FAITH IN ACTION

Understanding the Relationship between Faith and Practice for Evangelical Humanitarian Organisations

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May 2019

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of The Australian National University.

I declare this dissertation is a product of my own original research, and all sources have been appropriately acknowledged.

Alana Kate Moore, 31st May 2019

Acknowledgements

Embarking on a dissertation while caring for two little people is not necessarily the most rational of decisions, so first and foremost I need to express my eternal gratefulness for the village who helped me raise my children and my 'thesis baby' concurrently. That includes my mother Odette, my sister Alysha and my mother-in-law Judy as fly-in babysitters, as well as my dear friends Emmaly, Hannah, Deborah, Johanna, and the Thomas family. Thank you for holding the fort with me.

Next, my thanks are for the academic community around me; they challenged my ideas, advised my direction, encouraged me in disappointments, and pushed me to more balanced, articulate expressions of my work than I could have achieved alone. I am very grateful to my panel – Dr Cecilia Jacob, Dr Luke Glanville, and Associate Professor Jacinta O'Hagan for their interest in my work and the amount of care they have taken in supervising it. All three have gone above and beyond the role laid out for them, and have my admiration as well as thanks. The Department of International Relations and the Coral Bell School where I have conducted this study have been generous and welcoming, staff and students alike. My fellow PhD candidates are owed my particular thanks, for making friends out of co-workers through plenty of cake and coffee runs, writing lock-ups, and sharing of advice and ideas. It makes a world of difference to have friends with whom to lament the trials, and celebrate the successes.

I also need to thank Dr Erin K Wilson, Dr Douglas Shaw, and Professor Terence Halliday who kindly guided me with further advice and insight. I am very appreciative of opportunities to refine my project through more formal means as well, such as the UQ Theory Forum, guest lecturing here at the ANU, as well as presenting at Scholarly Circles workshops, and contributing APSA and ISA papers. And of course, my dissertation would not be possible without the openness and generosity of my interview participants, especially the efforts made to connect me by Abby, Laurie, and Tim Hanna. Thank you for your outreach on my behalf.

It must be acknowledged that I could not be here without the unwavering support of my husband. He kept me on track, dragged two small children thousands of kilometres across continental USA to accompany me on fieldwork, never complained at how much money I spent on coffee (!), and then helped me 'kill my darlings', when it was time. If dissertations were attributed by emotional investment, he would have to join me as co-author on the front page.

Finally, my path to higher education was only possible because my mother Odette and father Alan paved the way. I am so thankful for their sacrifices for me, their encouragement, and their prayers. Sharing my intellectual journey with my mother as she returned to mature-age postgraduate study was a totally unanticipated delight of the past four years. Phone calls to Papua New Guinea to discuss ideas, emails of draft essays (from both of us) sent back and forth across the ether, CDs and USB drives of extra journal articles arriving in the post; she has been my most unexpected and dedicated study companion.

Her diligence and intelligence inspire, and it is to her that this thesis is dedicated.

Abstract

The increased interest in and willingness to consider the role of religious actors, ideas and practices in the IR discipline is a promising development of contemporary scholarship. Within the study of humanitarianism in particular, attention to the range of ways in which religion infuses action and meaning in the global space has raised important questions about how best to go about answering the questions of when and how these religious factors matter. However, the slow pace at which the field is moving away from secular framings of humanitarianism means that religious actors are still largely under-conceptualised, and poorly understood. This disproportionately affects perceptions of religious actors that do not obviously resemble the mainstream aid community, such as evangelical Christian faith-based organisations (FBOs). Understanding the relationship between their religious identity and their humanitarian practices in a manner that does not reproduce such framings is an important research task to contribute to this field. This thesis seeks to advance conceptualisation of this relationship by providing such a theoretical framework. It also contributes original empirical evidence through case studies to which this framework is applied. It explores the relationship between identity and practice by asking what role theological commitments play in guiding the humanitarian practices of evangelical Christian FBOs. It does so by examining three evangelical humanitarian agencies – World Vision, Samaritan's Purse, and Compassion International – as they engaged with two humanitarian disasters in the Asia Pacific region: the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia, and the 2008 Cyclone Nargis in the Ayeyarwady delta region in Myanmar.

It finds that their evangelical theological commitments play an important part in constructing an organisational identity and set of values for each agency, which then orients them towards certain styles of response. However, this understanding of the role of faith is incomplete without also considering the constitutive role of context in both giving the boundaries in which those beliefs can be expressed, and supplying important pressures, constraints, and demands that shape that expression. Their theological commitments created a framework of action for these evangelical FBOs that interacted constitutively with a prism of environmental factors in order to produce humanitarian practices that both reflected and diverged from the broader mainstream response, depending on circumstances. These findings highlight the importance of approaching religious organisations as complex and agentive actors, who adopt, reject or adapt to the pressures of the dynamic environments in which they work. It is an insight necessary not just for dealing with evangelical FBOs working in the humanitarian space, but in understanding religious actors across various sites of global politics.

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List of Acronyms

ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
AERDO	Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organisations (now Accord)
ADP	Aceh Development Programme (World Vision)
ADP	Area Development Programme (World Vision)
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AHTF	ASEAN-led Humanitarian Taskforce for the Victims of Cyclone Nargis
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATRT	Asian Tsunami Response Team (World Vision)
BGEA	Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
BRR	Agency for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias (*Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi*) (Indonesian government)
BSPP	Burma Socialist Programme Party (Myanmar)
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CNRP	Cyclone Nargis Recovery Programme (World Vision)
DART	International Disaster Assistance Response Team (Samaritan's Purse)
EAT	Emergency Assistance Team (Thai-Myanmar border communities)
ERAT	Emergency Rapid Assessment Team (ASEAN)
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
GAM	Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*) (Indonesia)
GRRT	Global Rapid Response Team (World Vision)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHO	International Humanitarian Order
IMT	Incident Management Team (Samaritan's Purse)
KNLA	Karen National Liberation Army (Myanmar)
KNU	Karen National Union (Myanmar)
LFC	Local Faith Communities
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development

MAF	Mission Aviation Fellowship
MSF	Doctors Without Borders (*Médecins Sans Frontières*)
NAE	National Association of Evangelicals (US)
NDPCC	National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee (Myanmar government)
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NLD	National League for Democracy (Myanmar)
OCC	Operation Christmas Child (Samaritan's Purse)
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
PESAT	Integrated Village Ministry (Indonesia)
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council (Myanmar government)
SOHS	State of the Humanitarian System
SP	Samaritan's Purse
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council (Myanmar government)
TCG	Tripartite Core Group (AHTF, Myanmar)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WMM	World Medical Mission (Samaritan's Purse)
WV	World Vision

Introduction

"Are We Just 'Oxfam With Hymns'?" This was both the title and provocation of former Christian Aid Director Michael Taylor's presentation to the 2010 meeting of ACT Alliance (M. Taylor and Rakodi 2010, 1).[1] In posing this question, he drew on frustrations generated by a key dilemma for religious actors in the global arena: how are we to understand the distinction between religious and non-religious actors in the international system? Is there a meaningful difference that this distinction points to, that might drive our analyses of their actions? Or are such boundaries arbitrary, constructs of vested interests that contain no analytical value? For IR scholars, these questions have been the source of renewed attention; the twenty-first century declared the 'age of religious resurgence' (see for example Hatzopoulos and Petito 2003b; Philpott 2002; Thomas 2005). This resurgence they see as taking place not so much in the practices and experiences of religious traditions themselves, but in the willingness to pay attention to these by IR academics in the context of 9/11, the 'war on terror' and the demise of the secularisation thesis. In the process, IR scholars have had to consider how to conceptualise religious thought, actors, and practices within the broader disciplinary paradigms.

There has been a predictably varied number of avenues pursued. There are those who argue that "a sustained investigation of religion… would add little to our understanding of state actions or international outcomes" (Rosato 2013, 182). There are those who are comfortable with seeing religion slot into pre-existing disciplinary paradigms (Snyder 2011, 6); and those who see religion as having a future on its own terms within the core of IR focus (Thomas 2005; Fox and Sandler 2006). At the other end of the spectrum are those who question the coherence of religion as a category of analysis in any meaningful sense at all (Shakman Hurd 2008), and those who champion the re-examination of religious traditions as the very means to "break the liberal monopoly on normative theory" and free IR from its Westphalian conception of world politics (Hatzopoulos and Petito 2003b, 18). According to this latter approach, religion provides a "competing vision of international society… by challenging the universality of IR norms (such as sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-intervention) and the very foundation of the Westphalian system" (Sheikh 2012, 374). With such an array of responses to the questions of how to approach religion in the international space, it is difficult to plot a path forward.

[1] Action by Churches Together (ACT); a coalition of 152 churches and FBOs working in relief and development, founded in 2010 to better coordinate their humanitarian efforts and resources (ACT Alliance 2019).

Eva Bellin (2008) calls for an approach to religion in IR that attends to the questions of when religion matters, and how it matters. This implies a certain fluidity in the role and space that religious ideas, actors, and practices occupy. However, this ontological and epistemological uncertainty can leave scholars in danger of shying away from the task of engaging with religion substantively at all in their research. Such shallow conceptualising of religion is problematic where it leads to flawed theorising about religious actors in the international system. In turn, flawed theorising about religious actors in the international system produces skewed empirics, that cannot shed light on the nuances and diversity of religious practices in the rich variety of contexts that faith is expressed. Thus, in this thesis I seek to provide a conceptually rich understanding of religious actors that drives novel theoretical accounts of the relationship between their ontological commitments, their embedded contexts, and their practices. This in turn will allow me to contribute new empirical insights into the complex interactions between faith-based actors and the world in which they operate.

In this thesis, I look at the world of humanitarianism in order to study specific instantiations of religious actors in a global space. The story of faith-based action in humanitarianism holds many similarities to the broader story of religion in IR. The establishment of an international humanitarian order (IHO) relied heavily on religious actors and institutions, yet the role and relevance of faith was increasingly sidelined by the IHO throughout the twentieth century (as chronicled for example in Barnett 2011b, also 2011a, 95). A contemporary reversal of this marginalisation reflects the global trends raised in IR studies also: the secularisation thesis' waning grip on the discipline, the impact of strains of international political Islam on geopolitics, and the increased presence and visibility of faith-based actors, particularly in the global South (Swart and Nell 2016, 2).

This continued persistence of religion is relevant both to the giving and receipt of humanitarian assistance. In a world where 84 percent of the global population self-identifies with a religious tradition, the significance of faith for recipients of aid cannot be discounted in humanitarian responses (Pew Research Center 2017). However, religious communities are also deeply involved in mobilising relief and development across the globe; Elizabeth Ferris notes that while the scale of assistance provided by faith-based organisations (FBOs) and broader faith communities is undoubtedly in the billions of dollars each year, much of this resource transfer goes unquantified and unrecorded (Ferris 2011a, 612). What has been recorded though, is the rapid growth of both the non-government organisation (NGO) sector in general, and FBOs specifically (de Cordier 2009, 663). One kind of FBO in particular, evangelical Christian FBOs, have seen particularly significant growth, now estimated to comprise 80 percent of all FBOs in

the humanitarian sector, and more than a third of all relief and development agencies in total (Barnett and Stein 2012a, 5; Barro and McCleary 2004, 10). This means that evangelical FBOs arguably now comprise one of the largest non-government aid delivering groups in the world.[2]

As a result, the humanitarian community, scholars and practitioners alike, are having to learn to work with local faith communities (LFCs), FBOs, and their religious beliefs and practices in both the relief and development spheres. The shape of these interactions has been greatly varied, ranging from enthusiastic embrace to deep suspicion, with a liberal sprinkling of plain disinterest throughout (A. Ager and Ager 2011; Barnett et al. 2009; Barnett and Stein 2012a). Part of the reason for this diversity of response is the diversity of faith-based actors; working out where they fit in the broader IHO is far from straightforward. So the scholarly task in this area reflects that in IR more broadly: in what kinds of ways does the faith of these actors matter for their humanitarian action? In investigating how ontologies shape practice, I seek to provide a means of answering these questions of why and how religious actors engage with the global political sphere.

Such a project is timely, as there is still a lack of conceptually rich theoretical engagement with religious actors in the humanitarian system that points to the way that faith informs practice in the kinds of ways discussed. This is a symptom of the discipline's broader slowness in exploring the roles, values, and implications of an increasing diversity of humanitarian action (a lack noted in O'Hagan and Hirono 2014; Yeophantong 2014). Within the field of development for example, Ben Jones and Marie Juul Petersen's (2013) literature review leads them to conclude that much engagement with religion is 'instrumental, narrow, and normative'. By this they mean that it mostly considers the way in which religious actors and resources (normally narrowly defined by belonging to religious institutions) can be pressed into service for a secular development agenda of "progress and freedom" (B. Jones and Petersen 2013, 42). Indeed, until relatively recently in the broader humanitarian literature, FBOs were usually assumed to be functionally identical to their secular counterparts, or at most, distinct from secular NGOs but indistinguishable from one another (see for example Ferris 2005). These assumptions have started to be overturned, as research highlights that the landscape of religious NGOs is far more varied than previously suspected.

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[2] Additionally, their ability to capture market share of charitable private giving is noticeably strong. Abby Stoddard notes that while the average US private donor gives around 1 percent of income to charity, the pervasiveness of the mandate to 'tithe' amongst US evangelical populations (that is, give 10 percent of income to churches and church-based charities) makes them "a potentially much more lucrative source of private relief and development funding" (Stoddard 2003, 6).

While some FBOs seem difficult to separate from their secular counterparts, others appear to operate in very diverse and distinct ways. The reasons for those differences and the impact of the 'faith' in 'FBO' are areas that are starting to receive more scholarly attention. For example, Laura Thaut's (2009) typology of religious actors seeks to distinguish between three different sorts of Christian FBO according to their theological basis, noting the operational differences for relief and development work that this might create. However, it is still an area where much remains to be discovered. This thesis seeks to help overcome this problem, by exploring the connection between the faith of evangelical FBOs and their humanitarian practices, in the context of the renewed focus on religion in the global space, generating new theoretical thinking and empirical research to the literature.

Both Thaut's typology and other research (such as Clarke 2006; Ferris 2005; Kniss and Campbell 1997) note that evangelical FBOs seem to be particularly distinct as a category of humanitarian actor, often focussing on the proselytising dimensions of evangelical identity. However, this research all calls for more work to be done to understand the source of this distinctiveness. Where specific engagement with evangelical FBOs exists, much of it remains mired in what Jonathan Agensky calls "a predominant and totalising metanarrative that reduces global evangelical activities to imperial or missionary practices" (2013, 474). There is a great suspicion of this category of actors and their humanitarian practices; with Thaut warning that evangelical FBOs might represent "a thinly veiled form of religious imperialism by taking advantage of unfortunate situations of human suffering to spread the Christian message to a necessarily captive audience" (2009, 326). Others also share this concern that the spiritual framework at the heart of their distinctive approach compromises their humanitarian legitimacy and effectiveness, risking 'jeopardy' of the broader humanitarian project (discernable in, for example, Cottle 2003, 17; Ferris 2005, 323).

This theoretical focus of equating evangelical FBOs with (usually coercive) missionary practices leads to representations of faith-based agencies as inherently damaging, such as with Stoddard's assertion that USAID funding for FBOs is a sign of "the scale of the threat" to the agency's commitment to respecting humanitarian neutrality (2003, 6). It is also present in the use of normatively loaded language to describe evangelical Christians' actions in empirical research. This can be seen, for example, in Orlando Wood's descriptions of "religious opportunism" and "exploitation" by evangelical Christian groups seeking to "gain a foothold" after the tsunami in Sri Lanka (Woods 2018, 37). The presentation of evangelical Christian interaction with local communities entirely in terms of their desire to "use relief as a pretext for both subtle and more overt forms of religious engagement with society" (2018, 43) gives no space to religious identity

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or theological commitments beyond proselytising. Instead, it assumes their relief efforts flowed from "an overarching remit of missionisation and proselytization" (2018, 40). These empirical conclusions notably, contain no substantive discussion on evangelical motivations or commitments beyond conversion, and no definition of evangelical other than to note that Sri Lankans consider them "the fundamentalist alternatives to their mainline Christian counterparts" (Woods 2018, 38).[3]

These kinds of works level a serious accusation at this category of humanitarian actor – the charge that their very involvement in relief and development is damaging to the goals of humanitarianism. It springs from the fear that evangelical FBOs 'hijack' humanitarianism in order to appropriate it as a vehicle for their 'real' goal – conversion, using their relative power over their recipients in order to coerce adherence to their religious beliefs (Schwarz 2018, 13). Moreover, the kind of condemnations canvassed above of evangelical FBOs as intrinsically implicated as propagators of a coercive conversion agenda seem both under-verified and over-assumed, with few empirical studies and little analysis of the actual link between the substance of evangelical values (beyond commitments to evangelism) and humanitarian practice. Agensky notes this lack when he calls on the field to "empirically engage the range of actual activities conducted in the framework of faith-based humanitarianism… by attending to the "microphysics" of these groups across their various sites of operation and organisation" (2013, 473). This is the task required to advance better understanding of the relationship between this kind of faith-based actor and the humanitarian world in which they work.

Central Research Question

I answer Agensky's call for empirical engagement with the actual activities of evangelical FBOs through the work of this thesis. I use empirical data collected on a number of evangelical FBOs and their humanitarian programs in order to analyse the connection between these groups' evangelical values and their humanitarian practices. Hence, the central research question guiding this project is as follows: what are the effects of evangelical FBOs' beliefs and values on their humanitarian practices? In answering this question, this thesis examines how evangelical FBOs choose and develop programs, formulate objectives, understand their scope of action, and what kind of criteria they use to evaluate success. It does so by comparing three evangelical

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[3] Mainline was in turn defined as belonging to the denominations of "Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Christian Reformed, Methodist, Presbyterian, the Church of South Indian and the Salvation Army" (Woods 2018, 44). Chapter two will highlight in more detail why a denominational bounding of evangelical does not give particularly useful insights into the category.

Christian FBOs' responses to two humanitarian disasters in the Asia Pacific region, the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 and Cyclone Nargis in 2008. These case studies serve as a site where connections between evangelical values and organisational practice for these actors can be identified and analysed, in line with Agensky's call to attend to the 'microphysics' of faith-based humanitarian groups by empirically engaging with their activities across different sites (Agensky 2013, 473). The project does not assume either a beneficial or a harmful relationship between belief and practice. Instead, it seeks to establish through observation and analysis a more nuanced understanding of just how evangelical faith impacts an organisation's humanitarian response, and what some of the implications might be both for affected communities being offered assistance by these groups, and other actors and donors in the wider humanitarian system.

Although this thesis answers its central research question through a focus on the aforementioned 'microphysics' of evangelical FBO activities, it also speaks into the broader theme of faith played out on a global stage. In an attempt to rectify the neglect of the past century of scholarship, the wider IR field's approach to religion leaves it in danger of uncritically importing religion as a variable in a manner that oversimplifies its role in politics. The truth often resists simplicity, and so too IR scholars should resist the temptation of transforming "the complexities and contingencies of human affiliation, behaviour and motivation into a singular explanation of political outcomes: 'religion made them do it'" (Shakman Hurd 2015, 116). On the other hand, there is a danger in so over-complicating and caveating the role of religious beliefs that there becomes no way to grasp religion meaningfully at all (Desch 2013, 35). The role of the IR scholar is to navigate between these two extremes in order to develop a deep understanding of religious actors that provides detailed insight into "why and how FBOs choose particular courses of action over others" (Schwarz 2018, 17). In investigating how ontologies shape practice in this particular site of global politics, this thesis will contribute to that task.

Linda Woodhead argues that the contemporary era has produced a fascinating diversity of religious actors, structures and expression, which has changed greatly from the 'old religion' associated with European institutionalised religion, closely bound to the nation-state and reflective of it (Woodhead 2015, 72). Today's 'new-style religion' is more reflective of the globalised world in which it exists, sitting side by side with the traditional religious structures but producing very different forms and understandings of religious communities and beliefs. She argues that political representations of religion have struggled to adapt the reality of this 'new-style religion', bound up in habits of interaction with traditional forms (2015, 78). This is an

unhelpful framework because more and more it does not reflect the reality of what religious actors are doing and creating in the world.

This is certainly an argument that can be applied to the world of faith-based humanitarianism. Agensky's (2013) criticisms of oversimplified and outdated representations of evangelical humanitarian actors as imperial missionaries are a similar call to academia and policy makers to consider more carefully the complex place that evangelical FBOs inhabit in the modern IHO. Evangelical FBOs certainly represent a qualitatively different 'face of faith' than the institutionalised religious structures (particularly western) IR commentators are familiar with, with their unique fusion of modernised branding and governance, technical humanitarian expertise and evangelical Christian theological and spiritual frameworks. Understanding the choices they make as they play out these 'fusion' identities publicly in the realm of humanitarianism provides insight into the broader category of these kinds of faith-based actors, and in turn, helps shed light on contemporary manifestations of religious belief.

Conceptual Framework

There are two major conceptual frameworks that underpin my investigation, which help to locate this project within the scholarly approaches to the topic. Firstly, the work is motivated by the central premise that both the actual content of specific faith beliefs and the context in which they are practiced should be central to any investigation of faith-based actors. This approach will be laid out in detail in the chapters to come, but it is worth noting at this juncture that while such an approach grounds this work in certain, substantive understandings of what religion is, it is not substantivist in full. This clarification is important because different understandings of what religion is lead to different responses.

Substantivist definitions of religion pick out the object of religious belief as a unique ontological category, and so tend to centre the content of religious belief in understanding. On the other hand, functionalist definitions "refer to some social or psychological function, such that anything that fulfils said function(s) counts as religious" and phenomenological definitions refer to "some special experience, such as of awe or majesty, or even dread" (Jong 2015, 17). My thesis does not take a substantivist approach insofar as I do not accept the claim that religious actors are doing a uniquely different kind of thing when they follow religious beliefs or have religious experiences. My emphasis on the constitutive role of context in shaping belief as it affects practice is also not necessarily in this definitional vein. However, I do think that study of religious actors must none-the-less begin (although certainly not end) with seeking to

understand what and why these communities and individuals think they are doing. Robert Woodberry (2012) argues for the importance of centring analysis on the consequences of specific theological commitments because they highlight demonstrably distinctive empirical effects.[4] And Monica Duffy Toft (2011, 126) notes that the specifics of a faith identity (such as Jewish, Buddhist, or Muslim) resist abstraction in a way that has no accurate analogue in secular international relations theorising, and that scholars must account for the specific "intangible benefits" such actors prioritise (2011, 133). Likewise, Tanya Schwarz develops this approach when she argues that studying FBOs well requires "ascertaining what different ideas and practices mean for FBOs themselves" (2018, 17). This requires taking seriously their self-constructed identities and values, including the content of their beliefs, and as such, is a key conceptual commitment in this thesis.

However, there are certain complexities and ambiguities bound up in the construction and reproduction of religious identities and values that need to be considered when investigating actors defined by their religious adherence in one way or another. The distinction between 'religious' and 'secular' is neither politically neutral nor ahistorical; and all too often scholars do not take sufficient account of this when they begin their study by taking this dichotomy and its related assumptions as "unproblematic categories of analysis" (Schwarz 2018, 31). Therefore, part of the work of this thesis is to question and explore what it means (both to other actors and observers, and to the FBOs themselves) to be conceived of as 'evangelical', rather than merely accepting this religious categorisation as a starting point. This commitment requires a flexible, and indeed, a reflexive approach to the values, identities, and practices of FBOs that does not pre-judge what is and is not considered religious, but investigates the social construction of such categories to reveal how they both shape and are shaped by broader environmental pressures. This approach avoids reifying religious actors and beliefs, instead allowing room for understanding how they interpret and apply their given values and heritage against varying backdrops (Schwarz 2018, 44).

Secondly, in a similar way, I treat humanitarianism as a socially constructed concept that is dynamic and value laden, a 'concept in motion' that evolves across time and space through its practice in particular contexts (Barnett 2011b, 21). It also varies between participants: "different actors may be chasing divergent ends because they hold different ideas about what is right" (M. J. Davies 2014, 218). Although it has a meaningful core, and can be distinguished from other

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[4] Bertrand Taithe's provocative assertion "missionaries win" is an example of this line of argument. He noted that in the difficult context of 'the field', "faith translates into concrete commitments that have meaningful consequences"; i.e. their beliefs give them a willingness to endure greater hardship or stay for longer stints (as discussed in Barnett et al. 2009, 9).

forms of compassion and charity, humanitarianism is imbued with enduring tensions that bring out differences in its meaning and practices depending on time and place. The core, that 'humanitarian impulse', is the desire to help those who are suffering in some systematic way (Yeophantong 2014, 18). The characteristics that make that impulse distinct from other forms of altruism are that it is assistance that is directed 'beyond the call of duty' to those in other lands; has a transcendental significance in the sense that it calls on a global ethic of care; and seeks to be organised and a part of governance (Barnett 2011, 21).

There are however, tensions endemic to the concept of humanitarianism that cause individual actors, organisations and communities to understand and practice it in many different ways. These tensions include "the existence of multiple humanitarianisms; ethics that are simultaneously universal and circumstantial; a commitment to emancipation that can justify forms of domination; the possibility (or not) of advancing moral progress; and ministration to the needs of both the giver and the recipient" (Barnett 2011, 21). Humanitarianism is indelibly bound up in the world it seeks to better, and as that world changes, different facets of the humanitarian project are highlighted or marginalised. Understanding the shifting nature of the concept of humanitarianism is important in understanding the way that actors such as evangelical FBOs navigate it.

This idea of humanitarianism as a 'concept in motion' is distinct from some approaches, which see humanitarianism as action characterised by the traditional principles espoused by organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) – humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.[5] It is also more expansive, incorporating broader relief and development work that is done under the banner of humanitarianism (contra more tightly delineated approaches, which rule out all but the emergency aspect of humanitarian relief). By taking a more constructed understanding of humanitarianism, I seek to more fully capture some of the tensions and interplay between secular and religious evolutions of the humanitarian tradition in particular. Taking the traditional principles as a starting point for enquiry hides some of the assumptions and values embedded in that conceptualisation; by taking a step back from this approach, this project hopes to shed light on some of these values. It allows us to see the normative choices that are made about human suffering and what should be done about it. This thesis is fundamentally about ontologies of belief – about what we think humanitarianism really *is*, its purpose and value, and how these ontologies are not the same

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[5] Humanity requires that all people have the right to humanitarian assistance. Impartiality dictates that assistance be given based on consideration of need alone. Neutrality means that humanitarians are not to take sides in a conflict, while independence requires that assistance be unconnected and uncontrolled by those who have a stake in the conflict's outcome (Barnett and Weiss 2008, 3).

from group to group, even as they may be engaging in very similar-looking practices or activities. This particular lens allows for that kind of investigation. This thesis explicitly challenges the notion of humanitarianism as neutral, universal, and ideologically impartial. It is not. Humanitarianism is a normative endeavour. It is grounded in its own assumptions about what kinds of things have value and should be preserved in this world. It is bound up in understandings of right and wrong, and the duties we have to one another. In the sense that it requires belief in the possibility of better world, as Barnett and Stein conclude: "all humanitarian organisations are faith-based" (Barnett and Stein 2012a, 23).

Research Design

These two major conceptual frameworks drive the research design of this project in very specific ways. From the first of these frameworks, it takes as its starting point the notion that "understanding the role of religion in international politics requires grasping its meaning for believers" (Bellin 2008, 343). This necessarily means guarding against the tendency to overgeneralise from the experiences of a small set of FBOs about the role of 'religion' writ large.

As a result, one of the things that is distinct about this project is that instead of taking the values of the actors as given, it places an understanding of that belief at its centre, seeking to unpack the effects of theological content of belief on practice. This approach has implications beyond evangelical FBOs and humanitarianism; it contributes to a research agenda that can be pursued more broadly in the area of religion and IR. It starts with this category of evangelical FBO, but it looks at three different organisations that fit this category, to highlight the potentiality for difference, as well as similarity. If these categories are based primarily on theological orientation (as Thaut 2009 explicitly argues), then there should be a great deal of similarity between them. However, if their interpretation of these values within a variety of contexts and across unique organisational histories differs, then there will not necessarily be strong similarities. By looking at these three FBOs as they respond to humanitarian disasters in different situational contexts, this project seeks to answer two key questions about the relationship between belief and practice:

Firstly, does the theological content of their designated religious category actually affect the practice of these FBOs in a meaningful way? In other words, are the organisations actually prioritising their guiding values and beliefs when they are on the field? Or do other considerations regularly and systematically take preference? If belief does not affect practice, or affects it only marginally, this would contradict the assumptions made in the general literature

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on this topic. This would suggest that resultant condemnations of this entire category of actor (particularly in the face of their growing size and corresponding ability to mobilise resources for humanitarian endeavours) because of their organisational affiliations to a particular stream of Christian values are problematic. However, if the content of belief does affect the humanitarian practices of these FBOs in the field, then having a clear understanding of how these FBOs conceive of their mission and values is a key requirement to understanding the actors and the nature of their impact. Secondly, this thesis asks: if the content of belief has an effect on practice, how is this effect shaping and shaped by their operational environments? In other words, how does the construction and the 'living out' of these values interact with the normative, organisational, and pragmatic contexts in which these FBOs operate? And how do such interactions mould and change what it means to be a 'religious' humanitarian?

In looking for the answers to these two questions, the project contributes to the process of disentangling the different ways in which the faith of faith-based groups may have an impact. In ask what it means to be understood as an 'evangelical' humanitarian, and in seeking to trace if, where, and how it shapes operational decisions on the ground, this thesis offers a means for delineating much more clearly what actually matters when considering the impact of actors such as evangelical FBOs. And while this is important for increasing our understanding of the role of 'religion' in the humanitarian field, it has purchase and application well outside of this area also. Hence, the research design generated by the project's commitment to its first conceptual framework centres understanding how these religious values, identities and beliefs are constructed and what gives them content.

The second conceptual framework adopted in this thesis also has important ramifications for the project design. I approach humanitarianism as an inherently normative project, with meaning and content varying over time and space. The IHO that exists today has grown out of a historical humanitarian project that has had changing understandings of what constitutes tragic human suffering, and what duties the rest of the world has towards those who suffer (Barnett 2011b). Questions about what humanitarianism is and what humanitarianism does are ultimately moral questions, as all humanitarianism is 'faith-based', that is, grounded in a vision of the transcendent and preoccupied with trying to get the 'real world' a little closer to being that vision. The role of this thesis project is not to act as arbiter of those distinctive normative visions; however, it does need to expose the ethics and values often hidden behind terms such as 'universal', 'impartial', 'neutral', and so forth.

Furthermore, referring to humanitarianism as a monolithic endeavour, even in strictly contemporary observations, disguises the staggeringly diverse array of actors, motivations, values and objectives involved in humanitarian work. There exist multiple humanitarianisms, rather than a single humanitarian project (argued further in Barnett 2009; O'Hagan and Hirono 2014). While best practice standards such as the Sphere guidelines or the State of the Humanitarian System (SOHS) reports exist, and have benefit, they too reflect certain normatively loaded understandings of what humanitarianism is for and should be like that are neither universal nor problem-free (Davey 2012, 4). As the 2018 SOHS report itself comments, humanitarian principles "are better thought of as norms to be considered, argued over and understood in context" (ALNAP 2018, 217). Thus, rather than representing the humanitarian field as a monolith, it is better to understand that the weight of these norms generates a mainstreaming pressure to conform to these particular standards, what Katherine Davies refers to as the 'master-narrative' of humanitarianism (K. Davies 2012, 1). This is felt by actors as pressure (positively or negatively conceived) to conform to the "methodological, relational, material and spatial practices of the mainstream international aid community" (Agensky 2013, 468).

The first major implication of this particular approach for this project's research design is that there is no impartial standard against which to measure humanitarian success or failure, no value-neutral ideal from which FBOs deviate, to some lesser or greater degree. Hence, the project does not seek to compare some aggregated picture of humanitarianism as practiced by evangelical FBOs with either other 'secular' or 'mainstream' NGOs. Nor does it hold up documents such as the Sphere guidelines or the SOHS reports as the gold standard against which the case study organisations must match up to in order to be considered 'good' humanitarian actors. Instead, the project focuses on understanding the relationship between identity as a 'faith-based' actor and practice more specifically, and investigates the implications of that relationship for the organisations, for the communities amongst which they work, and for the broader humanitarian sector. This includes reflecting on mainstreaming pressures, but does not assume or deny their superiority.

Secondly, if all humanitarianism is 'faith-based', in that it holds particular values and acts out humanitarianism according to those values, then all humanitarianism is to a greater or lesser extent, unavoidably in the business of norm propagation (as concluded by Hirono 2008; Lynch and Schwarz 2016). This is true whether it is evangelical FBOs sharing their faith or secular NGOs promoting women's rights or anti-FGM messages. In terms of the research design, this has lessened the focus on proselytising in and of itself (which, as explored earlier, is often a key

focus of treatment of evangelicals), and sharpened the focus on the effects of faith more holistically – what the specific impact of the entire package of evangelical beliefs and values is on these actors' practices.

