ committees described in the Tanzania evaluation report. The pastors’ committees did engage in activities that seemed to be a blend of both development and evangelism, and they were funded and supported by World Vision. However, it seems reasonably clear that the committees in Tanzania did not function as agents of World Vision. They were one step removed. While they were initially created as a non-denominational expression of World Vision’s commitment to local churches, thereafter they seemed to operate autonomously. The evangelical activities being conducted were on behalf of member churches. The evidence strongly showed that Muslim communities in Tanzania did not believe that World Vision was setting out to convert them, even if World Vision tacitly approved of evangelical campaigning.

It is difficult to support Clarke’s objection to ‘lifestyle evangelism’. This practice amounts to World Vision staff displaying a lifestyle that is distinctive and loving in a way that attracts the attention of the community. It seems plausible, even likely, that this could form part of a deliberate strategy, and the evidence from one location in Senegal would support the existence of such a strategy.\textsuperscript{47} The question raised is whether there is anything unethical about living a life so marked by love, care and simplicity that over time it rouses the curiosity of others. The alternative – leading lives that are bland, detached and focus on clinical service delivery – would be troubling for a different set of reasons.

Taking a broader historical perspective, King has made a very important contribution to understanding the evolution of World Vision’s work and practice. His research affirms World Vision as a serious, respected and professional organisation that has managed to operate in

\textsuperscript{46} Clarke, G 2005, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{47} See topic code E5.
the development sector without compromising its faith position. King described an organisation with an ability to reinvent itself over time. In particular, its theological position had changed from an evangelical organisation to a development organisation with a strong focus on professional methods and a commitment to advocacy and policy activism. Broadly, the data from the present research was consistent with King’s assessment. For example,

- There was clear evidence of World Vision seeking to engage with the Roman Catholic Church, despite its own reformed and evangelical heritage.
- Likewise, World Vision was deeply engaged with Orthodox churches in Armenia and Georgia, and to a lesser extent in the Balkans.
- There was an appropriate sensitivity to the issue of proselytism, with repeated policy injunctions against this.
- No data indicated programmatic evangelism, although in the religiously charged environment of East Africa, the work of pastors’ committees, which had evangelistic leanings, was condoned by World Vision.

When it came to World Vision’s stance on advocacy, the position was mixed. At a formal level, there was recognition of the importance of advocacy in all offices. However, in countries like Senegal, Rwanda and Lebanon, the stance taken was fairly muted when it came to engaging the government. In contrast, in Albania and Armenia there was strong evidence of policy change at a municipal level as a result of World Vision’s efforts. There was a record of promotion of child rights in many contexts, with localised efforts gaining the best traction.

Finally, de Wet has conducted qualitative research exploring the different conceptions of ‘transformational development’ between World Vision’s strategic and operational branches (ADPs) in South Africa. She notes that dependency theory heavily infuses the concept of transformational development so that it becomes conflated with ideas of ‘internal poverty’ and ‘marred identity’. In her view, this builds a false picture of South Africans as passive, lazy or irresponsible. According to de Wet, the overwhelming majority of academic literature denies the existence of a culture of welfare dependency within South Africa.

Nothing in the present research is able to shed light on de Wet’s conclusions one way or the other. However, they are especially interesting as the necessity of inner transformation is one of the key theological motifs which is characteristic of World Vision’s operational

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49 Ibid., pp. 103–104.
50 Ibid., p. 104.
theology. This emphasis on transformation often involves encouraging the poor to think about themselves in a different way, and it is seen an essential aspect of World Vision’s holism. In several ex-communist settings, the World Vision evaluation reports claimed that entrenched dependency on the state, social passivity and hopelessness were pressing development challenges. De Wet’s conclusions suggest this is an assumption made by World Vision in order to fit its theological narrative, or worse, an ill-informed projection on the whole community. She sees the unrealistic valorisation of self-sufficiency as eroding the development vision it aspires to.51

13.3 Resurgent interest in faith-based approaches to development

At the outset of this thesis, the systemic bias against any serious consideration of the role of faith within development work was outlined. According to Lunn, among others, the academic literature reflects more than 60 years of neglect.52 Its overriding emphasis has been on scientific empiricism. This literature has emerged largely from Western academic environments, which have been reluctant to recognise any public or social role for religious faith within professional development activity.

Some commentators are highly sceptical about the resurgent interest in the role of religion within development. Fountain has taken a more cynical view, asserting that it serves a deeply political purpose.53 He critiques a seminal text by Katherine Marshall.54 Fountain argues that the resurgent interest in religion on the part of the World Bank was about enlisting religious institutions in an instrumental agenda to assist it in meeting its own objectives – while leaving mainstream conceptions of development largely unchallenged.55 In a complex argument, he sees the failure to meaningfully define ‘religion’ in the debate as setting up an ill-informed dichotomy between secular development, on the one hand, and ‘religion’ on the other. This has operated polemically. It has allowed the mainstream development sector to

51 Ibid., p. 109.
52 Lunn, p. 940; see also Fountain 2013a, p. 10.
53 Fountain (2013a) argues that ‘the prior exclusion of religion and the current celebration of its newfound celebrity status by development studies are plagued by an ongoing ideological bias apparent in the framing and deployment of the concept. Religion is not an object waiting to be discovered and analysed, but rather a domain constructed according to dominant modern presuppositions by the religion and development literature. Discourse relating to religion is, correspondingly, not neutral description but deeply political and should be analysed accordingly’ (p. 10).
55 Fountain 2013a, p. 11.
see itself as normative, setting itself up against a vague and amorphous construct of ‘religion’ operating as a straw man, which then justifies using religion in a highly utilitarian way.\(^{56}\)

Marshall has vigorously defended her approach, noting that her research was not the product of a conspiracy.\(^{57}\) She objects to the idea of religions being ‘used’ in the pejorative sense of that word.\(^{58}\) Instead, she argues that partnerships with religious institutions can involve a true mutuality, and that the concept should be affirmed.\(^{59}\) Marshall acknowledges that instrumental engagements are not ideal, while at the same time claiming the need to be practical on behalf of the poor.\(^{60}\) Her idealised vision is one of true partnerships which involve real dialogue and improved understandings, and which may provoke challenges about the nature and meaning of development.

The data from this thesis provided examples of secular NGOs engaging with faith institutions in highly transactional ways (although some good still resulted from this). One example was an anecdote about the domestic saving scheme that came from the data in Rwanda. There were also multiple references to communities which were sceptical about city-based NGOs that would make fleeting visits.

The data showed that World Vision did not operate in this way. As a theological position, World Vision conceives itself as part of the broader church. It had a highly consultative, community-based and longer-term view of development, and it set up local structures to ensure the ongoing participation of churches at the ADP level. World Vision trained clergy and set up church-based partnerships. It had dedicated staff whose role was to foster church relationships. Part of its vision is that

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\(^{56}\) Fountain 2013a, pp. 11–14.


\(^{58}\) ‘Fountain presents a rather suspicious even conspiratorial dissection of the approach that I (and my colleague Lucy Keough) are said to represent … at no stage, in any way, were we **thinking**, much less saying, that religion should be “used”’ (Ibid., p. 37).

\(^{59}\) Ibid., pp. 35–36.

\(^{60}\) Marshall asks rhetorically ‘But why is the desire to halve poverty, sharply cut infant and maternal death, provide clean water and fight disease, suspect?’ (Ibid., p. 35).
churches will ultimately lead the witness to a holistic gospel in the local area, so there is a theological imperative for it to strengthen the church in its developmental understandings. In its internal life, World Vision invited the churches to participate in its devotional program and practising Christians were sought for its leadership. Staff were encouraged to participate in local churches and contributed much to their ministry.

In terms of engagement with the Islamic faith, the data suggested that World Vision’s approach became more relational than instrumental. World Vision extended its participation in training to imams and adapted its CoH for HIV and AIDS program to include an Islamic version, the faith-based content of which was written and taught by Koranic teachers. It formed coalitions with mosques against areas of perceived common interest, such as resisting animistic practices. In its internal life, it sought to accommodate the needs of Muslim staff members. It provided a level of inclusion in its devotional life, trying to model harmonious and co-operative interfaith relationships. The picture to emerge was not fundamentally utilitarian, but one involving a deeper sense of relationship.

Overall, World Vision’s praxis seemed to correspond more closely to Marshall’s ideal. It is clear that all NGOs can risk treating religious institutions in an instrumental way. The data from this research, however, shows that FBOs are well positioned to engage more deeply with counterpart religious institutions, especially where they have localised and longer-term modes of operation. Even where different faiths are involved, the style of engagement does not need to be transactional.

Fountain also argues that an overly benign picture can be painted when ‘religion’ remains ill defined. He notes the general failure of Marshall to highlight sources and examples where religious views have contributed to conflict and violence. To balance this he refers to the research carried out by Flanigan, which has shown that religious NGOs can exacerbate conflicts by setting up exclusionary boundaries in favour of their co-religionists and engaging in proselytism. It is difficult to challenge Fountain’s central point that it is not meaningful to consider ‘religion’ in an undifferentiated or generic way, and that when it comes to individual FBOs, case studies provide the best analysis. He argues that ‘taking religion seriously will

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61 Fountain asserts that Marshall and Keogh conspicuously avoid the topic of religious violence and proselytization (2013a, p. 18).
62 ‘religious NGOs are embedded in allegiances which implicate their work in the process of exclusionary boundary activation among their respective religious groupings’ (Fountain 2013a, characterising Flannigan’s thesis, p. 19). Interestingly, Flannigan’s work refers to interviews conducted in Lebanon, Sri Lanka, and Bosnia and Herzegovina conducted with NGO managers. Interviews conducted in the present research in Lebanon and Bosnia and Herzegovina contradict this finding in the case of WV, and indicate its strong emphasis on positive interfaith relationships.
involve dissolving essentialised religion and replacing generic studies with more detailed, nuanced, and specific approaches.”

The data from this research showed that in the case of World Vision, there were repeated policy prohibitions on proselytism and no evidence of discrimination in its field work. Instead, several inductive connections were drawn from the dataset which correlated particular theological motifs with the strengthening of interfaith relationships. These included:

- Topic code A1 – Biblical Holism and Spiritual Worldview: Leveraging community goodwill from an existing spiritual worldview
- Topic code B2 – Work as Ministry: Work as an expression of love
- Topic code C2 – Living for the Kingdom: An emphasis on interfaith respect and co-operation
- Topic code E4 – Imperative of Inner Transformation: Transfiguring inter-ethnic and interfaith relationships
- Topic code F4 – Devotional Culture: Modelling respectful interfaith and interdenominational relationships
- Topic code H5 – Special Relationship with the Church: Unity and co-operation.

The quantity and pervasiveness of this data suggested that a commitment to strengthening interfaith relationships was one of World Vision’s distinctive themes. This highlights the need to view FBOs individually and map their theological positions. World Vision is alert to the risks of sectarian conflict, which is why it does not engage in programmatic evangelism. In part it agrees with commentators like Haynes, who, while acknowledging the risks, conclude that ‘religious faiths typically encourage members to work towards resolving conflicts and develop peace.’ However, unlike Haynes, World Vision sees itself as a faith-based agency best placed to pursue that agenda.

Specifically, the research has been able to respond to the challenge of writers like James and King who have pointed to a particular gap in knowledge: understanding the way faith actually functions in faith-based development. Identifying the key theological motifs of World Vision and investigating by inductive means how they link to its work have been especially helpful in filling this gap. This analysis supports the view that FBOs can be credible actors with a qualitatively different contribution to make in their development work.

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63 Fountain 2013a, p. 27.
64 Haynes 2007, p. 99.
It would be dangerous, however, to generalise. As Fountain has pointed out, there is a need for a detailed case-by-case analysis. For example, the data from this research shows that the practice of World Vision may be improved by careful reflection on the church relationships required by its own theologically informed praxis.