It is worth emphasising again that underpinning both of these implications is the critical point that no examination of faith-based agencies can be comprehensive without understanding the role that the construction and enforcement of a secular-religious binary has played in the humanitarian sphere as it has developed over the course of the nineteenth, twentieth and now twenty-first centuries. The boundary between secular and faith-based humanitarianism is a blurry one, constructed by many different actors for different reasons over the history of humanitarianism. In seeking to understand the role of faith-based actors, I must engage with broader arguments about the implications of these differentiated spheres, and the interests such a separation might serve (see for example Shakman Hurd 2015, 2008; Wilson 2017, 2012).

Case Studies

In order to investigate the relationship between belief and practice for FBOs, I have concentrated on three evangelical FBOs working across two different field sites, examining their responses to the humanitarian disasters that took place. While the term evangelical will be analysed in more detail in the coming chapters, I note briefly here that evangelicals are usually defined as "Protestant groups that emphasize the authority of the Bible, salvation through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, personal piety, and the need to share the "Good News" of Jesus Christ with others (i.e., to evangelize)" (The Baylor Institute for Religious Studies 2006, 9). Sometimes known as 'Bebbington's quadrangle', this definition highlights the core theological commitments of evangelicals.[6] However, these core theological similarities do not necessarily negate the significant sociological and cultural variations between different evangelical groups (D. King 2012b, 925). For example, Jonathan Malloy (2015) argues that despite theological similarities, evangelical communities in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the US, and the UK approach domestic political engagement very differently depending on the historical and social relationships that they have had with government institutions. Furthermore, Malloy observes that while 'evangelical' is a coherent theological concept, it is deployed in a confusing and inconsistent manner (Malloy 2015, 2). It is often used interchangeably with other words such as fundamentalist, born-again Christian, conservative, charismatic; and as a political category as well as a religious or social one. Thus, the first part of

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[6] Bebbington's original formulation is: "*conversionism,* the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism,* the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism,* a particular regard to the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism,* a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross" (Bebbington 1989, 2–3 original emphasis). The Baylor Institute's version seeks to convey these in plainer language for unfamiliar audiences.

chapter two will be dedicated to exploring the concept of an evangelical actor, whether this categorisation is meaningful and to what it might actually refer.

The FBOs examined in this project – World Vision (WV), Samaritan's Purse (SP), and Compassion International – were selected according to the criteria of evangelical FBO laid out by Thaut (2009) in her typology, which assesses the interaction between theology and four dimensions of agency structure: mission statements, staff policies, ties to a religious authority or community, and sources of donor support (2009, 322). She argues that evangelical humanitarian agencies are underpinned by a particular set of theological commitments to social engagement that have important ramifications for their organisations. As a result, they can be identified through a mission statement that "places a clear emphasis on providing service that is motivated by and witnesses to God's love for humanity", staff policies likely to require "the personal faith commitment of staff", strong ties to broader church authorities and communities, and a donor support base that depends on faith communities and may struggle to obtain or submit to the conditions of public or non-religiously based funding streams (2009, 342).

While Thaut's typology is a useful starting point for investigating the kinds of practices and values that help to construct the category of 'evangelical', she too ends up assuming rather than exploring certain ontological assumptions about what religion is and can do. This means that her typology should not be uncritically taken as an objective definition of what an evangelical humanitarian actor is, but rather, as an analytical 'jumping off' point that highlights useful areas of organisational structure in which FBO meaning making can be investigated.

Additionally, and reflecting the commitment to exploring the socially constructed nature of religious identities, these FBOs (WV, SP and Compassion) are all understood and referred to as evangelical humanitarians by both the broader academic and practitioner field. They are all members of the Accord Network (formerly The Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations), signifying their mutual recognition of one another as belonging to this category, as well as the consensus of the broader evangelical community. However, despite their categorisation, there are differences between them.

WV is one of the largest humanitarian actors in the IHO, and as such as is well known, well respected, and has the largest resource base of the three FBOs in this project. It faces great pressure because of its position to practise a style of humanitarianism that conforms to the expectations of the broader IHO, making it a useful case study to expose how some of these pressures may interact with operational decisions. The second FBO, SP, is much more distant from the mainstream field than WV. Although it is also a large, well established and well-

resourced international NGO, it has attracted controversy several times over its refusal to separate its 'spiritual' and 'physical' goals in the course of its work (see for example Christenson 2003; Cottle 2003; Thaut 2009). The FBO's seeming rejection of many elements of the religious-secular binary that has pervaded much of international humanitarian discourse makes it a highly relevant case study in exploring which values and practices are considered 'religious' in humanitarian operations and why. The final FBO to be studied, Compassion, sits between WV and SP in size, and carefully avoids identification with the label 'humanitarian', preferring to call itself a 'child advocacy ministry', which is involved in 'disaster relief' and 'holistic child development'. Compassion appears to be opting out of identifying with other humanitarian NGOs entirely. Why it opts out and how this relates to its evangelical identity and commitments, and how this affects practice and outcome are key questions with which this thesis will engage.

Field Sites

The project looks at the responses mobilised by the FBOs in question across two different field sites in the Asia Pacific: the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia, and the 2008 Cyclone Nargis in the lower delta region of Myanmar.[7] In each, the humanitarian disaster was of sufficient size and scale that it merited a large international response. Additionally, both of the field sites are places of cross-religious interaction for the FBOs in questions, and therefore, locations where the current assumptions of the literature would see their specifically evangelical theological commitments most likely to encounter testing situations or pressure to minimise faith-based identity markers.[8] Both contexts have also been highly militarised. This effectively gives the project six individual case studies of FBO responses, comprised of three FBOs' interactions with two field sites.

I examine each case from first response to final withdrawal (or handover to a long-term development team in cases where the FBO is still engaged). The first field site, Aceh, has a Muslim majority, with a history of tension around markers of religious identity, and armed conflict present in the lead up to the tsunami. The second field site, the Ayeyarwady delta region in Myanmar, has a more diverse mix of religious and ethnic minorities, with a majority Buddhist population intertwined with other faith groups, including a growing Christian minority. This makes it a challenging environment of a different kind: with multiple competing tensions and pressures likely to be present where there are high levels of political tension and violent

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[7] In Australia, it is common to refer to the Indian Ocean tsunami as the Boxing Day tsunami, since it occurred on the 26th December, traditionally celebrated as Boxing Day in Australia as a former British empire colony. The two terms are interchangeable through the thesis.

[8] As, for example, there is no 'cultural proximity' advantage claimed by co-religionist status (see for example Benthall 2012).

conflict between religious, ethnic and national identity group; perceptions of favour or coercion in FBO responses may have serious ramifications.

Methodological Considerations

I gathered data for the project through a combination of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included FBO reports and internal documents, external reporting, newspaper archives and interviews with FBO staff. The secondary sources included other academic research and official FBO histories. I sought interviews with those in key roles of project direction, planning and implementation, as well as other staff able to shed light on organisational strategy, history and culture, and with a number of third-party observers. I conducted these interviews through a combination of face-to-face, video call, and email correspondence methods, numbering 43 in all.[9] I made several trips to meet with these staff in their various location between 2016 and 2018. These included FBO headquarters in Newcastle and Sydney, Australia, as well as Colorado Springs and Boone (North Carolina) in the US, and several auxiliary cities, Canberra, Melbourne, Dallas, and San Francisco. I undertook more interviews with staff from Compassion and SP than WV, given that the latter has substantially more publicly available material to source.

Most of the relevant staff involved in the responses were no longer based in the original field sites, given the international nature of relief and development work. Although there were a small number of local interlocutors identified in the research whom I could have approached for inclusion in the project, I ultimately chose not to travel to Aceh and Myanmar to conduct interviews with them. Many have already shared their stories with a range of researchers and agencies, and there have been a number of works published since the disasters based on in-country interviews with local staff of various NGOs, as well as the internal reports generated by the three I study in this thesis. Furthermore, I felt that the potential ethical costs of asking local staff (for whom the regions affected were their home) to share again their perspectives in order to participate in my project far outweighed any benefit to them, and secondarily, to the project given the availability of these accounts second-hand. Consequently, I sought out and included in my analysis reports, interviews, and scholarly research that contained firsthand accounts from that group of informants to complement the perspectives of the other staff chosen for interview.

In focusing on the writings and reflections of staff working for these FBOs, I have sought to uncover the ways in which they understand their work and the values they attach to it. In doing

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[9] Further details about these interviews is contained in the interview appendix to this thesis.

so, I am seeking to interrogate and contextualise their self-presentations and self-rationalisations of their actions, "the system of thought and forms of value" through which these actors have "conceptualised, reflected, and rationalised" their actions (Loevy 2014, 77). It goes without saying that their presentations of their own actions will not always accord with other points of view, or 'the facts of the matter', such as they may be. However, in seeking to understand how religious actors conceptualise and action their humanitarian practices, and then exploring the implications of these choices on the world around them, a close attention to (although not mere acceptance of) these claims is critically important.

The focus on self-presentation had a significant methodological impact. Being explicit about my own beliefs in relation to the participants I interviewed turned out to be a very important part of the research project. My childhood was spent in theologically conservative Christian faith-communities, and while my personal religious identity has evolved since then, it is important to note that my research examines a group of which I myself am broadly a member. That always entails risks of presuppositions that might inhibit analytical insights. The temptation to pre-interpret what various practices and ideas might mean for the FBO staff is a particular risk. For example, this might entail relying on my own pre-existing assumptions about what prayer is and does, rather than focussing on investigating how prayer is conceived of and used by my interviewees, which may be quite different (a risk considered in more detail by Schwarz 2018, 34; also Paras 2012).

One of the reasons that this positioning became so important, however, was that having 'insider' status was a key component in being admitted to the inner lives and beliefs of my interview participants. They did not attribute in my approaches the spiritual scepticism that they suspected pervaded mainstream academia, and because of this, were open in sharing perspectives they otherwise found difficult to translate to a non-Christian audience. The trust they demonstrated in giving this role over to me instead was immense. Sometimes participants demonstrated this by praying for me and my project in the interview, or by speaking in Bible passages or specifically Christian phrases and terms to explain parts of their stories.[10]   However, this relationship was built up over some period of time, and also relied on finding the right gatekeepers to certain key informants. While other researchers in different contexts to mine

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[10] Such as one interviewee breaking off a story with the words, "right hand, left hand, you know" before resuming, referring to a teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, from Matthew 6:3, about safeguarding the generous intent of giving through discretion. These four words encapsulated a whole theology of giving, that enriched his reflections immensely but which he did not explicitly elaborate, with this expectation of shared understanding between us (interview with senior Compassion executive, 14 March 2018, Colorado Springs).

may find fruitful alternate entry points as a basis for relational trust, my positioning became an effective means of entry for this research.

In this process, I was experiencing the ways in which I, as researcher, was implicated in "the interpretive context" of my research (Lynch 2008, 714). Rather than being outside of the world I studied, offering objective representations, I was, in fact, deeply embedded within it. This dual position as both an insider to the world of faith and an outsider as a researcher seeking to study it from the perspective and for the digest of a secular IR academy was a central component of that interpretive context. As Lynch observes, in situations where the agenda of the researcher may be a source of suspicion, "the positionality of the researcher affects her reception by civil society actors, whether they are relatively powerful or marginalised" (Lynch 2008, 717).

A general perception amongst my interview participants of negative scholarly treatment of evangelical FBOs created a wariness of participating in external academic research. Many participants were only comfortable contributing to the project on the condition of anonymity, personally, and sometimes organisationally as well. Additionally, despite the role of gatekeepers in vouching for my presence, most of my interview participants very explicitly mined my background and faith credentials as a researcher before or at the start of the interviews. They wanted to know for example, my church background, the state of my religious beliefs, the faith credentials of my extended family, my motives in focussing on evangelical actors, and/or why I was pursuing my PhD in an IR department rather than a theological college. Only once a connection was established in the light of these personal attributes and experiences, did they accept my questions, and share their own experiences and thoughts. Revealing this personal aspect was therefore a crucial part of the "constitutive process of knowledge-building" with these research subjects (Lynch 2008, 719).

However, this entanglement of researcher and subject highlights the need for reflexivity as a researcher to maintain integrity and analytical rigour in the project. Lynch notes the importance of embarking upon these conversations from a position of respect of one's research participants; working hard to maintain openness to findings which might challenge "one's proclivities and expectations"; and being ready to reassess these based on the outcomes of that research (Lynch 2008, 718). Additionally, it required me to think about how a shared ontological discourse might shape the way representatives of the FBOs conceptualised their work to me – that is, that where other researchers might be presented their practices in a secular frame, my positionality as an insider could prompt articulations explicitly couched in discourse drawing on assumed shared ontologies. In other words, where they might have 'translated' their thoughts into what they

assumed were more palatable framings for a researcher from outside their faith tradition, they might equally have translated themselves *into* the faith-based framings in which they expected me to be interested. Thus, again, the need to employ a reflexive approach that considers how, methodologically, the "researcher shapes the research project and result", in part by being a socially embedded person to whom interview participants respond (Schwarz 2018, 37). This prompts a view of knowledge that is produced with one's interviewees, rather than discovered about them (Lynch 2008, 710). This constant reappraisal of my own questions and assumptions, and of the ethical implications of my self-representations to my research participants, was therefore a continual process throughout the project.

The commitment to reflexivity in this project needs to go beyond self-reflection over interview processes, however. It is also required in thinking about the very kinds of categories and definitions that I use. It means "understanding and acknowledging the stakes involved in implicitly or explicitly categorizing an FBO value, identity, or practice as 'religious' or 'political'" (Schwarz 2018, 38). Rather than simply asking 'what is religion', a reflexive scholar holds in tension and balance the knowledge that their use of such analytical categories is already value-laden (containing assumptions about what religion is and does), and seeks to make clear why such a definition is adopted, and what its implications may be (Schilbrack 2012, 106). I use concepts such as religion, secularism, evangelicalism, faith-based organisations, and more throughout this thesis. I do so noting that I am mobilising them as a means to engage with and relate to the broader field's assumptions and categorisations, even as I seek to challenge many of their assumptions and analytical counclusions (excellently explained by Schwarz 2018, 38-39). There are tensions in engaging discourses one also seeks to problematise. This is a balance that will be returned to and further explored throughout the thesis.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the additional methodological challenges raised by FBO staff wariness of external academic researchers. It is preferable when conducting qualitative case study research to demonstrate as clearly as possible the relevance of interview participants' contributions, because of their expertise, experience and qualifications. However, this must be balanced by the need to create the conditions in which those with the most insights to offer are comfortable with contributing. Although I have named the three major FBOs in the study (and indeed, a proper understanding of their history and context is not possible without identification), as well as some of the staff, I must also respect the confidentiality of a number of staff who preferred to contribute anonymously. In FBOs with limited staff in certain sections of the organisation, this can prove challenging. Accordingly, where revealing the staff role or the section of the agency they work for would not practically preserve anonymity, I have left details

more general. Where naming an interviewee would by implication make obvious the identity of colleagues who prefer anonymity (even if the original interviewee has given permission), those names and roles have been left off as well. It is always a challenge to balance the needs of accountability of data with respecting participants' rights to confidentiality. I have sought to find this balance by including a comprehensive list of participant interviews in the interview appendix at the end of this thesis with restricted availability to readers, while in the body of the thesis itself I have noted contributions more generally.[11]

As a brief note on style, I have chosen to capitalise words such as God, Bible, Christ throughout the thesis. This reflects both literary convention of proper noun capitalisation (it is not just a bible, it is specifically the Bible), and also fits with the overall ethical responsibility of myself as researcher to respect the participants for whom these words denote not just ideas or beliefs, but a living and loving person with whom they are in relationship. Where church not capitalized, it refers to individual churches; where Church is used, it refers to the idea of the global community of believers across time and space, sometimes also called the body of Christ, in line with how my interview participants use this term.

Research Outcomes

The study of these evangelical FBOs demonstrates the critical role that specific evangelical commitments play in constructing an organisational identity and set of values for each agency, which then oriented them towards certain styles of response. These evangelical commitments of the inerrancy of the Bible, the centrality of Jesus' death on cross, the belief that people must be transformed by this message, and the need to share it with others are the theological distinctives identified by David Bebbington (1989). However, it is the way these four pillars of doctrine are 'wired together' by evangelicals that generate much of the distinctiveness of their actions as they work out these beliefs in varied socio-historical contexts: they tend to be highly individualistic, strongly oriented to the poor and vulnerable, and keenly attentive to their connection to a global humanity (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012). In constructing and responding to a shared 'evangelical' identity, these FBOs developed unique organisational orientations based on the interplay between these values and their broader contexts. These organisational orientations towards certain styles of humanitarian engagement can be explored through their

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[11] Reflecting some of these challenges, not every targeted decision maker was available or willing to be interviewed. I have noted where these informants were approached but did not participate in the research in the interview appendix. I adjusted for their absence through the pursuit of further secondary interviews, and by seeking to triangulate these insights from multiple sources.

historical trajectories, mission statements, staffing policies, institutional relationships and donor pools. These orientations are not deterministic however; they interact with environmental factors specific to each response (a combination of normative pressures, strategic restraints, and pragmatic demands) in order to generate unique practices. These orientations can be overridden by contextual pressures, but only as far as the changes from 'standard' approaches can be justified as still adhering to the FBO's overarching faith-based commitments. This constitutive interaction between faith and context both gives the boundaries in which those beliefs can be expressed, and supplies important pressures, constraints, and demands that shape that expression.

My theoretical framework (as laid out in chapter two) shows how these theological commitments and their distinctive consequences created a framework of action for these evangelical FBOs that interacted constitutively with a prism of environmental factors in order to produce humanitarian practices that at times resembled the 'mainstream' aid response, and at other times did not. The FBOs were often active agents in seeking to shape the environmental pressures they felt, and in contextualising their expressions of faith as required. These case studies challenge the idea that evangelical FBO humanitarian activity can be primarily understood through the framing of missionising or proselytization; while evangelism is a part of evangelical identity, its relationship to humanitarian action is complex. Furthermore, this study highlights the agency of FBOs in positioning themselves within the framing pressures of their own understandings of evangelicalism, as well as the external pressures they faced in developing their practices.

In making these findings, this thesis contributes to the work of IR scholars in religion and humanitarianism is three ways. Firstly, it makes a conceptual contribution, in providing a way to approach the study of religious actors that does not reproduce the essentialising tendencies of much scholarship that assumes rather than explores what it means to be categorised as a religious actor. My conceptual work frames religion as a constructed but non-arbitrary category whose boundaries are fluid in the vein of a family resemblances approach (laid out in chapter one), which avoids treating religious actors as a monolithic category whilst still providing a coherent analytical starting point.

Secondly, this thesis contributes to mid-range theorising about religious actors in the international space. My theoretical framework emphasises both the importance of the beliefs and values of religious actors in shaping their identity, and the need to understand that those beliefs and values must be expressed in a locally-embedded context. Although belief has

important semantic content, it has to be practised. My theoretical framework in chapter two emphasises therefore the importance of examining the interactions of FBO organisational orientation with a prism of environmental factors.

Finally, this thesis uses this theoretically rich approach to generate an empirical contribution in its collection and analysis of evangelical FBO practices in the field, as understood and conceptualised by the actors themselves. Agensky noted the sore lack of empirical engagement with the "range of actual activities conducted in the framework of faith-based humanitarianism" by IR scholarship (2013, 473). In focussing on the disaster responses of three major global evangelical agencies across the Asia Pacific, informed by a comprehensive organisational development historical overview, this project contributes to advancing a better understanding of the actual relationship between this kind of faith-based actor and the humanitarian world in which they work. This also provides an alternative way of understanding this relationship, speaking to the dilemmas raised in the humanitarian literature on how to engage with and accommodate more diverse actors in the IHO, including but not limited to faith-based agencies.

Thesis Structure

The remainder of this thesis is structured in two parts. Chapters one and two lay out the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that underpin the research, while chapters three, four, and five apply these frameworks to the three FBOs and their responses at the two field sites. The final chapter serves as an extended conclusion to the thesis, drawing the findings of the research back into conversation with the key arguments and themes with reference to understanding the role of faith in the global space more broadly.

In the first chapter, I examine the concepts of religion and humanitarianism, exploring the different ways they are characterised by scholars in the field, in order to justify the positions that I adopt for this thesis. I identify key questions of defining and understanding the role of religion in the broader Western social science context, looking at the broad trends and themes that have characterised the latter's relationship with religious actors, institutions and values.[12] This

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[12] The 'West' is a problematic term; both because of all its historical baggage (such as problematic comparisons of the 'west and the rest'), and because it is very imprecise, to the point of geographical paradox. In using 'West' and 'Western' in this thesis, I acknowledge these problems; and I deploy it as a 'least bad' option (see Buzan and Lawson 2015, 22). In using it, I am seeking to capture self-identity in an imagined community that links itself to civilizational and/or cultural narratives stretching back to ancient Greece. It identifies perceptions of shared identity and continuity, not just of populations across the Atlantic and Europe, but also in former Commonwealth dominions such as Australia and New Zealand (McNeill 1997, 513,514,523).

includes particularly questions about how the religious has been juxtaposed with the secular in order to define and contain certain categories of actors. Consequently, the question of what religion is cannot be answered without making certain ontological assumptions that shape any study that follows. The resulting myriad of ontological and epistemological approaches to the study of religion can leave IR scholars with weak conceptualisations of religious actors and ideas that reinforce secular biases in the study of IR, and foreclose particular avenues of understanding. I introduce the idea of a family resemblances approach to the concept of religion, which moves away from general statements about religion as a meta-category, whilst affirming the focus on particular instances of religious thought and practices in particular socio-historical contexts. This approach allows for conceptually deep understandings of religious actors, ideas, values, communities and practices that still leave room for acknowledging the ramifications both analytically and normatively of such characterisations. I then examine the way that religion has been approached in the field of humanitarianism more specifically. I trace the impact of the dominance of the secularisation thesis on the development of a distinctly secular contemporary IHO, and the way this positions faith-based actors as outsiders to a mainstream order. I argue that this is problematic because it ignores the diversity of the humanitarian field, represents a particular normative Western liberal idea of humanitarianism as universal and value-free, and consequently misses potentially valuable alternative perspectives and voices from diverse 'cultures' of humanitarianism.

In the second chapter, I turn my focus to the specific concept of evangelicalism. I explore the evolution and changing nature of the idea of evangelicalism, asking what it means to be labelled 'evangelical', and presenting my argument as to why it is a coherent category, despite these historical and rhetorical changes. After this, I introduce my theoretical framework for tracing interaction points of values and beliefs across organisational structures, which explains an FBO's orientation towards certain patterns of social engagement. I also explain the importance of accounting the role of context in understanding the effects of faith on humanitarian practice at a conceptual level, explaining how practices can vary where beliefs are the same, or vice versa. This framework builds on the work of Thaut (2009) and Agensky (2013) in particular in order to explore the role of evangelical identities and values in historical trajectories, mission statements, staffing policies, institutional relationships and donor pools, for the purpose of building a picture of organisational orientation. This orientation interacts with a prism of environmental factors – normative pressures, structural constraints and pragmatic demands – in order to produce unique and divergent humanitarian practices. This framework emphasises the need to consider religious belief and the context that shapes its expression as largely inseparable.

The third chapter is where I begin the empirical work of the thesis by turning my focus to the three case study FBOs. I introduce and contextualise each organisation through an overview of their historical development. After this, I use the analytical tools laid out in the second chapter in order to explore the FBOs' organisational orientations. Each organisation is dealt with in turn, through the examination of primary sources such as mission statements, annual reports, interview materials, media releases and the like as well as secondary sources such as other studies and reports conducted on the FBOs.

After introducing the FBOs in depth, I demonstrate the importance of accounting for context by my investigation of their disaster responses in chapters four and five. In the fourth chapter, I focus on the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia. I show how strong pressures from the field context modified FBO behaviour, particularly the need for sensitivity to religious difference from the Acehnese, and the highly chaotic and competitive rebuilding environment. I note how these changes were absorbed and accepted through recourse to faith identity and values. The fifth chapter of this thesis provides further insight into this process by studying the responses of the three agencies to another natural disaster, that of Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar in 2008. I explore how the sensitive and complex political environment exerted strong pressures to behave in certain ways, which the organisations responded to quite differently depending on their organisational orientations. The values they articulated and the resources they drew upon highlighted the importance of understanding both religious beliefs and environmental pressures, constraints and demands when exploring the impact of faith identity on humanitarian practices by evangelical FBOs.

In my final chapter, I finish with an extended conclusion, bringing the analysis of the specific field sites back into conversation with the broader arguments of the field. I argue for the importance of understanding 'faith in action', that is, the way that faith-based actors conceptualise their beliefs, apply them to specific and varied contexts, and deal with specific and varied environmental pressures. In doing so, I reflect on the empirically rich story that is opened up when theoretical frameworks do not reproduce the secular biases that underpin much exploration of faith-based action. If all we are looking for is proselytising, it is hard to see anything else. In contrast, my case studies demonstrate the dynamics of FBO behaviour as they moderate the expressions of their religious identities to fit their context. This demonstrates the importance of approaching religious organisations as complex and contextually embedded actors, exercising agency as they adopt, reject or adapt to the pressures of the dynamic environments in which they work. This would suggest that the 'evangelism' part of evangelical is

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a less important factor for their engagement with communities in need than their ability to respond sensitively and respectfully to the specifics of the situation in which they are active.

Chapter One: Unpacking Religion and Humanitarianism in the Modern Order

Introduction

One of the first and most difficult steps in studying the place of religious actors in IR is to try to grasp what is meant by the term 'religious'. In this chapter, I examine the concepts of religion and humanitarianism, exploring the different ways they are characterised by scholars in the field to justify the positions that I adopt for this thesis. It is important to unpack these broad and contested concepts, to better understand the costs and implications of certain categorisations. My goal in this chapter is to explain what it means to designate something as 'religious' or 'faith-based' in the international system; what it is to be a 'humanitarian' actor; and why the study of faith-based humanitarian organisations matters for global IR. The answers to these questions form the foundation of my later examination of the three case study FBOs. In the first section of this chapter, I delve into the vexed problem of defining religion as a category of analysis in the study of IR. In the second section, I explore the field of humanitarian actors. In the final section, I locate this thesis where these two topics meet: the study of faith-based humanitarian actors in the international system.

Section One: What is Religion?

Defining the Category

The first question is what is meant by the term 'religious' when scholars study the impact of religion in international affairs. Theologian William Cavanaugh notes wryly that:

> International relations scholars exude confidence that we can talk about religion sensibly, but the issue of definition tends to be dismissed rather quickly, either by laying hold of one of the standard substantivist definitions that lie readily to hand, or by appealing to some version of "We all know it when we see it." International relations scholars do not generally doubt that religion is out there; we just have trouble defining it. (2013, 56)

IR scholars are at least, here, in good company. Social scientists of various stripes have long wrestled to get a handle on the category. Indeed, sociologist Max Weber began his weighty tome *Sociology of Religion* by declaring that he could not attempt to say what religion is at the start of his presentation, only, perhaps, by the end (Weber 1993, 1). Likewise, philosophy of religion scholar Victoria Harrison mourns that "few seem to have difficulty in distinguishing between religious and secular institutions, yet there is widespread disagreement regarding what "religion" actually means… formulating a definition of "religion" that can command wide assent

has proven to be an extremely difficult task" (2006, 133). A task that has pre-occupied various departments of theology, anthropology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, religious studies, and history, these definitional debates have spawned countless publications and a plethora of competing definitional standpoints. These range from Émile Durkheim's (1965 [1915]) *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, and Sigmund Freud's (1919) *Totem and Taboo,* to Peter Berger's (1967) *The Sacred Canopy* and Clifford Geertz's (1993) *Religion as a Cultural System,* as well as many, many others. As a result, IR scholar Daniel Philpott warned that the use of the very word religion should done "provisionally, and with care" (2002, 67).

Despite the broad range of definitions available, most of them fall into one of three categories which I refer to as: substantivist, affective and functionalist. These names vary across disciplines. Proponents of each of these categories argue that quite different things are important in the study of religion (Harrison 2006, 133). For some, it is the content of the belief that is at the centre of their definition (such as Rees 2011; Bradley 2005). For others, the experiential elements of religion are key (such as Schleiermacher 1928). For still others, the effects, or the functions that that religious system fulfils are what matters most (such as Durkheim 1965; Fox 2001). There is a long history of disagreement across multiple disciplinary divides about which approach is the most useful for the study of religion and religious actors. There is also a growing body of critical scholars, who eschew defining religion altogether in favour of studying why and to what end different definitions are proposed. Below, I briefly canvas each approach and highlight how they have been appropriated in the IR discipline, before demonstrating the benefits of a middle road strategy: the family resemblances approach to studying religious actors and practices.

Substantivist

The first approach to defining religion is often referred to as substantivist or essentialist in the IR literature, although it corresponds with 'intellectual' or 'rationalist' in other disciplines. Proponents of this first category of definition, who I refer to as substantivists throughout, argue that religion is primarily understood as a set of beliefs about a particular kind of object, usually God or some other type of transcendent force or being. (Cavanaugh 2013, 63). They argue that religion is *sui generis,* that is, it is irreducible to some other kind of phenomena. All religions, on this reading, are diverse expressions of the same *kind* of thing. At their core they have this shared essence: a focus on a system of ideas and values in response to some kind of ultimate reality or transcendent power (whether real or imagined) (A. S. King and Hedges 2014, 4). Anthropologist Edward Tylor gave one of the most famous (if not perhaps, terribly nuanced) substantivist definitions in his work *Religion in the Primitive Culture* (1871) when he said that all

religion is "the belief in spiritual beings". The attraction of a substantivist definition is that it carves out religion as a unique kind of human activity that can be understood in a distinct and coherent way. It is a particular way of trying to explain the world and humanity's relationship to it. When groups of people hold spiritual or transcendent beliefs, they are religious; when they do not, they are not.

The price for this coherence in categorisation is that substantivists can struggle to construct definitions of religion that accommodate religious communities of various stripes while ruling out others commonly regarded as non-religious. Often, religions are not as unique a way of thinking about the world as simpler substantivist definitions suggest. As a set of guiding beliefs about how the world works and what we should do, at times religion does not sound particularly different to say, political ideology. For example, it can be difficult to argue that communism with its moral codes, founding texts and hope in an as yet unrealised future, is not a religious system while functionally atheistic strands of Buddhism such as Theravada Buddhism are (Harrison 2006, 134). Questions of how to bound the category of religion so it can be analysed as a discrete phenomenon are difficult to settle. The differences between religions are often vast; and this is to say nothing of the diversity within religious traditions. Hinduism is infamous as a nominally singular religious tradition within which it is difficult to find a common set of beliefs (Hedges 2014, xv).

Another criticism of the substantivist approach is that they are prone to reifying religion, problematically and sweepingly "treating complex and context-dependent sets of practices, identities, and actors as an overarching, stable concept" (Schwarz and Lynch 2016, 8). This can lead scholars to oversimplify phenomena, imbuing religious systems with inherently normative weight that might be appropriate in the philosophy of religion, but that does not help IR scholarship understand the role of religion in global affairs (Schwarz and Lynch 2016, 9). Authors in this vein might treat religious proselytism as inherently evil or insist that violence justified by religious language is not actually religious but a perversion of something more 'legitimate'. By treating various religious traditions as being fixed in their systems of meaning, substantivists can also struggle to explain how religious actors might come to different interpretations of religious texts, or why seemingly unifed traditions produce divergent practices (Schwarz 2018, 44).

Additionally, several critics argue that these substantivist approaches best describe Christianity, particularly Protestant Christianity, which leans strongly on the idea that adherents must actively affirm a particular set of beliefs/ideas/propositions in order to authentically identify as a Christian (A. S. King and Hedges 2014, 6). They note that many religious traditions do not share

the Christian tradition's focus on intellectual engagement with an explicit system of values and propositions, and so assert that substantivist definitions are simply veiled reproductions of Christianity, imposed somewhat messily on other faith traditions that do not neatly fit (Harrison 2006, 134). For some scholars, this legitimates a rejection of the category of religion altogether, as religious studies scholar (and Presbyterian minister) Wilfred Cantwell Smith paradigmatically argued in his (1962) book *The Meaning and End of Religion.* Cantwell Smith's major thesis was that there was no common defining feature running through all the social and cultural phenomena Western audiences perceive as religions; instead, the category is a European construct that has no analogue outside of 'western civilisation'. He argued that Western scholars in the eighteenth century were embedding secularism into western political life, seeking to separate the realm and business of religion and the political world. And as this idea was taking purchase, scholars were busy identifying the 'religious' in the cultures around them, imposing and reifying their concepts onto the beliefs, experiences, practices, and communities of the time.

Cantwell Smith's approach served as the forerunner to a number of similar rejections of religion as a coherent analytical category: "ultimately, scholars should turn from studying something called 'religion' to examining traditions, actors, practices, and ethics deemed 'religious' by specific actors and/or analysts" (Schwarz and Lynch 2016, 15). A number of scholars have suggested the category and the term are not meaningful in any analytical way at all, and should probably be abandoned so as not to simply reproduce problematic normative claims about religion (famously, for example Fitzgerald 2000; McCutcheon 1997). In doing so, these calls resonate through much contemporary IR scholarship that seeks to disaggregate religion as a category, that problematizes its relationship to the secular, or that adopts a postcolonial lens (see for example Wilson 2014, 2012; Shakman Hurd 2008). However, despite these developments, and despite heavy and frequent critique, IR scholars still tend to reach for substantivist conceptualisations when studying religious actors.