13.3.1 An enlightened secularism?

As Western donor governments have sought to affirm their secular underpinnings, this has led to a hesitancy in recognising the positive role that religious faith and faith institutions might play in carrying out development work. One bureaucratic response has been to avoid or filter out faith-related elements from government-funded development programs. One example is the stance taken by some European governments, who will not fund development projects that are co-located with faith institutions. Another has been the historical resistance of multilateral agencies like the WHO to engage with faith-based institutions. In development work, this may be seen as a kind of neo-colonialism that is disrespectful to local culture. When Western governments and donor agencies avoid engaging with faith-institutions, they may, by default, export a particular view about development. Over time, the exclusion of faith elements from government-funded development programs may suggest that there is no valid role for faith-based approaches.

The implication of this research is that consideration should be given as to how religious beliefs can be positively used to reinforce the government’s own goals for development. This contrasts with the more traditional approach, which attempts to separate religious belief from development as if they were mutually exclusive worlds. A very significant recent development, which pre-empted this conclusion, is the CPP funded by AusAID in PNG. This is a bold initiative funded by Australia’s international development arm, and it involves a partnership of Australian FBOs with churches in PNG. The initial case study reporting on the effectiveness of the program has been very positive.

I would argue that this type of partnership is not inconsistent with secular government and should be encouraged. Properly understood, secularism is about being neutral about religion, not anti-religious. As such, it involves balancing competing viewpoints – including the freedom of religious expression and conscience; the equality of people with religious, non-religious or anti-religious consciousness; and creating an open public forum where people can

65 Grills 2009.
speak on behalf of these different points of view. In this way, secular government is a helpful system of government that seeks to accommodate diversity and pluralism.

At times, secularism has been misunderstood as a position of entrenched suspicion or antagonism toward religious viewpoints, and this has influenced the willingness of some actors to engage with it. Holstein reminds us that ‘The secular system of a State does not necessarily presuppose a non-religious society or the exclusion of cooperation between Government Donor Agencies and Faith-Based Organisations. A secular system frees the State from being patronized by religion, but it also frees religion and religious communities from patronisation by the State.’

One commentator who has been consistently cautious about the resurgent interest in the role of faith in development is Gerard Clarke. He points to the dangers of proselytising and the denigration of faiths in poor and culturally sensitive areas. This hesitancy is justified by the present research, which identified several locations where programmatic evangelism could have an incendiary impact. At the same time, Clarke recognises that organisations like DIFD ‘must revise its secular and technocratic vision of development … Operationally, it must develop a more coherent corporate position on faith and development, promote faith literacy among staff, adjust its funding modalities to better accommodate FBOs, and diversify its engagement with FBOs beyond the mainstream Christian churches, while working to build their capacity and their inclusion in key development partnerships.’ This encapsulates something of the dilemma facing policy-makers.

Both the benefits and the risks of greater engagement with faith institutions and faith-based methodologies are real. Holstein acknowledges this highly ambiguous position: ‘Religion and faith communities can be effective as “angels of peace” and as “warmongers”.’ They can legitimise the use of force and demonise people of other faiths.

While noting the attempt to mitigate risk through the development of codes of conduct, she

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69 Holstein, p. 371. Flanagan also notes that ‘religion has the ability to stimulate militancy on behalf of the other, as well as militancy aimed against the other’ (p. 252).

70 Holstein, p. 371.

71 Holstein references the Geneva Spiritual Appeal, which was launched in 1999 and was co-signed by the several heads of international organisations and religious leaders. The kinds of principles enshrined are: refusal to invoke a religious or spiritual power to justify violence of any kind; refusal to invoke a religious or spiritual source to justify discrimination and exclusion; and refusal to exploit or dominate others by means of strength,
recommends that critical questions be framed as a reference point to test relationships. Some of the questions she proposes include:

- Does the program contribute to faith harmony beyond its own faith community?
- Does the program strengthen group solidarity exclusively within its own faith community or does it have a socially integrating effect? In other words, do others outside that faith community really benefit?
- How is a local FBO seen by the local population? 

This seems to be a very constructive approach that could be adopted by governments to help reconcile such a dilemma.

It should be noted that the risks are not all one-sided. There are also very real risks for religiously based institutions in dealing with governments, especially the risk of being co-opted into political or other agendas. There is evidence to indicate that the effectiveness of development programs is compromised when this occurs.

13.3.2 The conversation about ‘development’

It is important for the church and other faith institutions to have a voice in contributing to the discussion about the nature of ‘development’. The last two decades have seen a fragmentation in development studies and a move away from classical economic and rationalistic approaches, opening up space for religious viewpoints. Jones and Petersen argue that this opening up should move beyond a narrow consideration about how religion can be enlisted to serve development agendas to a broader conversation about what development is. For them, the narrow approach ‘misses something of the plurality of positions within development studies. Development as a concept has always been contested, and development studies remains an interdisciplinary field, reflective and heterodox in its epistemological orientation, drawing from a continuum of social science theory and methods.’

intellectual capacity or spiritual persuasion, wealth, or social status. Holstein sees these principles as helpful, but insufficient.

72 Holstein, p. 372.
73 Candland, C 2001, ‘Faith as social capital: religion and community development in Southern Asia’, Policy Sciences, vol. 33, pp. 129–148. This article concludes that ‘NGOs that are rooted in religiously articulated programs for social reform can be particularly effective at community development and build social capital, especially in political environments in which the state does not promote civic religion’ (p. 145). However, the broader political context is highly relevant. Where the state has co-opted religious institutions for arbitrary or authoritarian political purposes, this can lead to a loss of credibility, and damage the effectiveness of development programs.
74 Jones & Petersen, p. 1293.
75 Ibid., p. 1300.
Fountain agrees, arguing that too often the question of engaging with religious NGOs is judged according to the interests of the mainstream development industry. 76 He seeks to turn that question on its head: ‘Rather than asking how religion may align with our (secular liberal) priorities, attention should be turned to the more interesting and important question as to how development came to be seen among mainstream actors as distinctly secular, universal and [a] virtually unquestionable moral good such that religious involvement could be imagined as an abnormal intrusion.’ 77

If Fountain is correct, there is clearly work to be done in establishing the legitimacy of faith perspectives in the sector. It is important that faith leaders inject the voice of a spiritual perspective. For the majority world, spirituality is an important part of their human experience, and any concept of development that is dismissive of this perspective is arguably deficient.

More positively, for many practitioners and some institutions, development has come to mean human development. There has been a movement away from narrower material and technocratic aspects. According to the UNDP website, human development ‘is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential, and lead productive, creative lives in accordance with their needs and interests.’ 78 As early as 1980, Gourlet described development experts as ‘one-eyed giants’ who ‘analyse, prescribe, and act as if man could live by bread alone, as if human destiny could be stripped to its material dimensions alone’ 79 Twenty years later, Tyndale echoed that flaws in the development process can be referenced to the failure to consider metaphysical questions concerning human life. 80 During the last ten years, there has been a dramatic surge of interest. It has taken a long time for these more holistic conceptions of development to gain any real traction. The voice of religious leaders may help ensure that this shift in emphasis does not dissipate.

There are a number of reflections arising from this research which suggest that a long-term holistic approach to development must consider spirituality. First, in many of the communities examined in the evaluation reports, spiritual beliefs were strong and pervasive, consistent with worldwide data on increasing religiosity in the majority world. Second, in some places, faith and daily life were inseparable so that development activity divorced from

76 Fountain 2013a, p. 24.
77 Ibid., p. 25.
78 Haar & Ellis, p. 353.
a religious worldview was seen as culturally anomalous. A good example here was Senegal. Third, some societies expressed their faith in a very communal manner, rather than seeing religion as a private choice. This led to spiritual expectations being projected upon the development agency, such as prayer, in order to achieve local acceptance.

It is important for faith institutions to represent their constituencies in the conversation about the development process. In short, spiritual beliefs and practices are central to many people’s understanding of what it means to be human, and faith institutions have a legitimate voice in the development dialogue.

In recent years, these conversations have begun to be formalised. The first initiative was the Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics sponsored by James Wolfenson of the World Bank in conjunction with George Carey, the then Archbishop of Canterbury. This evolved into the World Faith Development Dialogue, again facilitated by the World Bank, which established a secretariat under the leadership of Katherine Marshall. In addition, there has been a formal dialogue between faith leaders and DIFD and the establishment of the University of Birmingham’s Religions and Development Programme.

Some faith leaders have also made strong personal contributions that have touched upon important development themes, including Archbishop Rowan Williams and Benedict XVI, through his papal encyclicals. These conversations have been highly beneficial in opening up a broader set of ideas about development.

13.4 Conclusion

The research has shown that an examination of an organisation’s key theological motifs by way of case study can be an excellent window into the different ways faith informs development activity. In the case of this specific case study, a large set of data has revealed the distinctive contribution made by one of the world’s leading development agencies. More broadly, this research has suggested that there are strong reasons for a much greater engagement between the development sector, governments and religious institutions. In

81 For example, Haar & Ellis report that ‘In Africa, both illness and healing are generally viewed as holistic in nature, requiring attention to the spiritual as well as physical aspects of a person. For this reason, religion plays an import role in health care in Africa generally’ (p. 361). For this reason they state ‘Should policymakers and development agents pursue a path of greater co-operation with religious networks, it will mean lending serious attention to religious world-views, with which they may be unfamiliar or even feel uncomfortable’ (p. 365).
82 Resulting in the launch of DFID’s Faith Partnership Principles.
83 Especially, Caritas in Veritate.
85 For a brief overview of the evolution of these initiatives, see Jones & Petersen, p. 1294.
relation to FBOs, the data has shown that the nature of their engagement with religious institutions does not need to be instrumental or transactional. The data has also shown what this engagement might look like.

Historically, the literature indicates a systemic bias that has operated to the detriment of the world’s poor. This research supports the renewed impetus to examine the role of religious faith within development. The data from this research suggest that in some contexts, faith-based approaches may represent a source of comparative advantage, and that dichotomous approaches which attempt to sever ‘faith’ from ‘development’ are retrograde because they fracture an integrated values base.

The dangers for governments and policy-makers of greater engagement with religious organisations are very real, and it is suggested that the way forward lies in establishing clear protocols, review mechanisms and administrative safeguards. There are also real risks of not engaging more deeply if governments are to fulfil their development objectives. It is encouraging that some governments are already moving in this direction.

The next chapter considers a suite of specific implications for development practice arising from the data.
14. Implications:
Specific Implications for Development Practice

This research has drawn on data from eight contexts in three continents, all of which concerns the role of faith in development. This chapter considers the specific implications for development practice raised by the dataset. An eclectic suite of ten implications is outlined which will be of interest to development practitioners and agencies as they seek to become more effective.

14.1 Implication for religious institutions as actors within civil society

This research has highlighted what is often the dominant role of the church, and comparable religious institutions of other faiths, within civil society. Communities will be strengthened by supporting those institutions which have a pivotal role within their life. These may include faith-based institutions. This poses a public policy dilemma for governments, secular organisations and multi-lateral organisations in knowing how to engage – and the appropriate limits of their engagement.

Religious faith can be a source of immense pride. It can build community and provide a sense of cohesion and belonging. In some contexts, religious identity may be considered coterminous with community identity or even national identity. Tyndale has observed that:

Places of worship: the temple, the gurdwara, the mosque or the local church have always been the centre of community life, the place where the vulnerable seek help and those who have sufficient are expected to share. The life of all religious people is, in some sense, necessarily about building communities, caring for one’s neighbour, feeding the hungry and teaching people about the meaning of their relationship with one another. Since the horizons of faith-based communities stretch far beyond the family, the clan or the village, they can help to broaden people’s perspective and enable them to feel they belong to a wider community as well as a smaller one.¹

As local customs and cultural events are frequently informed by local religious beliefs,² a case can be made for strengthening those organisations which nurture the local community, including religious institutions, where this serves some clear developmental purpose.

These are the kinds of institutions that hold a community together, reflect local preferences and provide hope in times of crisis. Therefore, strengthening these institutions may strengthen the community as a whole. For example, Clarke and Jennings report that: ‘the

² Clarke, M 2013, p. 6.
language of faith, the religious idiom, frequently better reflects the cultural norms in which the poor and marginalised operate. They are better able to draw such individuals and communities into global discourse of social justice, rights and development, without recourse to the often distancing language of secular development discourse.\textsuperscript{3}

Nonetheless, there has been an understandable reluctance to directly support religious institutions through development work, because this may be seen to be promoting a particular religious standpoint. It is suggested that a more flexible position is warranted where a government’s development agenda would be better served by providing targeted assistance to religious institutions of any faith. To not support religious institutions on ideological grounds risks devaluing the role of faith within community life and, by default, makes a statement that diminishes the importance of religion within human affairs.