Affective

Affective or phenomenological definitions of religion (sometimes referred to as experientialist) focus on the experience of faith itself, the emotional and phenomenological elements, the sense of spirituality, or connection to the transcendent. German philosopher-theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher described this as a feeling of "absolute dependence" (1928, 16). Rather than a set of doctrinal truths that *explain* reality, religion is in this telling a way of *experiencing* reality. What is key to understanding religion is the expression of faith, not the information contained in

doctrine or theology – these systems are just symbols or formalised expressions of the inner feelings and "existential orientations" of the believer (Harrison 2006, 134).

There are several different definitions that seek to capture this experience in a way common to all religions. Scholars at times try to express this as the feeling of insignificance in the face of the universe, or a sense of mystery and wonder, sometimes as a sense of deeper-level connection with spiritual forces. The major criticism of this definition is similar to substantivist definitions – so much so in fact, that many explorations of definitional categories collapse the two entirely (see for example Sheikh 2012; A. S. King and Hedges 2014). Like substantivist approaches, affective definitions struggle to define a single sense or experience that rules in religious communities of various stripes while ruling out others. After all, atheists can experience feelings of insignificance and smallness when considering the universe too; environmentalists can understand deeper level connections with nature; parents might have a sense of mystery and wonder as they gaze at their newborn baby. Freud (1928) rather unkindly criticised this approach as confusing the cause of religion with the meaning of religion. And while affective definitions solve the problem of a lack of common belief structures (by saying they do not matter), they do so at the cost of ignoring the regulatory nature of various religious systems that explicitly place the teachings or doctrines of the faith in hierarchy above its emotional or experiential elements (Harrison 2006, 135).

Functionalist

Freud's criticisms actually serve as an example of the third type of definition, the functional or functionalist definition of religion (sometimes called instrumental). On this approach, the function that religion serves is considered its defining feature: what people do and how they do it rather than what they believe. Religion is not a system for explaining our world, but a strategy for surviving in it. For example, anthropologist JG Frazer says religions are defined by their placatory functions, meaning humanity has religion in order to help it solve problems with recourse to a higher authority than itself (as cited in Alston 1967, 140). Freud's (1928) work paints religions as an illusion, whose function is to shield humans from existential dread and restrain socially destructive individual impulses. And of course the most famous functionalist account of all is Karl Marx's description in *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* of religion as the 'opium of the people', giving an illusory happiness to the poor to downplay the harsh realities of their economic oppression (noted in Fox 2006, xii).

Functionalist approaches claim to solve the problems inherent in the first two definitions. This is because they are not concerned with treating religion as a distinct kind of thing, but in investigating what role religious phenomena play in the service of other ends. The biggest

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difference between functionalist approaches and the other two categories is that the functionalists typically draw on naturalistic theories of religion while the others usually sees religion as sui generis. In other words, one sees religion as the phenomena in need of explaining, while the others sees religion as the explainer of other phenomena. Functionalist approaches tend not to see religious activity and belief as unique; they are much happier to argue that the boundaries between religious and nonreligious activity are artificially constructed rather than a reflection of a distinct kind of activity.

Obviously, proponents of substantivist and affective approaches find the functionalist dismissal of the existence of an essential 'religiousness' as unpalatable, and criticise accordingly. However, I would argue that the most compelling criticism levelled against functionalist approaches is that they almost always bake an epistemological scepticism about the truth claims of religions into their study of the religion itself (Gregory 2006; Sheikh 2012). Functionalist accounts are always pushing aside the believer-practitioner's account of what they are doing in order to get at the 'real' reasons for such action. In doing so, these approaches often construct a picture of religion that is not recognisable to the objects of their study, and so miss important factors that help understand and illuminate religious actors and their behaviour. Historian Brad Gregory, commenting about studying Mormons, argues that "insight about LDS convictions – not recourse to sociological, anthropological, or some other sort of theory – is the key to understanding them, as distinct from reductionistically explaining them" (2006, 134). Likewise, IR scholar Mona Kanwal Sheikh argues that our understanding of the role religion can play in IR phenomena is lacking when we only look for the instrumental relevance, thus seeking to explain religion away as part of something 'more real' and of "higher significance" (Sheikh 2012, 368). IR scholars must decide if they want to explain religion (away), or understand how religion can help explain IR phenomena (2012, 370). Gregory also presents this choice: "there is a fundamental distinction to be made between attempting to *understand* a given religion on the terms of those who believe and practice it, and attempting to *explain* that religion (or religion in general) in terms that reduce it entirely to something else. These are two radically different endeavours" (2006, 134).

IR Approaches

The result of these definitional complexities for IR is a tendency to try and sidestep: "most international relations scholars simply ignore functionalism, make some quick nod to a substantivist definition, and proceed to talking about religion as if everyone knew what they were talking about" (Cavanaugh 2013, 64). Partly, this is disciplinary immaturity; as an academe, IR is still making up time catching up with other social science disciplines in examining the role of

religion in its field of study. The 'religion went away but it came back' motif is by now an established tradition of the introductory patter to any work on religion and anything in IR (see any text on religion and development, religion and global justice, religion and security, et cetera).[1] The debate between traditional and behavioural methods in the 1950s and 1960s, the Cold War realist focus on material capabilities and the popularity of rationalist approaches all helped suppress "religious argument from the academic mainstream along with secular normative theory and diplomatic history, all equally out of place in a positive discipline"(C. Jones 2003, 371; Sandal and James 2011, 4). While this is a gentle simplification of the discipline's evolution, the 'behaviouralist turn' certainly helped silence religion as a factor in explanations of the international system by creating as orthodoxy in IR theory a very specific and narrow view of "what kinds of things existed in international relations" to be studied (S. Smith 1996, 11).[2] When ideational factors were discussed, religion found itself mostly addressed as a subsection of a broader category such as culture, civilisation, or society; or through lenses such as terrorism or institutions (Fox 2001, 53; Kubalkova 2000, 362). These categories were often themselves treated in ways just as essentialist as religion.

Often IR scholars refer to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US in 2001 as the catalyst for a renewed interest in studying religiously motivated political actions, and thus religion in IR. That may be so, but the door was first opened by the discipline's reckoning with post-positivism in the 1980-90s, which rejected positivists' narrow focus in favour of a much wider scope of study. In doing so, IR began to prioritise a much more constitutive understanding of the forces that define and shape the political system and the actors within it (S. Smith 1996, 35). While Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilisations' essay (despite its essentialist simplifications) might be the most infamous symbol of this change, other academics were seriously examining religion in that period (such as Haynes 1998; Huntington 1993; Juergensmeyer 1994; Johnston and Sampson 1994, also the special issue entitled 'Religions and International Relations' in *Millennium*, 2000, 29(1)). However, it is true the shock to the system provided by the high profile interjection of

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[1] That is not to say this is mistaken; Philpott displays some of the empirical evidence that the volume of academic attention (as measured by mention in publications in major Western IR journals at least) was barely a trickle in the years between 1980 and 2000: religion considered a major influential factor in only approximately six articles out of 1600 surveyed (2002, 69).

[2] A simplification because, for example, classical realists such as Hans Morgenthau and Reinhold Niebuhr had quite definite opinions about the role of religion in IR, and English School founders Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight likewise wrote compellingly and thoughtfully about its impact (as noted by Sheikh 2012, 368).

religious non-state actors into international politics through the events of 9/11 can be seen as a symbolic turning point for the discipline (Sheikh 2012, 369).[3]

A field of literature focussing on how religion matters in global politics has developed rapidly in the years since 2001, with many different approaches and assumptions. Political science professor Michael Desch categorised this field as coalescing into three 'waves' (he notes overlap between them) (2013, 16). The first wave of theorising has focused on how religion's effects in the past have shaped modern global politics today; digging up the 'religious roots' of modernity. This is done either by acknowledging IR's intellectual 'debt' to religion through the religion's impact on the work of individual IR scholars (such as Martin Wight or Reinhold Niebuhr) or by an analysis of the conceptual ties between IR theories and their religious antecedents (Kratochvíl 2009, 6). Arguments about the role of religion in establishing the modern state system are an example of this (see for example Philpott 2000, 2009; Philpott and Shah 2011); as are investigations in the assimilation of theological terms and ideas by modern IR theories.

The second wave has emphasised religion's growth and its contemporary impact on global events, often articulated in terms of religion's 'resurgence' (such as Hatzopoulos and Petito 2003a; Thomas 2005; Philpott 2009). Philpott and Shah attribute this return to changes in the international system itself: that the forces of globalisation have "increased the capacity of religious actors to project influence, mobilise resources, and attract followers across national boundaries, greatly enhancing their overall political position vis-à-vis nation states…[they can] act, react and organise as coherent political agents" (Philpott and Shah 2011, 49–50). Others disagree, and argue that what has changed is not so much "the facts on the ground, but rather, a shift in Western perceptions of those facts" (Fox 2006, 1060). This wave traces the role of religious actors, institutions and ideas in various international events; the Six Day War; the Iranian Revolution; the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia; actions of al Qaeda and Islamic State being just a few examples of such focus (Desch 2013, 27).

The findings of the first two waves both lead to and are challenged by scholars of the final wave of theorising, who question the walls between religion and politics entirely. Much more critical of religion as a settled category, scholars in this vein want instead to focus on how the boundaries of the category themselves become a part of the contest for power. In doing so,

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[3] It also led to a quick brush-up in definitions: "Religion is a set of beliefs about the ultimate ground of existence, that which is unconditioned, not itself created or caused, and the communities and practices that form around these beliefs" said Philpott in his examination of 9/11's effects on IR approaches to religion (2002, 68). Fox and Sandler try not to get caught defining religion at all; they want to just "accept that it exists and influences human behaviour" (Fox and Sandler 2006).

they study not religion so much as the political impact of defining something as religion (Bosco 2009, 109). What is considered a religious 'resurgence' is on this view rather "a political contestation of the most fundamental contours and content of the secular, a contest that signals the disruption of pre-existing standards of what religion is and how it relates to politics" (Shakman Hurd 2008, 136). The construction of 'legitimate politics' and 'legitimate religion' is a political act (Shakman Hurd 2011, 72). Elizabeth Shakman Hurd powerfully argues that this is because the act of designating something as religious is an act of power, which seeks to either remove it from the sphere of politics, or make it subservient to it. As a result, third wave scholars argue that religion cannot be meaningfully separated from other domains of human experience, as it is entangled within them (Shakman Hurd 2015, 7). Such attempts to understand "'religion' in such fixed, abstracted ways necessarily limits our capacity to understand its entanglement with politics across multiple levels in contemporary IR" (Wilson 2014, 348).

As has already been highlighted in the introduction to this thesis, this analytical stance has important methodological implications for IR scholars' study of religious phenomena. Critical scholarship compellingly explores the problems with reproducing existing categories and definitions of religion and secularism without interrogating the way this can contribute to (often problematic) discourses that paint religion as inherently irrational, transcendental, or good (Schwarz 2018, 15). By contrast, third wave scholars point to the way in which secularism is used to fix politics' relationship with religion, and thus control it, meaning that they spend as much time studying the 'secular' as the 'religious'. They note that just like religion, secularism is a complex concept, with diverse types and forms that are shaped by context, as well as contestation with different religious traditions. This can be seen, for example, in the distinction Shakman Hurd makes between laicism and Judeo-Christian secularism, two different forms of secularisation in Western democracies, which both "regulate the place of religion in politics by assigning it a fixed and final location in (or out of) public life", but do it in slightly different ways (2004, 242). Thus, "claims of secular neutrality and universality mask the contested process through which the 'secular' itself has come into existence" (Shakman Hurd 2004, 246). The IR scholar should not, therefore, take the place and category of religion as a neutral description, but instead should look at what particular constructions of the term reveal about power in international relations (Cavanaugh 2013, 67). This is in part because "secularism's claims are based on an inherent dualism that serves to privilege certain aspects of social and political life and subordinate others" (Wilson 2012, 29).This leads third wave scholarship into a very different research stance; critics argue this leaves their agenda in danger of returning IR to a state of

ambivalence about the role and effects of religion in the international sphere (Desch 2013, 36). Their critiques of the construction of the religious-secular binary are none-the-less highly significant in investigating how FBOs have been cast in the contemporary international humanitarian order, and much of the second section of this chapter will explore humanitarianism from this perspective.

My Approach

The combination of different definitions of religion, and different approaches in use by IR scholars makes for a complex field. The concept of religion is deeply contested, and in this thesis, I wish to avoid two extremes. Scholarship on religion at times risks uncritically importing religion as a variable in a manner that oversimplifies its role in politics and understates the complexity of its attributes, substituting instead singular explanations of political outcomes: "religion made them do it" (Shakman Hurd 2015, 116). On the other hand, over-complicating and caveating the role of religion can lead to denying any meaningful way to grasp it as a relevant factor of analysis (Desch 2013, 35). The criticism that third wave scholars make religion too complicated to study has teeth; for many, if religious actors cannot be considered "agentive forces that can be analysed, quantified, engaged, celebrated or condemned" (Shakman Hurd 2015, 19), then the point of incorporating religious actors and actions into their analysis is difficult to uphold.

In wrestling with the idea of religion, I do think that meaningful engagement needs to begin with an appreciation of adherents' own understandings of their reality. This does not mean embracing a one-dimensional substantivist stance; the criticisms of third wave IR scholars are very persuasive in pointing out the socio-historically constructed nature of the boundaries of the things we call religious and secular. Furthermore, unlike substantivists, I am not wedded to the notion that 'religion' must concern faith claims about a transcendent object. Religions may commit their followers to particular metaphysical realities, but this is common for all humans. Everyone thinks certain things are important, certain truths exist, certain practices matter, certain feelings and experiences are significant. Secular humanists have a certain set of answers about questions of ontological and epistemological reality that require no more or less 'faith' than religionists. Atheist communists would have another. It is not that religion does not exist, but everything is religious in that it requires faith commitments to metaphysical realities. I aim to use religion "strategically and with full awareness of its cultural and ideological baggage" because "it brings certain phenomena into focus in a way other terms do not…" such that even critics of the term such as McCutcheon and Fitzgerald "still need to invoke terms such as 'sacred' or 'transcendence'" to get at what they mean (A. S. King and Hedges 2014, 12). Accordingly, I

engage with the category of religion as a category, because (largely informed by substantivist definitions) its construction so profoundly shapes the contours of our contemporary world. For the study of evangelical humanitarianism in particular, the consequences of being labelled 'faith-based actors' are real and meaningful. The social world which they inhabit attributes certain characteristics and tendencies to them because of it, bars them from or admits them to certain spaces, and expects certain actions. Whether for positive or negative effect, being defined as 'religious' matters in global politics. In this sense, while it may be a constructed category of analysis, it is not arbitrary.

More pressingly, the classic social-scientific accounts of religion, grounded in functionalist understandings, start with scepticism about the truth claims of religions, and in so doing render themselves unable to understand the motivations of religious actors, continually seeking the 'real' functional motivation. This is obvious in the work of many famous social theorists who continue to influence the social sciences strongly, such as August Comte, Emil Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx, who all believed some version of the secularisation thesis – that religion would decline and eventually disappear as the world modernised (as discussed in Fox 2001, 54). This leaves scholars with an invisible bias, a metaphysical naturalism (or at least, an epistemological scepticism) in response to religious truth claims which is often not similarly applied to other truth claims. "These [sceptical] beliefs necessarily distort the character of religion and what it means for religious people: "No religion can be what its adherents allege" is a less than promising maxim on the basis of which to penetrate the character of religious belief and practice" (Gregory 2006, 146).

While the truth claims of various religions are not what is in focus here – it is not the role of the IR scholar to judge whether the Buddha really achieved enlightenment or if Jesus really was God on earth – they must be understood. The scholar needs to know how these beliefs matter for the faithful, how they constitute their identities, their communities, their priorities, their own understanding of what the world is about, and what to do. These are fundamentally questions of ontology and epistemology – about the nature of reality, and how humans understand it. Faith-based actors usually have unique answers to these questions, and so understanding, explaining and engaging with their actions needs to begin by looking at that starting point. This leads me to an analytical disposition that eschews broad-stroke categorisations of 'religion' and 'religious' in favour of exploring how specific groups and communities themselves understand and put into practice the values, identities, and practices commonly labelled as religious. This requires bringing into focus both what is considered religious in the broader discourse, and how specific faith communities themselves construct and conceive of their values and actions

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(Schwarz 2018, 15). The investigation cannot end there, however. As Lynch and Schwarz recommend, my approach seeks to ground religion holistically in particular contexts. Rather than finding a set of beliefs or doctrines and calling job done I hope to investigate "how religious actors navigate complex ethical schemes that are influenced by historical, political, economic, geographical, and other factors, in order to understand how and why they choose particular courses of action over others"(2016, 3).

This means that for this thesis I adopt a 'family resemblances' approach to religion, referred to in other disciplines sometimes as the cluster approach. Drawing loosely on philosopher Ludwig Wittgensten's notion of the same name, this is a way of constructing categories, or concepts, which recognises that not every instance of that category corresponds perfectly with set criteria.[4] Wittgenstein rejects the idea that we need to dogmatically search for "one, essential core in which the meaning of a word is located and which is therefore, common to all uses of that word" (Biletzki and Matar 2018). Instead, we understand a word's general reference by following its usage through "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing" (PI 66, as quoted in Biletzki and Matar 2018). The scholar looks to see how the category has been constructed, what we usually consider an instantiation of that category, and what kind of characteristics these things might have. Following this approach, Dawson and Thiessen (2014) argue that religion's family resemblances can be seen across four attributes: belief, ritual, spiritual experience and social form. These are not essential requirements for religion; rather, they describe the kinds of attributes that scholars and communities tend to designate as religious. Hedges and King likewise list six attributes of which particular traditions might contain elements:

1) Belief in a spiritual power or being(s)
2) Interest in the afterlife
3) Guiding societal and ethical norms
4) It is transformative
5) Methods or procedures for prayer or meditation
6) Explanations of the human and natural situation. (2014, 16)

They argue that this cluster of attributes does not purport to outline some essence called religion, but instead shows that the term is not arbitrary just because it is constructed – that the word picks out distinct elements of human activity in combinations of ways that we recognise as

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[4]Wittgenstein was making a broader point about the philosophy of language and its (in his mind) problematic reliance on a particular kinds of logic, but his ideas provide a helpful starting point for many who seek to grapple with defining religion.

'religious' when enough of them are present together. That these boundaries are fuzzy and diffuse should not be a surprise – there are political, theological, legal, and academic implications and attractions for contesting them (2014, 22).

This has similarities to George Lawson's approach to the concept of 'revolution' in his work, *Anatomies of Revolutions* (2019). Lawson argues that the concept of revolution is both enduring and changing; revolutions do not have uniform structures, but rather, shared forms. He argues that because context has a constitutive impact, only by examining the concept in its context can we truly understand it. Although Lawson does not draw particularly explicitly on Wittgenstein in order to build his case for this approach, the two methods have many similarities. Anthropologist Benson Saler similarly advocates this when he declares "it is family resemblances all the way down" (1999, 397), by which he means that each religion is best understood through this complex cluster concept, as well as the overall category of religious. I use this complex cluster approach when I explore and contextualise the origins and usage of humanitarianism and of evangelicalism in the next chapter.

The strength of this approach is that it allows exploration of the way that a concept is 'formed and reformed' through its encounters with history, rather than abstracted away from it. It stops and critically examines the way that the theory and practice of religion have changed over time, but it does not end there. It looks for the 'moving target' of the 'concept in motion' of Barnett's global historical approach (Barnett 2009, also advocated in 2011a, 109; R. M. Feener, Fountain, and Bush 2015, 243).

It is also a malleable enough definition to accommodate conversation between adherents of different approaches to studying religion in IR. For example, third wave theorists can argue that the construction of these concepts is entirely social and historical, and the act of deciding which features should be considered important is what actually should be studied, because it is where we can see the political struggle. They can disaggregate and problematize and pull apart the concept itself, investigating the boundaries and who put them there, and what reasons they might have had for doing that, and who that benefits, and all sorts of interesting questions in that vein. Others can use the category with clear understanding of its limitations, and go on to investigate how things that hold those similarities go on to affect the world around them. Sheikh argues for substantively the same approach when she calls for IR theorists to reject the temptation to find the 'real' essence of religion as a (singular) meta-category, while embracing an attention to the essence of particular cases of religions – that is, to study the substantive content of the 'diverse manifestations' of the category, not just the category itself (Sheikh 2012,

370). This is exactly what I seek to do in this thesis, as I focus on one particular manifestation – evangelical humanitarian actors – rather than make generalisations about religious humanitarians as a monolithic category.

This is not popular for everybody, of course. Timothy Fitzgerald, for example, argues that the family resemblance approach makes the category of religion so large as to be "practically meaningless and analytically useless" (Fitzgerald 1996, 216). And Religious Studies scholar Michael Bergunder accurately notes that the inability to definitively rule on border cases is a serious weak spot (Bergunder 2014).

However, what is so compelling about this family resemblance approach is that it acknowledges two important dimensions: firstly, that the three different major approaches (substantivist, affective, functional) all capture elements that are important in understanding religiosity; secondly, that different religious systems draw upon different elements as more or less important, and this is part of what generates their differences. So for Protestant Christians (at the centre of this investigation), affirmation of particular beliefs about God and his relationship with the world are front and centre in their understanding of what their religion is all about. It also creates room for the importance of understanding religious actors holistically in their context, and examining critically the means by which they are admitted to and the ramifications of their membership in this constructed category.

It is fair to say the search for a compelling and comprehensive definition of religion is "quintessentially modern insofar as modernity was the first era in which a firm distinction between religion and the rest of human activity was presupposed" (Harrison 2006, 146). However, the insight that our ancestors did not perhaps think of religion as a category separate from the rest of life does not mean that the category has no useful analytical content today, as long as scholars are extremely cautious as to the limits of generalisability. Daniel Nexon argues:

> Religious orientations supply ways of apprehending the world, which, in turn,
> constitute conditions of possibility for social action. Actors operating within a
> particular set of religious frameworks have a limited number of scripts,
> rhetorical commonplaces, and styles of reasoning available to them. Religious
> beliefs, experiences, and frameworks draw boundaries, however blurred,
> around what constitutes acceptable arguments and warrants. (2011, 158)

While this description perhaps limits too tightly the possibilities for meaning-making available to religious actors in dynamic and evolving contexts, it does highlight the need to pay attention to the shaping power that identities and values derived from shared traditions of thought can hold for communities that see themselves as bound together by such commonalities.

The benefit of the family resemblances definition of religion is that it neither takes too seriously nor too lightly the differences between those who think our metaphysical reality relates to the transcendent and those who do not. Furthermore, the idea of family resemblances can help guide investigations not just into religion in general as a concept, but also treatment of the distinctions and divisions within particular religious traditions themselves. This will become particularly powerful in chapter three of this thesis, where the category of evangelical Christian is explored. I use this idea of family resemblances to help order that examination in a meaningful way, identifying a core of theological coherence surrounded by a cloud of more conflicted or unshared practices, experiences and values.

This collection of core and cloud exerts subtle but definite pressure on people to think, respond, and understand things in a certain way. The accumulated beliefs, habits, knowledge, cultural expectations, patterns of thinking, body of past action, and structures of resources will form an orientation for religious NGOs, as well as individuals to act and react in certain ways.

As religious systems can be very diverse, and emphasise different elements of the family resemblances, the starting point has to be to work out what matters for the community at the focus of study. This means, as Duffy Toft urges, that we must be wary of over abstraction when we study religious actors in IR, because the unique and distinct combinations of elements that gives them their identity cannot be broken down into theoretically interchangeable units (Toft 2011, 126). If a Buddhist monastery teaches that current wellbeing is the result of past morality, they begin from a very different place to a Protestant mission that teaches that medicine is a gift from God to alleviate the suffering of a broken world. This means that while the study of religion in IR should be about more than belief, scholars cannot break down religion as a category of analysis beyond the content of belief, and the meaning (doctrinal or experiential) of certain rituals and practices. This leaves room for the "the idea that people seem to do religious things for religious reasons – that actions and ideas can be based on the notion that there is a relationship between individuals and the transcendent, hopes for spiritual transformation in this life and the next, and the longing for salvation and spiritual fulfilment" (Sheikh 2012, 371).

This position is also endorsed by Woodberry (2012, 2006) in his seminal work on the impact of Protestant missionaries on the democratic resilience of certain African countries, as much as two hundred years after their colonisation. Woodberry argues that the specific beliefs of the missionaries had an empirically distinctive impact on the African nations they worked in, which was not shared by either Westerners who were not missionaries, or Western missionaries who were not Protestant (2012, 245). He notes that this impact is not clear without understanding

the particular belief-driven differences between the Protestant missionaries and their Catholic counterparts. For example, the theological commitment to an individual, personal relationship with God based on a comprehensive understanding of the work of Jesus as taught through the Christian Bible explains why these missionaries cared so much about literacy, and about local printing presses. Their converts needed to be able to read the scriptures for themselves, and they needed it translated and printed in their local languages (Woodberry 2006, 5). The flow-on impacts of these beliefs are still visible generations later, and still clear after rigorous controls for other competing variables/explanations.

However, Woodberry does not posit this relationship between belief and outcome in isolation from other factors. For example, he notes that where missionaries were tied to representation of the colonising state, they did not have these same effects (Woodberry 2012, 256). He posits that this is because the external pressures of the state and the control they were able to exert over the missionaries changed their choices and behaviour. How they engaged with their world was shaped by how they interpreted their identity and role within the constraints and the relationships of their context.

This study has significant implications for this thesis. It is important to investigate the things that matter to the religious group under study. For Protestant Christians, the content of their beliefs is a key part of understanding what their religion means to them, and so any study of faith-based evangelical Christians must start with what they understand the world to be like, and how they ought to relate to it. I will do this in this thesis by telling the history of evangelicalism and tracing the things that they prioritised and discarded over the years and across the globe, but I will also show the theologies of social engagement to which they subscribe. I will point out how this provides a framework for understanding the way that they approach the role of humanitarianism as faith-based agents in that field.

Woodberry's study also highlights the need to be alert to the way that lived experience within a particular time and place engages with and shapes the relationship between belief and practice. The state-associated Protestant missionaries in his historical study did not leave the same legacy amongst African post-colonial nations as their non-associated counterparts because their positioning in their particular webs of social, economic and political circumstances changed the paths they took. Likewise, I need a framework of investigation that is open and responsive to tracing the constitutive role that context plays in giving shape to actors' expressions of their faith. This is why I have chosen to pursue a small number of case studies, with a deep investigation of the processes that occurred during the times selected. I hope to consider the

ways in which FBO identity, values, and practices are interpreted and enacted through specific circumstances, and in response to various situational pressures. This analytical approach helps this thesis to move beyond 'religion made them do it' explanations in order to provide conceptually and contextually rich accounts of the role of these FBOs in the humanitarian order.

Section Two: What is Humanitarianism?

Just as modern Western political traditions have struggled to account for the role of religion, so too the conventional account of the evolution of the modern IHO marginalises the role and influence of religious actors and institutions, depicting them as little more than a relic of its history. In this section, I explore the consequences of this secularisation for how humanitarianism has been understood and reproduced. Then I set out a working definition for what it means to *be* a humanitarian actor, to give a foundation for the final section of this chapter, where I bring things together by laying out the approach for the study of faith-based humanitarian actors in the international system.

Evolution of an Idea

Although concern for strangers has long been a part of human societies, scholars tend to treat humanitarianism as a distinct and modern phenomenon, distinguished from these other forms of assistance (Anheier and Juergensmeyer 2012, 829; Barnett 2011b, 19). The modern humanitarian field has grown up over the past two centuries (largely out of North America and Europe), and has represented a "global institutionalisation of compassion"(Barnett 2009, 622). The concurrent rise of secularisation in broader Western politics thus also played out in the development of the international humanitarian order. Although religious agencies are routinely credited as "pouring the foundations" of the contemporary humanitarian order, and religious ideas and values are often considered key motivators for historical actors and the changes they made, the participation of religious actors tends to drop out of the story as it approaches the present (as explored through Barnett and Stein 2012b). The development of the modern IHO is often portrayed as the shedding of religions' parochial and limited bonds and duties, and instead the embrace of a universal ethic predicted on nothing more than shared humanity. This story, as Barnett notes, suffers from 'selective memory' (2011b, 5).

Take, for example, the origin stories. Often, humanitarianism's 'birth' is given as the foundation of the ICRC by Henri Dunant, a travelling businessman who was horrified by the suffering of injured soldiers he witnessed at the battle of Solferino in 1859. He went on to found the ICRC as a voluntary society working to assist the victims of war while remaining neutral in the conflict

(such as given in Bradshaw 2013).[5] The ICRC bravely fought for more humane conditions through the horrors of WWI, forging the pathway for other private voluntary agencies to form and getting busy with the task of providing much needed relief to the victims of that great and terrible war. Their armour was their neutrality; carving a place for themselves by limiting the scope of their attentions to the non-political work of binding wounds and feeding the starving (Barnett 2011b, 5).

However, while the founding of the ICRC did indeed represent an important milestone in the development and institutionalisation of modern humanitarianism, it was not the foundation stone. Other early movements that embodied this ethic played an important role in the development of the modern order. The age of 'imperial humanitarianism', as Barnett categorises it, (spanning from the early 1800s to WWII) was characterised by a range of moral, scientific, technological, and social changes coming together to expose large numbers of people to (and often their complicity in) a range of ills and suffering beyond their home borders. This in turn fed the confidence that these ills could be fixed, and provided a range of tools and tactics for doing so (Barnett 2011b, 49–56). These included the campaign to end the transatlantic slave trade and armed intervention in the Greek-Ottoman wars of the 1820s to protect civilians, as well as disastrous occupations of colonies in the name of civilisation like King Leopold of Belgium's takeover of the Congo (Anheier and Juergensmeyer 2012, 829). The early history of humanitarianism weaves and dips through the story of empire, tangled up with colonialism and capitalism, missions and paternalism.

Early humanitarians were usually affiliated with religious movements and motives. The ICRC itself, for instance, drew upon a number of recognisably evangelical dispositions in its response to human suffering and its mobilisation of individual volunteers to respond to it (chronicled in Dromi 2020). Indeed, Peter Stamatov argues that the very non-governmental agency model of humanitarianism itself developed out of the church-missionary relationships formed in the context of European imperial expansion from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, where religious activists learnt to mobilise across long distances to defend the interests of their missions in far flung colonies (2010, 608). In this reading, even the 'early humanitarianism' of the abolitionist campaigns of the 1800s were the maturation and culmination of these networks, not the infancy. Organisations such as the London Missionary Society and Society for Missions to Africa and the East (now the Church Missionary Society) were examples of early NGOs,

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[5] Such accounts might make passing reference to Dunant's Protestant beliefs as providing personal motivation for his work, before going on to highlight the thoroughly secular nature of the organisation's evolution.

bypassing government structures and offices to connect churches and pool resources across vast distances. Modelled along these lines, early humanitarians were not, as the standard history goes, focussed only on emergency relief; they had deeply ambitious goals to reform society itself. This included abolitionism, more civilised approaches to colonialism, mission work, and social reform on issues as wide spread as child labour, alcoholism, gambling, public education, prostitution, work hours, cruelty to animals, and many others (see both Barnett 2011b; Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012).

For example, the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (now Oxfam) was begun at a 1942 meeting of Quakers, academics and social activists, who gathered with the aim of lobbying the British government to lift war time blockades of the continent to allow Red Cross aid to reach starving European children. Co-founder and first honorary secretary Cecil Jackson-Cole was an energetic Christian businessman, who also ran the Voluntary and Christian Service Trust, an umbrella committee under which he established many more humanitarian, missions and charity agencies, such as Action Aid, the Christian Initiatives Trust, and Help the Aged (and its spin-off, HelpAge International), as well as administered a range of one-off grants (Evans 2016, 3). For him, the humanitarian impulse found action in a range of activities.

Over time, all of this activity evolved into a system, a loosely connected network of actors, agencies, governments, institutions, and other bodies all working together for the same broad goal: an international humanitarian order. Riding on consensus produced by the horrors of the war, actors in this IHO, particularly the ICRC, helped to update numerous Conventions on acts of war, in an attempt to reduce wartime suffering, particularly of non-combatants (ICRC 2018). In parallel there was also increasing pressure from NGOs and civil society on government and inter-governmental institutions to change their behaviours and morals, to reduce the human toll of their policies and wars. The 'global aid society' of the post-war period brought relief and rehabilitation to a war-torn globe and developed great access to needy populations across the globe (Barnett 2011b, 104). As the Cold War intensified, the IHO entered an age of 'neo-humanitarianism' defined by great power rivalry where both sides promoted competing secular visions of universalistic nationalism (Morgenthau, as noted in Barnett 2011b, 98). These narratives were echoed in the decolonising states of the 'Third World' who were pressured to pick a side. Development, mostly economic in focus, became a key weapon in the arsenal of the great powers as they competed for global influence.

As the IHO developed in the twentieth century, it took on both the framework and then the semantic content of secularism, in line with the broader secularisation of Western society, law

and politics. The codification and institutionalisation of principles, laws, structures of accountability and dominant actors that happened rapidly during the twentieth century established a distinctly secular regime (A. Ager and Ager 2011; Maxwell and Walker 2009). As humanitarianism has become more and more organised as a project of global governance, it has reflected this value set. Humanitarian goals and aims have been increasingly articulated in secular terms, focussing on material needs, appealing to what were considered universal concepts devoid of religious or cultural significance, and based on a confidence in the processes of institutionalisation, bureaucratisation and professionalization (A. Ager and Ager 2011, 457; Barnett and Stein 2012b, 8).