In 2009, the Australian government moved to fund a development partnership with churches for the first time through its CPP in PNG. A second partnership has been undertaken with churches in Vanuatu. The rationale for the PNG partnership is compelling:

Working with the churches in PNG is highly relevant for the PNG context. With strong legitimacy among the population, which is more than 95% Christian, churches can contribute to public policy in PNG, enhance government transparency and accountability, support social justice and peace building and develop social capital. In addition the churches in PNG play a crucial role in service delivery – some 50% of health services and 40% of the schools in PNG are run by the churches. In the context of PNG, where the government is relatively fragile with very little capacity, the role of the churches is especially important. The churches themselves have strengths in their legitimacy, widespread presence and ability to shape social capital but can benefit from stronger structures, systems and development practice. Such capacity development is the highly relevant focus of the CPP.\textsuperscript{4}

Capacity building within churches is a particular focus of the CPP. Importantly, building an understanding of development principles within churches, mosques, temples and synagogues can also be a strategic investment. The data has emphasised that these are institutions of lasting and authoritative influence within local communities. They are established, functioning and geographically dispersed. In the case of churches, the data indicated that long-term engagement by Christian development organisations can help modify theological positions for developmental purposes.

One way of building developmental capacity is to provide in-service training around topical development issues for pastors and clergy. World Vision has done this in a variety of settings, and this approach has helped to influence target congregations on important issues.

\textsuperscript{3} Clarke & Jennings, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{4} Dart & Hall, p. \textit{v.}
A particularly helpful methodology may be to prepare theologically informed developmental materials, such as Bible studies and sermons, for use within congregations. This is beyond the usual repertoire of development interventions, but it has the potential to be influential.

Another suggested initiative is investment in the theological formation of clergy while they are in training. Belshaw has noted that ‘The training of religious leaders usually emphasizes spiritual and ethical issues to the exclusion of applied social and environmental studies.’ There is scope to train professional religious leaders in development issues by relying on theological and sacred sources from various faith traditions. This could also be a highly strategic move, potentially leading to a lifetime of informed and sympathetic teaching on developmental issues within congregational life. A developmentally literate cohort of clergy may help the church, or the mosque, to re-shape themselves into more socially active and transformative institutions.

For example, the acquisition of developmental skills could enable the church or mosque to proactively contribute to the design of specific programs. It may lead to the voice of the faith community being represented more directly, sensitively and effectively. Developmental training could enable faith institutions to understand how social movements work and the role of advocacy in setting public policy. It could also lead to churches and mosques becoming more self-critical, as well as more vibrant, active and socially engaged.

Improved knowledge may also help religious institutions to engage with development as a profession. That profession is close at heart but distant in terms of language and process. For example, improved skills may assist grassroots faith communities to compose grant applications, access funds, and to employ helpful evaluation and monitoring techniques. Ultimately this may lead to faith institutions gaining confidence to initiate projects. For Christian churches, it may also help in the conception of the kingdom of God as both immanent and transcendent.

14.2 Implications for instrumental approaches

Religion has shown remarkable resilience and the evidence shows that theistic belief is strengthening around the globe. In 2010, 12% of the world’s population claimed no religious affiliation compared with 20% in 1970. Religious affiliation is highest in developing

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5 Belshaw, p. 4.
6 Anglican Communion News Service, citing the work of religious demographer Dr Todd M Johnson.
countries, and the most recent statistics confirm a strong shift in the centre of gravity for Christianity to the Global South.\footnote{7 Rah, p. 13.}

While in 1910 Christians in the Global North comprised 80% of all Christians, by 2010 that figure had fallen to less than 40%. Christians of all denominations comprise 33% of the world’s population, and Muslims 22%. In Africa, ‘religion shows no sign of disappearing or diminishing in public importance, as development theorists have generally supposed.’\footnote{8 Haar & Ellis, p. 351.} In fact, Christian faith has risen from 9% to 47.9% over the last 100 years. It has been reported that for the first time, the rise in Christian affiliation in the Global South is outpacing the decline in the North, fueling a global net growth in Christianity.\footnote{9 Anglican Communion News Service.}

This landscape has important implications for the development profession, heavily influenced by modernity thinking. It has to wrestle with how it can best serve the majority world, which sees religious faith as its primary source of meaning. While development practice has espoused working in a close and participatory way with communities, the place of religion has been awkward and unsettling. Some parts of the development sector have responded by treating religious institutions in a very instrumental way.

This approach recognises religion as an unavoidable feature of the development landscape that must be responded to. Religious institutions are dealt with in transactional and tactical ways, often to further preconceived development goals. Jones and Petersen argue that this kind of approach is ‘based on normative assumptions in terms of how both religion and development are conceptualised: religion is understood to be apart from “mainstream” development, while development is defined as that thing that development agencies do.’\footnote{10 Jones & Petersen, abstract.} This kind of thinking has not optimised the constructive role that religion can play in securing developmental outcomes.

There are many disadvantages of instrumentalism. This type of approach uses faith institutions in an episodic way as a delivery channel. However, the literature suggests that development programs are more effective when reinforced from within communities. Where a development project or message is experienced as something from the ‘outside’ that has been projected upon a community, it will be much harder for it to take hold. Tyndale cautions, ‘The reduction of relationships between people as merely instrumental to the aim of attaining maximum economic efficiency has often led to a breakdown of solidarity …’\footnote{11 Tyndale, p. 13.}
Again, ‘When genuine participation is sacrificed the sense of common ownership is soon lost and with it, the motivation to make a contribution.’\(^{12}\) In contrast, the AusAID case study on PNG recognised at an early stage the need to increase and strengthen the role of the local church.\(^{13}\)

At its worst, instrumentalism reduces the relationship with the faith institution or community to one of convenience. The underlying assumption in some cases is that externally produced pre-packaged messages or projects can be neatly received and socialised. The data from this research casts serious doubt on that assumption, illustrating that the church or faith institution can be left with the task of translating or reframing the project. The real cost of development work includes the cost incurred by the religious institution in undertaking this important contextualisation. It can be argued that co-creating with the community provides greater ownership from the outset and is more respectful. It builds capacity, shares knowledge, draws on local input and promotes goodwill. In this regard, Goulet has noted that religious beliefs ‘when properly respected, can serve as the springboard for modes of development which are more humane than those drawn from outside paradigms. When development builds from indigenous values it extracts lower social costs and imposes less human suffering and cultural destruction than when it copies outside models.’\(^{14}\)

### 14.3 Implications about the parameters of development practice

The recognition of a greater role for faith within ‘development’ may alter the boundaries of development work itself. It may call for the acknowledgement of an additional set of methodologies used by faith-based agencies, even if those methods seem strange. It may also result in a broader sphere of activities that may be considered ‘developmental’.

One of the potential strengths of faith-based approaches to development is their strong ethics and values framework. This can be an advantage in helping communities to frame developmental messages that are in sympathy with their religious teaching. Marshall has plainly stated that ‘the arguments for engaging in an active dialogue between institutions of faith and development turn around the growing appreciation that there are enormous areas of overlap, convergence, shared concern and knowledge, and a core purpose.’\(^{15}\) That overlap provides a positive foundation for mutual action.

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\(^{12}\) Ibid.

\(^{13}\) Dart & Hall, executive summary, p. v.

\(^{14}\) Gourlet, p. 485.

\(^{15}\) Marshall 2005b, p. 11.
A defining feature of religions is that they are concerned with transcendent or ultimate truths. These truths may be based on revelation, sacred sources or traditional beliefs that are handed down from one generation to the next. Although religions vary from one another, most are concerned with an unseen, unprovable world. Haar and Ellis state that ‘For most people in the world, including Africa, ‘religion’ refers to the belief in the existence of an invisible world, distinct but not separate from the visible one, which is home to spiritual beings that are deemed to have effective powers over the material world. For people who hold this point of view, the invisible world is an integral part of the world, which cannot be reduced to its visible or material form only.’ Many religions hold that the spiritual world is linked to the material world through prayer and cultic practice, and one influences the other.

When it comes to faith-based development practice, the World Vision data indicated a wide range of spiritual or faith-related methodologies. These included corporate devotional practice, private and public prayer, a more embedded longer-term relationship with churches, a positive role for discernment in decision-making, the role of faith in inculcating social values, building up churches to strengthen civil society, using religion to help form social identity, and the use of scripture in designing programmatic tools. These methodologies clearly recognised an active role for religious faith within ‘development’.

Moving beyond these categories, World Vision also traversed more explicitly ‘spiritual’ territory by recognising spiritual influence within the broader penumbra of wellbeing. The data showed that World Vision staff responded to perceived malign spiritual influences through prayer, exorcism and teaching. This poses something of an intellectual dilemma. While the social consequences of all belief systems can be observed and mapped to some degree, spiritual knowledge of this kind is esoteric and cannot be tested. At this deeper spiritual level, there can be a clash of worldviews. World Vision sees some practices and belief systems as oppressive and seeks to work against them. Its strong reaction to harmful animistic practices was the clearest example in the dataset.

According to World Vision, certain animistic practices had strong anti-developmental consequences. They were seen as unscientific, oppressive, socially debilitating and in some cases linked with so-called witchcraft killings and the stigmatisation of widows. It is important to note that some commentators like ver Beek, and Haar and Ellis16 have identified some positive features of traditional belief systems that can used in pursuing development goals. Alola and Connell have also given a largely sympathetic account of ATR, without

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16 Haar & Ellis, p. 358, concerning peace-building through traditional mechanisms; see also ver Beek.
denying its more sensational and negative aspects. World Vision, in its approach, is making a statement that not all spiritual worldviews or beliefs are benign.

The lines are blurry and to some extent subjective. If it is accepted that development should be more holistic, in recognition that for most people spiritual beliefs are an important aspect of their human experience, then in some concrete settings there may be a contest of spiritual ideas. It was in this area that the data raised the prospect of religious imperialism in World Vision’s opposition to animism. It is interesting that one way World Vision responded was to form a coalition with Muslims against such beliefs. This suggests that its goal was not to win Christian adherents, but simply to oppose perceived anti-developmental practices.

The implications from this research for the sector is not to deny the role of religion in development, which can be positive, but to ensure the manner of engagement around spiritual topics is respectful, ethical and non-coercive. While spiritual belief is an important part of human existence, freedom of conscience is a non-negotiable development norm. This lies at the heart of all truly participatory development approaches. As the role of faith gains greater legitimacy in development work, faith-based methodologies and the scope of development practice will come under closer scrutiny. What must not change, however, are the accepted norms of respectful community engagement.

14.4 Implication about the communication of love in development work

The secularisation of Western society has coincided with the professionalisation of the development sector. Earlier generations of development work were associated with missionary endeavours, church volunteers or skills co-opted from other disciplines. However, international development is now recognised as a profession in its own right with most practitioners receiving their training through degree and post-graduate level courses.

This professionalisation has undoubtedly brought many advantages, including the development of advanced specialist skills, collegial networks, academic rigor and discipline in program design, shared research, an emphasis on assessment and evaluation, and, in general, an appetite for empirically supported field investment. This healthy suite of professional norms is to be commended. There may, however, have been one especially critical loss.

17 A date commonly used to mark the commencement of the development profession is the inauguration speech of US President Harry S Truman in 1949. See Clarke, M 2013, p. 2.
18 See Clarke, M (ed.) 2012, Mission and development: God’s work or good works, Continuum, London. This book helps to document the outstanding contribution of missionaries to early development initiatives.
Amid the debates about theories of change, rights-based approaches, the nuancing of design documents and the simplification reporting requirements, one inspiring humanitarian ideal underpinning development – the communication of love – may have been lost. This theme came up in multiple domains. Practical expressions of love allowed access to communities of different faiths. Love underwrote a relational and incarnational style of interpersonal engagement. Many World Vision personnel conceived their work as an expression of love. The implications of this were significant, providing a strongly positive reason for an open, non-discriminatory, non-proselytising behaviour. Love provided the basis for committed and sacrificial service. Love helped explain an embedded, trusted presence within communities. Love stirred up a focus on kingdom values and incubated hope. Love was an inspiring devotional theme that fomented social action. Love was a motivation for prayer and helped nurture the transformation of personal and social behaviours.

This is perhaps an unusual implication to draw from the evaluation data, but it was consistently and pervasively present. One of the downsides of the professionalisation of development work has been an emphasis on more theoretical aspects. I argue that professionalisation should not be at the expense of the communication of love or human understanding. When development becomes a theoretical exercise, it will parody those whom it exists to serve. The data reminds us that human connectedness should remain at the centre. Therefore, when it comes to the attainment of development goals, organisations with explicit religious values may be at an advantage. These organisations may be more ‘permission giving’ when it comes to the expression of love through work interactions compared with other types of organisations governed by standard corporate norms.

There is also a harder edge to love. A mature understanding of love may move beyond basic charity and compassion to take action in the more difficult territory of justice. Making this vitally important transition is a particular challenge for FBOs, especially when they seek to encourage churches and other faith institutions to do likewise. Such institutions tend to be socially passive and resistant to change.

14.5 Implications for understanding the internal dimension of development work

Some of the hardest development challenges are those that lie within. Nevertheless, this research highlighted how important it was for development work to be personally transformative. For development practitioners, going through a process of reflection was a necessary step in order for them to model the kind of changes they aspired to see.
Reflective processes are needed so that necessary changes can occur, and there was a clear emphasis on inner transformation within World Vision’s work. The consistent interiority of World Vision’s praxis has been noted as one of its distinguishing features. In this respect, World Vision seems to have pre-empted suggestions from eminent development theorists. For example, Edwards and Sen have written about the need for personal integration by development practitioners. They argue ‘even the socially committed will be unsuccessful if they ignore the inner basis of change’ and declare that ‘if people are not caring and compassionate in their personal behaviour, they are unlikely to work effectively for a caring and compassionate society.’ In their analysis, rarely do empowerment strategies generate the shifts in inner values that are needed to be truly effective. Chambers has similarly decried the hypocrisy of development practitioners, noting that personal behaviours and attitudes are a peculiar blind spot. He comments that practitioners find it extremely difficult to cede any responsibility or power, contradicting their own rhetoric.

In World Vision’s view, development cannot be disconnected from the interior world. Beliefs, attitudes and goodwill are as important as the interventions that alter the physical world. Intuitively this view rings true, and it was supported by direct evidence. One stark example came from Rwanda and followed a casual remark made about a new school building observed from a car window. The driver, a Rwandan, remarked that the building in question could be torn down tomorrow in civil unrest. He promptly added that the greater development challenge was not education, but people learning how to live with each other.

This example, and others like it, suggest a number of implications for development work. To begin with, an appropriate emphasis needs to be given to the topic of inner change. This is a topic that does not receive much attention, as it touches upon personal values and therefore is kept at arm’s length. However, while education and training are undoubtedly helpful in challenging personal values, spiritual engagement can be just as important in this process. An active religious faith involves the relational claims of God and neighbour. These relational claims may help bring good values to life in a more concrete way. This was part of the rationale for World Vision’s devotional program.

The intensification of religious faith in the Global South has the potential to be of significant benefit to developing communities, because it offers a useful platform to help

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19 Edwards & Sen, p. 41.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid., p. 42.
22 Ibid.
23 Chambers, p. 2.
24 Ibid., p. 3. He also finds it telling that psychologists are under-represented as development professionals.
change social attitudes and behaviours. Transformative change can happen when people purposefully connect with their deepest source of meaning. The up-skilling of faith leaders in development principles may help in engaging those faith communities.

Finally, faith-based agencies have a particular responsibility to lead by example. World Vision has been able to do this by encouraging a reflective culture among its staff, and by consistently and publicly emphasising the importance of respectful interfaith relationships. That emphasis was pervasively expressed in one way or another in many of World Vision’s key theological motifs.

When it comes to interfaith relationships, faith-based agencies have a particular responsibility. This is because historically, faith institutions have been accused of being a perennial source of conflict. Faith-based agencies, like their staff, should live out the kind of changes they wish to see in the broader community. World Vision was able to model a wide variety of initiatives directed at bringing about inner change and strengthening respectful relationships.

It is important that faith-based agencies realise their special responsibility. They are able to approach the question of harmonious interfaith relationships as a participant/actor, and in this sense they have a vested interest. In short, they have the opportunity to use their faith as a part of achieving a long-term solution to religious conflict.

14.6 Implications for the recognition of spiritual capital in development

One of the great social researchers of recent decades, Robert Putnam, has focussed on the horizontal links that are necessary for a coherent and productive society in the context of North American democracy.\(^ {25}\) His research identifies social capital – the voluntary links between people, and different groups – as critical for civic development.\(^ {26}\) Putnam has pointed out that with the decline in traditional organisational structures, such as church, society has become more disassociated and atomised.

There is a close relationship between social capital and spiritual capital. Berger and Hefner suggest that ‘Spiritual capital might be thought of as a sub-species of social capital, referring to the power, influence, knowledge and dispositions created by participation in a particular


\(^{26}\) Putnam refers to bonding capital as bridging capital as the voluntary links of goodwill between people and different groups.
religious tradition.' Others see spiritual capital as simply another term for the power and influence generated by religious belief and practice.

This research supported the positive role that religious belief and institutions can play in achieving development outcomes. Religious faith helps to build long-term hope and reliance within developing communities, and it can strengthen social identity and meaning. The role of the church in providing strong participatory networks was highlighted by the data, including its locus as source of teaching, social care, inspiration and belonging. These findings were consistent with the emerging literature on ‘spiritual capital’ as a valuable resource within communities.

One commentator has pointed out that there are important links between spiritual capital and health, observance of the rule of law, volunteerism and education. While it can be difficult to reliably measure, when it comes to developing communities, spiritual capital can be especially significant. The poor may not have access to more traditional types of capital, such as financial capital. Stocks of human capital and intellectual capital can be depleted by poverty, making other forms of capital more important.

Spiritual capital exists as a reflection of the social strength of a community arising out of its religious convictions, networks and practices. The present research has affirmed the importance of spiritual capital in carrying out development work, and it has highlighted the kinds of connections that contribute to it. The research has also pointed to an important question: Given that spiritual capital is so important to developing communities, could its value be exponentially enhanced by providing faith communities and their leaders with a specific knowledge of development principles? Intuitively, it seems likely that if development knowledge was more widely disseminated within religious networks, then spiritual capital could be more easily deployed in more socially transformative ways.

Some researchers have focussed specifically on the economic impacts of spiritual capital. In this sense, spiritual capital may not be such a new idea. It was Max Weber who proposed that Christian inculturation created the conditions necessary for the capitalist system to flourish, especially the so-called ‘Protestant work ethic’. However, spiritual capital is now being examined in a fresh light. For example, Rebecca and Timothy Shah assert that ‘A

comparative research program investigating spiritual capital in different civilizations remains a matter of central intellectual and policy importance. The urgency is all the greater in the light of the fact that, contrary to the forecasts of modernisation theorists a generation ago, the past 20 years have seen an unprecedented religious revival in much of the world. The global trend towards increasing religiosity in developing countries has been commented on elsewhere in this research, and it shows no sign of abating. It follows that ‘if religion aids economic betterment by serving as spiritual capital, then it is urgently important that faith of the poor be tapped as a resource for economic development, and faith-based anti-poverty policies and strategies may be one way to do this’.

14.7 Implications concerning short-term project work versus long-term incarnation

The research indicated that secular agencies may be better suited to short-term project work, typically the carrying out of discrete projects, as well as emergency, humanitarian and response work. The reason for this is that non-faith-based agencies may not be able to engage as meaningfully on a longer-term basis as development partners in many faith-infused contexts.

Long-term commitment is seen as one of the distinctive advantages of FBOs: ‘They are likely to remain in place through a variety of difficult circumstances.’ Personnel operating from a faith commitment may be more willing to submit themselves to the privations of living with impoverished communities on a long-term basis than those operating out of ‘career’ rather than ‘vocation’. The present research affirmed this conclusion.

A long-term community relationship is necessary to build trust and achieve true participation. There is a vast difference between the translation of projects so they can be acceptable and useful, and the generation of development projects as the fruits of lasting partnership. This observation is not meant to disparage project-based initiatives, which are welcome and do much good. It is, however, important to be clear. The most effective development will be community-led, strength-based and highly participatory.

The latter type of action requires a longer-term engagement, not ad hoc visitation. The data from this research indicated a level of cynicism and resentment towards organisations

30 Shah, R & T 2013, ‘Spiritual capital and economic enterprise’, The Oxford Centre for Religion and Public Life, online at http://www.ocrpl.org/?p=13, 24 April. ‘If it were demonstrated that the poor can leverage their vast stocks of religiosity as economically beneficial spiritual capital, this could translate into a new paradigm for development practice and policy’ (p. 1).
31 Ibid.
32 Belshaw, p. 4.
which operated in that manner. This phenomenon was reported in several communities and serves as a caution.

There are some resonances here with data gathered from the World Bank’s *Voices of the poor* research.\(^\text{33}\) This was a monumental research exercise that surveyed 60,000 people in isolated poor communities. The data was intended to capture the respondents’ own impressions of poverty. This body of work produced some surprising findings, and it was an impetus for the World Bank’s participation in the World Faiths Development Dialogue.

One finding was the higher confidence in religious organisations and leaders than most others (including government and many narrowly focussed NGOs). One clear contributing factor was their ongoing presence within communities. A lived solidarity can build the kind of trust needed for the most effective development. A second finding concerned the highly holistic understanding among the poor of the phenomena of poverty.\(^\text{34}\) These findings are both relevant to this topic.

It unrealistic to expect NGOs to change their basic mode of operation. For example, it is not going to be possible for all development NGOs to disperse their operations within remote, impoverished communities even if there are sound theoretical reasons for doing so. This reality, however, reinforces an important conclusion expressed elsewhere, namely, that there may be a substantial benefit in training up local religious leaders within communities in developmental understandings. These leaders will have an ongoing presence and an improved knowledge of development principles that may help them to respond to poverty within prevailing spiritual frames of reference.

This type of approach may enable trusted leaders to interact more effectively with development organisations. This could improve the quality of the interactions with visiting agencies and enable a more effective intermediation to occur. However, the ideal that is firmly underscored by this research is an embedded long-term presence within communities. The characteristic ADP model pursued by World Vision, consisting of a 12- to 15-year presence within the local area, is one of the features that contribute to its distinctiveness – and effectiveness. This may serve as an example to others.

\(^\text{33}\) Narayan, D 2000, *Voices of the poor: can anyone hear us?* Oxford University, Washington DC.

14.8 Implications for engaging with local communities in prayer

Prayer is an act by which people submit themselves and their concerns to God, a higher authority. When a development organisation and a local community pray together, this is an act of humility. It shows that they together seek God’s providence and blessing. This is respectful of local culture and an important way of building goodwill, in addition to any transcendent value of the prayers themselves. The data consistently showed that public prayer was an advantage for World Vision in establishing trust in both Christian and Muslim settings in Africa.

Prayer is not something that can be undertaken lightly or insincerely, and not every organisation will be able to engage in this practice. The evidence showed that organisations that were not able to participate in prayer were viewed more suspiciously in some contexts. One implication for the sector is to consider how this divide can be bridged.

One way may be to invite community leaders to pray at significant public occasions or ceremonies. In this way, respect can be shown towards local beliefs even if they are not shared. Another way may be for individual personnel to pray, in their personal capacity, if they are able, even though their employer organisation may not subscribe to any faith position. The data suggests that this is not a trivial issue, and that non-faith-based organisations may need to think through how they can gain greater acceptance. Ignoring local sensitivities and preferences will be unhelpful.

A fundamental point to be addressed is the stark difference between the way religious faith is expressed in some developing country settings and the way it is expressed in the West. Western donor countries are often highly secularised and have views about the public expression of faith that have been shaped by the Enlightenment and modernity. In short, religious faith in the West is an increasingly rare personal choice that belongs strictly in the private domain. By contrast, the public expression of faith in some development settings, especially in Africa, is seen as a social or communal expectation. The failure of development organisations to recognise this and respond in a considered way may lead to resentment or disengagement.