Larry Grubbs (2009) describes the arrival of 'secular missionaries' in 'Third World' village sites across the world during this period of 'neo-humanitarianism', armed with cheerful determination to develop and modernise these so-called backwards societies. The secularisation thesis was at the height of its popularity. US President John F Kennedy launched the Peace Corp as another vehicle for volunteers from the 'developed world' to enact community development overseas according to this agenda (R. M. Feener and Fountain 2018, 383). They were guided by the increasingly invoked humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence and humanity (Barnett 2011b, 5).[6]

These articulated principles sat uneasily with many humanitarian actors, across a divide that has been with humanitarianism from its inception. On one side of the divide were those who thought that humanitarian action should only seek to help people in the most temporary of ways. They saw humanitarianism as helping to keep people alive in the time that it takes for political actors to solve the problems that are causing this crisis. Barnett calls this the 'emergency' approach; some call them the 'traditionalists'. For these actors, the four humanitarian principles articulated by the ICRC are simply a definition of what humanitarianism *is*. If action falls outside of that realm, it is no longer humanitarian work (see for example Ferris' criticism of 'mission creep' in Ferris 2011b, 175).

The alternative conception of the field was from those who felt that humanitarians have a duty to do more than just keep people alive. They argued that where humanitarian actors are able to help make life better and safer for people in situations of conflict or disaster, they should. The work of humanitarianism must address the causes of humanitarian crisis wherever possible, not just the effects. Barnett labels this as an 'alchemical' approach (2011b, 39). Others call it a 'transformative' approach to aid. This approach extends humanitarian work into the realms of

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[6]Principles that did not become part of the ICRC's codes of conduct until the 1960s.

civilian protection, rebuilding, development, peacebuilding, human rights advocacy, democracy strengthening, economics, and more. For transformative humanitarians, the ICRC's guiding principles represented more of a set of guidelines: "benchmarks against which performance can be measured… to prevent pragmatism from degenerating into unprincipled opportunism" (Minear and Weiss 1993, 3). This stance was articulated most clearly in the 'well-fed dead' problem, coined after observations of the meaningless nature of aid given during the Balkans conflict (attributed to the late Fred Cuny as noted in Cohen and Deng 1998, 10). Victims fleeing violence received aid but they were not protected from the conflict that still raged around them. Instead, they were attacked and killed. They may have been well fed, but they were still dead. This orientation to the holistic dimensions of human need inevitably admits a political dimension. Championing the human rights of vulnerable populations and the desire to address the structures of conflict inescapably entangles humanitarians in politics (Anderson 1999, 147).

Although Barnett explains that these two alternative approaches to humanitarian activity were always present, it is the emergency approach that has largely dominated the conception of humanitarianism, until fairly recently. In the 1990s, the two competing visions of the purpose, principles and politics of humanitarian action were laid in stark contrast by their proscriptions for complex humanitarian emergencies that emerged in that decade, like Rwanda and the Balkans conflict. As a result of these complex crises through the 1990s many agencies changed direction and since then the pendulum of IHO practice has swung more towards more transformative approaches.

Although the agenda of 'transformative humanitarianism' is far reaching, its most obvious effect has been the expansion of aid agencies further into the development sphere. Most NGOs in the humanitarian space engage in some level of development work, and many work hard to streamline their relief efforts with their development programming. This is encapsulated by debates over 'linking relief, rehabilitation, and development' (LRRD) which began in the 1980s around the complex drivers of food crises in Africa. These crises presented as short term relief responses, but were increasingly clearly driven largely by complex socio-economic configurations that could not be adequately addressed by emergency relief programming (Audet 2015, 112). Discussions on how to effectively sequence different aspects of relief and development programming in more complementary fashions became another battleground between the traditional and transformative visions for humanitarianism.

As a sign of the inroads the transformative side has made, at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, representatives of many parts of the IHO voiced support for the need to dispense with the

siloing of relief and development (such as Griffiths 2016, 33). The language reflected earlier LRRD discussions and embraced a continuum of response that use the opportunities that relief/disaster situations provide to make room for long-term development goals and opportunities. In practice, this looks like integrating disaster risk reduction and disaster readiness into rebuilding programs, and also seeking to design better education, infrastructure, and the like to mitigate the effects of future disasters.

However, relief and development are still often separated, as although their purposes broadly align their operational activities generally differ quite significantly. While both seek to respond to the moral imperative to help the vulnerable stranger, emergency relief focuses on saving lives in extraordinary situations, while development aid is more associated with alleviating suffering that is structured into the 'ordinary' of day-to-day lives (Gabiam 2012, 102). The different operational requirements of these two activities make them difficult to streamline.

The silos between the relief and development work done in the humanitarian space are replicated in several places, such as for example, the latest State of the Humanitarian System (SOHS) report, which does not count development actors as part of the system's core. It also notes that for 'multi-mandated' agencies (that is, agencies that work in both relief and development sectors) they analyse only the "resources they dedicate to humanitarian assistance" (ALNAP 2018, 107). This explains why the report identifies Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières) (MSF) as the current largest humanitarian organisation in the world, as measured by staff and operational expenditure, because they only count staff and finances in relief roles. Audet notes that it is the relief rather than the development sector that has shown the most interest in LRRD work, leading to criticisms that integration attempts are just an exit strategy by another name (2015, 117).

There are costs to this back and forth over the boundaries of humanitarian work. The SOHS 2012 report noted that 'coherence' (its term for convergence of shared principles and goals) in the system has been weakening, as the gap between 'traditionalists' and 'multi-mandated' organisations widens (ALNAP 2012, 13). By its nature, the transformative approach enfolds a much more expansive collection of actors; they run the gamut from being traditionalist-like but committed to finding solutions, to being fully positive and proactive about the politics humanitarian actors should be engaging in for their task. There is no consensus among them over how ambitious the reach of humanitarian action should be, which (if any) of the four traditional principles need honouring, or how to best prosecute the agenda (Calhoun 2008, 74). Ambiguity over the scope of humanitarian action has made it both more ambitious, and its

norms less respected (Bradshaw 2013, 90). Many agencies in the field of practice, whether by conceptual confusion, pragmatic compromise, or an element of both, simply exist in a state of mild paradox, embracing a range of both transformative and traditional positions (Calhoun 2008, 75).

Uncovering the Foundations

The distinction between traditional and transformative approaches to humanitarianism has two relevant dimensions for this thesis. The first is that the transformative approach has a wide scope of activities that fit under its rubric which opens up more space for a wider variety of actors. The second is that because transformative narratives centre the search for solutions to crises, the normative nature of humanitarian work is more clearly laid bare. In searching for solutions, humanitarians are drawn into "developmentalist agendas and ambiguities about the real problems and who defines them" (Ager and Ager 2011, 467). The wider scope of work reveals the moral frameworks that were always there but were buried by the constraints of emergency-only relief. When humanitarian work includes relief, rehabilitation and development, the worldviews driving humanitarian actors start to lead to real divergence. Across the IHO this highlights the semantic content and the widespread pervasiveness of secularism as a primary organising principle.

There are compelling reasons for the adoption of secularism as an organising principle of the IHO. At its best, secularism seeks to provide a neutral framework based on universal reason within which diverse groups can interact productively regardless of existing religious commitments (Jakobsen 2010, 34). In the relief and development world, secular framing is meant to promote pluralism and multiplicity, an ambivalence to race and creed, by adopting a neutral position to the competing worldviews and value systems of both its donors and its beneficiaries (Bender and Klassen 2010).

The problem is that the reality does not necessarily follow the desire. As criticisms by IR scholars discussed earlier in this chapter reveal, there are many strands of secularism, and their ability to deliver on their promise of neutrality is highly questionable. Secularism is rather, "a highly specific, culturally embedded model for managing the relationship between religion and politics" (Wilson 2017, 534). While it can take many different forms, certain kinds of secularisms "are underpinned by an ideological agenda that makes assumptions about the worth of religious belief and practice in relation to other human pursuits, about the existence and value of immanent and transcendent realms, about the very nature of religion itself" (Wilson, 2017, 534). Because the IHO arose out a particular socio-historical context, it is clearly linked to the "historical, social and intellectual traditions of the global North" (A. Ager and Ager 2011, 467).

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Sarah Teitt argues that the IHO is imbued with an ideology of Western individualism and an ethics of cosmopolitan liberalism (Teitt 2013, 3). Individual humans are ascribed with inherent and equal moral value to be upheld over values of individual societies; classical humanitarian principles resting on ontological assumptions about human life that are not necessarily universal (2013, 7). This has created a particular secular paradigm out of which humanitarianism is practiced, one that is not neutral to religious actors, but that prescribes them certain roles and expects certain behaviours from them.

As this secular paradigm became dominant, the contributions of religious communities to relief and development work faded from the history books. While there was an appreciable withdrawal of some religious agencies in the twentieth century, this was likely less total than is often assumed in the 'Great Reversal' narratives (VanderPol 2010, 54). However, as will be explored in chapter two, there were elements of Christian communities, particularly in the US, who felt as though they were presented with the choice of doing 'humanitarianism' (according to a very narrow window of physical needs derived criteria) or doing 'missions'. For those who saw caring for the distant stranger through the lens of their spiritual need, this meant a pullback from the humanitarian sphere.

Specifically for religious actors in the humanitarian space, a secularly grounded IHO by definition excludes participation by those drawing upon something other than reason as an arbiter of truth (A. Ager and Ager 2011, 459). Actions springing from a more transcendent frame do not have a place in the discussion. In this appeal to reason, the IHO exhibits "a specifically materialist character; that is to say that only that which is materially verifiable is deemed reasonable… materialism thus becomes the determining ideology of functional secularism [in the IHO]" (Ager and Ager 2011, 460). Shakman Hurd argues that this leaves religion only salient in its material effects (Shakman Hurd 2011, 71); theologically grounded concepts of spiritual wellbeing do not register. Religion is thus functionalised, admitted to the realm of consideration conditional on its tangible functions. In the humanitarian realm, the consequences of this privileging mean that secular organisations and ideals are presented as the normal, or neutral standard. By extension, this leaves religious actors as the 'other', who are then judged as either conforming to or deviant from the secular paradigm that underpins these standards (Ngo 2015, 31).

In the next chapter, I expand in more detail how this buried assumption affects the way that FBOs are studied, and the problems that this raises for understanding them. But suffice to say for now, the secular nature of the IHO means that religious agencies are viewed with a lens of suspicion, where they are judged for how well they conform to or deviate from a secular norm.

This contributes to reinforcing a religious-secular binary, grounded in hidden expectations about what kinds of activities are 'religious' and therefore problematic (Schwarz 2018, 14). As Agensky argues, for all the talk of critiquing "secular narratives of political modernity", the global trend of humanitarianism is still profoundly underpinned by secular and liberal narratives, that leave the field largely unable to "frame and theorise" how religious groups interact with the broader field (2013, 455). It considers their value as confined to the resources, material or otherwise, they are able to bring to the work. The Global University of Islamic Finance and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (IFRC) investigation of 'Islamic social giving' is one such area, as they seek to find out the extent to which these alternative 'religious' streams of funding might be used in crisis response. These are not insignificant financial resources; "it is estimated that at least $600 billion of *zakat* from Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries is potentially available annually, including for humanitarian response" (ALNAP 2018, 116). Speculation as to the impact of these finances if redirected towards humanitarian programming tends to make up the extent of much engagement with Islamic expressions of humanitarianism.

While the separation of religion from other elements of human life and practice is now the default way of understanding the world in the West, it is not the case for many places around the world (Holenstein 2005, 370). Such secular framing does not resonate across many communities and societies given global demographics of religious adherence; proponents of faith-based approaches strongly argue that where humanitarian NGOs are unable or unwilling to engage with the non-secularised nature of the communities they work in, they risk creating friction, misunderstandings, offence and long lasting damage. The 'return' of religion to the relief and development sector's consciousness has been in many ways bottom up. Humanitarian actors were largely compelled to recognise the place of faith because of their experiences when working with non-western cultures. To date though, the re-discovery of the role that religious actors can play in relief and development has mostly been largely instrumental; grounded in the resources that other players think religious actors can bring to bear in their interests and judged according to its reproduction of acceptably 'secular' practices (A. Ager and Ager 2015, 15; B. Jones and Petersen 2013). Politics scholar John A Rees provides an example of this dynamic when he argues that the World Bank's pivot towards development partnerships with religious actors is an act of co-option, that is little more than an "expression of the hegemony of Northern interests" (Rees 2011, 143).

Rick James likewise notes that European governments as donors "want to engage with the institutional forms of faith (the religious institution), but remain concerned about the spiritual

dimensions of faith"; secular donors want a sanitised separation between religion's institutional and spiritual elements (James 2009, 9). This leads to a situation where "it is all well and good for faith groups to be inspired by the love, compassion, and moral obligation their faith bring them, but they should not use it to proselytize or *influence the content of development*" (Thomas 2004, 22 my italics). This can lead to a deep sense of frustration and paralysis amongst faith-based groups; it can also lead to exasperation when, for example, an FBO is told to take out the biblical basis for a program but leave in all the "Protestant work ethic" (Corbett and Fikkert 2012, 92).

International development scholar Nathan Grills also finds this dynamic in his (2009) research on World Health Organisation (WHO) engagement with FBOs, concluding that multilateral organisations (MOs) like the idea of FBO partnerships, but not the reality. Their pragmatic acceptance of the "crucial" role FBOS play in global health governance, for example, does not result in a willingness to engage substantively with them. Grills argues that this kind of engagement is countercultural for these large, Western-based MOs, as it challenges their core principles. Instead, he finds that MOs limit their engagement to large professional FBOs, predominantly those with "liberal religious ideals", preferring "impartial multifaith activities" and requiring their FBO partners to "engage on secular terms" (Grills 2009, 517). As a result, MOs miss the opportunity to confront the effects of their own (secular) identity on other actors, and thus to find truly mutual engagement opportunities. These, and other studies lead Petersen and Jones to conclude that much engagement with religious actors is narrow, instrumental, and normatively problematic (Jones and Petersen 2013, 34).

There are other consequences for humanitarianism in having a framework of functional secularism. One key one is that it does not have the means to address the way in which humanitarianism is a transcendental activity. What I mean by this is that the functional secularism of the IHO largely ignores the way that humanitarianism is a profoundly moral endeavour (Barnett 2011b, 2011a; Barnett et al. 2009). It is a normative venture. The claims of secularism to be a neutral framework that allows people to work together from different value contexts are undermined by its dominance as the normative moral framework of the current IHO which marginalises and exclude alternative moral systems. As Teitt argues, the IHO's values are liberalism, individualism, cosmopolitanism, and materialism (2013, 3). This is an ontology that excludes the transcendental.

The result is not no faith, but rather the production and the privileging of a particular kind of faith. As Barnett reflects:

> Nearly every aid worker I have ever met, from those who work for the
> evangelical World Vision International to the irreligious Doctors without
> Borders, expresses one kind of faith or another… While the humanitarian
> sector operates with a distinction between faith- and non-faith-based action,
> it is probably more accurate to acknowledge that its workers are inspired by
> different kinds of faith traditions. (2011a, 110)

Barnett and Stein observe that humanitarianism is a part of the sacred; it has its texts, its rituals, its sacred spaces (2012a, 25). Miwa Hirono goes even further when she suggests all NGOs are 'evangelical' when they are animated by a belief that their values have something to offer to improve the lives of the disenfranchised (Hirono 2008, 197). "Evangelism is usually understood as the preaching of the Gospel, but a secular organization also has its own 'Gospel' - in the sense that it believes its values are 'universal', and need to be spread throughout the world" (Hirono 2008, 195). Hirono argues that an NGO's capacity to respect local values and tolerate some degree of pluralism are far more relevant indicators of their benefit to a recipient community than their commitment to evangelism per se (Hirono 2008, 195).

Third wave scholarship on religion in politics provides useful anlytical insights with its focus on the normative and explanatory signifance of labelling particular actors, values, and practices as 'religious' in contrast to 'secular' (Schwarz 2018, 6). There are implications to the label; there are claims about legitimacy and authority to act in certain situations that are being made when an actor is accepted or rejected as 'humanitarian'. Leading humanitarian scholar Hugo Slim incisively points out:

> Laughter is a universal good. What would the world be like if only clowns
> were allowed to be funny and make people laugh? This would be a terrible
> world that confined humour to a professional class and restricted a universal
> human desire and capacity. At times, it can sound as if NGO humanitarians
> are suggesting something similar about humanitarian action. It is something
> that they want everyone to value and enjoy but which only they are allowed
> to do… If this is what they really think, then this is humanitarian
> professionalism gone mad. (2001)

Actors in the humanitarian field seek to carve out various spaces for themselves as legitimate participants in global events by virtue of their purposes in helping the hurt. In doing so, they draw an implicit question mark over the actors they see as marginal in humanitarian action. This is not a single action; even the 'mainstream' order is itself made up by a multiplicity of actors and practices. Understanding that the idea of humanitarianism is a modern one, formed and reformed through its encounters with history, helps in thinking about what constitutes it core. Instead of accepting either the traditional or the transformative imaginaries of the boundaries of humanitarianism, I instead adopt Barnett's broader categorisation, which seeks to find that core of meaning while understanding its contextual and shifting boundaries.

Building the Humanitarian Concept

Barnett's idea of a concept in motion gives a starting place to put boundaries around what is and is not humanitarian action, part of the wider order. He argues that while humanitarianism seeks to embody the universal, it does so contextually for each age (Barnett 2011b, 11). As a label, it has varied considerably in meaning since its first modern usage in the early nineteenth century. Barnett argues that it is none-the-less distinguishable from other forms of compassion or charity, by three characteristics. Firstly, it is assistance that is directed beyond borders. In other words, it is assistance to those who are outside of our communities. To bring one's own child to hospital, to raise money for a neighbour's cancer treatment, these are not humanitarianism because they flow from the nature of pre-existing bonds. What makes assistance humanitarian is when it goes 'beyond the call of duty' to those who have little or no claim on us. Sociologist Keith Tester resonates with this with his depiction of humanitarianism as "the sensibility that assistance ought to be given to others who are need, irrespective of whether or not they are members of one's own group" (2010, 377).

Secondly, humanitarianism is defined by its transcendental significance; it calls on a global ethic of care. Barnett argues that humanitarians act as though there is "something larger than us", seeing their work as a means "of both expressing and bringing into existence an international community", because of the inextricable way that "humanitarianism's purpose is intertwined with the desire to demonstrate and create a global spirit" (Barnett 2011b, 20). This brings into focus the constructed nature of the religious-secular divide, and shows where the battle for its boundaries takes place.

Thirdly and finally, humanitarianism is defined by its structure; it seeks to be organised and a part of governance. It goes beyond spontaneous or informal expressions of caring and demands a seat at the table, a legitimate public space and mandate. IR scholar Pichamon Yeophantong echoes this idea when she talks about the humanitarian impulse as the desire to help others who are suffering in some *systematic* way (Yeophantong 2014, 18).

At the same time, Barnett introduces the impact of enduring tensions that bring out differences in how humanitarianism is understood and practiced depending on time and place. This is where, like for religion, the role of context and environment shape the production and reproduction of the concept of humanitarianism. These tensions include "the existence of multiple humanitarianisms; ethics that are simultaneously universal and circumstantial; a commitment to emancipation that can justify forms of domination; the possibility (or not) of advancing moral progress; and ministration to the needs of both the giver and the recipient" (Barnett 2011b, 21). Humanitarianism is indelibly bound up in the world that it seeks to better,

and as that world changes, different facets of the humanitarian project are highlighted and marginalised.

This change is present on the global level as well. Hirono and O'Hagan build on Barnett's declaration to point to the way that different cultural values also generate distinct cultures of humanitarianism. They warn that ignoring this diversity and insisting on narrow carve outs of the humanitarian impulse ultimately leads to a system that shatters and fractures (O'Hagan and Hirono 2014, 421).

So what are the implications of adopting the notion of humanitarianism as a 'concept in motion'? The main benefit of this approach is that it does not uncritically reproduce the secular biases inherent in other definitional approaches, because it explicitly highlights the changing normative tensions driving humanitarian action as it has evolved over time. This in turn helps us understand why religious actors have such mixed success in navigating their place in the contemporary IHO. Both have changed over time. Different values and goals have been emphasised through the IHO at different stages, which have accorded more or less well with the goals and values of the religious actors (themselves reproduced and shaped over time). When dominant actors within the IHO privileged a narrative of humanitarianism that was strongly grounded in claims of universality, neutrality, and technical governance, FBOs slid out of focus. As the system has begun to engage with the nature of the moral commitments this narrative has contained (and their differing resonance across societies), FBOs have again found more points of entry.

Faith-based agencies have long claimed that their strength in humanitarianism is that they recognise the deeply transcendent nature of the humanitarian impulse. The Christian missiology field has expounded for years on the semantic content of secular frames – on the de facto materialism, scepticism and metaphysical naturalism that fills this space (Chester 2002; Mitchell, n.d.; Myers 2011). Here they parallel works such as Charles Taylor's (2007) *Secular Age*. And their frustrations are given voice by other commentators in the academy, such as Ager and Ager, Teitt, Wilson, and others. Lynch and Schwarz (2016) point to a similar criticism, noting that the major 'proselytism problem' facing the humanitarian field is not from faith-based actors seeking to convert beneficiaries, but from secular agencies imposing the semantic content of their donors' values without introspection.

FBOs also argue that their faith gives them a 'cultural proximity' advantage: the ability to engage with the spiritual perspective of a community, as they can "offer a discursive space where issues of good, of evil, of the injustices of poverty and the moral dangers of individual

success, can be discussed alongside fears of demons and hopes of salvation" (Bornstein 2005, 7). This sensitivity to the intersection of the material and the spiritual also helps them, they argue, to engage with communities potentially hostile to secular agencies (Thaut 2009, 324).

Hirono and O'Hagan also argue that the cohesion of multiple cultures of humanitarianism can only be achieved by recognising the points of similarity and difference that occur between them – finding where dialogue can be had so that goals can be shared even where conceptions of humanitarian action differ (O'Hagan and Hirono 2014, 409). This requires seeking to understand what different cultures perceive as legitimate humanitarian action, by asking four questions: who do they see as a legitimate actor; why do they act; who are they expected to help; and how and when do they take action (O'Hagan and Hirono 2014, 410). Similarly, this thesis begins by asking what religious action means to those who perform it.

Section Three: Understanding Faith-based Humanitarian Actors

The final groundwork that is necessary to set up the investigations of this thesis is unpacking how to explore faith-based humanitarian agencies as unique actors in the global space. There are many different faith-based actors, of varying sizes and organising principles. There are "professional relief agencies, small-scale mission-aid initiatives, and ecumenical bodies" (Agensky 2013, 456). There are also apex bodies, denominational charity arms, missionary agencies, domestic welfare charities, socio-political organisations, and mega-churches, and this is still not an exhaustive list (see for example Clarke 2006). How to sort through and categorise these groups is a vexing issue. For example, in Australia, WV is a professional relief and development agency. Baptist Aid and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), are found in the same places as WV, but they are denominational arms. So is Anglicare, but Anglicare is a domestic welfare charity, not a relief agency. Anglican overseas aid is performed by Anglican Aid. Clearly, this is a complex space. There are, consequently, problems separating *humanitarian* faith-based agencies from other faith-based agencies.

Religious communities do not necessarily help clarify where they are located. There are a variety of terms mobilised in evangelical discourse alone when referring to "organised, collective, religiously motivated action for the sake of ameliorating grave social or material privation" (VanderPol 2010, 13). These include 'emergency needs', 'holistic mission', 'transformational development', 'relief and development', 'mercy ministry', 'social justice', 'ministry of deeds' and many, many others.

Agensky talks about 'mission aid' as a way to understand and tame this complicated relationship. This is a focus on "the humanitarian dimensions of mission spaces, which sanction interventions into sites of emergency". He paints a picture of faith-based actors shifting along a spectrum of religious and emergency imaginaries of a humanitarian situation (2013, 465 – 566). A WV senior staffer expressed this when he noted the sense of tension between the "great commission and the great commandment and evangelicals tend to be biased by the great commission, while a lot of aid workers are biased towards the great commandment" (video interview with WV GRRT member, 21 September 2018).[7]

There are also problems separating humanitarian *faith-based* agencies from other humanitarian agencies. Partly this is the result of the wide-spread use of loosely synonomous terms that may or may not target the same phenomenon, such as religious NGOs, religious not-for-profits, faith communities, faith-inspired organisations, and religious or faith-based actors (Haynes 2014, 7). Where the literature has generally defined a faith-based agency specifically, it tends to be simply as one that is guided by faith-derived principles. For example, Ferris defines FBOs as being characterised by "affiliation with a religious body; a mission statement with explicit reference to religious values; financial support from religious sources; and/or a governance structure where selection of board members or staff is based on religious beliefs or affiliation and/or decision-making processes based on religious values" (Ferris 2005, 312). Likewise, Grills defines an FBO as simply "an institution, associations, or group formed by members of a religious affiliation or mission" (2009, 506). However, the relative simplicity of these definitions disguises the difficulties of definitively ruling on what does or does not count as sufficiently 'faith-based'. This is because of the immense diversity in organisational structure, faith expressions, goals, strategies, and self-identities present in the range of NGOs potentially classifiable as 'religious' (Schwarz 2018, 8). As a result, a plethora of typologies, taxonomies, and other organising schemas exist in an attempt to provide consensus on what constitutes a faith-based organisation (such as Sider and Unruh 2004, Clarke 2006, Jeavons 1998, Mitchell, 2016, Monsma 1996, Thaut 2009, to name a few). Many of these classifications are useful in helping to provide "abstract

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[7] The Great Commission is found in Jesus' words in Matthew 28: 16 – 20: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
The Great Commandment is similarly a teaching of Jesus, this time in Matthew 22: 36 – 40: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."
My interviewee may also have been referring to the New Commandment, a similar teaching of Jesus in John 13: 34 – 35: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another".

mapping" of the landscape, but are not so useful for making specific or in-depth study because of their tendency to reproduce prior ontological assumptions about what kinds of ideas and activities count as religious (Schwarz 2018, 10).

Defining Faith-based Humanitarians

To identify faith-based humanitarian actors I apply Barnett's concept in motion. Humanitarian actors are faith-based when they are guided by an explicitly articulated set of beliefs that are connected to the transcendental, which sees the work they do in the world as intimately linked with and flowing from the implications of the reality this describes. Faith-based actors are humanitarian when they are concerned with alleviating the suffering of those in a far-off place – so not domestic welfare charities, because they are dealing with their own communities, and not missionary agencies, because they're not primarily focussed on alleviating suffering, but on spreading their teachings. They are humanitarian when they connect this concern to a global ethic of care. And they are humanitarian because they seek to carry out this work in a manner that is organised, that seeks to make this work a form of governance. This excludes purely church-to-church relationships, which do not seek this governance aspect.

This helps to narrow down in a meaningful manner what it means to be a faith-based humanitarian actor. It also shows the scope for overlap in this idea. There are times when actors who are not primarily defined by a humanitarian identity move to perform humanitarian actions. For example, it is fair to say that while the Myanmar Baptist Convention is not primarily a humanitarian actor, they do participate in humanitarian activity. When they do this, they participate in but are not core actors of the IHO. This is similar to the role of militaries and government agencies, who are not core humanitarian actors, but at times act in a humanitarian role (O'Hagan and Hirono 2014, 416). Denominational arms, therefore, are humanitarian actors, as they have been specifically spun off from the broader mission and goals of their denominations in order to pursue the task of relieving human suffering as an organised site of governance. Agensky's idea of faith-based actors moving along a spectrum of religious and emergency imaginaries of humanitarian situations helps to highlight how the boundaries between humanitarian and other forms of activity are a gradient rather than a sharp line (2013, 465). There will of course, always be some exceptions to these guidelines, and even within this pared down cross-section there is still enormous variation. Islamic Relief is very different to World Relief (founded as the humanitarian arm of the National Association of Evangelicals), as are ADRA and SP.

The three FBOs at the heart of this study are all humanitarian FBOs that are dedicated primarily to the wellbeing and relief of suffering of people around the world. WV says that its aim is to

"overcome poverty and injustice". SP also defines as its goal the ethos of the Good Samaritan: to help the stranger in need. Even Compassion, often styled as a children's ministry, has as its major aim "to release children from poverty in Jesus' name". This is a development goal, a humanitarian impulse. Children are suffering and need to find relief.

As they operate in and engage with the humanitarian space, these agencies are also regularly and consistently perceived as 'faith-based', in the sense that each one draws upon and articulates a specific, recognisably Christian narrative to frame their work. While I am mindful of the need to resist ascribing any essentialist or inherent characteristics to the agencies based on this label, recognising their positionality within general scholarly approaches to the study of humantiarianism is a useful analytical starting place (Schwarz 2018, 9). How these FBOs interpret and navigate this label is an important part of understanding their impact in the humanitarian field.

Agency

A final dimension of clarification is about what it means to study an organisation. It is not automatically the case that insights about individuals and communities and their faith and beliefs apply to the organisation. It depends on whether an organisation is just a collection of individuals, or whether it takes on its own agency and identity. The question of where agency is located in politics is a big one and largely beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, I rely on the work of other IR scholars who have discussed the moral agency of institutional actors. I draw particularly on Toni Erskine (2008, 2001), who argues that institutions themselves can be treated as agents in analysis, provided they meet certain criteria. This is not a radical departure from IR orthodoxy: as a discipline, it treats "certain collectivities as agents with interests, aims and decision-making capacities" all the time (Erskine 2008, 701). Although IR scholars mostly apply this to states, the move beyond states to consider the agency of non-state actors is growing also.[8]

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[8] Erskine ascribes moral agency and thus responsibility to the collective itself, not merely the group of individuals that constitute it (Erskine 2001, 70). This approach is attentive to the realisation that some responsibilities, duties and expectations cannot reasonably be borne by an individual, who "on their own lack the power, coordination, and resources necessary to achieve many espoused goals" (Erskine 2008, 701). The greater capacities of institutions for 'deliberation and action' are simply beyond the scope of any individual.
Erskine argues that a collective has agency when it has a) a corporate identity (its identity exists beyond a determinate group of individual members); b) internal decision-making procedures (it can process information, deliberate on a course of action and move towards it purposefully); c) an identity over time (it has continuity, and the ability to access experience-memory); and d) is self-asserting (it has an internal conception unity, not just external definition) (Erskine 2001, 71–72). She explicitly notes that transnational NGOs such as MSF and transnational religious organisations such as the Roman Catholic

I adopt Erskine's approach over one that looks only at the agency of individuals within institutions because this better captures the way that FBOs function. Each individual within the FBO holds only a part of the historical knowledge, decision making capacity and moral responsibility of the collective. Over time, the FBOs have become more than just an aggregation of individual attributes; they take on their own character. Individual staff and volunteers come and go, but the organisation as an entity, along with its culture, though changing, persist over time.

However, accepting the existence of moral agency at an organisational level as a starting premise of the thesis does not mean that there is nothing more to be said about the processes by which faith permeates the corporate body. The question of organisational dynamics and the means through which values, identities and practices are negotiated through the agencies in response to situational pressures is an important analytical focus of chapters two and three.

Conclusion

Agensky argues that study of faith-based humanitarian groups must "dismantle secular biases about faith-based humanitarianism and redirect the conversation into broader debates of global governance and aid"; "address the extent to which faith-based organisations are integrated into the mainstream aid field and the mechanisms through which this occurs"; and "explore the social dimensions of these groups across different sites of operation and various modes of organisation" (2013, 456). That is my task in this thesis. Audet argues that in the humanitarian system, 'replicable models' do not exist (2015, 116). Each response must consider 'unique and specific' conditions, challenges and constraints that mean that "the appropriate response is highly context specific" (Audet 2015, 117). Likewise, understanding humanitarian actors, and understanding religious actors, requires being attentive to their ontologies of practice as they interact with the times and places in which they exist. Drawing on a family resemblances concept of religion also helps to provide attention with the nuance and detail required. Conceiving of humanitarianism as a concept in motion frees the project from uncritically reproducing one particular normative vision of humanitarian work. Different facets of the humanitarian project, and different facets of religion will come into and out of focus as context demands. At the heart of this is a need to begin by understanding what believers think they are doing through their practice. For evangelical FBOs, this requires understanding the evolution of their communal identity, and contexts in which they exist. That is the next step of this thesis.

Church meet her criteria for holding agency (2001, 72). The three FBOs at the centre of this study likewise all meet these criteria.

Chapter Two: Building a Picture of Evangelical Humanitarianism

Introduction

Although common, the label 'evangelical' is difficult to pin down. It is deployed (often confusingly and inconsistently) by different people to highlight different things (Malloy 2015, 2). It is used interchangeably with a host of other opaque categories, such as fundamentalist, born-again, Religious Right, conservative, Charismatic, or Pentecostal. At the same time, it is often treated as a monolithic category of cultural or political identity.[1] As a result, there has grown up a 'cottage industry' of definitions, focussing on the relevant attributes, the right groups for inclusion and even whether to retain the term at all (VanderPol 2010, 10). Despite its ambiguity, it is commonly used in both IR literature and relief and development studies; as Schwarz notes, attachment of the 'evangelical' label has significant consequences for how Christian FBOs are treated (2017, 8).[2]

In this chapter I answer the question of what it means to be considered an 'evangelical' humanitarian FBO. Drawing on the conceptual choices of the previous chapter, I explore a broadly theological definition but placed in a socio-historical context to understand how the term was born, how it has evolved over time, and the key forces that have shaped its contemporary expression. Once I establish the working understanding of the category, I go on to model how it affects these organisations day-to-day by modifying and combining Thaut's (2009) taxonomy of Christian faith-based humanitarianism and Agensky's (2013) work on 'mainstreaming' pressures within the broader field of practice. This enables me to bring to light how these FBOs understand and interpret this identity, giving meaning to it as they engage with the complex humanitarian environments in which they operate.