The data showed that World Vision had a nuanced policy that allowed public prayer with Muslims. Care needed to be exercised in the way the Divine was identified and addressed – for example, referring to Jesus as the Word of God but not as the Son of God. It was acceptable for Christians to pray the Muslim Fatiha. In addition, it was critical that prayer
was undertaken respectfully and sincerely. This level of co-operation was possible because both Christianity and Islam are Abrahamic faiths.

This poses an interesting question about how World Vision might operate in strongly religious but non-Abrahamic faith settings, and it is an important area for further research.

### 14.9 Implications for the role of faith in building resilience

The data strongly supported the role of faith in building community resilience. This is of critical importance. Development projects fail when communities become disengaged and give up. Many aspects of development work are incremental and inherently long-term in nature, and it may take more than one generation for changes to really take hold. There are often unpredictable setbacks, so there is a need for communities to have confidence about the future and believe in a process of change.

A Christian faith-based approach to development takes place within a broad metanarrative. This metanarrative usually has two parts. The first part is about encouragement in the present through displays of human solidarity. This aspect is about people caring for one another, recognising that everyone has an intrinsic dignity and worth, and they are bound together in their shared humanity. Belshaw observed that ‘Spiritual and relational experiences can raise the self-regard and confidence of previously excluded poor people.’ The application of the Golden Rule – that is, important ideals of self-sacrifice and unconditional love – and the living out of kingdom values underpin this kind of encouragement. Other faith traditions will reflect some or all of these elements.

The second part of this narrative is that God cares. This is the aspect of faith that takes deeper root through adversity. Christian faith claims that not only does God care, but ultimately he is seeking to change the world so that it reflects his intentions. This offers a transcendent hope of a better world to come. This is an especially rich collation of ideas, involving elements of divine empathy, participation, re-creation, overcoming and abiding hope.

These themes may be especially resonant in developing communities where life is fragile and precarious. It is speculated that part of the massive shift of global Christianity to the South is that God goes where he is needed. In terms of development practice, some of the alternative narratives have been less clear and less compelling. The idea that the steady linear

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35 Belshaw, p. 4.
36 A scripture of special resonance here is Rev 21:3–5, which speaks of a time when God makes his home among his people, and there is no more death, mourning, or crying, or pain.
application of technology will lead to sustained improvement has been disabused. Similarly, a focus on human rights and economic stimulus have to date failed to deliver widespread social transformation. Many of the positive elements of these approaches have been able to be absorbed within a broader faith story – a narrative that may have stronger historical and cultural resonances in many developing country contexts.

These aspects were reflected to varying degrees in the data. The topic codes dealing with the living out of kingdom values and transcendent hope dealt with these themes most directly. Importantly, a wide range of development themes could be incorporated within World Vision’s work, such as child rights, gender empowerment, income generation, micro-finance, water and sanitation, and improved agriculture. Not only were these items able to be incorporated, but there was some data suggesting that the accompanying faith narrative of World Vision’s work enhanced and accentuated these elements of the development program. For example, the evaluation from Tanzania claimed that ‘All community members reflected on the value of development interventions; they cannot be understated as they address real needs and bring much hope. Attention to the spiritual doesn’t replace or supplant the physical requirements of food, water and shelter, but greatly amplifies the value of them.’

Religion can provide a strong metanarrative of hope and belonging, sometimes expressed in stoic endurance. This is perhaps one reason why, despite earlier predictions, religion is patently not dying out. It is speculated that communities may take comfort in knowing that their life is significant to God, and that he grieves with them in the present. In this way, a religious narrative may provide a deeper, existential meaning in environments of exceptional challenge.

Based on the research data for World Vision, the observation can be made that its theology of the kingdom of God is not sufficiently well developed or emphasised. While it does lay appropriate stress on reflecting kingdom values in the present, its emphasis on God’s ultimate transforming action is less pronounced. It is suggested that more attention could be paid to this aspect because it would provide valuable assurance to staff and the communities where they work. The role of development workers and communities as co-creators and co-participants with God also deserves a stronger focus.

37 Goode 2010b.
14.10 Implications for development cooperation between Muslim and Christian faiths

The data from the research contradicted the view that religion is inevitably a source of divisiveness and conflict. The evaluation reports illustrated a remarkable degree of cooperation between representatives of the Christian and the Islamic faiths. In all mixed-faith environments, there were strong examples of interfaith co-operation.

This issue was tested most closely in Senegal. There were examples of joint programs, cooperation between faith leaders and strong goodwill exercised by World Vision staff of different backgrounds. Most surprising was the desire of Muslim staff to work for World Vision precisely because it was a Christian organisation.

There were several factors at play here. Christianity was a known faith, in the sense that Christians are regarded as People of the Book. There is a sense of place for Christians within the Islamic worldview, and their shared Abrahamic heritage was helpful for both Christians and Muslims in ascribing the identity of God. In particular, the recognition of Jesus respectively as Saviour or Prophet was sufficient common ground for staff to render faithful service. The data indicated that Muslim staff saw working for World Vision as a way of serving the Prophet and living out Koranic values.

It helped that World Vision took its faith seriously and Christian staff were identified as having lives that demonstrated piety. Most important, however, was World Vision’s commitment to faith, which was respected by staff and the communities where it worked. World Vision’s strong faith perspective enhanced its reputation in communities that viewed development challenges from a theistic frame of reference. It was also significant that World Vision had a proven track record of non-proselytising behaviour, although some staff had become Christians. Nevertheless, some staff reported becoming better Muslims because of their exposure to the organisation.

Like most of sub-Saharan Africa, the strand of Islam present in Senegal is Sunni, and it has been historically influenced by Sufi mysticism. It is unclear whether World Vision would be so warmly received in more fundamentalist or hard-line environments. In the Balkans, Lebanon and Tanzania, there was consistent data, including from Islamic community leaders, supporting World Vision’s presence, impact and operational style.

38 Kessler & Arkush. Consistently, this paper reported ‘If you go to a Muslim community and start saying I’m a person of the Book or I am a Muslim, people will be more accepting of you because of the faith element’ (Maki Mohamed from Islamic Relief).
The implications of this finding are significant. First of all, in multiple contexts, World Vision was able to enjoy very positive relationships within Muslim communities. In several of those communities, World Vision’s faith perspective was identified as a positive advantage. This contradicts the view that religion is typically a source of social division. It certainly contradicts the ‘clash of civilization’ thesis, which has gained currency in the populist Western media. These instances serve as an example and in some respects, a model.

Second, the data contradicted the claim sometimes made that secular agencies have the advantage of being more ‘neutral’. Their secular underpinnings are claimed as an advantage because it places them above religious conflict and beyond the dangers of proselytism. This type of claim was refuted by the data. The ‘neutrality’ of secular agencies in Senegal and Tanzania meant that communities were sometimes confronted by a completely alien modernist philosophy. There was clear data showing that a number of secular organisations were reported to be culturally and philosophically distant.

Taking a broader view, the widespread and intensifying theistic belief in much of the majority world raises an important question about the ‘connectedness’ of worldviews. On the topic of proselytism, Wrigley has pointed out that it should not be regarded as a problem confined to FBOs. She cautions that some organisations remain unaware that they have ‘disregarded culture themselves, tramped on belief, undermined traditional social networks and imposed a secular mindset, engaging in dangerous, subtle proselytising of a material gospel.’ Likewise, Salemink notes that rationalistic approaches sometimes preach a gospel of market-based prosperity so that development co-operation involves a community in a kind of quasi-religious conversion.39 The question of the compatibility of beliefs and methodologies receives insufficient attention in development circles. The problem may be a lack of self-awareness or a lack of capacity to be genuinely self-critical.

The data provided clear evidence of co-operation between Muslim and Christian faith leaders in carrying out projects and training together with World Vision. In Senegal, there was also evidence of World Vision enlisting the support of Muslim leaders to take a stance against perceived harmful animistic practices. The ability to form a coalition of this type indicated a high degree of trust. Koranic teaching was used by World Vision in a specially adapted version of its CoH program, with the relevant components designed and delivered by Muslims, and also in promoting children’s rights in Tanzania among Muslim communities.

39 Salemink, O in Harskamp & Giri (eds) 2004, The development of religion, the religion of development, University of Chicago Press, Chicago. Fountain also points out market driven and secular ideologies can be zealously applied so as to seek to change the attitudes of others. Fountain 2013a, p. 26.
In terms of more general implications for the development sector, recommendations include:

• encouraging a deeper self-awareness of broader organisational compatibility issues, particularly when it comes to organisations considering their own ‘neutrality’

• thinking more creatively about how to engage effectively in faith-infused contexts – this may involve programmatic contextualisation in conjunction with religious organisations or partnerships with local FBOs

• awareness of the changing global faith landscape and considering how this affects a profession deeply indebted to modernity

• considering faith as a unifier in some communities, which has been able to provide a strong basis for co-operative action

• recognising the potential for a close relationships between Christians and Muslims in many contexts because of their shared Abrahamic heritage.

The final chapter will provide an overview of this research and suggest some of the more promising areas for further enquiry.
15. Overview and Areas for Further Research

An overarching contention of this thesis is that there is a benefit in Christian FBOs reflecting intentionally on how their organisational theology informs their development work. It was believed that a process of systematic reflection may lead to a clearer understanding of the attendant benefits and risks for development work. The thesis has demonstrated this process by taking one of the world’s leading development organisations as a case study. In conducting the research, important implications have been identified for other FBOs and the development sector more generally.

The foundation for the research was the articulation of the key elements of World Vision’s organisational theology. This was possible because World Vision has described many of its theological positions in policy documents that are treated as authoritative throughout its worldwide development partnership. Some elements of World Vision’s theology were able to be tested with senior personnel, and the researcher was able to draw on his own experiences as a former employee engaged in theological reflection.

A corpus of evaluation reports, as well as supporting interviews and focus group discussions, provided an especially useful dataset supporting a detailed revelatory case study. These materials focussed on the integration of faith within World Vision’s development practice in eight diverse countries.

Qualitative research techniques were used to interrogate the data and to see how World Vision’s theological motifs informed its work. A mix of techniques was thought the best way to analyse these written materials. The theological motifs that were identified established eight general domains. Each unit of text was coded, adopting a standard approach for classical content analysis.

The research then became more inductive, with grounded theory providing the basis for a detailed analysis within each domain. Connecting themes (called topic codes) and sub-themes emerged organically through an iterative process, as quotes and examples were grouped. A high-level quantitative analysis was then applied to these themes to give a general indication of prevalence and distribution.

The complete list of topic codes catalogued the various ways that the characteristic theological motifs were reflected in World Vision’s work.

A distinctive feature of this research has been its breadth. The role of theology within the development work of international FBOs is a spacious topic that has scarcely been touched
upon. This research has therefore provided a foundation for exploration, especially at the operational level. The methodology outlined, based on largely qualitative research techniques, was able to build an informative case study.

Like all research, however, it has significant limitations.

The conclusions expressed are limited by the dataset. The data provided a largely positive picture of the way that World Vision’s organisational theology affects its work. However, it is possible that World Vision commissioned the evaluation reports because it had a preconceived view about the constructive role that faith can play within development work. There is therefore some risk that this research is built upon a tendentious foundation. Nonetheless, there were a significant number of external voices within the dataset, and significant risks and criticisms were also identified.

A case study based entirely on original research materials, rather than internally produced organisational reports, could be seen as more robust. That was not feasible in the present case. The dataset has, however, provided a clear view about how World Vision’s organisational theology informs its development work, including the direct evidence of staff in the various contexts examined. The connections outlined in the taxonomy are instructive, and that taxonomy is now available to be expanded, critiqued and contested by other researchers.

The present research has uncovered a range of important research themes. It has therefore served as both a foundation and an introduction for further work. Several of the more prospective research themes are mentioned below.

15.1 Expanding the World Vision taxonomy to cover non-Abrahamic faith settings

The taxonomy developed in this study is limited in part by the religious landscape of the countries where the evaluations were undertaken. They were all counties where the predominant religious affiliation was either Christian or Muslim. While these groups combined represent a majority of the world’s people, there are other major world religions in places where World Vision operates.

It would be instructive to see how World Vision’s theology informs its development work in other settings, for example, in Buddhist and Hindu contexts. It is hypothesised that many of the connections described in the topic codes would be affirmed. These may include those relating to more ‘universal’ attributes such as World Vision’s self-understanding about its work as ministry, its kingdom values, and its incarnational style of engagement. However, it
seems likely that other aspects would be very different. For example, engaging with Buddhist or Hindu temples may be very different from engaging with churches and mosques.

It is also expected that the types of risks attached to World Vision’s theology may vary according to the surrounding religious context. For example, how would World Vision’s emphasis on empowerment of the poor work in a Hindu culture built on a caste system? It is conceivable that World Vision’s approach might meet resistance and cause social disruption in this kind of environment. It would be useful to extend the present research and expand the taxonomy – and the identified risks – if additional evaluation reports become available.

15.2 Comparing the theologies of other FBOs and the impact of those theologies on development work

The use of theology as a development tool is a major theme arising from this research. Although theology is rarely considered as an asset in development work, this case study has shown that World Vision’s organisational theology profoundly impacts its work in mostly positive ways. This may not be true of other FBOs. An explicit research focus on the impact of organisational theology across a broader range of FBOs would help to identify the ways in which differing theological positions can help or hinder aspects of their development work.

There has been a huge investment within the development sector in trying to articulate various theories of change. These reflect different ideological and theoretical positions about how sustainable change occurs within developing communities. So far, however, there has been no attempt to map the different theologies of change employed by FBOs. For example, how would the theology of a more distinctly evangelical development organisation differ from a liberal Catholic development organisation in terms of its impact upon development work? How would the risk profile of each organisation differ? While it is easy to speculate about the answer to these questions, empirical evidence is necessary. FBOs rank among the largest international development organisations, but the role of theology within their development praxis remains largely unconsidered.

It is posited that a more explicit and intentional focus on organisational theology may help identify strengths that can then be used to enhance development work. Likewise, it should be possible to articulate the risks which flow from different theological positions more clearly so that they can be mitigated.
15.3 The role of World Vision in brokering psycho-social care in developing communities

One area where the data did not reveal enough information was the role of World Vision in providing or arranging for psychosocial care within developing communities. It is unclear whether this is because it does not generally do so on any appreciable scale, or because staff do this privately through informal networks. It is possible the evaluations simply failed to elicit the data.

This area warrants further investigation because it is counter-intuitive. FBOs typically have strong networks with religious institutions equipped to offer pastoral care. In the case of World Vision, its work was conceived as a ministry motivated by love and strong community relationships. There was evidence of World Vision staff praying for personal needs within some communities, but there was no significant evidence of referral networks. Given the traumatic and fragile environments World Vision operates in, and the scarcity and cost of other modes of care, this role could be significant and should be clarified.

15.4 Comparative research on specific faith-based programmatic tools

The data revealed that World Vision has developed some specific faith-based programmatic tools in carrying out its development work. These include CoH for HIV and CoH for Gender. These are an exciting innovation, as they are an attempt to link a community’s religious worldview with the attainment of specific development outcomes. This research strongly suggests that developmental messages need to be framed in terms of local worldview, especially religious viewpoints, in order to gain greatest traction.

It would be valuable to identify whether other FBOs have also developed similar types of programmatic tools. Further research that specifically tests the effectiveness of these types of approaches appears timely, given the positive indications about these tools within this research. In particular, a study of the design, use and effectiveness of these initiatives compared with other methods would be helpful. This would be of seminal importance to the operational life of development FBOs.

15.5 Research to confirm potential areas of comparative advantage for FBOs

The persistent trend of marginalising or excluding faith from development research has been potentially damaging to the interests of the poor. Some development organisations have
found it necessary to diminish or marginalise faith aspects within their development praxis in response to a variety of external pressures. It has been reported that this type of response risks eroding the very basis of their comparative advantage.¹

Empirically based research is needed to more conclusively define the areas where FBOs can make a unique contribution. It is important to know in what contexts those comparative advantages can be enjoyed, as well as the limitations upon those advantages. The data examined in this study suggests that this kind of research is warranted. It contained many clear statements indicating that faith-based approaches were more resonant with local communities. Conversely, secular development frameworks were associated with physical, relational and cultural distance in several communities. This has important implications in terms of organisational effectiveness.

If the kinds of advantages foreshadowed by this research can be proven, then FBOs may be subject to less pressure to exclude or minimise their faith elements.² Such evidence may show these organisations where and how they can best operate to maximise their advantages. Most importantly, it may encourage them to desist from undermining themselves in the interests of the world’s poor.

15.6 Research to improve methods and protocols for engaging with churches

This research has shown that engaging with churches is World Vision’s greatest potential strength and weakness. The kinds of risks identified included the charitable mindset of many churches, the dangers of passive funding relationships, anti-developmental theological positions, the misuse of relationships and co-option. It would be logical to examine in more detail how World Vision can capture and leverage the advantages of its church relationships, while minimising the very real risks. The evaluation reports indicated that World Vision relies a great deal on the skill and judgment of individual CC staff in mitigating these risks.

There does appear to be a strong case for examining more carefully the ways that World Vision and other FBOs could optimise their relationships with churches. Part of this research could focus on ways of helping churches to break out of social passivity and pietism. The resurgence, or re-discovery, of diaconal ministry in development is one prospective area for this research. Another line of research could be the kinds of due diligence protocols to follow before entering into church relationships, as well as the ways of monitoring and improving

¹ Grills 2009, p. 515.
² Ibid.
the developmental effectiveness of those relationships over time. Another area, touched upon below, is the capacity building of churches to help them engage more effectively and sympathetically in carrying out development work.

15.7 Researching possible shifts in public policy to engage faith institutions more effectively in development

This research identified a number of possible shifts in public policy to help governments and the development sector achieve better outcomes for the poor. A suite of implications were set out in Chapter 13 which would benefit greatly from careful policy research. These included greater direct engagement by governments with faith institutions and working out more respectful modes of co-operation and co-creation. The benefit of permanent forums to establish dialogue between religious faiths, government departments and sector bodies was also flagged.

These kinds of initiatives focus attention on the nature of secular government in the West. Secularism, as a model of government, seeks to avoid state patronage of religious institutions and religious patronage of the state. This does not mean excluding religious viewpoints from important public policy debates or the state declining to engage with religious institutions in implementing programs. Research that examines how religious faith can be engaged in doing international development without compromise to the underpinning of secular government is a clear priority.

15.8 Theological reflection about the role of the Holy Spirit within other faith traditions

A final area that warrants further critical reflection arises from data highlighting the extraordinarily co-operative relationship between World Vision as a Christian FBO and its Muslim staff. The evidence suggested that many Muslim staff saw their employment with World Vision as an expression of personal faith and a vital way in which they could serve the Prophet. Likewise, the data consistently reported a close working rapport between World Vision and Muslim faith leaders who had come together in the interests of shared development goals.

An interesting theological reflection arises for Christians. This data may point to the actions of the Holy Spirit in drawing people into his purposes from within other faith traditions. World Vision is very clear that it sees itself as working for God’s kingdom in this
world through development work. Some Muslims agree that its work is honouring to God and reverently embrace it, while denying any Trinitarian formulations about the nature of God. For many Christians working at World Vision, these Muslims honour the Spirit through their obedience and service, rather than their doctrine.

In terms of God’s coming kingdom, the outstanding co-operation on display in the data may foreshadow, in one sense, the inclusive vision of salvation depicted in several parts of the New Testament. Those who arrogantly presume to be on the inside are found to be outside, while those who are seen as not belonging to God are revealed as honoured guests at his banqueting table. It is hoped that this research may stimulate reflection about the graciousness of God, which is beyond our knowing.

15.9 Final reflection

Development is a systematic process, generally long-term, of working with communities. The goal in view is to help communities to empower themselves to overcome the factors they recognise as diminishing their human life. It is not solely about physical or economic deficits, although these are important. Humans cannot live by bread alone, but nor can they live without it. Poverty comprises a complex suite of issues that may be described as anti-human because they deny people the achievement of their full humanity. The denial of basic freedoms, respect, opportunities, self-expression, health, security, participation and self-determination all diminish human life.

Many Christians argue that the gospel is meant to be transformative, involving important questions about life before death and the search for justice. They take to heart the call to actively seek that God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus speaks of a new way of living is because the kingdom of God at hand. God is understood to be immanent, active and present. Theologians like Moltmann argue that transcendent living means working with God to bring the future forward, in hope and power. Consistently, Abrams argues that the gospel must not be allowed to become insipid and detached: ‘If faith does not lead to real impact and influence in the real world then it is a mere shadow of its own meaning and a

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3 Mt 7:21–23.
4 Lk 13:29.
5 Jn 10:10.
6 Mt 6:10.
7 Mk 1:5; Mt 3:2.
8 See Moltmann 1967.
betrayal of the poor. If it is restricted to pious personal spirituality only, it is a fundamental denial of itself.\textsuperscript{9}

This thesis has demonstrated that Christian faith and development ideals are in many respects highly sympathetic to each other. The denial of a constructive role for faith within development is not so much a scandal as a parody. Throughout history, a great impetus for compassionate action has been religious faith, and this faith has led to the formation of many of the world’s largest development organisations. In the majority world, served by those organisations, theistic worldviews are pervasive and growing. The modern world has arguably persisted in a false self-confidence, which at times has been to the detriment of developing communities.

Lunn warned at the outset: ‘The systematic omission or devaluing of religion in scholarship is a form of cultural imperialism which could result in the reduced effectiveness of development research and potentially damaging interventions.’\textsuperscript{10} Similarly, Matthew Clarke asserts that the ‘exclusion of religion from consideration severely constrains efforts and compromises the ability to improve lives of the poor.’\textsuperscript{11} This thesis has attempted to redress this imbalance in a small way. The investigation of the impact of the organisational theology of a leading Christian FBO on its development work has been illuminating. A positive and distinctive approach to development work was revealed, which points to significant areas of potential comparative advantage. Key risks were also identified, raising some significant challenges.

It is hoped that others will continue to shine light on the unique contribution that FBOs can make to the development task, and in particular, the role of theology as a potential asset in carrying out their work.

\textsuperscript{10} Lunn, p. 940.
\textsuperscript{11} Clarke, M 2013, p. 6.
Appendices

Appendix A  A List of Catholic Social Justice Teachings and Sources Concerning Development

(Taken from Caritas Australia website.)

Dignity of the human person
‘Whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children as well as disgraceful working conditions … are infamies indeed.’

This is the foundation of a moral vision for society. Human beings are created in the divine image and have an inherent dignity which must always be upheld. Human life is therefore sacred.

The common good
‘[T]he common good … is … the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members … access to their own fulfilment.’

Human beings are not only sacred but social – we become human in relationship to others. Community has to be built up and organised in such a way that the dignity of all is maintained. The community that is built up has to be fair and just and allow the participation of everyone in the enjoyment of the goods of Creation.

Preferential option for the poor
‘The struggle against destitution … is not enough. It is a question, rather, of building a world where every person … can live a fully human life … and where the poor man Lazarus can sit down at the same table with the rich man.’

A basic moral test of how society is faring is in its treatment of the most vulnerable whose needs should come first.

Rights and duties
‘A well-ordered human society requires that people recognize and observe their mutual rights and duties. It also demands that each contribute generously to the establishment of a civic

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1 Second Vatican Council, 1965, The Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes), #27.
2 Ibid., #26.
3 Pope Paul VI, 1967, The Progress of Peoples (Populorum Progressio), #47.
order in which rights and duties are more sincerely and effectively acknowledged and fulfilled.  

Human dignity can be protected and the common good upheld only if human rights are cherished and corresponding duties – to family and society – are carried out.

**Participation**

‘Development programs … need to be flexible; and the people who benefit from them ought to be directly involved in their planning and implementation.’

It is a fundamental demand of justice and a requirement for human dignity that all people be assured a minimum level of participation in the community.