Section One: Defining Evangelical

The definitional debate around 'evangelical' is heated. There is disagreement over whether it should refer to a historical movement; a grouping of theological commitments; a political-cultural identity; describe 'true belief' (that is, the components of Christian faith necessary for salvation); or merely

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[1] Such as during the 2016 US presidential election, when pundits often referred to the singular 'evangelical vote', despite distinct political differences between subgroups within American evangelicalism (D. Burke 2016).
[2] For example, Lynch and Schwarz give 'evangelical/Pentecostal' as one of four Christian FBO categories (2016, 637); Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2012) adopts Thaut's (2009) evangelistic-humanitarianism category for her study; Gerard Clarke (2006) speaks of evangelical FBOs fitting into his outline of multiple organisational 'types'; and Tanya Schwarz notes her case study FBO International Justice Mission is classified as evangelical by external observers, which comes with assumptions of problematic practices (2017, 8), to name a few.

be considered a self-identity so broad that it is semantically useless.[3] It should come as no surprise that its use is similarly diverse. Indeed, some academics and policy makers use the term (usually negatively) without ever explaining what they mean by it all (for example Ferris 2005; Hoffstaedter 2011, 13). Where scholars do define the term, they tend to lay out the well-known 'Bebbington quadrilateral', which highlights the core theological commitments that unite evangelicals, and move on (such as Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2012, 12; Barnett 2011b, 53).[4] The tendency of scholars to rely on the 'Bebbington quadrilateral' points to the importance the content of belief. However, while its outline of evangelical theology is a helpful starting point, it is not enough (D. King 2012b, 924). It glosses over the complex, and at times contradictory identity signified by the name, and suggests a level of homogeneity that does not exist (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 17).

To properly understand the meaning and significance of these theological commitments we must trace their development over time. This is necessary because the *beliefs* associated with evangelicals are not particularly different to those of Protestant Christians who came before them. It is the unique way evangelicals emphasised and wired these beliefs together that sets them apart, and continues to drive their activities (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 10–11). In other words, it is the meanings they have assigned these beliefs as they have engaged with the world that have generated a distinctive evangelical identity. In particular, their commitments to their core theological beliefs have made them highly individualistic, deeply attractive and attracted to the poor, and keenly committed to a wider vision of global connectedness.

Birth – Rediscovering God

Evangelicalism was born in the eighteenth century against a backdrop of religious and social crisis in Europe, Britain and the Americas. Debates across the institutional divides of Puritanism, Scottish Presbyterianism, High Anglicanism, and Pietism fuelled an impassioned style of preaching that condemned faux-religiosity and called for spiritual revival. Associated clergy went on long preaching tours with a message that had remarkable impact on their audiences. This came to be known as the Great Awakening by historians of the period (J. Coffey 2008, 273; D. King 2012b, 925).

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[3] See particularly the debate between George Marsden (1993) and Donald Dayton (1993) as an example of disagreement over whether the movement's intellectual and doctrinal elements should take primacy, or its populist and 'Pentecostal' (emphasising the experiential elements) attributes.

[4] This definition highlights core theological commitments that bind evangelicals together: "*conversionism,* the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism,* the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism,* a particular regard to the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism,* a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross" (Bebbington 1989, 2–3 original emphasis). Sometimes this is expressed simply as "the authority of the Bible, salvation through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, personal piety, and the need to share the 'Good News' of Jesus Christ with others (i.e., to evangelise)" (Baylor Institute for Religious Studies 2006: 9).

These preachers condemned nationalistic and nominal Christianity, preaching instead that people must be 'born again' through Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross to be assured of their salvation.[5] This rejected the communal/institutional view of Christian identity common at the time. Many of their audiences had little personal engagement with the tenets of the Christian faith; surrounded by structures of religion, they did not need much personal commitment. They articulated Christian-derived morals; attended church; said their prayers; were baptised, married and buried by clergy. Yet, at these preaching meetings, called revivals, congregations of people whose Christian identity had never been questioned were confronted with the proposition that they were spiritually dead, and they needed to be 'revived' (hence the name revivals).

Revivals spread across the Western world through the eighteenth century. They consisted of people "of a wide range of ages and circumstances coming suddenly – and seemingly miraculously – to an intense experience of God that changed the course of individual lives and, for a time at least, could transform whole communities" (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 32). Of themselves they were not a new phenomenon, but those of this period are distinguished by their number, impact and intensity. Revivals happened across Europe, Britain and North America almost simultaneously, remarkable momentum in an era of horse-speed communication. These revived communities looked different to what had come before with their emphasis on "outpourings of the Holy Spirit, and on converted sinners experiencing God's love personally" (Kidd 2007, xiv). They shook up participants' lives as they threw aside day-to-day activities and committed to a "great and earnest concern about the great things of religion" (J. Edwards 1737, 12–13). Participants were fully convinced that they were experiencing and witnessing the direct intervention of God in their lives and their society, producing deep emotional and spiritual responses that gave great staying power to their group identity (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 36).

The word evangelical became associated with the revivalism of this time. Although the term had been a part of the Christian lexicon since its establishment (it comes from a Greek word meaning 'good news' or gospel), it was previously used more generally to refer to someone spreading the gospel, that is, the 'good news' of Jesus as saviour. In the sixteenth century it experienced a new run of popularity when was used to describe the Reformation movement, out of which Protestant churches were born (Fisher 2016, 184). However, its association with eighteenth century revivalism – re-energising and transforming those who already identified as Christians - infused it with the specific theological beliefs it is associated with today. This includes evangelism – the act of

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[5] These preachers were often highly energetic and charismatic public speakers, such as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitfield.

spreading the good news – but also the importance of the Bible, the need for personal relationship with Jesus, and the call for whole-life transformation to which this relationship should lead.

Stories of revivals and their remarkable effects spread through books, magazines, newspapers and other publications, creating a shared narrative and distinctive evangelical identity animated by powerful personal experiences. One of the key results of the evangelical revivals was to renew a sense that Christian faith was not just the means of salvation after death, but gave purpose and direction to the lives of believers here and now (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 50). Their core beliefs – biblical authority, salvation through a personal relationship with Jesus, personal piety, and the need to share the 'Good News' – had practical implications which came together not as old doctrine, but as a new reality (Barnett 2011b, 53).

Growth – Sharing the Joy

The power of the conversion experience led to great zeal amongst evangelicals for reform, both of their churches, and of their societies. Their spiritual experiences made them desire to see the world, with its deprivations and injustices transformed for the better. Unlike their Catholic cousins and more traditional Protestant siblings, evangelicals focussed on the individual's agency in salvation. This led them to emphasise the responsibilities of individuals to better society (Barnett 2011b, 54). Committed to "saving slaves, sinners, savages, and societies", they organised into movements like the (later named) Clapham Sect, dedicated to encouraging one another to social reform and religious revival (Barnett 2011b, 57).

If all people needed to respond to the call for revival, then they must have opportunity to hear the message. If harsh social conditions and extreme poverty robbed people of their ability to hear, these conditions must be changed. Thus, evangelicals committed great energy and resources to the furthering of revival by the reform of society. When evangelicals spoke of 'bringing in God's Kingdom', this is what they meant. Two years after his evangelical conversion, Clapham Sect member William Wilberforce began his slavery abolition campaign, a "moral and political crusade that became emblematic of the aspirations of evangelicals" to save souls and transform society across the globe (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 55). However, their emphasis on individuals meant that they tended to eschew pre-existing formal structures to carry out these activities. Instead, they created associations of individuals to push for change.

Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, evangelical voluntary societies sprang up everywhere. There were societies for everything: education of the poor; translation and distribution of Bibles and other religious tracts; domestic mission to under-churched regions; moral and legal reforms of prostitution, liquor, gambling, and work; and public health initiatives and

poverty relief (Wolffe 2006, 155–82). Evangelicals also invested greatly in the development of global mission agencies. Their commitment to the Bible was primary, and the Bible was clear: the good news of the gospel was for "all nations", to be carried "to the ends of the earth" (Matthew 28:19 and Acts 1:8). Agencies such as the London Missionary Society, the Church Missionary Society, China Inland Mission, and the Baptist Missionary Society all carried the urgency and the optimism of the evangelical message beyond the borders of 'Christendom'.[6]

The relationship between Christian missionaries and European imperialism was complex (see particularly Porter 2004). On one hand, many early evangelicals saw little friction between the missionary endeavour and the colonial project, viewing both as necessary elements of the moral and technological development of 'backwards' peoples (Barnett 2011b, 67). On the other hand, the evangelical missionaries' commitment to the global relevance of their message frequently led them into conflict with colonial administrators and commercial traders. If the 'slave and the savage' had a soul, then their enforced servitude had confronting moral implications for those who ministered to them. As a result, Woodberry argues, the presence of non-state affiliated missionaries played a major role in combating the excesses of colonial power (Woodberry 2006). Their commitment to spreading the gospel amongst indigenous people groups saw them mobilise social pressure to change exploitative practices, sponsor mass literacy and argue for the preservation of indigenous languages, agitate for religious liberty, and challenge prevailing ideologies of scientific racism (see also Lake 2018; Woodberry 2012). The missionaries of this period acted as forerunners for later relief and development actors by their provision of medical aid, food, shelter, and education as a part of their mission work (Taithe 2012, 166–67; Barnett and Stein 2012a, 23). They also foreshadowed some of the ethical dilemmas of paternalism, cultural imperialism and claims to universalism with which contemporary humanitarian actors of all stripes continue to struggle (Barnett 2011b, 69).

Establishment – Settling In

As evangelicalism spread and the movement became more established it began to recruit from a range of denominational backgrounds and encounter new social and political environments. This diversity is an important part of the evangelical story and one of the reasons it becomes so difficult to define. It has always been an ecumenical movement: that is, trans-denominational rather than a grouping of particular churches (Amstutz 2014, 30). This meant that, for example, in the 1800s there were a number of evangelical Quakers, even though as a whole, the Religious Society of Friends (the formal name of the Quaker movement) was not and is still not encapsulated in evangelicalism

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[6] And as a result, high profile missionaries such as William Carey, Hudson Taylor, and Amy Carmichael began to send back eye opening stories of difference and need from as far away as China, India and Japan.

(Newman 2005). This, combined with the highly individualistic nature of evangelicalism, makes it difficult to produce a definitive list of 'evangelical' denominations.

Evangelicalism spread rapidly through this period beyond its North Atlantic birthplace to Southern Europe, India, Africa and the Pacific. These evangelical populations responded to their varied contexts in different ways. For example, Italian evangelicals found support in political liberalism as they struggled against the dominance of Roman Catholicism, while evangelicals in Switzerland denounced 'liberal illiberalism' that stifled their actions (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 100). American voluntary societies at the time tended to afford a greater equality and opportunity to women than their British counterparts (Miller, Stout, and Wilson 1998, 120). Meanwhile, evangelicalism was co-opted by both the 'manifest destiny' nation-building rhetoric of the American north, and the slaveholder justifications of the south (Emerson and Smith 2001, 36). This was a recurring feature of the movement: often there was no *single* evangelical response but rather a range as biblicism and activism were worked out in particular contexts (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 114). Although evangelicals held the same core beliefs, they gave meaning and expression to them in context-specific ways.

Social reform was key to the establishment phase of evangelicalism in the nineteenth century. Mass urbanisation led to ever greater efforts from groups all over the evangelical world to be 'on the ground' with the working and middle classes as they tried to live out the concern they had for the marginalised in society (Barnett 2011b, 57). A number of initiatives sprang from these efforts, with varied results. Although sincere in their desire to improve the lives of the urbanised working poor, evangelical societies did not always grasp the sociological complexities of these communities; the (often forced) mass migration of poor English children to the colonies for 'a better life' is one example of a well-intentioned scheme with disastrous outcomes for working class families (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 104). It also acts as one example of the growing problem evangelicals had with being able to step back from their day-to-day activities to consider 'big picture' strategies.

The intensity of the 'call to action' felt by evangelicals arguably resulted in a preoccupation with practical activity that left behind the more circumspect. The energy required to run all of those voluntary societies was enormous, and the briefly popular practice of setting out for the mission field with belongings packed in a coffin hinted at the short life expectancy of overseas work. This had serious consequences for the movement that became apparent towards the end of the nineteenth century: evangelicals lacked credible intellectual voices in the academic and institutional circles of their respective countries (Bebbington 1989, 137). Evangelicals struggled to influence senior clergy in established denominations and respond to the modernist and secularist thought

overtaking elites (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 95). Consequently, their lack of investment in creating coherent bodies of evangelical thought and teaching meant that they lacked resources to draw upon as they navigated the challenges these movements later posed for their revivalist message. They were also cooling to colonialism, and increasingly concerned that "replicating the West throughout the world threatened to spread the contagion of materialism, secularism and nationalism" and "silence the evangelical voice" (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 139).

By the end of the nineteenth century, evangelicalism's global presence was firmly established. It had over a hundred years of social revival and reform to its name, marked by an energetic spirit of voluntarism for the faith and the betterment of society. It had a firm foothold in traditional Protestant denominations such as Anglicanism and Presbyterianism, and new ones such as Methodism. Evangelical zeal had spawned missionary societies and sown the seeds for local church movements across the globe. They had managed to transcend their original geographical boundaries, and began to grow in India, Asia, Africa, and the Pacific. The gathering of delegates at the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland marked a symbolic highpoint in global unity among evangelicals (although it was not an exclusively evangelical conference) (Barnett 2011b, 70). They faced the new century united by their commitment to core doctrine, a shared experience of spiritual revival and a common sense of purpose.

Retreat – On the Defensive

This established and united evangelicalism was violently torn asunder almost immediately in the early part of the twentieth century. Deep wounds were left by savage wars and the relentless impact of modernity, both technologically and ideologically. The First World War destroyed the confidence of evangelical missionaries in the positive influence of 'civilised Christendom'; mauled the psyche of a generation of possible church leaders, and fuelled internal divisions that led to the rise of fundamentalism.

When the Great War began in 1914, evangelical clergy across the British Empire largely supported the fight.[7] They did so for myriad reasons: the cause of justice for smaller states; a sense of duty to nation and empire; the belief that war would 'make a man' out of the wavering next generation; even the hope that conflict might undermine (largely German) liberal theology and 'rebalance' Christian civilisation (Clifford 1918, 4–5; Ebel 2009, 106; Wace 1917, 58). However, the war had serious consequences for the next generation of evangelicals.

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[7] There were limited exceptions to this support, such as conscientious objection on the grounds of Christian pacifism by many Quakers, and some early Pentecostals. However, their pacifism was generally criticised by other Protestants (Kohrman 1986, 38).

The war's damage was twofold. First, causalities stripped the movement of a generation of leaders and workers. Second, the horrors of war disillusioned many who became agitators for socialism and left their churches, rendering evangelical churches more conservative simply by their absence (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 155). This created two contradictory impulses in the evangelicalism of the early twentieth century. There was still a great internationalist energy for church involvement in social reform and peace, and outreach to the next generation, particularly through the vehicle of campus student ministries.[8] At the same time, there was also a growing anti-internationalist sentiment, that viewed non-Christian states with suspicion, pushed for a greater prominence for Christian morals in public policy, and, specifically amongst Americans, envisaged a special role for the US as an enforcer of what was 'right' (Ruotsila 2008, 3). During the inter-war period this isolationist impulse converged with a push to re-establish the 'fundamentals' of Christianity in the face of liberal theologies and gave birth to fundamentalism.

The orthodox Christian concern about the rise of liberal theology had been incubating for some time. Evangelicals were particularly alarmed by the growth of what they called the 'false philosophy' of 'German biblical criticism'. Begun in the eighteenth century but growing rapidly in influence through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, liberal theology was a broad movement whose major distinction was its application of modern hermeneutics to study of the Bible. This constituted a rejection of the authority of the Bible as God's infallible revelation to humankind, a key evangelical doctrine. The scriptures were in this view more of a collection of human reflections *on* God than an authoritative source of knowledge *from* God. Liberal theologians sought to "reinterpret the symbols of Christianity" as a progressive alternative to both atheism and traditional theology (Dorrien 2001, xxiii). They sought to do this by recasting Christian doctrine and practice as a particular moral pathway for life, open to development by the findings of intellectual inquiry. This also led to the rise of what was called the 'social gospel', which evangelicals felt reduced the call to 'spread the good news' in favour of championing more effective welfare (Corbett and Fikkert 2012, 44).

In the eyes of many evangelicals however, liberal theologians taught a form of Christianity stripped of the very beliefs that *made* it Christianity. In the US, a twelve-volume study called *The Fundamentals* republished ninety essays written in the 1910s as a direct response to liberal teaching (Amstutz 2014, 32). The essays stressed the centrality of biblical inerrancy and biblical literalism to the Christian faith – that the Bible's accounts of events such as creation, the virgin birth, miracles and the physical resurrection of Jesus from the dead after his death on the cross were literally true

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[8] Internationally linked university student missions became a defining feature of twentieth century 'intellectual' evangelicalism. Examples include Inter-Varsity Fellowship, Campus Crusade for Christ (now called Cru), the International Federation of Evangelical Students (IFES), and the Navigators, as well as equivalent organisations such as Young Life for high school students.

and authoritative (Sandeen 1970, 6). The book helped to coalesce the battle lines between the liberals and the subset of evangelicals determined to oppose them, dubbed 'fundamentalists', after the book.[9]

In the US, these fundamentalists became known for their aggressive defence of orthodoxy, which, after a number of bruising confrontations in the public arena, led them to withdraw to alternative institutions and churches, in a kind of reversed purge of the 'corruption' of mainstream Christianity by the liberals (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 160). Although their opponents often labelled them as anti-intellectual, the fundamentalists born of the inter-war period did not reject intellectualism per se. They were rather deeply concerned over the specific trends of liberalism and modernity they felt had corrupted biblical scholarship and hence Christianity itself. They became increasingly hard-line in their insistence that scientific work in particular and intellectual enquiry more generally be subservient to theological orthodoxy.

Over the middle decades of the twentieth century, fundamentalism in the US took on a populist bent. Fundamentalists became more absorbed in questions of eschatology, theology of final judgement and the 'end-times' of history (Amstutz 2014, 32). Their rejection of liberal theology and its associated 'social gospel' saw them retreat from many of their former poverty alleviation endeavours, in a move so sweeping historians named it the 'Great Reversal' (Corbett and Fikkert 2012, 44). This reinforced the gap between fundamentalists and liberal (by now 'mainline') Christians, and split fundamentalists from other evangelicals who were unwilling to join the retreat from mainline denominations and institutions, and the social reform work they carried out.

American Evangelicals in this period who were not fundamentalists applied themselves, as always, to their practical endeavours, meeting the challenges of the Great Depression through the establishment of social welfare provisions such as soup kitchens and job retraining schemes across the globe. In the US, these neo-evangelicals founded the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in 1943 as a sign of their commitment to social consciousness and responsibility – and in direct criticism of their fundamentalist co-religionists' failures (Amstutz 2014, 33).

However, often overlooked in this story is the fact that these tensions over theology that bred the US fundamentalists did not spark the same polarisations in evangelical populations outside of America. In Britain and its Commonwealth dominions, conservative evangelicals who shared the

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[9] This is where the boundaries of definition matter: scholars such as Mark Amstutz (2014, 2) do not count fundamentalists as evangelical; instead defining modern evangelicals as a return to orthodox Christianity after the confrontations between fundamentalists and liberals in the US in the early twentieth century. While I would say that many fundamentalists went on to depart the evangelical fold as they lost the distinctive commitment to transformation in this world, not just after it, their meaning making processes do share common origins with broader evangelicalism.

theological concerns of the US fundamentalists mostly kept their struggles against liberalism 'in-house', where they presented as arguments over appointments to key clerical and academic positions. As these groups generally avoided public conflict within their respective institutions (be they churches, universities, mission agencies, or bible colleges) they were able for the most part to avoid acrimonious schisms (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 160–61). This was in part because smaller populations forestalled parallel institutions, and partly because these evangelical groups were often more concerned about the influence of Roman Catholicism than they were liberals (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 162).

Redemption – Sharing the Joy Again

A second great shock, the Second World War, temporarily shelved the internal divisions and strife amongst evangelicals. This war itself was greeted by evangelicals with far less enthusiasm than its predecessor. Overall, evangelical clergy saw the war as a great human tragedy, rather than a glorious opportunity as they had initially conceived the Great War.[10] It was the Allies' political, not religious, leaders who used spiritual narratives to describe the Axis powers as evil and portray their forces as defenders of Christendom (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 174). Many evangelicals still served and there were periodic reports of small revivals in various militaries through their influence. Critically, the war forced the withdrawal of many western missionaries from their mission fields, especially in Japan, China, and North Africa. Although a source of great anxiety for western evangelicals, this exodus had the effect of turbocharging the growth of evangelical communities in those mission fields, as locals filled the leadership vacuum.

Arguably the most significant effect of the war was that it helped to restore to the fractured evangelical community a sense of their global mission, reconnecting them to their forebears' vision of worldwide evangelisation (Carpenter 1997, 178). The demonstration of the capacity of the modern state for evil was a sobering and shocking reminder to evangelicals the world over of the need for spiritually grounded social transformation, and their duty to provide it. Once again in their eyes, society's great institutions had failed to hold back humanity's sinfulness, and the evangelical preference for individual action simmered to the surface. Carl FH Henry's *Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, published in 1947, spoke to this need for reconnection, lamenting that conservative Christians had forgotten their heritage of a distinctive evangelical social ethic in their rejection of the social gospel of liberal churches (D. King 2012b, 927).

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[10] For example, conscientious objection rates were far higher among British evangelicals than the general British population, suggesting a lot less pressure to enlist from the pulpit this time around (Wilkinson 1986, 291).

The (often unwilling) repatriation of missionaries during the war played a surprising role in this, as it brought workers on the coalface of global missions back into the lives and minds of evangelicals in the North Atlantic (and associated colonies, to a smaller extent). The result of this consensus was a kind of second golden age for evangelical mission. The post-war era saw the raising up of famous evangelical organisations such as Youth for Christ, providing platforms for figures like Billy Graham. Travelling preachers such as Graham initiated a period of worldwide 'crusades' – evangelical mission campaigns that took advantage of new media and technology to update the signature evangelical activity of revivals.

Billy Graham was the most famous, although far from the only evangelical of the post-war generation to successfully update the itinerant preacher method of revivalism into radio, television, film, and large-scale tours drawing crowds of thousands. The means may have been different, but the evangelical purpose remained the same: to call people out of their spiritual complacency and commit their lives afresh to spreading the good news of the Christian gospel. Graham's impact was immense; he became a public figure of international standing, meeting political leaders, opening state houses, and endorsing the election and praying at the inauguration of Dwight Eisenhower (Frady 2006, 255). The US itself in the 1950s has been described by some academics as the most religious it had ever been, when 'In God We Trust' becomes its national motto – a rallying cry of identity based on shared religious values in the face of 'godless' communists in the Cold War (L. Fisher and Mourtada-Sabbah 2002, 682).

These evangelistic crusades (revivals rebranded) came just in time to stem a serious problem that evangelicals confronted as the war wound down; their diminishing influence on their societies. Although the US' experience of fundamentalist withdrawal following public conflict was the most dramatic example, evangelicals in all countries had continued to experience a loss of voice in the modernising and secularising public sphere (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 180).

The success of the US 'crusades' saw them replicated overseas; first in Britain and continental Europe, and then the developing world. They met with similar success to their domestic tours; 25 percent of the entire populations of Australia and New Zealand (nearly 3.25 million people) attended one of the 1959 Southern Cross Crusade events (Piggin 1996, 168). As they took these campaigns across the seas, American evangelicals learned anew the importance of cross-cultural differences, and of connecting their revivals to a local church presence. They began "cultivating fundamentally different evangelical attitudes towards social engagement and mission", as the role of social action in evangelistic outreach resurfaced as a matter for consideration (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 184). It was during this period that Reverend Everett Swanson founded the Evangelistic Association that

would go on to become Compassion International, mixing Bible distribution and evangelistic drives with clothing and education for Korean War orphans. In the same vein, Bob Pierce founded World Vision as an emergency needs support arm for missionaries overwhelmed by material needs in post-war Asia. The vast post-war rebuilding effort generated enormous amounts of work globally; and evangelicals were vigorously active.

Billy Graham's Evangelistic Association (the BGEA) in particular was able to foster a willingness in evangelicals to work across denominational boundaries that had been lost since the rise of fundamentalism. His pragmatic focus on common action helped to bring into the centre of evangelicalism a new and energetic subgroup, the Pentecostals. Early Pentecostal movements had emerged out of evangelical groups who placed special emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit.[11] Their focus on the 'gifts of the Spirit' such as supernatural prophecy, speaking in tongues, and healing divided other evangelicals but resonated with the poor and working class (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 150). The BGEA's willingness to work with various Pentecostal groups (a move opposed by more traditional evangelicals) gave these groups a way to contribute to evangelical projects and a sense of legitimacy that they had previously lacked. These Pentecostal connections in turn increased the global purchase of evangelistic campaigns, often well received in the developing world, as evidenced by the 'Pentecostal fervour' of revivals in post-war East Africa (Noll 2009, 178).

The focus and drive of charismatic evangelicals such as Billy Graham and Bob Pierce was able to give divided evangelical communities a sense of their potential when they worked together. Like their forebears, they preferred the voluntary society model, crossing denominational and institutional boundaries, working with anyone willing to work with them. Hatch argues that evangelical enthusiasm for these parachurch agencies was not just a marriage of convenience; they were such identity-shaping places that they were effectively the "organisational structures that house[d] the throbbing heart of evangelicalism" (Hatch 1995, 398).[12]

Evangelicals in the post-war period were able to adapt their movements to the post-war reality and built globally active parachurch organisations which remain the building blocks of modern

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[11] The Azusa St Mission in Los Angeles in 1906 experience of what they considered to be divine manifestations of the Spirit is generally given as the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, although recent scholarship disputes this and emphasises its outgrowth from earlier Keswick and Holiness movements (McCleary 2013, 4).

[12] Parachurch agency refers to any Christian organisation that is not a church (Scheitle and McCarthy 2018, 238). Parachurch agencies work 'alongside' the church, to further its aims and goals, but are *not* the church. Most Christians believe churches have particular spiritual authority, so this distinction is important to them. Parachurch agencies range from Christian publishers, campus ministries, and political lobby groups, to welfare agencies, and relief and development NGOs (Stephens 2018). Sometimes, the distinction gets foggy; the Salvation Army's foundation suggested a parachurch agency set-up (e.g. refusing to administer the sacraments), but it is a denomination in its own right today (Hirono 2008, 132; The Salvation Army Australia 2019).

evangelicalism (Marsden 1984, xiv). New technologies opened the door to ever-greater potential audiences for them and the majority world provided thought-provoking correctives to the cultural blind spots of Western missions. Meanwhile, intellectual evangelicals re-established footholds in academic institutions and began to produce more sophisticated evangelical scholarship than their fundamentalist peers. They prioritised student ministries on campus, and matured fledgling educational connections into robust international networks that drew students to their theological centres from across the world (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 198).[13] By the end of the 1970s, although "increasingly marginal to the secular states in the West, evangelical Christianity had positioned itself to become a mass reality in the majority world" (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 208).

Identity Crisis – Finding a New Fit

The post-war collaboration of diverse evangelicals slowly faded as interdenominational conflicts began to bite again in the latter half of the twentieth century. Samaritan's Purse was founded in the 1970s after Bob Pierce quit WV in disgust over its perceived capitulation to modernist development practices and abandonment of traditional evangelical focus (VanderPol 2010, 104). Conservative evangelical populations uncomfortable with the slow incursion of Pentecostals into their movement withdrew into a Reformed evangelical bloc. This group worried that the Pentecostal theological emphasis on modern prophecy undermined the authority of the Bible, and their easy ecumenism with Roman Catholics threatened the gains of the Reformation (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 203). Some questioned whether 'evangelical' was a meaningful identity anymore; expressing a preference to return to older identities that perhaps better expressed their theological orthodoxy.

Others struggled with social perceptions (in part thanks to the continuing profile of fundamentalists) that all evangelicals were politically or socially conservative, a 'Religious Right'. US President Jimmy Carter's self-proclamation as a 'born-again' Christian brought the evangelical movement to media attention in the 1970s, and political actors sought to mobilise them for their various causes (Amstutz 2014, 39).[14] The media's adoption of 'evangelical' as a voting marker in US elections, especially for the presidential campaign of Ronald Reagan, strongly reinforced this perception, giving the category a cultural parlance synonymous with white, conservative Republican voters, despite the diverse ethnic, denominational, political and cultural make-up of the evangelical movement.

Christianity's relationship to the political and public spheres was a fraught issue, and one that continues to divide evangelicals. Some evangelicals expended great energy in tapping into political

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[13]For example, Fuller Theological Seminary was established in 1947 by a successful radio evangelist and an evangelical pastor to be a "center for evangelical scholarship [that would] resist the separatism of the time and be a force for the renewal and broadening of fundamentalism and evangelicalism" (Fuller Seminary 2019).

[14] Jerry Falwell and the Moral Majority, and Pat Robertson and the Christian Coalition being some prime examples of this (Amstutz 2014, 39).

lobbying and policy pressure; others formed their own specifically Christian political parties. US evangelicals in particular fractured over how to engage with broader domestic politics. An internal divide emerged between establishment evangelicals, patriotic and more sympathetic to politics on the right, and the evangelical 'left', who vehemently criticised the former, and pushed for more action on social issues such as "economic justice, peacemaking, racial reconciliation, and gender equality" (D. King 2012b, 931). Left-leaning evangelicals such as Jim Wallis and Ron Sider became lightning rods for these debates in the latter part of the twentieth century.[15]

In the context of these domestic difficulties the growth of globally focussed FBOs presented an a-political, public social presence for many evangelicals seeking to be a positive influence in a rapidly changing world (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 246). Evangelicals had supported mission agencies throughout the twentieth century, but it was mainline and Catholic denominations whose mission organisations pivoted into the professionalised and secularised world of humanitarianism. Evangelicals had largely criticised this as a social gospel approach – by which they meant their co-religionists had forsaken their duty to spread the Christian message in favour of secular material development goals. However, the schism between the spiritual and the material needs of the distant vulnerable was never a natural one for evangelicals and there was a flourishing of evangelical development FBOs in the second half of the twentieth century. So many FBOs were established that the Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Agencies (AERDO) was created in 1978 to act as an umbrella organisation for them (Amstutz 2014, 113). Now known as Accord, the network has ninety-nine members and associates at the time of writing, including all three of the FBOs I focus on in the coming chapters (Accord Network n.d.).

There was another explosion of religious FBOs in the 1990s, also mainly driven by evangelicals, whose enthusiasm for social action was also on display in their Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History campaigns, as well as their strong support for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 273). There was also the rise of a peculiarly modern phenomenon: the megachurch. Mediated by technology, megachurches such as Saddleback and Willow Creek in the US, Yoido Full Gospel in South Korea, and Hillsong in Australia concentrated resources in individual churches then able to act globally in a way previously beyond their reach (Amstutz 2014, 43).

These many and varied threads of evangelical activity have led to an incredibly complex landscape. Making it even more diffuse, like their spiritual ancestors, modern evangelicals have tended to value

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[15] They were sometimes called the 'radical evangelicals', which seems somewhat melodramatic given their message was one of return to the original political and social justice boldness of their historical forebears.

action over reflection, and many modern members of evangelical churches are ignorant of the history of their faith.[16]   Some authors even argue that for the US in particular, the success of evangelicalism has created a generation of people called evangelicals who can be described as the very kind of cultural Christians whom the first evangelicals were preaching against (Kidd 2017). This complexity means labels matter; many contemporary Christian writers have started to make the distinction between big 'E' Evangelicalism, and small 'e' evangelicalism, where the first is a political category, while the second denotes a set of coherent theological beliefs and values.[17]   Influential evangelical pastor Timothy Keller criticises the sloppiness of US pollsters in creating a situation where Evangelicalism is a label for people who do not hold the beliefs of evangelicalism:

> In many parts of the country, Evangelicalism serves as the civil or folk religion accepted by default as part of one's social and political identity. So, in many cases, it means that the political is more defining than theological beliefs, which has not been the case historically. And, because of the enormous amount of attention the media pays to the Evangelical vote, the term now has a decisively political meaning in popular usage. Yet there exists a far larger evangelicalism, both here and around the world, which is not politically aligned. In the U.S., there are millions of evangelicals spread throughout mainline Protestant congregations, as well as in more theologically conservative denominations. (Keller 2017)

The monolithic representations of evangelicals in American media have been a self-fulfilling prophecy in this sense; creating a battle for ownership of the evangelical identity. Evangelicals have never been monolithic. Indeed, "the movement swings between its missional, experiential and doctrinal self-definitional touchpoints as it encounters new situations, negotiating between effectiveness and self-definition" (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 278).