**Economic justice**

‘[T]he remuneration of work is not something that can be left to the laws of the marketplace; nor should it be a decision left to the will of the more powerful. … Workers must be paid a wage which allows them to live a truly human life and to fulfil their family obligations in a worthy manner.’

The economy, including the market, must serve the people, not the reverse. People are more important than things and labour is more important than capital. The economy must be directed to a just and equitable distribution of resources.

**Solidarity**

‘It is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good … to the good of all and of each individual because we are all really responsible for all.’

Human beings constitute one human family, no matter the differences. ‘Loving your neighbour’ has global dimensions in an interdependent world.

**Stewardship of creation**

‘The environment is God’s gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole.’

As sojourners on Earth, we are called to show respect not only for people but for all Creation.

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5 Pope Benedict XVI, 2009, Charity in Truth (*Caritas in Veritate*), #47.
6 Pope John XXIII, 1961, Mother and Teacher (*Mater et Magistra*), #71.
Promotion of peace

‘Peace is not merely an absence of war; nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies … Instead, it is rightly and appropriately called an enterprise of justice.’\(^9\)

Peace is a positive, action-oriented concept not just the absence of war. It implies ‘right relationships’ between people, between groups, between people and the environment, and between people and their idea of the transcendent. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings.

Role of government/subsidiarity

‘It is clearly laid down that the paramount task assigned to government officials is that of recognizing, respecting, reconciling, protecting and promoting the rights and duties of citizens.’\(^10\)

‘The characteristic implication of subsidiarity is participation …’\(^11\)

The role of government is to promote human dignity, protect human rights and build the common good. It therefore has a positive moral purpose. It should assist citizens in fulfilling their responsibility to others. Promoting subsidiarity means functions of government should be performed at the lowest level possible consistent with participation above. When the lower level cannot respond, then it is for the higher levels of government to intervene. This also applies to authentic partnership practices.

\(^9\) Second Vatican Council, #78.
\(^10\) Pope John XXIII, 1963, #77.
Appendix B  Statement by Ashley Goode – World Vision Australia Spiritual Engagement Consultant

I, Ashley Goode, have been employed/contracted by World Vision Australia (WVA) throughout the period in which all the Christian Commitment (CC) evaluation reports were produced. I was primarily responsible for planning, organising and conducting each one.

The approaches taken to complete each evaluation were generally as follows:

- Liaise with respective National Office (NO) and WVA Country Program Coordinator/Manager to ascertain their requirements, needs and guidance. Of note, all CC evaluations were completed upon invite by the NOs.
- Draft evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR) and Evaluation Matrix (where needed) for NO approval and authorisation.
- Commenced planning according to agreed ToR, including travel and administration arrangements.
- Drafted visit schedules and Evaluation Questionnaire/Discussion Guide for contextualisation on arrival in country.
- Commenced each visit with a presentation to NO Senior Leadership on evaluation aims, objectives, methodologies and explanation of faith-based development research conducted by WVA.
- Confirmed visit schedule, Key Informant Interview (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sample size, depth and breadth. Ascertained and adopted most contextually appropriate approaches/methodologies.
- Conducted evaluation training for team members where needed.
- Coordinated completion of KII and FGDs. Collected and compiled data/transcripts of KII and FGDs. Edited and forwarded draft KII and FGD records for interviewer edit/correction.
- Coordinated and data collected for team analysis meetings throughout visits.
- Drafted and presented (with fellow evaluator) initial observations, findings and recommendations to NO Senior Leadership.
- Collated all KII, FGD transcripts and evaluation notes, reformatted all records to suit import into Nvivo 8 (and later Nvivo9) software package
- Used Nvivo 8/9 to capture and code all data according to relevant questions, quotes and themes
• Drafted report based on data collected in accordance with ToR requirements and evaluation objectives.
• Submitted draft report for internal edit and proof reading. Where another ‘author’ is listed, they then took the draft with associated data and changed it according to their writing style and emphasis.
• Sent the final draft back to the NO for correction and accuracy check.
• Upon confirmation by NO, published the final report and distributed it to WVI, WVA, and the respective NO and Regional Office.

In addition I was engaged by Bob Mitchell in February/March 2014 to check his entire thesis for accuracy in the use of field data and quotes against the primary source materials.

Signed

Dated

Ashley Goode

25 May 2014
Appendix C  Complete list of key informant interviews and focus group discussions

Table A1: Complete list of key informant interviews and focus group discussions

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<th>Country</th>
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### Appendix D  List of all connecting propositions and sub-propositions for each theological motif

**Table A2** Listing of all connecting propositions and sub-propositions for each theological motif

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<th>Topic code</th>
<th>Connecting Propositions</th>
<th>Sub-Propositions</th>
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<td>A1</td>
<td>WV’s development work can leverage the goodwill of communities towards its Christian faith or its faith-based ethos.</td>
<td>Some specific faith-based activities can be a doorway to more ‘traditional’ developmental activities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sub-propositions</td>
<td>In a pre-modernity theistic society, developmental messages are better received when framed theistically. This has helped WV in some Islamic contexts.</td>
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<td>WV has gained trust in some Islamic communities because there is a ‘sense of place’ for Christians, and because of a high value placed on perceived devoutness and piety.</td>
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<td>A2</td>
<td>WV’s concept of development reflects holistic notions of salvation rather than personal evangelism. This often requires careful explanation up-front to overcome initial suspicions and gain long-term access to communities.</td>
<td>WV rejects evangelism and discrimination in its programming because this will erode community goodwill for its work and may place its presence at risk.</td>
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<td>A3</td>
<td>WV sees its commitment to biblical holism as enhancing the value of physical interventions, because those interventions occur within a broader narrative of change that engages community relationships, ways of living and religious convictions.</td>
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<td>A4</td>
<td>WV pursues a vision of development that seeks to normalise spiritual activities in communities, especially in post-communist countries. This helps build belonging, social meaning and reconnects people to their heritage.</td>
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Table A2 (continued)

<p>| B1 | WV pursues its development model through a highly incarnational and relational style of engagement. This builds respect and trust in communities. | 13 |
| B2 | In the contexts examined, many WV field staff saw their work specifically as an expression of their love of God and neighbour, gaining support within communities. | 12 |
| B3 | WV recruits and develops staff members who see their work as a vocation rather than as a career. This results in a strong commitment expressed at field level. | 9 |
| B4 | At an organisational level, a loving and relational approach involves a longer-term commitment. For some staff this may entail hardship and sacrifice, helping to build community trust and respect. | 6 |
| B5 | A self-understanding by staff of their work as ministry meant they felt supported by God’s presence in their work and were able to invoke spiritual strength through prayer. | 6 |
| B6 | At an organisational level, WV’s understanding of its work as ministry meant having an embedded, committed presence within communities and a focus on principles of subsidiarity. | 17 |
| C1 | The data showed a suite of kingdom values have been promoted by WV staff and activities, and these values have underpinned its acceptance within communities. | 27 |
| C2 | WV’s kingdom values emphasise building trust and understanding between different religious groupings. This builds greater harmony and co-operation within communities, helping to achieve sustainable development. | 8 |
| Sub-proposition | WV is well positioned to bring about greater interfaith and interdenominational understanding, and it uses a variety of programmatic means to do so. | 9 |
| Sub-proposition | WV uses shared/overlapping religious values with Muslims to provide a common platform to engage staff and communities in their work. | 12 |</p>
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<td>C3 WV takes a stand against corruption based on its religious convictions, and this may inhibit corrupt behaviour and build goodwill in communities.</td>
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<td>C4 WV’s faith-based development model instils hope, which helps communities to become more resilient. This hope comes through the expression of kingdom values, which communicate a consistent narrative about God’s love.</td>
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<td>Sub-proposition WV’s focus on living out kingdom values can build hope in a particular way in Muslim areas by countering the fatalism associated with the prevalent idea of <em>insha’Allah</em>.</td>
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<td>Sub-proposition In post-communist settings, the restoration of kingdom values was conducive to restoring hope.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-proposition In Christian contexts, hope is instilled by WV staff and community leaders explicitly modelling trust in God. This produces a sustaining hope at community level.</td>
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<td>D1 WV helps to achieve its developmental aims by facilitating activism against systemic forms of discrimination and oppression.</td>
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<td>D2 WV seeks to achieve development by standing against practices that it considers evil or dehumanising.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D3 WV’s concept of development includes seeking to overcome animistic or mystical practices that it regards as harmful to personal wellbeing. WV discourages animistic practices by actively co-operating with Muslim leaders.</td>
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<td>E1 WV pursues its vision of development by using specific faith-based activities that bring about inner transformation or deepen participants’ Christian faith formation. These activities include certain types of training, summer camps and Sunday Schools.</td>
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<td>E2 Religious faith can provide a realistic and readily available alternative to Western models of psychosocial care in traumatised communities.</td>
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### Table A2 (continued)

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<th>WV’s concept of development uses Christian teaching to impart a moral and ethical framework through its staff and field interactions.</th>
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<td>Sub-proposition</td>
<td>In Africa, WV pursues its desire for moral formation by supporting a conservative social agenda via church and mosque teaching. The ‘flavour’ of moral teaching in Tanzania and Rwanda extended to conservative cultural habits like not drinking or smoking.</td>
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<td>E4</td>
<td>WV’s focus on inner change is centred on improving interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue.</td>
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<td>E5</td>
<td>WV’s emphasis on inner transformation (often spiritually linked) may lead to non-coercive religious dialogue and reflection, and ultimately religious conversion.</td>
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<td>F1</td>
<td>WV’s devotional life contributes to development by preparing and equipping staff for field work. It aims for staff to see their work as ministry that inculcates and reflects spiritual values, connecting staff with their deepest motivations.</td>
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<td>F2</td>
<td>WV achieves its development aims partly through a devotional culture that focuses on ministry quality.</td>
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<td>F3</td>
<td>WV’s internal devotional life contributes to its development work by building stronger teams and a shared sense of mission.</td>
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<td>F4</td>
<td>WV’s inclusive devotional culture contributes to development by modelling the positive interfaith and interdenominational relationships it seeks for the broader community. It does this by providing a safe place to learn and showing respect.</td>
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<td>Sub-proposition</td>
<td>In some Christian staff settings, the devotional program was delivered by representatives of different Christian traditions, helping to build mutual understanding and internal cohesion.</td>
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<td>Sub-proposition</td>
<td>In mixed Christian and Muslim staff settings, WV’s devotional program deliberately accented common theological beliefs between Christians and Muslims that underpin its development work. It also adopted an inclusive approach to devotions and made careful use of shared prayer.</td>
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<td>The use of public prayer by WV helps provide ‘legitimacy’ for its projects within some communities. These public prayers also model organisational trust in God to local communities.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2</td>
<td>WV helps achieve its development aims by using personal prayer ministry within the community. This gained acceptance within devout societies.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G3</td>
<td>In some places, WV’s development model involves sensitising itself to community needs through prayer and discernment.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G4</td>
<td>WV uses public prayer to identify God as the source of its authority, significant in terms of overcoming harmful animistic practices.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G5</td>
<td>WV makes use of contextualised biblically based programmatic tools to pursue its vision of development.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G6</td>
<td>WV has pursued its vision of development by supporting the publishing of faith-based materials with a developmental focus.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>WV furthers its development work by leveraging the church’s ability to influence social attitudes. While this engagement includes some tactical elements, it also seeks longer-term relationships. It does this because it sees its own identity as standing in continuity with the church.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1 Sub-proposition</td>
<td>The churches are important actors within civil society, and working constructively with them can assist in achieving developmental aims.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1 Sub-proposition</td>
<td>It is helpful to engage dominant state churches to influence social change and promote a developmental agenda.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1 Sub-proposition</td>
<td>In a society with no state church but a strongly Christian culture, it is difficult to achieve development outcomes without engaging with the churches.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1 Sub-proposition</td>
<td>In a society where Christianity is a minority religion, there is some potential for the church to contribute to development by adopting a more holistic and socially active role.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H2</strong></td>
<td>WV furthers its development work by leveraging the influence of individual church leaders. These leaders are usually (but not always) trusted figures within developing communities.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-proposition</td>
<td>WV’s work with religious leaders can involve symbolic acts leading to greater impact.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-proposition</td>
<td>WV recognises the importance of working with church leaders who influence public opinion in negative and damaging ways.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H3</strong></td>
<td>WV achieves development by utilising church networks to access remoter geographic areas.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H4</strong></td>
<td>WV has pursued its development goals by encouraging the church to think more critically about development issues.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-proposition</td>
<td>WV has pursued its development aims by participating in theological education at various levels. This is a way of shaping longer-term influence.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-proposition</td>
<td>WV has encouraged and modelled for clergy the acceptance of social responsibility.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-proposition</td>
<td>WV contributes to development by helping to instil pro-development shifts in theological understanding through longer-term church engagement.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H5</strong></td>
<td>WV furthers its development work by encouraging churches to work together. This models its desire for unity and helps achieve the efficient and consistent delivery of developmental messages across a range of denominations.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-proposition</td>
<td>WV’s non-denominational ethos helps it to leverage unity and co-operation between churches.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-proposition</td>
<td>WV recognises that a focus on orthopraxy transcends dogmatic differences.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of links/quotes/references: 450.
## Appendix E  Linkages between various topic codes

### Table A3  Linkages between various topic codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Code</th>
<th>Nature of inter-relationships with other codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Topic Code A1**  
Biblical Holism and Spiritual Worldview: Leveraging community goodwill from an existing spiritual worldview | This topic relates to H1 and H2, leveraging the influence of church institutions and church leaders within Christian communities, and topics concerned with positive interfaith relationships. |
| **Topic Code A2**  
Biblical Holism and Spiritual Worldview: Sustainability and community access | This topic is closely related to C1 (strong commitment to living out kingdom values). There is also a connection with B1 (incarnational living), B4 (longer-term engagement to build trust) and a connection with E5 (recognises that some community members will initiate enquiry about WV’s faith motivation without overt evangelism). |
| **Topic Code A3**  
Biblical Holism and Spiritual Worldview: Program accentuation through holism | A3 is most closely related to E topic codes (inner transformation). E.g. E1 is about the use of programs which involve elements of spiritual formation, E3 is concerned with promulgation of Christian morals and ethics, and E4 is concerned with transfiguring social relationships. There is also a relationship with H4 (equipping the church in terms of its longer-term developmental understandings). All these themes paint a broader narrative of change in which faith and personal relationships are central to achieve development. |
| **Topic Code A4**  
Biblical Holism and Spiritual Worldview: Using spirituality to develop social meanings | This topic is related to H1 (leveraging organisational influence with the church). Building up the church can help restore social meaning and community identity. It is loosely related to E topics, as spirituality is a source of inner transformation. |
| **Topic Code B1**  
Work as ministry: a relational/incarnational style of engagement | The most closely related links are those that deal with living out kingdom values, such as C1 or C2. The 'work as ministry' topic is concerned with a particular style of relating for field staff that gives expression to kingdom ideals. There is also a clear link with G2 (Prayer in building deeper community relationships) and B6 (embedded organisational presence within communities). |
| **Topic Code B2**  
Work as ministry: work as an expression of love | There are close connections with those links dealing with living out kingdom values, such as C1 and C2. Moreover, category F1 (devotional culture and its role in the spiritual formation of staff) is vitally connected. |
### Table A3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Code B3</th>
<th>Work as ministry: vocation over career</th>
<th>The most closely related links were other links within this category. There are also clear with links F1 and F2, which support the idea of reconceiving work as a ministry or vocation, and G3 (prayer and discernment within organisational life).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic Code B4</td>
<td>Work as ministry: long-term, sacrificial, and committed</td>
<td>Closely related links are B5 (a sense of being supported by God’s presence) and the devotional culture links (F codes), which help staff to live out this deeper level of commitment. Categories such as F3 (building teams and a shared sense of mission) are also relevant in this context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Code B5</td>
<td>Work as ministry: a sense of being supported by God’s presence</td>
<td>The most closely related links are devotional culture links, including F1 (the spiritual formation of staff), and F3, which is partly about a shared sense of mission. G3 is also highly relevant (prayer and discernment in operational life).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Code B6</td>
<td>Work as ministry: embedded organisational presence and commitment to subsidiarity</td>
<td>This link is the corporate expression of B1 (a relational, incarnational style of engagement). It connects closely to C1 (the living out of strong kingdom-focussed values).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Code C1</td>
<td>Living for the Kingdom: A strong values base and a commitment to living it out</td>
<td>The most closely related link to C1 is B1 and B2. When work is understood as a ministry requiring a close relational outlook and a commitment to love, this will be conducive to instilling kingdom values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Code C2</td>
<td>Living for the Kingdom: An emphasis on interfaith respect and co-operation</td>
<td>The most closely related links are F4 (devotional culture: modelling interfaith and interdenominational relationships) and H5 (church unity and co-operation). Parts of A1 (leveraging community goodwill), and E4 (transfiguring inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships) are also closely related.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Code C3</td>
<td>Living for the Kingdom: standing against corruption</td>
<td>There are general links with understanding work as a ministry, perhaps B2, and F4 (the importance of devotional culture in reinforcing desired behaviours). More generally, this topic related to D1 (standing against systemic evil).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Code C4</td>
<td>Living for the Kingdom: building hope and resilience in the present</td>
<td>There is a close relationship with B1 and B2. B1 and B2 are about serving God relationally and with love in the world. This connects with the idea of restoration of hope in communities. There is also a connection with G1, where public prayer is used to engage with projects, and G2, where prayer is used to deepen community trust. These actions build both temporal and transcendent hope.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A3 (continued)

<p>| Topic Code D1 | Standing against evil: systemic injustice | Standing against evil in society can be seen as a positive expression of kingdom values, see C1. It is about seeking the reign of God in specific instances where there is injustice. Topic code C3 may be a specific instance of systemic evil. There is also a relationship with the church at H1 and H4. Standing against evil involves teaching the church how to think developmentally and act with a prophetic voice. |
| Topic Code D2 | Standing against evil: Responding to the demonic/occult | The most commonly related link is C1. The positive affirmation of the reign of God may involve responding to localised manifestations of evil. G2 is clearly related, with prayer being utilised in responding to demonic phenomena. |
| Topic Code D3 | Standing against evil: Challenging harmful animistic practices | There is a considerable overlap with D2 (responding to demonic/occult) and it is difficult to draw a clear line. There is a link with upholding kingdom values (C1). There is also a specific connection with G4 (the use of prayer specifically as a means of countering animistic practices). There is also a possible link with C2 as Christians and Muslims form working coalitions to resist animism. |
| Topic Code E1 | Imperative of inner transformation: using camping, Sunday Schools and specific programs to encourage inner change | There is a close link to C1 (the living out of kingdom values). Inner transformation is a way of embedding desired behavioural changes consistent with kingdom ideals. |
| Topic Code E2 | Imperative of inner transformation: inner strength in times of crisis | The most closely related link is C4, which is about building hope and resilience in the present by modelling trust and giving expression to kingdom values. |
| Topic Code E3 | Imperative of inner transformation: promulgating Christian morals and ethics through staff and general field interactions | The most closely related link is E1, which differs only in that the moral formation comes specifically from more programmatic activities. There is a link to C1 (seeking to promote broader kingdom ideals) and H1 and H2 (seeking to intentionally use church institutions and leaders in the promotion of a moral framework). |
| Topic Code E4 | Imperative of inner transformation: Transfiguring inter-ethnic and interfaith relationships | There were several related links, viz, C2 (a kingdom values emphasis on interfaith respect and co-operation) and F4 (devotional culture modelling respectful interfaith and interdenominational relationships). Moreover, there is a relationship with H1 (recognising the role of the church in regenerating people’s internal moral frame). |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Related Links</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E5</td>
<td>Imperative of inner transformation: enquiry and conversion</td>
<td>The most closely related link is A2 (WV living out a holistic gospel of salvation). This holism does not preclude verbal witness, but the context is limited (in the countries reviewed, at least) to community-initiated inquiry. There is also a relationship with H1 as WV sees its ministry standing in continuity with the broader church. While WV seeks to engage churches for developmental reasons, it recognises the church’s general commission to evangelise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Devotional culture: nurture and sustaining staff</td>
<td>The most closely related links are B1 and B2 (understanding field work as an incarnational and loving ministry). There is also a cross link with C1 (living out kingdom values). A devotional culture reinforces these aspects. There is an obvious link with B5 (ministry as a sense of being supported by God’s presence) and G3 (prayer and discernment in operational life).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>Devotional culture: encouraging quality field work</td>
<td>The most closely related links were again B1 and B2 (understanding field work as an incarnational and loving ministry). There is also a cross link with C1 (living out kingdom values).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>Devotional culture: building teams and a shared sense of mission</td>
<td>There is a possible connection with B1 (ministry as a relational mode of operating) and living out kingdom values (C1). Shared prayer is also important here, suggesting links with B5 and G3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>Devotional culture: Modelling respectful interfaith and interdenominational relationships</td>
<td>There is a cross link with parts of A1, C2, E4 and H5 which are all concerned with promoting positive and respectful interfaith relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Prayer and scripture: The role of public prayer in validating community development work</td>
<td>There is a clear link between the role of public prayer in validating community development work and B1 (understanding work as a relational/incarnational ministry). There is also a link with A1 (leveraging community goodwill from an existing worldview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2</td>
<td>Prayer and scripture: Prayer in building deeper community relationships</td>
<td>The most closely related links are B1 and B2, which conceive field work as a relational and loving ministry. There is also a link with A1 (leveraging community goodwill from an existing worldview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G3</td>
<td>Prayer and scripture: Prayer and discernment in operational life</td>
<td>Prayer and discernment in operational life is linked to B1 (a personal incarnational presence) and B5 (God’s sustaining presence). There are also connections with F1 (spiritual formation, enabling prayer and discernment) and F2 (seeking quality ministry for communities being served).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table A3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Topic Code G4</strong></th>
<th>Prayer and scripture: Prayer and the locus of spiritual power</th>
<th>The most closely related link for G4 (prayer and the locus of spiritual power) is D3 (challenging harmful animistic practices).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic Code G5</strong></td>
<td>Prayer and scripture: use of scripturally based programmatic resources</td>
<td>There is a link connection with A1 (leveraging community goodwill from an existing spiritual worldview) and also H2 and H4, as programs like CoH for HIV are often aimed at religious leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic Code G6</strong></td>
<td>Prayer and scripture: support for developmentally focussed Christian publishing</td>
<td>The most closely related links are the influence of the church (H1) and promoting developmental understandings (H4). There is also a possible link with A1 (leveraging community goodwill from an existing spiritual worldview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic Code H1</strong></td>
<td>Special relationship with the church: Leveraging organisational influence</td>
<td>This topic is closely related to a number of themes. Working with the church can have a role in leveraging community goodwill (A1). In some cases this involves restoring identity and building social meaning (A4). Churches can have a prophetic voice in standing against injustice (D1). It can be argued that the role of the church is to help foment inner transformation through conversion (E5). Some churches had a direct role in participating in corporate devotional life (F1 and F5 especially).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic Code H2</strong></td>
<td>Special relationship with the church: Leveraging personal influence of church leaders</td>
<td>This topic is closely related to a number of themes. Working with the church leaders can have a role in leveraging community goodwill (A1). Churches leaders can have a prophetic voice in standing against injustice (D1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic Code H3</strong></td>
<td>Special relationship with the church: reaching isolated areas</td>
<td>The most closely related links are to other themes within this general code, such as leveraging organisational influence (H1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic Code H4</strong></td>
<td>Special relationship with the church: promoting developmental understandings</td>
<td>H4 is related to the idea of living for God’s kingdom in the present, especially insofar as it inculcates a sustaining or transcendent hope in communities. It therefore relates to C4. It is also related to A2 themes. These reflect broader community-based pictures of salvation. H4 is also related to D1, which speaks to understanding and then overcoming systemic injustice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic Code H5</strong></td>
<td>Special relationship with the church: unity and cooperation</td>
<td>This topic is closely connected with C2, (kingdom values in terms of interfaith respect) and F4 (devotional culture promoting interfaith and interdenominational harmony).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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