Defining Today's Evangelicals

All this diversity has led some to conclude, "evangelicalism… is a construct developed over the last half of the twentieth century" (Hart 2004, 19) and others, "there is no such thing as evangelicalism" (Hatch 1990, 97). Historically, even in advancing their own causes, they "seldom found consensus on

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[16]Mark Noll's *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* critiqued this: "The scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind", was the provocative premise and opening salvo of his insider history of American evangelicalism (1994, 3). He was not arguing that evangelicalism is anti-intellectual, but that modern US evangelicals had become so busy with practical activities that they had forgotten their intellectual vitality – particularly in engagement with 'the life of the mind'. By this he meant "what it means to think like a Christian about the nature and workings of the physical world, the character of human social structures like government and the economy, the meaning of the past, the nature of artistic creation, and the circumstances attending our perception of the world outside ourselves" (Noll 1994, 7).

[17] Although, confusingly, some use little 'e' to refer to the broader historical descendants of the Reformation, and big 'E' to denote the neo-evangelicals of the early 1940s who adopted the label consciously to distinguish themselves from fundamentalism (Rah and VanderPol 2016, 11). This is not helpful when it comes to clarifying the contemporary landscape.

moral questions, and many endorsed acts considered sinful by evangelicals today" (Carter and Porter 2017, xviii). As a result, some writers advocate a move away from definitions along 'essential doctrinal beliefs' and religious attitudes entirely. For example, Gary VanderPol criticises doctrinal approaches for generating an unhelpful normativity, and argues instead that evangelical only include the historical group of US Protestants after WWII, "initially with fundamentalist backgrounds, who self-consciously appropriated the name evangelical or neo-evangelical in order to distinguish themselves from separatist fundamentalism on the right, and the liberal Protestantism of the World Council of Churches on the left" (VanderPol 2010, 11).

These criticisms raise important questions about how to bound the category, and indeed, whether it can be meaningfully bounded at all. Part of my task in this thesis includes understanding how self-identification with a category is important in constructing identity, and can both generate and mask denominational and sociological diversity in a wider movement. Timothy Smith (1986) refers to evangelicals as a 'kaleidoscope', and indeed, the reactions of interviewees to the idea that their FBO is 'evangelical', was one of the interesting and diverging outcomes of the primary research conducted. This label comes laden with baggage that people react to in different ways. A common response from my interviewees was "well, what do you mean by evangelical?" Even within a single agency (WV) while some denied most strenuously that the agency was evangelical, others were comfortable with it, and some were not particularly aware that it applied. For others, the label was just one of many identities they embraced. Geography mattered here too; Compassion staff in Colorado were by and large comfortable with the term, but Australian staff were more cautious (with one even half-jokingly asking me in which Australian-produced media content had I seen that term attached to his organisation, so he could remove it!). SP staff, by contrast, seemed to embrace the label as a part of their identity much more uniformly, highlighting the centrality of that agency's narrative of self-identity as an evangelical humanitarian.

The question of whether the evangelical label should be used at all is a fair one. I use the concept because it is 'what we have'. As imperfect as the concept is, it makes sense to people, it is understandable, and there is enough meaning conveyed by the term to illuminate the FBOs it describes. Its common usage as a descriptor for humanitarian FBOs also means that it is part of the system, however confounding and confusing its usage may be.

I also use the concept because its problematic nature is fitting, in that it highlights something more fundamental about the nature of religion and religious practice. There is an extent to which the messiness, contradiction, and yet core of theological coherence in the label 'evangelical' beautifully reflects the social world in which the bearers of the label exist. Hutchinson and Wolffe agree when

they note that an intrinsic part of understanding evangelicalism is recognising that "it is a phenomenon that defies precise definition, partly because it was 'held' by its practitioners in ways different from those used by its categorizers" (2012, 6). This means analysis needs to begin with acceptance of the fact that there is unescapable fuzziness at the boundaries; they are constantly shaped and reshaped by their encounters with history. Despite this fuzziness at the boundaries of who counts, and who does the counting, there is a core of coherence, a set of shared beliefs that bind people together and tells others something about those people, what they consider important and how that might affect what they do and how they see the world. To understand what people believe and its impact on what they do we must engage with the fuzzy identities that they use to understand themselves and their world.

Bebbington's criteria (introduced in the introduction and noted earlier in this chapter) are useful, and when this thesis talks about evangelicals, these core commitments are all present. Theologically, evangelicals have emphasised "the inherent sinfulness of unredeemed human beings… justification by faith alone… the work of Christ as the means for the salvation of humankind… the active work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer… [and] the importance of the Bible as the authoritative guide to faith and devotion", all captured by Bebbington's approach (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 10). However, these theological beliefs have been held by evangelicals in a distinctive way, because of "the manner in which such ideas were 'wired' together in evangelical minds, generating zeal and energy for the salvation of others"(Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 10–11). Evangelical faith is "experiential, Biblicist and activist. It is concerned with the Spirit, the Word and the world"(Piggin 1996, vii).

These theological commitments generate characteristics that are explicable by reference to the content of their belief. As seen in their history, evangelicals tend to be highly individualistic. They emphasise the need for a personal relationship with Jesus, personal regeneration through the Spirit, and personal understanding of the Bible. Justification through faith alone (and a rejection of doctrines that emphasise human effort in achieving salvation) leads evangelicals to experience a great assurance of and confidence in their salvation, which further promotes this sense of individualism, and helps to explain the dynamic energies of evangelicals, as well as their diversity and proneness to fragmentation (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 19).

Evangelicals have also had great purchase as a popular movement, with a message that seeks to empower the poor and the marginalised. From the working classes of the British industrial revolution to the displaced on the African continent, evangelical revival has crossed cultures, time and space to appeal to these groups. The evangelical emphasis on the power of the Spirit to

regenerate individuals and communities, through personal, achievable relationship with God through Jesus is a powerful narrative of purpose and belonging, a story of love for the 'unlovable' (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 20). It does not require anything of the marginalised or the vulnerable but repentance and a profession of faith – salvation and belonging to God presented as a gift that does not have to be earned. For those who are the bottom of their societies, in circumstances of disenfranchisement and precariousness, the evangelical emphasis on the free gift of salvation through the cross is a message that both speaks to their situation, and claims to radically overturn it.

Finally, evangelicals see themselves as a part of a global story, always outwardly focussed and connected across communities and contexts (Agensky 2013, 464). This is a natural consequence of their belief that the good news of their faith is a message meant for all humankind, and, in the vein of their individualism, that Christians have a personal duty and responsibility to bear that message (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 20). This incentivises them to avoid laying the duty of witness at the door of institutions and structures; their sense of individual salvation impresses upon them the need for personal action over 'mere' structural or institutional engagement. The founder of Compassion described being hounded by the thought, "what are YOU going to do, what are YOU going to do?" all the way home from his encounter with South Korea's war orphans (Compassion International 2009). This encapsulates the sense of personal responsibility and connectedness that evangelicalism's central tenet of evangelism – sharing the 'Good News' of Christianity – generates.

These characteristics all have important ramifications for the way that evangelicals carry out humanitarian action. The commitments that they carry, the priorities they hold are distinct from Christians who hold different beliefs, from secular humanitarian groups, and from FBOs from other religious traditions. It is important to again emphasise that a study of evangelical actors requires a meaningful engagement with their beliefs and the way they are interpreted as they are put into practice. We need to go beyond the simplistic focus on proselytising, and consider the wider characteristics of evangelical faith and action. We will see in the next section how their theological commitments generate distinctive and nuanced understandings of central concepts in humanitarian activity such as development, disaster, and the relationship between the helper and the helped.

Section Two: What Makes an FBO Evangelical?

Having explored the complexities of the term evangelical, I now consider what it means for an FBO to be characterised by the term. Explaining Bebbington's quadrilateral definition is a start, but authors still need to unpack how and where they think this translates into the everyday work of FBOs, something they are still largely unsure about (S. R. Smith and Sosin 2001, 652; see also Berger

2003; Ebaugh, Chafetz, and Pipes 2006; Jeavons 1994; Ferris 2011, 2005). The development literature has fielded several typologies of FBOs that IR scholars have drawn on in searching for purchase on the relationship between faith and action. Some of these typologies are focussed on delineating what counts as 'humanitarian', while others zero in on the specifics of organisational religiosity. It is the latter that I focus on now, highlighting how their key weakness – a focus on degrees of religiosity – undermines their attempts to make visible the impacts of belief on practice.[18] Although they wish to infer an FBO's likely behaviour from a clear categorisation of their religious identity, the assumptions that they make about the kinds of characteristics that are inherently religious do not leave room for observing how FBOs construct and mobilise their own identities in different contexts. As a result, they end up reproducing secularist biases that miss important insights about FBO practice.

After interrogating these flaws, I end the chapter by exploring what tools these analytical frameworks are none-the-less able to give scholars in better understanding the relationship between faith and practice. This discussion then orders the empirical investigation of the three caset study FBOs through the next section of the thesis.

Existing Taxonomies

One of the oft-cited taxonomies used to study FBOs is Sider and Unruh's (2004) typology of religious characteristics. This typology applies previous research to classify the 'intensity' of faith based identities, on a scale from faith-background, faith-affiliated, faith-centred, to faith-permeated as the most 'intense' integration of faith in the FBO's structure (with a note that faith-secular partnerships create a distinct category) (Sider and Unruh 2004). This integration is examined both organisationally: through mission statements, founding, staffing and management, donor support and the like; and programmatically: how religion is visible in program environment, content, and so forth. Sider and Unruh note that their typology focuses on the 'tangibles' of religion – "language, symbols, policies, and activities" – over values and beliefs (Sider and Unruh 2004, 118). They argue that the focus on tangibles is useful for two reasons: firstly, they are easier to see; and secondly, they are what causes the most contention in debates around FBO legitimacy. They have made this choice because they want a typology that gives onlookers a ready guide for spotting different *styles* of religious integration of programs, not different levels of religiosity (Sider and Unruh 2004, 116).

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[18] There are a number of organisational schemas in this category – Jeavons' (1998) assessment index; Monsma's (1996) Religious Practices Scale; Bradley's (2009) two frames approach, for example. For efficiency, I have focussed on three particularly drawn upon in broader humanitarianism literature; but my criticism is for the approach as whole.

Sider and Unruh are crafting an explicitly functionalist account of faith-based actors that understands why it chooses to de-emphasise content of belief in favour of observable phenomena. Throughout, they are clear about the boundaries that this places on their ability to understand questions of religious motivation and the connection between the ideas of faith and action. They point out, for example, that their typology is blind to the fact that "some faiths express their religiosity in more tangibly evident ways than others" (Sider and Unruh 2004, 117). For them, this is a limitation they are willing to bear because their typology was only meant to apply one kind of actor with relatively similar organisational set ups: domestic congregations who were engaged in welfare service provision in the US (Schwarz 2018, 9). In fact, they warn against the danger of using these kinds of typologies to go beyond this and assert that certain agencies are 'more' or 'less' religious in the way they are "animated by a set of beliefs"(Sider and Unruh 2004, 117).

A second typology is Clarke's spectrum, which presents a range of faith integration into FBO activities as passive, active, persuasive or exclusive, determined by how much is called upon to achieve the FBOs' purpose, or goals (Clarke and Jennings 2008, 32). FBOs classified as passive at one end of the spectrum see faith as playing a "subsidiary" role in motivating action, whereas those classified as exclusive at the other end have an "overriding" faith motive (Clarke and Jennings 2008, 32).

There is No Such Thing as 'Most Religious'

The approach of these above typologies is problematic because they create a spectrum of religiosity with degrees of 'seriousness' of religious thought and faith. In trying to explain why some FBOs seem to take religious tenets and practices more 'seriously' than others do, they create systems that conjure up images of FBOs being more or less religiously motivated, permeated, or inspired. They conflate modes of organisational practice with intensity of belief. However, this leads to the implication that Christians working for Christian Aid are 'less religious' than those working for SP, or conversely, that WV embodies a 'more intense' religious expression than Catholic Relief Services. The differentiation they are trying to make is understandable – Christian Aid makes very different staffing, organisational and practical choices to SP – but the way that they articulate that differentiation hinders, rather than helps explanations of difference.

Part of that hindrance is in their conception of religious identities, values, and practices that reduces religion to visible markers. Retired WV senior executive, now scholar Bob Mitchell argues in his assessment of various FBO typologies, that this fails to account for the most important element of being 'faith-based' – the faith (Mitchell 2016, 63). Mitchell applies detailed case study research to both Clarke's and Sider and Unruh's typologies to test their robustness in sub-classifying FBOs; he finds that neither approach is able to capture the variety of ways that faith was expressed through

organisations' choices and practices.[19] His case studies reflect various elements of each typological category and yet Mitchell argues that these frameworks do not take note of the way that contrasting theologies "lead to different ways of engaging the world" (Mitchell 2016, 61). Their authors are attempting to understand what it means to be faith-based as an FBO; but they all have the same shortcoming. They all look at FBOs as deviating more or less from the normal, from the secular, and seek to show how faith makes that deviation. In other words, they want to make visible the ways that faith makes faith-based actors 'different'.

In this thesis, I explicitly question these normative assumptions. A core contention I advance throughout is that all NGOs in the business of humanitarianism are underpinned by normative worldviews that shape their understanding of their work and the world in which they do it (seconded in for example O'Hagan and Hirono 2014). Non-tangible or non-overt choices and practices get missed by these typologies; FBO values can produce practices that do not look any different to the mainstream or might converge with the mainstream but are still distinctively underpinned by their own understanding of their faith identities.

This problem is further exacerbated when certain practices and organisational requirements are classified as inherently religious, which by definition implies that other kinds are not. However, this does not account for the ways that FBOs themselves understand and enact their faith in the different contexts that they find themselves. In Mitchell's investigation, variations in staff hiring policies at WV reflected both the constraints of operational context (not being able to find Christian staff) and the way in which national offices interpreted their community role as 'witnesses' for their faith (sometimes emphasising unity, sometimes outreach) (2016, 66). By ascribing these variations in practice as straightforwardly resulting from differences in religious permeation, scholars imply that organisational outcomes can be predicted by investigating 'how religious' an agency is. However, it is not that they are 'less' religious or 'more' religious, or are only weakly influenced by faith; but that their theological commitments stand in relative solidarity or opposition to the values that underpin secular NGOs and the broader IHO. Onlookers are less able to see the role of faith in those values that look like their own, and are more confronted by the faith-based values that obviously differ from theirs.

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[19] He notes for example, that staff hiring restrictions is considered one of the key indicators of a 'more' religious agency, but that WV branches have a variety of staff policies despite scoring as 'highly religious' on these kinds of criterion. The reasons were sometimes straightforwardly traceable to religious commitments, but not always. For example, WV Senegal simply cannot find enough staff from Christian backgrounds to maintain a Christian-only policy; WV Bosnia and Herzegovina pursues a balanced quota of Muslims and Christians as a deliberate community-unity strategy; while WV Tanzania and WV Lebanon actively discourage non-Christian applicants despite working in similarly mixed-faith contexts (Mitchell 2016, 66).

A better understanding of how faith informs practice leads to more accurate and open assessments of FBO strength and weakness, and allows for discerning partnerships and more effective use of resources. Therefore, understanding how FBOs construct and act out their religious identities and values is just as important as measuring the 'tangibles'. Without both it is impossible to make visible the connections between faith and practice, tracing the way these values might undergird all parts of the FBO, not just the parts that differ from mainstream practice. Thus, Mitchell has insight when he complains that typologies that do not pay attention to the theological premises FBOs hold struggle to understand the choices that they make. He gives the example of 'good stewardship' as a theological idea that might lead an FBO to choose less visibly 'religious' program methodologies, even though its entire decision-making rubric is grounded in spiritual principles and values (Mitchell 2016, 62). The FBO in this case does not value faith 'less', but typologies that see this interaction on a religiosity spectrum are unable to capture it adequately.

Classification systems premised on a spectrum of religious intensity notion have three concerning consequences. Firstly, this approach tends to treat actors with certain theological dispositions as inherently suspicious (J. D. Smith 2017, 68). Spectrums of religiosity become a proxy for effectiveness, with some FBOs displaying 'dangerous' levels of religion (implied, for example, throughout Thaut 2009; Benedetti 2006; Bradley 2009). This is a direct result of the poor conceptualisation problems highlighted in the previous chapter. Rather than approached as a complex cluster of ideas and values, practices and traditions that are lived and expressed and changed by people, religions are presented as a single thing that have more or less effect on the world around them. For the study of of FBOs in humanitarianism, this creates a bizarre portrayal of faith as something like a teabag steeping in a cup of water – the fundamentals are all the same, and FBOs are more or less infused (or perhaps more ominously, 'contaminated') by their exposure. The debate is thus closed to understanding or analysing FBO activity and effectiveness on its terms; instead, it is reduced to questions about how well various FBOs are able to 'control' their religious impulses from influencing the content of their service (Thomas 2004, 22; also exemplified in questions of partnership discussed in James 2009; Hoffstaedter 2011).

This leads directly to the second problem with these spectrums, and that is that they imply that the Western liberal secular model is the uncontested normative standard for global humanitarianism.[20]

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[20] Criticisms of the IHO as a project of western imperialism are a sobering reminder that this is not the case. For instance, BS Chimni argues strongly against the position that humanitarianism seeks to provide a non-political human response to suffering. He argues instead that humanitarianism is an ideological weapon of the western world (which he sees as hegemonic states of the North) deployed in service of its efforts to establish a post-colonial imperial order (Chimni 2009, 13). While agents may act with good intent, the "ideology of humanitarianism mobilises a range of meanings and practices to establish and sustain global relations of

By focusing only on the ways that FBOs are noticeably different from the 'mainstream', they help reinforce the idea that there is a singular monolith called humanitarianism that is practised in one way according to one set of values, and that any deviation is pathological. When a framework only speaks to the *different* goals, motives and ethics that religious approaches might offer, it gives a normality and authority to the constructed binary of 'secular' approaches (J. D. Smith 2017, 68). As a result, even though on the surface studies that explore religious difference appear to be adding insight to the multiplicities of humanitarianism, they end up undermining attempts to reckon with the "considerable diversity within the humanitarian sector and even within individual agencies" (Barnett and Weiss 2011, 15).

This implicit privileging of secularity means that thirdly, these typologies lead the humanitarian field to miss potentially valuable alternate narratives of knowing, belonging, and being. For example, if prayer is classified a priori in analysis as a 'religious' activity, it is sectioned off from the stable of politically and professionally appropriate actions a humanitarian actor can take, due to the ontological assumptions underpinning what prayer is and what it can be used for (Schwarz 2018, 15). It becomes irrelevant and inappropriate to the 'real' task of relief and development. In contrast, Schwarz's (2018) study of FBOs involved in transnational peacebuilding demonstrates how this does not adequately capture the range of ways in which prayer is mobilised to further peacebuilding efforts and reinforce specific narratives of justice amongst communities. By foregrounding the desirability of secularised humanitarianism, and then classifying practices such as prayer as motivated by religion in a way that practices such as good governance are not, these approaches are not open to the range of ways that FBOs and LFCs may seek to express the humanitarian impulse to respond to the suffering of others.

In critiquing this dynamic, I am not suggesting that all attempts to help the vulnerable stranger are to be uncritically lauded. I am not arguing that organisations be exempt from critique, censure or even rejection where they endanger those they claim to help, or weaponise humanitarian action for self-serving ends. None-the-less, "while cultural differences matter to conceptions of humanitarianism, such differences are not always irreconcilable" (Hirono and O'Hagan 2012, 7). A broad range of possibilities is opened up by Barnett's concept-in-motion understanding of the humanitarian endeavour. Indeed, many who critique standard Western humanitarianism narratives demonstrate the way humanitarianism can be enriched by a greater appreciation of what other

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domination" (Chimni 2000, 244). Similarly, Tester ties humanitarianism to the colonial conquests of the British in particular, exploring how humanitarian narratives "let Western actors expunge cultural shame for their imperial history, and indeed provide the means through which the dilemmas of a national imaginary haunted by memories of imperial grandeur incompatible with postcolonial realities" may be resolved (Tester 2010, 387).

normative traditions and cultures can bring. This includes understanding the evolution of the humanitarian impulse through a range of societies' histories, reconciling tensions between competing values, and seeing alternative pathways of action to achieve the same goals (as seen in the works of Yeophantong 2014; Christina Bennett, Foley, and Pantuliano 2016; Borton and Davey 2015; Hirono, Hagan, and Yeophantong 2011).

No Room for Context

The second shortcoming is that these taxonomies are largely blind to the role of context. Their authors present the relationship between faith and practice as linear: once the FBO's orientation is identified and categorised, predictions about their activities can be made. For example, Clarke can predict that his passive agency will use secular programs, while his exclusive agency will only work through churches (Clarke and Jennings 2008, 32). However, while belief is critical it alone does not explain action. A robust framework for examining the impact of belief on practice must account for a range of factors and circumstances that intervene to shape action.

There is however, more to context than competing priorities. Religious belief is not experienced in a vacuum; it is expressed through the lived realities of its adherents. It is more than other factors taking precedence (although we must be sensitive to this); it is the way that "relevant social, economic, political, and historical contexts" position religious actors and their practices (Lynch 2009, 273). Engaging with religion as a static set of beliefs rather than a dynamic identity "latent with its own cultural logics, meaning, symbols, and organisational structures" produces a flat and un-insightful reification (D. King 2011, 23). Faith communities understand, interpret and express their theological commitments in rich contexts, which is why similar underlying convictions give rise to different action. This is an element of the interplay between faith and practice that must not be lost in the study of religion in the political sphere. As the above exploration of evangelicalism's past showed, even the specific content of belief must be understood in its environment, responding to specific issues and events and interacting with other factors.

Critical scholars have warned of the dangers inherent in moving too quickly from exploring the theological concepts and texts underpinning religious identities to speculating on likely FBO action; without adequately exploring the ways in which the FBOs themselves perceive this connection, the researcher runs the risk of merely reproducing their own interpretations of their identities, and the secularist assumptions underpinning much treatment of religion (see for example Fountain 2013, 19; Kanwal Sheikh 2012, 377, Schwarz 2018, 48). For this project, this means that investigation of the role of faith in shaping humanitarian action needs to pay attention to the established traditions and categories that FBOs are drawing upon in operating as 'evangelical' humanitarians, as well as

maintaining openness to the diverse factors present in their social and operational environments influencing their interpretation and application of these categories.

Both of these shortcomings – the implication of a spectrum of religiosity, and ignoring the constitutive role of context in shaping FBO identity and behaviour – need to be addressed in any analytical approach to understanding the humanitarian programs of the FBOs studied. In this next section, I unpack another well-cited typology, Thaut's (2009) taxonomy, in order to provide an analytical starting point for exploring the relationship between faith and practices in various parts of the organisations.

Thaut overcomes many of the shortfalls of her predecessors by presenting three ideal-types that are based on theological commitments rather than just observably different religious practices. Observation of tangibles is still a central element of this categorical approach, but in this instance they are mined for their insight into beliefs and values, rather than taken as important on their own. Thaut does this by applying influential Christian ethicist Richard Niebuhr's model of differing theologies of Christian social engagement to understanding variations in faith-based agencies.[21] Thaut translates these paradigms into models of engagement with humanitarianism, and hunts for clues about where agencies might fit into those models across four dimensions of organisational make up – "express mission, staff policies, ties to religious authorities or congregations, and sources of donor support" (Thaut 2009, 321). She goes beyond the application of a label 'evangelical' or 'liberal' and acknowledges some of the messiness inherent in categorising belief. Thaut argues that while the connection between theology and humanitarianism is not deterministic, it is possible to explain "how religious principles are translated into humanitarianism and shape the organisation and operation of the agencies" (2009, 321). This approach goes part of the way in addressing some of the errors introduced by a 'spectrum of religiosity' framing, but is still hampered by its inattention to the constitutive role of contextual factors in shaping engagement. After exploring how Thaut's approach none-the-less provides some useful analytical tools, I will layer them with insights from Agensky (2013) in order to account more fully for the pressures FBOs face in applying and interpreting their values and identities.

Re-imagining the Roadmap

Understanding the identity and values that underpin organisations both in terms of established traditions and categories, and in terms of an agency's construction of their own theological

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[21] Niebuhr's 'Christ and Culture' paradigm is by no means an uncontested work, and there are fair criticisms that it problematically builds in normative judgements about 'right' theology. None-the-less, it is a highly influential seminal work in its field, engaged in the difficult task of breaking down the complexities of a spectrum of theological engagement with culture in an accessible and practical way. For this reason, it is used by Thaut and in this thesis.

understandings helps to highlight the impact of values on programs and positioning without reproducing secularist biases. Achieving sensitivity to context necessitates the kind of reflexive engagement advocated by Schwarz (2018), where the link between values and action needs to be approached as dynamic and evolving as it encounters the pressures of the world around it. I noted in the previous chapter how Agensky's conceptualisation of a religious-emergency imaginary helps to illuminate the way religious organisations move between different framings of a humanitarian situation as it interacts with 'mission spaces' (2013, 465). Likewise, Agensky's insights on the role of environmental pressures in humanitarian situations provides valuable assistance in accounting for the constitutive impact of context on FBO practices. Agensky theorises that there are three types of pressure on FBOs that may inhibit them from responding according to their pre-existing orientation: structural constraints, normalising pressures, and pragmatic demands (2013, 469). Agensky's contention is that these are mainstreaming pressures; that is, pressures that push them to become more like actors in the mainstream aid environment. I would argue however, that FBOs can resist, capitulate or adapt to these pressures, meaning that these pressures do not have to lead to mainstreaming. The benefit of a case study approach to studying their practices is that it allows for the kind of in-depth examination of processes that can shed light on why and how FBOs took the path they did (Mitchell 2016, 70).

Thaut's taxonomy classifies humanitarian agencies as either Accommodative, Synthesis, or Evangelistic based on four dimensions of analysis probing the role religious beliefs and practices play in generating their mission statement, defining their donor pool, clarifying their institutional ties and informing their staff policies (see table in appendix one for further details). She draws these dimensions out of a thorough review of previous work on the subject. Where she surpasses them is in her central point that different 'theologies of engagement' produce different models of engagement that can be traced in these four areas. Although Thaut's work reproduces some of the problems discussed earlier, it is helpful in pointing to places in organisational structure where the relationship between faith and practice can be analysed.

Mission Statement
The first dimension of analysis is the mission statement of agency. Thaut argues that the theological orientation of the FBO will be evident in the kind of religious language and aims found in their mission statement. She draws on previous research that finds "what renders these services religious (or spiritual) is the nature of the worldview on which they are based and on the motivation from which they spring" (Berger 2003, 32). This means that the mission statement of an agency reflects and provides insight into the agency's worldview, built from theology. This is the most obvious starting point for examining the role of faith in an agency; and many FBOs have specific statements

of faith within their mission statements. Thaut's taxonomy goes beyond the rhetoric of the FBO mission statement, and examines deeper institutional choices and connections to see a fuller picture. It is important not to overessentialise the link between doctrine and mission statements, but because FBOs draft (and update) their own mission statements, they provide a helpful starting point for exploring how the organisation perceives (and advertises) their identity and goals.

Affiliations

The second dimension of analysis is the agency's affiliations with other religious groups and communities. Thaut argues that the level of interaction that an FBO has with particular denominations or institutions is a self-reinforcing indicator of the kind of religious culture of the agency (2009, 328). Once again, she draws this from earlier arguments that 'high religiosity' is dominant "if agencies interact fully with congregations, other religious providers, and representatives of denominations" (S. R. Smith and Sosin 2001, 655). I reject the idea of a scale of religiosity, but I acknowledge that analysis of institutional ties reveals something insightful about how an FBO positions its identity within broader Christian traditions.

Staff

The third dimension of analysis is the working culture and staff policies of the FBOs. There is great variation in the hiring practices of FBOs, concerning the faith of their employees and volunteers (Thaut 2009, 328). The working culture (that is, the environment cultivated by and for the staff) of the agencies also varies greatly. Previous research has noted that FBOs benefit from the ability to "mobilise committed groups of volunteers who are motivated by religious precepts and the belief that they are doing God's work" (Chambre 2001, 436). Although it is important to heed Mitchell's warnings about the role of context in influencing staff policies (2016, 66), the extent to which they see faith as a necessary qualification for staff and volunteers reveals something important about an FBO's underlying values, especially how they draw the boundaries around what it means to be a 'faith' based agency.

Donors

The final dimension of analysis is the source of donor support for FBOs. Others have noted that large religious providers' services "are fundamentally altered in a secular direction by the agencies' funding arrangements and the resulting asymmetrical dependencies with governments… and other secular entities" (S. R. Smith and Sosin 2001, 654). Thaut argues that FBOs resist this pressure where they can rely on private or membership donations or religious tithing (2009, 329). Hopgood and Vinjamuri assert that the causality of this relationship is market-driven; that accepting government or otherwise large secular institutional funding causes FBOs to change their values and practices in order to compete for a larger market share of funding (Hopgood and Vinjamuri 2012, 40). Whether

this is the case, or the causal relationship is the other way around, the donor base of an FBO can reflect the kind of values an FBO holds. I argue that this is often a self-reinforcing cycle. The FBO feels the pressure of its donors' expectations to hold certain commitments, and certain donors are attracted to (or repelled from) that FBO because of its faith stance.

In the next chapter, the three case study FBOs are examined to determine their position on these four dimensions of analysis and demonstrate how these positions have been driven by their understanding of how their faith values ought to infuse their practices. An FBO's identity and values are visible in a) what they stand for (mission statement); b) who they partner with (religious affiliation); c) who works for them (staff policies); and d) whose money they accept (donor support). These four dimensions create an organisational orientation, and the case studies examined look at the contextualised effects of this orientation on the structure of programs, the sense of priorities, the benchmarks for success, and the goals of projects.

The strength of Thaut's approach is that she identifies important distinctions in the way that Christians engage with the broader world and tells a compelling story about how these distinctions generate organisational and practical variation. The weakness is that when she applies these categories, she reverts to treating the FBOs like the other taxonomies, envisioning the continuum as one of 'degrees of religiosity', where religious actors at one end of the spectrum are only weakly influenced by their religious beliefs, while actors at the other end are very impacted by their beliefs. She codes Accommodative FBOs as inherently 'less religious', and Evangelistic FBOs as the 'most religious', with Synthesis FBOs falling somewhere in the middle. Additionally, because her approach rests on a substantivist understanding of religion, she plays close attention to the way that content of belief affects practice, but does not allow much room for the role of context in shaping religious expression.

Thaut argues that there are three different categories of Christian humanitarian agency that can be seen operating in the humanitarian space – Accommodative, Synthesis, and Evangelistic. To do so, she draws on Richard Niebuhr's (1951) five 'Christ and Culture' paradigms to provide insights into different theological understandings of the interaction between Christians and the cultures they live in – which Thaut applies to faith-based humanitarianism.[22]

Accommodative-Humanitarians
The first paradigm Thaut draws on is the 'Christ of Culture' model. Adopters of this model are defined by a liberal or mainline theological tradition. The roots of this tradition can be traced back

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[22] Niebuhr's definition of culture includes "language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organisation, inherited artifacts, technical processes, and values… inextricably bound up with man's life in society; it is always social" (Niebuhr 1951, 32).

as far as the Christian Gnostics of the Hellenistic period, who used the lens of their contemporary philosophies to understand Christ and his relationship to the world (Niebuhr 1951, 8787). Modern liberals draw inspiration from the writings of thinkers such as Locke, Kant, Jefferson, Hegel, Emerson, and Ritschl, with their emphasis on a world based on reason (Moore 2013, 42). As highlighted in the earlier section, the liberal theological approach interprets Christian traditions through modern intellectual frameworks, ceding authority away from the Bible itself towards that of individual reason, experience, and scientific inquiry. The truths of Christianity are not the factuality of biblical accounts, but the moral concepts they express, and the ethical commitments they engender (Dorrien 2001, xxiii). Niebuhr argues that these beliefs create a view of Christian social engagement that is positive about the potential for achieving peaceful and cooperative societies through moral change without the adoption of Christianity. Adherents to this theological tradition see no conflict between Christianity and culture. Instead, they see the diversity of cultural beliefs and practices as diverse expressions of humanity, in which deeper ethical visions of justice and equality can be pursued. They are not sceptical or suspicious of secular institutions; but see them as tools for making the world a better place for all (Thaut 2009, 333).

Thaut argues that this theological approach to Christianity informs an ethic of faith-based humanitarianism that has very open and fluid understandings of the role faith should play. Thaut calls this Accommodative-Humanitarianism (2009, 333). For an Accommodative-Humanitarian agency's mission statement, "religious principles are a vaguely articulated motivation for the agency's service or may simply inform its original founding, but the agency does not mandate the incorporation of religious goals into its operations, particularly not proselytising" (Thaut 2009, 333). Religious beliefs and texts provide ethical orientations rather than authoritative prescriptions for action, and so the goals and practices of Accommodative-Humanitarian agencies tend to be informed most strongly by the mainstream aid system's standards of practice. They see all humans as potential agents in the pursuit of a more just and fair world, de-prioritising religious ties. Consequently, Thaut predicts they will be less likely to have close links with any particular religious authority. Additionally, they legitimise their work not by religious ties but by appealing to the efficacy of their service provision (S. R. Smith and Sosin 2001, 655). Their belief in the empowering potential of all humans means that while they may attract staff with Christian worldviews or convictions, they will tend to require professionalism rather than religious commitment as a primary qualification. This will also flow on to their donor support base, which will be more likely to be located across a spectrum of social and institutional support (Thaut 2009, 334).

Thaut calls the Accommodative-Humanitarian agency the most secular-like of all Christian organisations, arguing that they "blur the lines between the secular and the religious and embrace

the tools and culture of secular institutions in [their] service" (2009, 335). In doing so, she maintains that they are the least religious of the Christian humanitarian groups. It is however, a far richer analysis to understand their normative foundations on their own terms; their liberal or mainline theology has much in common with the predominant liberal secular humanitarian paradigm, and so it does not look much different to the mainstream. This makes them less foreign and therefore less threatening to other actors who preference this shared ontology, and they are more likely to be drawn upon for engagement by donors or other multilateral organisations as 'safe' or 'less' religious FBOs (as argued by Grills 2009, 517; James 2009, 9; Rees 2011, 143).

Synthesis-Humanitarians

The second of Niebuhr's paradigms translated by Thaut is the 'Christ Above Culture' model. Those who take this theological approach view social institutions as intrinsically morally beneficial to society, but in need of augmentation and guidance by Christian truths. "A Christian must live with high moral standards similar to Christ's example, but God extends his grace and love to humans by conveying it through the great social institutions of family, state and church" (Thaut 2009, 336). On this view, "culture is the work of God-given reason in God-given nature" (Niebuhr 1951, 135). It should not be shunned, but affirmed alongside the teachings and values of Christ, as long as Christians are able to maintain their religious distinctiveness (Moore 2013, 43). In this view, the Christian community acts as a kind of leavening agent on culture, supporting the God-given institutions within it for the benefit of the whole community, whatever their religious preference. The Christ Above Culture model underpins the theological traditions of the "church of the centre" (Niebuhr 195, 1180). This refers to the Roman Catholic Church, much of Anglican orthodoxy and some other Protestant streams that draw upon the work of Clement of Alexandria and St Thomas Aquinas.

Thaut labels those FBOs who draw on a Christ Above Culture paradigm as Synthesis-Humanitarians. The Synthesis-Humanitarian agency "values the role of social institutions in constructing a just and peaceful social order and believes there need be no barrier between believers and non-believers where the goal of service is the same" (Thaut 2009, 336). Where it departs from the Accommodative-Humanitarian is in its preference for a distinctively Christ-centred ethic of humanitarian engagement. Central to the mission of these Christian NGOs is the witness of God's love through deeds. Thaut argues that this model of engagement sees Christians as having a unique and divinely mandated role in working to improve societies, through the best of its institutions. Unlike the Accommodative model, Synthesis-Humanitarian organisations tend to be closer to a specific religious body or authority, and are more likely to attract staff who see humanitarian work as a direct expression of their Christian beliefs and their role as that 'leavening agent'. They are

likely to require some level of staff affirmation of their distinctly Christian mission. Their working culture usually frames humanitarian work as a "kind of ministry, not with an evangelising mission, but as fulfilling the spiritual purposes of one's faith" (Mercy Corps representative, quoted at USIP 2001). This also leads them to a preference for religious bases of donor support, although they have no in-principle objection to using secular society's means or tools in their service of others (Moore 2013, 43).

As with the previous ideal-type, Thaut lapses into a spectrum mindset, describing NGOs in this category as 'more' religious because of their participation in more obviously visible 'religious' activities and choices. However, this characterisation disguises the secular standards to which the FBOs are being implicitly compared; it is not that their faith affects them more strongly than Accommodative Humanitarians, but that they express a different set of ideas about what is important in living out their faith in their humanitarian work.

Evangelistic-Humanitarians

Thaut's third type of Christian FBO draws upon Niebuhr's 'Christ Transformer of Culture' and 'Christ and Culture in Paradox' paradigms. The first, the 'conversionist' tradition, draws heavily upon the Gospel of John in order to distinguish between "God's work in Christ and man's work in culture" (Niebuhr 195, 190). While they do not isolate themselves from society or its institutions, they see human nature as inherently corrupted by sin. For the conversionist, only "spiritual transformation through Christ is the antidote to society's ills" (Thaut 2009, 339). The conversionist is essentially positive in outlook, hopeful that an active Christian witness may stimulate the spiritual transformation necessary to restore society and creation (Niebuhr 1951, 191). "Poverty is rooted in broken relationships, so the solution to poverty is rooted in the power of Jesus' death and resurrection to put all things into right relationship again" (Corbett and Fikkert 2012, 73).

The second model (Christ and Culture in Paradox) represents a dualist tradition. Dualists focus on those writings of the Apostle Paul and Martin Luther that emphasise the all-encompassing corruption of sin in the world, pervasive not only in secular society but the Church also (Moore 2013, 44). They view both secular and Christian institutions as incapable of doing more than restraining the excesses of sin; only a personal relationship with Christ can bring about a spiritual and hence a social transformation (Thaut 2009, 340). Dualists reject the idea of God working to better society through secular culture; in fact, the Christian who puts his or her faith in Christ must resist and persevere under the temptations and distortions of their societies. Unlike the conversionist, the dualist is fundamentally pessimistic with regards to the possibility of true and long-lasting social regeneration.

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Thaut brings these two traditions of conversionism and dualism together as the theological grounding of the third ideal-type, Evangelistic-Humanitarianism. The core of this ethic is the belief that spiritual transformation is the most effective remedy for social ills and the only way to achieve long lasting justice and peace (Moore 2013, 45). Society is healed of its broken relationships – with God, with creation, and with one another – by the kingship of Jesus (Myers 2011, 64). I call this the spiritual version of the 'well-fed dead' dilemma, where there is considered to be little point to social action without evangelism, as it would not be of any lasting benefit (Samuel 1999, 229). Jesus preached the 'good news' of his kingdom through word and deed, and so his followers must do likewise (Corbett and Fikkert 2012, 33). Hence, Thaut sees these agencies frame success in terms of the spread of Christianity. The mission statements of Evangelistic-Humanitarian agencies explicitly express this. Service is a witness to God's love, motivated by a desire for all peoples to experience the spiritual transformation brought about by the gospel of Christ (Thaut 2009, 341).

As a result, Thaut sees the provision of relief and development by an Evangelistic-Humanitarian as usually for the purpose of growing the Church, strengthening the global community of Christians and attending to the wider spiritual needs of humankind (Kniss and Campbell 1997, 101). Agencies often articulate the need to 'earn a hearing' for the gospel through physical assistance. This clear mission direction for Evangelistic-Humanitarians is paired with strong or formal ties to religious authority or denominations. These religious ties reflect and legitimise the narrative of spiritual transformation used to justify the importance of relief and development work (Thaut 2009, 342). If spiritual transformation is key, then staff faith matters. Evangelistic-Humanitarian agencies not only prefer a professed personal faith of staff, they often require it as a written statement with evidence of church membership. A faith-based source of donor support is usually essential. These agencies dislike the restraints outside funding may impose, and they can also struggle "to receive public funds since their 'services' inevitably include transmitting religious values" (Chambre 2001, 452).

However, rather than characterising them merely as appropriating humanitarianism as a vehicle for conversion (as Thaut does), we need to point to the ways in which this theological approach sees the solutions to global suffering and injustices as inextricably bound up in people's spiritual poverty, and need for salvation. For Evangelistic-Humanitarians, everything is spiritual: "poverty alleviation is the ministry of reconciliation: moving people closer to glorifying God by living in right relationship with God, with self, with others, and with the rest of creation" (Corbett and Fikkert 2012, 74).

Rejecting poor conceptualising of religion does not mean that the scholar can say nothing about the impact of faith on action. "An attention to FBO values is necessary for understanding FBO behaviour, even though such values must be understood within broader organisational and

structural contexts" (Schwarz 2018, 43). In making explicit these established traditions of thought and considering how they may influence engagement with humanitarianism, Thaut's taxonomy provides an incredibly useful sketch of the kinds of ideas and logics Christian FBOs have access to as they construct their identities and formulate their interests through their work. She helps illuminate, for example, *why* one FBO might consider Christian staff a non-negotiable while another does not, and *how* they might privilege different visions of the transcendental through that process. She also provides somewhere to start in looking for those links, in her outline of four important organisational entry points to guide analysis. For a study of evangelical FBOs, her picture of an Evangelistic model of humanitarian engagement fits with the broader exploration of the socio-historical development of the 'evangelical' label in the first half of this chapter. The specific theological traditions Thaut explains (conversionism and dualism) are both seen, influencing the evangelical orientation towards individual action paired with scepticism of institutional solutions, a focus on the poor and marginalised, and vision for how their message has global relevance and reach.

Adjusting for Context

Lest analysis move too quickly from these traditions of thought to the actions they might entail, however, this approach now needs to be opened back up to the ways in which the environment of expression plays a role in constructing the FBO identities that draw upon these values and ideas. "Paying attention to FBO values does not mean treating such values as reflective of unmediated religious text… values are part of complex ethical processes and practices" (Schwarz 2018, 43). Agensky's work brings insight to these processes and practices because it is concerned with the ways that evangelical FBOs may in practice actually fall in line with and reproduce "the mainstream aid environment" despite their stated policies and donor-facing outputs (2013, 470). This is a significant and thought-provoking corrective to the notion that expressed beliefs and values are as determinative of practice as they might appear at first glance.

However, while mainstreaming certainly occurs, FBOs are not passive in their experience of mainstreaming pressures. They can (and I show later, they do) make strategic choices that increase or decrease the impact of these factors (Barnett 2009, 654). For example, SP Australia's decision to cease pursuing Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) accreditation intentionally reduces partnerships with the class of donors whose conditions would increase mainstreaming pressures (interview with senior SP staff member, Sydney, 24 August 2017). I will consider the way that FBOs resist, adopt, or adapt to contextual pressures in a process of give-and-take to change the pressures they are placed under. WV was able to change the content of the structural constraints

imposed by their institutional donor AusAID by successfully arguing that religiously based projects had a legitimate role to play in their relief and development programs. This meant that by the time they responded to the Indian Ocean tsunami in Aceh, their use of government-donated money to rebuild places of worship and engage with Islamic jurisprudence was easier to argue (interview with senior WV staff member, Melbourne, 5 May 2017).

In applying Agensky's work in this thesis, some modifications are necessary. Agensky does not elaborate in much detail on the specifics of his identified factors, and he has a particular focus on factors that will 'push' evangelical groups towards the mainstream. However, contextual pressures are not experienced in only one direction and I wish to account for as many factors that may be at play as possible, including those that may 'pull' agencies in the other direction. In this way I expand on Agensky's insights to include other important factors in tracing the effect of faith on humanitarian practice.

My first modification is to the category of structural constraints. Agensky's work sees structural constraints as created by donor conditionalities and project design (2013, 471). I expand this to include the constraints imposed by the structure of the FBO itself, such as its size, in-country presence and resources. As shown in my fieldwork, these structural factors can influence practice but are not explicitly raised by Agensky.

Agensky next introduces normalising pressures from the mainstream aid environment, which he sees expressed as norms restricting "restrictions on activities outside the scope of specific projects, guidelines for hiring practices, demands for project evaluations and assessments… prohibit[ing] proselytization, privileging co-religionists in the delivery of aid or diverting funds for the support of local religious institutions or individuals" (2013, 470). These norms around 'best practice' humanitarianism are reflected in codified standards such as the Sphere guidelines and the ICRC Code of Conduct. The desirability of professionalism and the pursuit of accountability and measurable outcomes are part of the normalising pressures of the mainstream system. I also consider the normalising pressures directed at the FBOs from the religious sphere. Agensky conceives of FBOs as having to balance the tension between a spectrum of response orientations between emergency and mission; and so there is pressure on FBOs from donors and co-religionists to conform to religious norms about engaging with relief and development in a certain 'mission' oriented way which is sometimes in tension with humanitarian norms of crisis response.

Finally, Agensky identifies the influence of pragmatic demands which often affect practice at a tactical rather than strategic level (2013, 472). This category includes all the situational elements of

an event, such as the pool of staff available for hire, the local laws and customs and the logistical difficulties caused by the disaster (such as infrastructure loss, disease, security considerations).

Clearly, elements of these categories overlap. For example, donor conditions on a project (a structural constraint) are in turn influenced by normalising pressures on the donors themselves; pragmatic considerations felt in one crisis can influence the construction of norms experienced in the next, and so forth. Nonetheless, they present a helpful way of organising the range of contextual factors which need to be considered when investigating the role faith plays in humanitarian practices.

Bringing this all together gives me a practical analytical tool for tracing how FBOs construct their faith-based identities and what kinds of practices they privilege through this process. Traditions of religious thought, and the values they influence can bee seen through four analytical entry points (staff policies, express mission, religious institutional ties, and donor support). As these values are constructed and reproduced, they reflect through a prism of environmental factors (structural constraints, normalising pressures, and pragmatic demands), producing varied and divergent practices. This is visualised through the simple diagram below (see figure 1). This helps to explain why different beliefs might produce both different and similar practices, depending on context, and also explain why the same beliefs sometimes produce different practices.
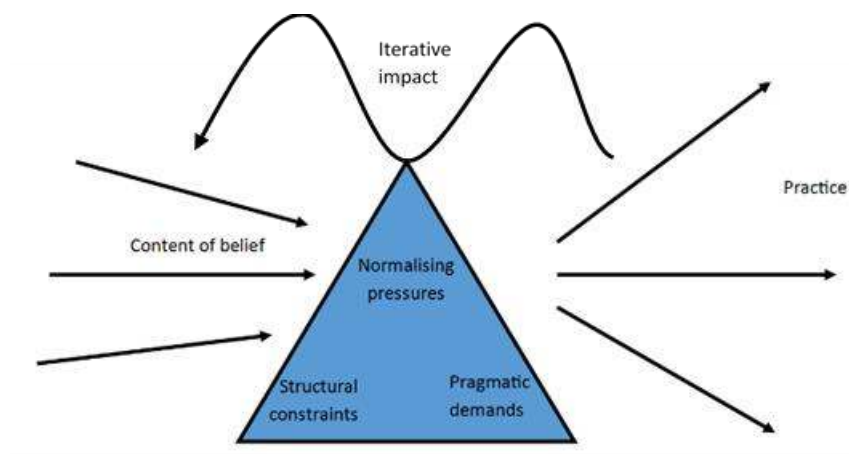
Figure 1: visualising the relationship between belief and practice

Conclusion

For the rest of this thesis, I explore this relationship through the case studies of three evangelical FBOs. All three fit Thaut's third subcategory of Evangelistic Humanitarian; yet their practices vary. As I do so I show that these organisations with similar beliefs produce different practices as a result of the constitutive interplay between the content of their belief and contextual factors.

Chapter Three: Finding Faith in Action

Introduction

Having set up a framework for understanding the way theological commitments impact organisations through a prism of context, in this chapter I apply that framework to the three FBOs whose humanitarian responses are examined in the next chapter. I take each agency in turn, outlining their evolution from birth through significant phases in their history, to the time of the disasters studied and ending with their contemporary status. Drawing on both secondary sources and my primary research, I explore how each organisation reveals and interprets its own faith values through the four dimensions of mission, staff, donor base and organisational ties.[1] I demonstrate the organisational orientation of each FBO, and identify some of the implications that this might have for their relief and development work, especially their responses to the Indian Ocean tsunami and Cyclone Nargis. This sets up the next two chapters of the thesis, where I explore the three FBOs' responses to those two field sites, and investigate the effects of contextual pressures on theirresponses.

The stories of these agencies must begin with an understanding of the men who founded them. As they were established, each organisation's character was deeply interwoven with its founder. Their personal relationships, deep-seated beliefs, and traumatising experiences of the post-war period were at the heart of the FBOs' reasons for being. Each of these FBOs was established because, in that great evangelical heart-cry: 'someone needed to *do* something' – and because two men, Bob Pierce and Everett Swanson, considered themselves that someone. However, organisational choices about how to move on from their 'charismatic founder' period set them on divergent paths (Rah and VanderPol 2016, 44). Explaining their contemporary strategic settings requires tracing their development over time.

World Vision

WV was founded by US preacher Bob Pierce in 1950, as "an evangelical inter-denominational missionary service organisation meeting emergency world needs through established evangelical missions" (D. King 2013, 74–75). Pierce was a highly energetic, astonishingly gifted and charismatic evangelist, who began preaching when he was just thirteen years old in his home in Southern

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[1] As highlighted in the introduction, in the interests of maintaining participant confidentiality, interviews will be referenced with general details through this and the remaining empirical chapters. Further details can be found in the interview appendix.

California (D. King 2013, 74). A restless, impulsive young man, Pierce was constantly on the move, channelling his evangelical forebears as he travelled from preaching post to preaching post with a message of revival. Eventually, Pierce joined a tour of Asia with Youth for Christ, an evangelical ministry to teenagers and the US military which had become an international movement in the post-war 'golden age' of missions. Pierce found conditions in these post-war Asian countries, characterised by great deprivation of local populations, deeply confronting (Rah and VanderPol 2016, 44). However, as he preached into these destitute circumstances, he saw that locals who decided to convert to Christianity were often shunned or driven out of already poor families and communities and left with nothing.

The Ministry of Missionary Support

Pierce was profoundly shocked that his message had such consequences for people already desperately vulnerable (Dunker 2005, chapter 6; location 915).[2] By his 1949 tour of Korea (facilitated by his press credentials as a war correspondent), he was convinced that something more than the 'crusade' model of ministry was required. He was particularly concerned by the targeting of fledgling Korean churches in the war, writing home with stories of disappearing Korean pastors and mass graves of churchgoers. He took photos and made films as a war correspondent that powerfully revealed the suffering of the Korean people:

> *38th Parallel* [Pierce's film footage] brought people face to face with the atrocities of war and the unconscionable suffering of the innocent – whole cities constructed of cardboard and newspaper; families huddling together in a feeble attempt to find shelter from winter's savage elements; thousands of dark-eyed, helpless children, their ballooning stomachs a stark contrast to their toothpick arms and legs; a young mother tenderly embracing a tiny bundle, the child's weak cry leaving no doubt that soon her arms would empty… money came pouring in, and it became obvious that some kind of organization was needed… (Dunker 2005, chapter 8; location 1057)

WV was founded from the donations received and focussed on emergency relief for Korean civilians, especially to widows and orphans. The child-sponsorship model for which WV is famous originated from these early days, established in 1953 and borrowed from the China's Children Fund concept, which Pierce saw and wanted implemented in Korea (D. King 2013, 90). It started with an emphasis on 'GI babies' ostracised by Korean society after their American fathers had shipped home, but quickly grew beyond that (Dunker 2005, chapter 8; location 1083).

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[2] This reality was hammered home in an especially personal way during his 1947 Chinese visit, where an exasperated missionary, Tena Hoelkeboer, literally handed him a child driven from her home because of her conversion at one of Pierce's chapel talks in her local mission school. Already stretched to her limits, Tena challenged Pierce to take responsibility for the consequences of his message for this child. Pierce sent money to Tena to support the little girl, White Jade, for many years; the story of their interaction has become a 'foundation myth' of both WV and SP (Rah and VanderPol 2016, 40).

One of the reasons that Pierce's work resonated with post-war evangelicals was that his focus on children allowed him to ignore theological debates about the centrality of individual responsibility for one's situation (Rah and VanderPol 2016, 49). A grown man might bear moral culpability for his dire circumstances, but a child was so clearly a victim of their need that the argument need not be had at all (VanderPol 2010, 73). From the beginning, Pierce side-stepped debates over the relationship between the spiritual and the material sphere by seeing WV's mission as both evangelism and social care (D. King 2012b, 928). The agency quickly expanded its reach beyond Korea and throughout Asia. His passionate preaching and zeal for responding to the overwhelming material needs of the Asian poor saw him named 'the Billy Graham of Asia' (D. King 2013, 75).

Another part of WV's early appeal was that it picked up and supported existing work of missionaries among the poor, rather than starting new programs from scratch. Although the Great Reversal had seen conservative and fundamentalist American evangelicals move away from supporting agencies focussed on physical need alleviation, due to its social gospel connotations, conservative missionaries on the field continued to be deeply invested in providing for the material needs of the poor to whom they ministered (VanderPol 2010, 37). Without official support from their mission organisations, they often struggled to provide necessities and care alongside their missionary work.[3] Pierce cannily positioned WV into this gap as a 'missionary service organisation', to support and expand these pre-existing activities. The agency secured funding, publicity and support for these overseas programs, tying emergency relief and proto-development programs neatly into the core work of missions (VanderPol 2010, 43).

An 'insider' due to his fundamentalist upbringing, Pierce was fluent in the language of post-war conservative American evangelicals. He steered WV along a fine line to convince evangelical supporters that emergency relief could be delivered without weakening 'foreign missions', as they criticised mainstream religious agencies such as CRS and the Church World Service for doing (D. King 2013, 75). Whilst declaring frequently that WV was in the business of foreign missions support, he took every opportunity to remind his supporters that Jesus' gospel ministry was not limited to preaching but included healing and feeding too. In doing so, successfully argued that spiritual and physical ministry went hand in hand in bringing glory to God (VanderPol 2010, 64):

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[3] Former Compassion CEO Wess Stafford relates a typical story that illustrates this dilemma in his autobiography, where he writes of his missionary father excising a report of saving a West African village from mass death through water contamination from his support letters. He was concerned his supporting churches in the US would discipline him for 'wasting his time' digging wells instead of preaching. That the whole community converted because of Stafford Senior's willingness to fix their water without requiring anything in return did not appear relevant to the mission financiers (Stafford 2005, 75).

> We can sit in solemn conclaves and discuss what is and what is not missionary work. Meanwhile, the missionaries are over-worked and under-equipped and pressed on every side because they labor in the midst of needs that are never-ending. If it's something that is breaking the heart of a compassionate God, then – yes – you can call it missions. (Pierce, as quoted in Graham and Lockerbie 1983, 204)

In doing so, Pierce presented WV as an answer to contemporary dilemmas of the 'uneasy conscience' (coined by Henry 1947). Support WV to support missionaries, and the primary work of evangelism – central to evangelical identity – could go on while tummies were fed and wounds were bound. The rhetoric was simple and compelling. By linking WV's work to missionary support, WV's early identity was thus expressed in classically evangelical terms, drawing on well-understood concepts of spiritual transformation to articulate its interests and values, even as it challenged post-war US evangelicals to broaden their gaze.

In these early days, Pierce had another winning strategy: he was able to link the work of WV with the Cold War. His trips to Asia reinforced his view that communism was more than a competing political ideology; it was a direct spiritual attack on Asian souls. Americans therefore had a divine role to help Asian Christians resist this 'spiritual ambush' (D. King 2013, 76). This kind of narrative typified the evangelical impulse to link individual's actions to global narrative. By giving to WV, individuals in Michigan, or California, or North Carolina could help the global Church resist (atheist) communism half a world away.

However, while Pierce was fiercely patriotic, and had great confidence in the ability of American (Christian) culture to be a vehicle for positive international change, he was not unreflective. He regularly championed the work of local Christians in their own countries, and readily criticised Western Christians for failing to work for the cause with such sacrifice and diligence as their eastern counterparts (Rah and VanderPol 2016, 47). He was committed to America's political victories foremost because in his mind it was Christian.

For the first decade or so of its operations, Pierce's eclectic vision meant that WV defied categorisation, neither a humanitarian nor a missionary agency. It operated outside of the mainstream humanitarian sector, out of step with prevailing trends (D. King 2012b, 927). Larger agencies dismissed its relatively diminutive size and its hyper-evangelical language, and WV in turn steered clear of any cooperation with mainline religious humanitarian agencies that might tar it with the 'social gospel' brush (D. King 2011, 24).[4] It was built on a simple foundation: the emotional response of one man to a child in need. WV, like its evangelical founder, emphasised the individual

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[4] WV's budget was US$1 million in 1956, an astonishing growth from roughly $100,000 just three years earlier. However, CRS operated with a budget of $120 million, and Church World Service with $38 million, which gives some perspective on the catching up WV would need to do (D. King 2011, 27).

rather than social structures or large scale trends, enabling individuals to respond to the stories of suffering and hardship they saw (VanderPol 2010, 74). "I could have turned down an orphanage as being too big. But I couldn't refuse one orphan," wrote Pierce in a sponsor appeal magazine (as quoted in Rah and VanderPol 2016, 51).

The agency also resisted institutionalisation; Pierce grew WV on his personal networks, eschewing long-term planning and administrative mechanisms. He wanted an agency that saw a crisis and responded to it (Rah and VanderPol 2016, 45). He operated on a 'handshake' model of work, where he would set out on preaching tours in Asia, see particular needs, pledge to provide support, and then go home to pray and fundraise for that support to appear. Once it did, he went out again preaching and delivering the promised support as he went. Pierce personally approved everything WV did, and it was an eclectic mix – from building hospitals and buying lepers' underwear to sponsoring orphanages and preacher training conferences (D. King 2013, 77). At the centre was the individual, from Pierce's oversight to its heavy emphasis on the emotional connections and relationships that individuals could make through sponsorship and support.

Through the 1950s WV's growth was steady, and by the 1960s it had become a sizeable agency. Because it mainly supported existing missions most of its US employees were fundraisers; and they were very good at it. WV's advertising and literature were mailed directly to individual supporters, departing from the standard mission agency practice of sending circulars to churches for clergy to distribute. They produced films, photo books, radio shows, and direct appeal letters with easy payment options (Vanderpol 2010, 52-53).

However, despite their media and fundraising prowess, the FBO struggled with debt. Pierce felt it important to rely on faith rather than human effort to meet goals, and so took little notice of the gap between the FBO's capabilities and his pledges (D. King 2011, 24). Frantic all-night prayer sessions at headquarters were common as the agency struggled to find resources Pierce had already committed (D. King 2013, 78). Eventually however, through the 1960s, increasing scale began to necessitate different approaches; local missionary or church groups often lacked the expertise to manage projects the size WV was now able to fund. This external factor impacted the agency's sense of self as partnerships with non-evangelical NGOs were experimented with, exposing WV staff to different ideas and ways of doing things. In 1962 WV obtained official USAID registration which required the separation of relief and evangelism funding, a move Pierce had always resisted (D. King 2011, 25).

Internal changes were happening too: management specialist Ted Engstrom was hired as executive VP by the frazzled board in 1963 to deal with the debts (VanderPol 2010, 107). His corporate experience emphasised fiscal responsibility, and his push for professionalization made 'Christian

management' a legitimate activity (Engstrom 1999, 123).[5] Independent delivery networks were established for relief and development projects to overcome the lack of local partner capability, and resources were committed to a research centre for better understanding mission and relief across culture. Thus, the external pressures of scaling up were internalised through a process of managerial change, building a new narrative of 'Christian' professionalism as an element of good stewardship. This allowed WV to legitimise reaching for practices of professional humanitarian agencies in order to help it as it grew (D. King 2013, 82).

Transition to Professionalism

The growth of WV from a small, almost folksy missionary support agency to a professionalised, financially accountable institution was completed by the resignation of Pierce as president in 1967. Pierce was increasingly frustrated by the limits it placed on his personal 'handshake' style of outreach, and was concerned that the push to professionalism would dilute the FBO's evangelistic mission (Rah and VanderPol 2016, 56). He felt that God worked the most impressive miracles in the space between human capacity and human need, attributing WV's success to their need to rely on divine intervention to deliver on their promises (D. King 2013, 83).   By the late 1960s, Pierce had burnt himself out, emotionally, physically and spiritually, through years of hard travel in unsanitary conditions, book-ended by family tragedy (chronicled by his daughter in Dunker 2005). When Pierce tendered his resignation to WV in 1967 in an outburst of temper, the board surprised him by accepting it. This moment symbolised the tipping point in WV's transition from a missionary support arm to Christian relief and development agency.

Away from Pierce's leadership, the 1970s were a period of enormous financial growth for WV, as well as consolidation of its humanitarian credentials. It worked with USAID to improve its developmental capacity and launched into mainstream awareness through its pioneering television advertising and 'telethons'. Since Pierce's early war correspondence films, WV had invested in film and visual media as an effective communication strategy, and by the end of the decade, half of its fundraising came through the medium of television (VanderPol 2010, 105). At the same time, it developed its '40 Hour Famine' program (initially for church youth groups, later for school groups also), designed to raise money for and awareness of WV's famine relief programs (VanderPol 2010, 107). WV developed staff specialisations and set up multiple country offices, and in 1977, WV International was set up to be the coordinating body for the partnership of national offices across the globe (World Vision International 2016, 5). The internationalising push came from their second

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[5] For example, Engstrom and WV worked with the BGEA to found the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA), which acted as a financial watchdog for evangelical organisations and helped them avoid the worst of the fallout from financial scandals enveloping televangelists through the 1980s (VanderPol 2010, 107).

president, Stan Mooneyham, and was the start of a long process of de-centralising control of WV from the American office. Although Mooneyham, a recruit from the BGEA, shared Pierce's evangelising charisma, he saw organisational professionalization as beneficial for WV's ministries rather than weakening them (D. King 2013, 84), thus cementing the FBO's reinterpretation of faithfulness as good stewardship through professional management practices.

WV transformed into a truly global agency during Mooneyham's tenure. This was in part due to pressure from evangelical voices of the Global South in forums such at the 1974 Lausanne Congress, which criticised the continuing Western evangelical separation of evangelism and social concern, and presented opportunities to recruit local workforces (D. King 2011, 25).[6] The advance of communism through Indochina during the 1970s also pushed WV staff out of some of their traditional service countries (such as Vietnam and Cambodia), which in turn prompted the establishment of child sponsorship programs in Africa, Latin America and South Asia (VanderPol 2010, 108). This geographical reorientation prompted a focus on hunger as a particular evil of poverty and disaster, which significantly impacted their strategy. These internal and external pressures combined and overlapped as they re-emphasised the evangelical focus on social action for poor across the globe.

Embracing Development

Wider trends in humanitarian thought had filtered into WV's programming through the 1970s, and by the 1980s, WV was putting more and more thought into the potential of larger development projects as an answer to need. Broader movements in the mainstream development field saw focus shift from national level economic growth to individual welfare improvements (VanderPol 2010, 115). At the same time, as chronicled in the previous chapter, evangelicals were being challenged by left-leaning insiders to embrace a more holistic vision of spiritual and social change. As evangelicals began to consider structural problems and other development actors started to think more locally, it seemed that secular and evangelical relief and development actors finally appeared to have something to *say* to each other.

WV's changing approach to child development exemplified the trend. Although their child sponsorship scheme was a major part of their outreach, WV staff worried that it was not delivering long-term, sustainable poverty alleviation. Through the 1970s and 1980s they experimented with different forms of programming, moving away from orphanages and institutional support and towards family welfare and small-scale community projects. Although this seemed effective in

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[6] Somewhat ironically, though, this embrace of evangelical global South voices came as the agency continued to put walls between its missions and relief and development activities. Through the 1970s, missions support became a department, rather than the organisational ethos (VanderPol 2010, 111).

delivering relief for individual children, it did not to translate into lasting community change (Pierce and Kalaiselvi 2014, 142). The desire to transform whole communities, not just their most destitute, compelled the agency to explore the growing expertise of the wider development field. It was the newfound space in the evangelical community to talk about structural problems of poverty that allowed them to explore that expertise.

Even as it continued to professionalize, WV began to change the missions strategies of other evangelical organisations. VP Ted Engstrom's emphasis on "responsible, active, self-controlled stewardship" of God's gifts introduced 'managerial missions' to a broad range of parachurch agencies through preachers' conferences and publications (VanderPol 2010, 120). By the 1980s, the agency's mission statement had changed from self-description as a "missionary service organisation… meeting emergency needs… through existing evangelical agencies" to "a humanitarian organization [that] is an interdenominational outreach of Christians concerned for the physical and spiritual needs of people throughout the world" (VanderPol 2010, 121). This change in mission statement highlighted their embrace of a wider spectrum of supporters and partners, as an "interdenominational outreach of Christians", rather than a support of "existing evangelical agencies".

At the same time, the agency struggled to balance their capacity to move beyond individuals' needs and their organisational legacy of responding to exactly that. In this, they reflected broader debates amongst evangelicals at this time, about the extent to which the traditional evangelical focus on the individual still *worked* in relief and development:

> What if the week after the Good Samaritan picked up the wounded man, he found another victim... and even a fourth, and a fifth? . . . Don't you think that after taking care of the victims, the Samaritan would have gone down to the authorities who had jurisdiction over the road and complained that it was a hazard? (Perkins 1976, 101)

This was a thorny debate for WV. Their fundraising machine was heavily geared towards presenting the individuality and immediacy of their beneficiaries' needs. Although television fundraisers had brought in a broader donor base, their largest supporter base was still conservative US Christians, who continued to be deeply suspicious of ideas and approaches they deemed secular.[7] The result was an uneasy compromise; as the project implementation side of the agency became more and more convinced of the importance of addressing structural issues of poverty and vulnerability, the marketing and sponsorship teams continued to favour a one-to-one approach to donors.

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[7] For example, internal estimates suggested that 20 percent of donors were actually Catholics in 1980 (VanderPol 2010, 113).

As WV sought to find the right balance between individual and societal approaches to relief and development, the 1990s became an important decade of experimentation. Child sponsorship programs were an important site for this. Their long-term, stable funding profile gave WV the space and flexibility to try new approaches. It was in this space that they developed their Area Development Programs (ADPs), "long-term, multi-sectoral development programmes on a much larger scale that included strong commitment to local capacity building" and a deliberate departure from the welfare model that had dominated for 40 years (Pierce and Kalaiselvi 2014, 142). Donor interest in the individual children they sponsored provided focus and accountability checks for the new macro-level programming intended address root causes of deprivation: "to change a child's life, by changing a child's world" (Pierce and Kalaiselvi 2014, 144).

At the same time, WV grappled with crises in their relief work; the Ethiopian famine, Rwandan genocide, and the wars in the former Yugoslavia all prompted deep soul searching about the reach and responsibility of WV's presence. This fed their later articulations of advocacy as 'prophetic tradition': witnessing to the truth in situations of great injustice (World Vision Australia, n.d.).

The late 1990s also saw change in the broader humanitarian system's normative pressures on FBOs, as the problems of professionalised humanitarianism that tried to ignore religion in its programs became more visible. Wider criticisms of relief and development as a problematic secular Western construct, unsustainably stripped of deeper meaning and values, gave FBOs the space to thoughtfully examine their own theologies of development and change. The 'problem' of being faith-based could be approached from a different perspective, no longer a weakness but a strength. WV's leadership become more confident in the relevance of their organisation's Christian identity for the humanitarian system as a whole. A flurry of publications (mostly from current or retired staff) mark this change in pressure, all examining the ways WV's faith identity might provide solutions to the shortfall of modern Western development approaches (see for example Chester 2002; Mitchell, n.d.; Myers 2004, 2011 first edition published 1999). Space for reflecting on the unique transformative narrative provided by the evangelical traditions of thought WV had been built upon re-invigorated the FBO's appetite for casting its identity as distinctively Christian.

By the early 2000s, governments and non-evangelical donors were a lot more willing to see 'spiritual' programming in accountability reports, and other NGOs were acknowledging the legitimacy of FBOs speaking to the holistic needs of affected populations (for co-religionists, at least). The pressure to exorcise spiritual narratives from relief and development approaches began to ease, and WV found itself, by size, resourcing and heritage, in prime position to lead the conversation about what faith-based humanitarianism should look like. This did not resolve WV's

identity questions overnight; but it is "precisely the tensions and re-articulation of its religious identity that have helped to define the organization through its engagement with evangelical missiology and ecumenical theology; mainstream media, technology, and professional management, as well as its relationships with secular INGOs and cooperation with the global church" (D. King 2012a, iv).

The WV of today looks very different to the agency Pierce founded in the 1950s. With an annual income approaching $3 billion USD, programs in 99 countries, and over 42,000 staff (World Vision International 2016, 4), it is the largest Christian FBO in the world. It also controls greater institutional resources than all but one of the thirteen largest aid agencies listed by the UN Financial Tracking Service (FTS examined in Ben Parker 2018).[8] It is also more global, no longer centralised under Western control. While WV International sits as the umbrella organisation, there is increasing autonomy at the regional and national branch level. National branches are either considered support offices or country offices, and pay 'upstream' to fund regional and international offices. WV Australia, for example, is considered a support office – their main function is to fundraise and provide support (financial, but also expertise) to WV's global programming. WV Indonesia is a country office, focussed on program delivery rather than support. Both of these entities sit under the WV Asia Pacific regional office, and the Asia Pacific VP is an automatic board member of each national branch's board in the region (video interview with WV Asia Pacific staff member, 13 July 2017).

WV's federated structure has led to distinct cultural differences between its different branches. One country office might require staff attendance at daily prayer meetings, while another might give their staff Friday afternoons off to go to the local mosque (Mitchell 2016, 61; interview with WV senior staff member, Melbourne, 20 April 2017). Some branches require adherence to the Christian faith for all employees, and others do not. Mitchell (2016) notes that this makes it very difficult to classify the agency according to existing taxonomies. This is where the theoretical insights of the previous chapter make a large contribution, as they are able to explain this diversity. The practices of each branch reflect the interaction between the FBO's theological orientations and the in-country context. The varying contexts explain why a consistent ethic of Christian social engagement produces different practices across different branches. The country office opened in Senegal during the famines of 1980s for example, was staffed mostly by Muslims because WV recruiters could not find more than a handful of Senegalese Christians in the country, let alone appropriately qualified Christians (interview with WV senior staff member, Melbourne, 20 April 2017). These pragmatic

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[8] FTS focuses mainly on government/institutional sources of funding, and leaves out private donation-reliant groups.

considerations did not negate the FBO's faith commitment to Christian-led development, and they satisfied that commitment by parachuting in expats as senior staff to give the office that non-negotiable Christian strategic and organisational direction.

This diversity at branch level needs to be accounted for when exploring the mission statements, religious affiliations, staff policies, and donor support of the FBO. For that reason, I will be moving between the different levels relevant to the field sites considered in the next two chapters. WV International, Asia Pacific, Australia, Indonesia, and Myanmar are all relevant entities to these cases.

Mission Statement

The first area to examine the ways in which the FBO narrates its contemporary identity and goals is that of the agency's mission statement. WV's mission statement is extensive:

> 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. We pursue this mission through integrated, holistic commitment to: Transformational Development that is community-based and sustainable, focused especially on the needs of children. Emergency Relief that assists people afflicted by conflict or disaster. Promotion of Justice that seeks to change unjust structures affecting the poor among whom we work. Partnerships with churches to contribute to spiritual and social transformation. Public Awareness that leads to informed understanding, giving, involvement and prayer. Witness to Jesus Christ by life, deed, word and sign that encourages people to respond to the Gospel. (World Vision International 2017b)

The language of this mission statement could reflect either a Synthesis or an Evangelistic Humanitarian position. The emphasis is on Jesus and his kingdom, further reflected in their values statement. In the first of their core values, they highlight that

> We acknowledge one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Jesus Christ the love, mercy and grace of God are made known to us and all people. From this overflowing abundance of God's love we find our call to ministry.
> We proclaim together, "Jesus lived, died, and rose again. Jesus is Lord." We desire him to be central in our individual and corporate life.
> We seek to follow him -- in his identification with the poor, the powerless, the afflicted, the oppressed, the marginalised; in his special concern for children; in his respect for the dignity bestowed by God on women equally with men; in his challenge to unjust attitudes and systems; in his call to share resources with each other; in his love for all people without discrimination or conditions; in his offer of new life through faith in him. From him we derive our holistic understanding of the gospel of the Kingdom of God, which forms the basis of our response to human need.
> We hear his call to servanthood and see the example of his life. We commit ourselves to a servant spirit permeating the organisation. We know this means facing honestly our own pride, sin and failure.
> We bear witness to the redemption offered only through faith in Jesus Christ. The

staff we engage are equipped by belief and practice to bear this witness. We will maintain our identity as Christian, while being sensitive to the diverse contexts in which we express that identity. (World Vision International 2017b)

Thaut mentions WV in her taxonomy, noting that it serves as an example of an organisation that resists straight-forward abstraction. She sees it as drawing on the theological engagement of an Evangelistic-Humanitarian, but notes the way in which it has moved toward the Synthesis position over the years (Thaut 2009, 344). I would agree; some of the theology drawn on in their understanding of transformational development better reflects the Synthesis position. Certainly, there are more diverse voices speaking from and within WV. For example, former senior staff member Bryant Myer's assertion that "no one knows the moment when someone is ready for faith, nor is God limited to the staff of a particular Christian development agency in bringing God's good news" (2011, 310) sits most comfortably in Niebuhr's 'Christ Above Culture' model of social engagement. On the other hand, this statement qualifies a broader argument that transformational development is inherently evangelistic, which fits the 'Christ Transformer of Culture' model. This is where avoiding the spectrum of religiosity rhetoric becomes important. WV is deeply committed to a Christian ethos of humanitarianism, and to classify its theological broadening as entailing a somehow less religious practice is misleading at best. Understanding the FBO as instead beginning to draw upon more diverse and multi-faceted theologies as it negotiates its identity helps explain how the agency can be different to its more straightforwardly evangelical brethren, not necessarily 'less religious'. Indeed, the history of WV flatly contradicts such a hypothesis, showing instead renewed confidence in the power and appropriateness of a faith-based relief and development approach after a period of uncertainty.

Religious Affiliations

As an ecumenical (that is, uniting various strands of Christianity) agency, WV is not structurally tied to any one religious denomination, but it is still strongly religiously affiliated. It has heavily invested in Protestant churches and institutions, where its traditional bases of support reside. Events like the 40 Hour Famine were designed to tap into church youth groups and Christian schools. Geography matters here: WV US does not make as much of an effort to fundraise outside of religious constituencies while WV Australia very deliberately pivoted to 'mainstream' fundraising efforts directed at 'secular Aussies' (video interview with senior WV staff member, 5 May 2017).

In terms of the partnerships at program delivery, one interviewee noted that the size of WV's footprint was a major factor in its decision to move away from local church partnerships for program delivery. "We were corrupting too many local pastors" he said, noting that their project funds were usually significantly more money than many of these churches had ever handled (interview with senior WV staff member, Melbourne, 20 April 2017). However, WV still works with local churches

where possible, particularly as their development and justice arms of programming have grown. The increased willingness in the development field to see religious communities as useful partners in community development programs has likely contributed to WV's renewed interest in this area, armed with the painful lessons of the 70s and 80s to enable them to avoid past mistakes. It notes in its values statement: "we affirm and promote unity in the Body of Christ. We pursue relationship with all churches and desire mutual participation in ministry. We seek to contribute to the holistic mission of the church" (World Vision International 2017b). Partnership with churches in the local communities also helps WV resolve evangelism's (sharing the Christian gospel) place in relief and development work. Some staff talked about WV as the 'handmaiden' of the church, or as a parachurch agency, supporting and empowering local congregations as they practised and shared their faith to those around them. One of WV Australia's former senior leaders wrote on this issue that "when the agency for evangelism programs sits clearly with the local church, most of these difficulties are avoided" (Mitchell 2017, 41).

Staff Policies

WV's staffing policies reflect an interesting collision of preference and necessity. The ideal presented to US audiences is of a largely Christian workforce. WV International lists 'demonstrating Christ-centred life and work' as a core capability for job applicants, expressed by "modelling a lifestyle of Christ-centred witness and service in word, deed, life, and sign" (World Vision International 2015). The majority of country offices also cultivate a corporate culture of faith, with prayer, staff devotions and church attendance all a regular part of office life (Mitchell 2016). At times, evidence of staff faith can be part of work performance evaluations (Bornstein 2005, 46). However, as the FBO has grown, it has fostered greater variety in the kinds of Christianity represented in the staff. Whereas it once attracted a strongly evangelically-oriented worker population, it now appeals to Christians of numerous denominations. As one (now retired) senior director cheerfully commented: "we're probably the largest ecumenical organisation in the world, in terms of every staff member. It ranges from Serbian Orthodox to Pentecostal jump-in-the-aisles, and everything in-between… with 45,000 staff, you are going to have everybody under the sun!" (interview with WV senior staff member, Melbourne, 20 April 2017). This diversity of staff religious affiliation is an important factor in opening the agency to wider theological resources for their work, highlighting again the iterative nature of relationship between meaning making and organisational context.

However, unlike many evangelical humanitarian FBOs, some WV branches do recruit non-Christians. This is much more common in program delivery countries, rather than support offices (video interview with senior WV staff member, 5 May 2017). WV US fought a court challenge in the early

2000s to maintain their right to employ only Christians in domestic administrative and support roles, even as the office in Afghanistan sought out Muslim field staff. Conversely, different branch hiring policies can affect the global brand. In 2014, the US office indicated that they would allow same-sex married employees; the overwhelmingly negative response from donors and the evangelical community, as well as the backlash felt by other national offices in third party countries led them to reverse this policy within a matter of days (PR Newswire 2014).

Cultural difference in national offices also leads to other staffing differences. For example, in the WV Rwanda project offices, staff prayer at the beginning of each morning is mandatory (Mitchell 2016, 61). However, in the WV Australia branch, weekly participation at staff devotions is voluntary, and some pains have been taken to prevent attendees from receiving any career-related benefit so as not to penalise non-attendance (interview with junior WV Australia staff member, Canberra, 11 July 2017).

The fact that WV allows these differences between its offices demonstrates their reinterpretation of their identity along a more Synthesis model of engagement. It is also an indication of the way WV has chosen to adapt to divergent normative pressures at work on its various national offices, including system wide pressure towards professionalisation. One interviewee noted that sheer size mandates WV become a part of the wider humanitarian employment pool. Staff who are specialising, either in relief or development, as a career, transfer in and out of WV as their career progresses (interview with senior WV staff member, Melbourne, 20 April 2017).[9] For its part, WV takes these non-Christian staff because they often cannot source enough expertise to run their programs drawing only on Christian populations.

WV is not passive in the face of these pressures however, and seeks to protect its distinctive faith identity by keeping non-Christian staff out of senior roles. The more senior a position, the more the staff member's "alignment with our core goals and philosophy" becomes a consideration in the recruitment process (video interview with senior WV staff member, 5 May 2017). This creates a situation where staff at the junior and middle levels may hold a range of beliefs, but senior and strategic staff are universally Christians, for both support offices and country branches. "I've already been told there's a ceiling" said one non-Christian staff member when interviewed about their work at WV Australia (interview with junior WV staff member, Canberra, 11 July 2017). Senior staff, in turn, are encouraged to access a range of theological education and training as a part of their

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[9] He recited a litany of staff he had hired that went on to senior positions in other agencies, including CEOs of PLAN Australia, International Needs Australia, Save the Children Australia, country directors for UNHCR Sudan and the DRC, and head of strategy at PLAN International (interview with senior WV staff member, Melbourne, 20 April 2017).

professional development. Works from current or former WV staff members I draw on in this thesis, such as *Faith-Based Development*, *Walking with the Poor*, *Bridging the Gap* and *Change Across Cultures: A Narrative Approach to Social Transformation* flow from these opportunities and showcase a range of nuanced reflections on the relationship between faith and humanitarianism.

Donor Support

WV maintains a ratio quota on their funding sources to safeguard their organisational independence from government and multilateral donors. This is a common form of virtue signalling among FBOs, where government funding is often equated with government interference (Berger 2003, 28). Although in the past, 70 and 80 percent of WV International's funding comes from private sources, currently that number is closer to 63 percent, with the remainder coming from government grants and multilateral agencies (World Vision International 2017a). Their status as one of the largest revenue-receiving INGOs worldwide makes their commitment to non-government funding telling. Key to this is child sponsorship donations (a stable, long term form of private donation) which fund approximately half of WV's programs (World Vision International 2017a), enabling them to keep government funding in the minority.

However, there is variety between branches. WV US places a 20 percent cap on government funding, but WV Australia caps government support at 25 percent of total revenue (video interview with senior WV staff member, 5 May 2017). These differences arise from the contextual pressures of these two branches. Several interviewees noted that the size of the US Christian population means that the US office does not have to work hard for funding outside of this demographic; it is so large that WV has not yet reached market saturation. In Australia, confronted by declining church attendance and an already relatively small Christian donor pool, the branch made the decision to pursue alternative forms of financial support. This included more government grants, as well mainstream private donors. As a result, WV Australia's donor support comes from a wider variety of sources than its US counterpart. This deliberate strategy is reflected in current WV Australia CEO Claire Rogers' comments:

> WV has the ability to speak to the secular world and engage the secular world in issues of poverty… our Christian heritage is very real… However, our position is that we will support all people in all contexts regardless of their faith. Jesus has called us to love the poor. Full stop. … We also want to be able to communicate with the Australian public in a way that is accessible for them and brings them in.
> (quoted in Holgate 2016)

This exploration of WV's history and its current organisational orientation demonstrates how the FBO has both reproduced classic narratives of Christian evangelicalism, and re-imagined them in navigating the complexities of the humanitarian space. They have built a self-identity that values a

highly professionalised, globalised workforce with ambitious visions for relief and development work that is strongly committed to a distinctly Christian ethos of care but is increasingly open to diversity in how that ethos is expressed.

Samaritan's Purse

WV's story is directly relevant to the birth of the second FBO I consider in this thesis, SP. SP was founded by Bob Pierce and explicitly structured to avoid the failings of WV which had 'caved' to the professionalised, secularised pressures of the wider humanitarian system. However, the 1970s that SP was born into were very different to the post-war 1950s when WV had begun. Although they shared a founder and a founding vision, the two agencies went on to bear little family resemblance. Now "one of the largest evangelical relief organizations in the United States" in its own right (Oliver et al. 2017, 1020), this status was hard won.

In the 1970s, after recovering from the events that led him to step down from the WV board, Bob Pierce was invited to become president of a small evangelical agency called Food for the World that at risk of closing its doors. Pierce accepted the role, changed the organisation's name to Samaritan's Purse, and set about building its capacity to respond to disasters and mission needs across the world. Pierce brought three key lessons across from WV. First, he ensured that the president retained control and discretion over the day-to-day running of the agency, with a 'command structure' that led quickly to the top, and a compliant board that rarely met in person. Second, he brought his pre-existing missionary relationships and 'handshake' model of program outreach, prioritising flexibility and spontaneity over almost everything else. Finally, he brought the entire US mailing list of donors he had accumulated as WV president, a largely personal network of sponsors and supporters that ensured the financial recovery of his new organisation (D. King 2013, 85). Through it all, Pierce reiterated the need to place the physical and spiritual needs of the poor at the centre of SP's ministries, continuing his earlier mobilisation of classical evangelical narratives in the name of broader humanitarian action.

The growth of Samaritan's Purse through the 1970s and into the 1980s closely reflected its president's ethos. As with WV, Pierce wanted an agency that saw a crisis and responded to it. A strong focus on disaster relief was supplemented by support for other projects seemingly at random, as the leadership made handshake connections with those who came across their path. This time, Pierce required each board member to go on annual mission trips, lest they forget the 'little people' who SP had been created to serve (Graham and Lockerbie 1983, 80).

Second Generation

In the mid-1970s, aging and unwell, Pierce made succession plans for the FBO's presidency. An organisation so dependent on the connections and attentions of its president faced an existential crisis with a leadership transition; Pierce no doubt felt pressure to ensure he chose someone who would stay true to the character of SP, forged so strongly in reaction to the secularisation of its big brother, WV. Pierce selected a surprisingly young candidate, Franklin Graham Junior, just twenty-eight years old at the time. Graham Jr, son of famous evangelist Billy Graham, was a good fit to continue in the spirit of his predecessor. Although not considered as charismatic as Pierce, he displayed the same spontaneity and the same confident faith in God's provision. Well-connected through his family, well-travelled and with his own pilot's license, Graham slotted easily into Pierce's pattern of travel and preaching tours, handshake deals to support existing ministries, and home circuits to raise funds for pledges. He also believed fervently in the power of 'God Room' – Pierce's idea that the impossible is achievable when you leave room for God to provide the way. In the handover process, Graham and Pierce had repeated conversations to that effect: "nothing is a miracle until it reaches the area where the utmost that human effort can do is not enough and God moves in to fill that space between what is possible and what He wants done that is impossible—that is 'God Room'" (Pierce, quoted in Graham and Lockerbie 1983, 53). This time around, rather than leadership change consolidating a process of reinterpretation of the FBO's identity (as with Mooneyham), it served to strengthen the founder's narrative. By the time of Pierce's death in 1978 aged sixty-four, his three-year mentorship of Graham had produced a second generation of leadership just as committed to the original evangelical vision of spontaneous, needs-driven, miracle-awaiting missions support

After taking over the presidency, Graham relocated SP's head office (formerly in California) to his home state of North Carolina, and set about growing SP's reach and resources. His affinity with Pierce's vision and style meant that as it grew, SP developed structures and systems to enable individuals to make independent and flexible choices. The command chain empowered decision making that was quick and decisive; relying on Graham and his VPs to act as final arbiters where junior staff felt unsure (interview with SP staff member, Boone, 28 March 2018). VanderPol disparagingly describes the organisational style as 'missionary adventuring', and while perhaps a trifle unfair, the first years of his leadership certainly emphasised Graham's personal activity, as he parachuted into warzones, delivered medical supplies through sniper fire, and was smuggled into unwelcoming ports in the dark of night (VanderPol 2010, 158; chronicled throughout Franklin Graham 1998). The organisation did not develop anywhere near the reach and resources of WV in this time, but Graham was slowly able to build SP's reputation and support base through mail outs,

visits and film. Possibly the single greatest event to raise SP's profile among US evangelicals was his appearance on a Christian talk show in the early 1980s, where he raised over $400 000 for a Kenyan hospital essentially by accident. Graham mentioned on air that he had (as usual) committed funds SP did not have. The resulting publicity saw just the right amount of money donated for the pledge, boosted SP's public standing, and advertised Graham's commitment to miraculous rather than mundane provision (Graham 1995, 181, 183; VanderPol 2010, 160).

Becoming Humanitarian

Although SP never adopted the approaches of its big brother, WV, the 1980s and 1990s did see it slowly evolve its conception of missionary support.   As mentioned earlier, the relief and development environment of the time had a great 'NGO-isation' effect on many Christian ministries, who increasingly borrowed the grammar of humanitarianism, rather than missiology, to explain their work. However, the broader changing context allowed SP to absorb these changes within its existing narratives, rather than see them precipitate a crisis of identity.

At the same time, more of the eclectic ministries SP funded came under their umbrella permanently. A prominent example is World Medical Mission (WMM), a ministry that sends Christian medical staff as short-term volunteers in SP field hospitals, and hosts a fully funded two year post-residency program. WMM was the brainchild of two doctor brothers in Graham's home state of North Carolina. The brothers wanted to use their medical skills to volunteer overseas in short bursts but could not find a mission agency to take them. They approached Graham to ask for his help and in 1977 WMM was born (Samaritan's Purse 2018c). SP's particular approach to supporting ministries means that although WMM is functionally a SP endeavour, it is set up as its own department in SP's headquarters in Boone, North Carolina, and treated as a semi-autonomous entity. This partially embedded structure reinforces the FBO's high-flexibility preferences, maximising leadership autonomy and minimising bureaucratic drag. Several SP programs are run this way – Operation Heal Our Patriots (a marriage counselling course for US veterans), and the US Disaster Relief team as just a few examples – but the most infamous is SP's acquisition of the Operation Christmas Child (OCC) project.

OCC was adopted in 1993 from a Welsh couple who had been moved by the plight of Romanian orphans. The couple felt powerless in the face of the wartime conditions to help the children they saw on their television, but wanted to offer 'a gift of love' through Christmas presents, clothing, medical supplies and food shipments which they personally delivered in a trucking convoy. Since taking over the project, SP has delivered more than 168 million of their 'shoebox' gifts (so-called because donors pack toys, school and personal hygiene items into a shoebox sized container) to local churches to give to children in their communities at Christmas time (Samaritan's Purse 2018a).

These Christmas presents often coincide with a children's discipleship program offered by the local ministry partner.

OCC is not integrated into the FBO's relief and development programming; instead, it is run semi-autonomously "to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to needy children around the world, and together with the local church worldwide, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ" (Samaritan's Purse 2018a). OCC is one of, if not the most controversial of SP's programs. In many ways it typifies SP: incomprehensible to outsiders, complicated by SP's hybrid nature as it straddles the worlds of missions and humanitarianism, and yet clearly understood and valued by those in the agency. OCC is frequently criticised as 'bad development', but SP does not consider it development work (interview with SP staff member, Boone, 28 March 2018). OCC is intended to function as an evangelism and discipleship tool for local churches in their own communities, and provide a starting point for long-term relationships between SP and local churches (interviews with SP staff members, Boone, 27 and 28 March 2018).

OCC exists within the stable of SP's ministries because SP does not agree that missions work and relief and development work should be siloed off from one another. But that does not fully capture the SP's perspective. The incoherence of grouping WMM (clearly humanitarian work) and OCC (a tool of evangelism) only materialises from an ontology that sees sharing the Christian message as a different kind of activity to treating wounded civilians in warzones. For those with a conversionist or dualist approach, both activities flow from the same source. There is no incoherence. SP incorporates OCC and ministries like it such as Operation Heal Our Patriots to support the work of churches and Christians in places of deprivation and crisis around the world, without to their mind 'artificially' separating people's material and spiritual needs. In doing so, they resist the secularising norms of their broader humanitarian environment (although their adroitness at translating this as they adapt to the secularised requirements of the particular contexts in which they operate is a fascinating demonstration of what Paras (2012) describes as the 'secular fiction' at the interface between religious and non-religious service provision).

Mission Statement

SP explicitly places itself in the evangelical stable: it self-identifies as a "nondenominational evangelical Christian organization" in its mission statement:

> Samaritan's Purse is a nondenominational evangelical Christian organization providing spiritual and physical aid to hurting people around the world. Since 1970, Samaritan's Purse has helped meet needs of people who are victims of war, poverty, natural disasters, disease, and famine with the purpose of sharing God's love through His Son,

Jesus Christ. The organization serves the church worldwide to promote the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Samaritan's Purse 2017)

SP's mission statement is grounded firmly in the conversionist theological approach, seeing the work of humanitarianism, 'meeting needs', as a way to share God's love, and promote 'the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ'. In explaining its mission statement further, it draws on the story of the Good Samaritan, a parable told by Jesus and found in Luke 10:

> The story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) gives a clear picture of God's desire for us to help those in desperate need wherever we find them. After describing how the Samaritan rescued a hurting man whom others had passed by, Jesus told His hearers, "Go and do likewise." For over 40 years, Samaritan's Purse has done our utmost to follow Christ's command by going to the aid of the world's poor, sick, and suffering. We are an effective means of reaching hurting people in countries around the world with food, medicine, and other assistance in the Name of Jesus Christ. This, in turn, earns us a hearing for the Gospel, the Good News of eternal life through Jesus Christ.
> As our teams work in crisis areas of the world, people often ask, "Why did you come?" The answer is always the same: "We have come to help you in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Our ministry is all about Jesus—first, last, and always. As the Apostle Paul said, *"For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake"* (2 Corinthians 4:5, NIV).
> (Samaritan's Purse 2017)

However, this belief is expressed in context, as different staff articulate SP's place on the 'humanitarian-mission' spectrum differently. One Australian SP staffer spoke about the agency being the 'hands and feet of Jesus' with a mission to 'show love', rather than explicitly evangelise. She went on to tell a story about an SP program in Mongolia being well-received by the local community because it came with 'no strings attached', not requiring them to participate in any specific religious activities (unlike some other FBOs). The villagers told them they liked 'you Christians', who gave good quality aid and built positive relationships – for the SP staffer, this achieved SP's mission: communities in need felt loved and cared for by Christians (God's representatives), where everyone else had neglected them (interview with SP senior staff member, Sydney, 24 August 2017). I suspect that this was a culturally Australian way to express SP's commitment to sharing 'the hope of Jesus'; a number of staff from all three of the FBOs I interviewed noted the difference between Australian (understated and action oriented) and American (enthusiastically and verbally explicit) cultural expressions of faith.

Religious Affiliations

SP locates itself as non-denominational and evangelical, drawing on US evangelical Christians as its main support base. With much support from Southern Baptists, and a president who is the son of 'America's pastor', Billy Graham, SP is embedded in the American evangelical (particularly in the

sociological sense of the term) religious community. It also has close affiliation with the BGEA which describes SP as its 'sister organisation' (Hunt 2011). The boards of directors are almost identical, and BGEA chaplains have their own Rapid Response Team that often deploys with SP.   These religious affiliations are similarly important at the program delivery level, where they preference church and Christian FBO partners for their relief and development work. SP seeks existing Christian ministries and church programs to receive and distribute their relief aid, either through formal partnerships or one-off donations. This is a logical outworking of a conversionist approach to social engagement: the Church as the 'body of Christ' is the most effective and appropriate starting point for the resources to help the community. Additionally, SP often partners with Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF), Operation Blessing International, and other faith-based agencies for relief delivery. This preference continues, although not exclusively, in their development work also: for example, SP's 2012 Haiti gender-based violence prevention program was delivered by local pasters through marriage counselling programs and church workshops (interview with SP staff member, Boone, 26 March 2018).

Staff Policies

In most contexts, SP only employs Christian staff, requiring a signed statement of faith during the recruitment process as evidence. This requirement is almost always non-negotiable, and SP will let positions sit vacant rather than hire non-Christian applicants (interview with SP HR staff member, Boone, 28 March 2018). Staff hiring is viewed through a faith lens: God will provide the right person at the right time, so SP recruiters must pray for that person to be made ready, and wait for God to supply them.   The careers portal for their website outlines five staff objectives, "grounded in Scripture and Biblical Principles". These are to:

> Proclaim the Gospel: Exalt Christ and share the gospel while working in his name
> around the world (Romans 1:16).
>
> Serve with Excellence: Exceed the world's standard while serving the purposes of
> God's kingdom (Colossians 3: 23-24.
>
> Respond with Compassionate Action: Expedite our response to needs as the Lord
> reveals opportunities to minister (Luke 10: 33-37).
>
> Demonstrate Biblical Integrity: Exhibit integrity and Christ-like character personally, at
> home and work (Psalm 119:1).
>
> Walk in Bold Faith: Expect God to do the impossible (Matthew 19:26).
>
> (Samaritan's Purse 2018b)

The objectives are couched in the context of service to God, drawing on distinctly Christian words and ideas, and linking each principle to an accompanying Bible verse (a common practice in Christian

missiological and theological literature). They encompass expectations that staff will be faithful Christians as much as they will be competent humanitarians, and that, like Pierce, they will "expect God to do the impossible". Unlike WV, SP pursues a much more streamlined federated structure, and the cultural differences between branches, while present, are minimised. One Australian interviewee noted that some staff hiring was done through the main US office to protect SP from any grey areas in Australian anti-discrimination law, which might prohibit them from accepting Christian-only applicants (interview with SP senior staff member, Sydney, 24 August 2017). She also reflected that this sometimes requires 'translation' of culturally Australian expressions of evangelicalism to US hiring staff, in order to reassure them that Australian applicants were committed to the same traditions of thought and doctrine.

Donor Support

SP has a complex donor landscape. This makes sense given its history, with a president who believes strongly in the need to rely on God to provide resources for the work. While the "overwhelming majority" of funds come from individuals and churches, SP does accept government funding, although they fiercely defend their programming autonomy. Their liberal interpretation of the requirements for separation of religious and humanitarian activities in USAID contracts, for example, has been the source of repeated controversy (VanderPol 2010, 246). SP actively solicits corporate donations, to build long-term supporter relationships with business figures and companies. They work to be open to receive donations in whatever form supporters wish to give: they rely heavily on volunteers, often receive donations of goods and services as well as funds, and regularly utilise their logistics chains to transport other charities' supplies (interview with SP staff member, Sydney, 24 August 2017).

They also demonstrate adaptability in their navigation of the secularised spaces in which they must work. For example, Australian government regulations have led SP Australia to split their work and funding through two separate companies: *Samaritan's Purse Australia Limited*, which is registered and accredited with relevant government regulators to facilitate the operation of SP Australia's Overseas Aid Fund and *Samaritan's Purse Australasia- Operation Christmas Child Limited* (Samaritan's Purse Australia New Zealand 2017). This split corporate identity hints at the tension that government regulations and secular norms of humanitarianism engender in evangelical FBOs. The only way they can engage with these spaces as humanitarian workers is to either scale down or misrepresent their models of engagement (see Paras 2012). Neither of these options are particularly palatable. In SP's case, its Australian branch is not eligible for Australian government grants because they are not currently a signatory to ACFID – a move SP has gone back and forth on internally over the years, as ACFID accreditation would open alternative (not necessarily government) funding

options for them. SP Australia has lost corporate funding in the past as a result of not having ACFID accreditation (see for example the ThankYou controversy reported by Lucy Battersby 2013), so the losses are real. On the other hand, ACFID accreditation requires a commitment to secularist discourses SP Aus is currently not willing to make. In turn, these questions of how to present themselves and their programming infuse their internal meaning making stories, reinforcing their sense of distinctiveness (and at times their isolation) from the mainstream.

The development of SP over the last 50 years has led to an agency that highly values sponteneity, flexibility, and speed. Their understanding of how God's provision underpins their work draws on classically evangelical confidence in the miraculous potential of the divine to radically transform this world, where there is individually expressed faith. Their interactions with the humanitarian mainstream, framed by WV as their anti-model, have largely cemented this narrative, even as they have gradually adopted the professionalism language and norms generated by the Christian management discourses of other Christian NGOs. This encourages them in an orientation that pursues high-risk, high-reward action, resilient to external criticism and occasionally chaotic in its de-emphasis of structure in favour of individual relationships.

Compassion International

The final FBO in consideration, Compassion international, was created in the early 1950s. It was founded by American pastor and evangelist Rev. Everett Swanson after his preaching tour to US troops stationed in Seoul in 1952. Like Bob Pierce, Swanson was greatly affected by the extreme impoverished conditions faced by Korean war orphans in Seoul's winter, particularly the day he witnessed the garbage trucks that daily collected the bodies of homeless children who had died overnight (Compassion International 2017c). All the way back to his home in Chicago, Swanson felt he was being directly challenged by God to respond with compassion to what he had seen. So, he prayed that God would give him direction.

Saving Children

Upon his return to the US, two of the first people to whom Swanson recounted his experiences gave him money, a US$50 cheque and a US$1000 cheque, telling him that God had directed that money to South Korea's widow and orphans (Lee 2014, 28 and oral history recounted by ex-President Wess Stafford). Swanson took it as a sign that God intended him to help Korea's war orphans, and he continued to raise funds for them. His fundraising efforts grew into a child sponsorship scheme and was officially launched as the Everett Swanson Evangelistic Association in 1956, providing food, shelter, medicines, Bible lessons, and clothing for Korean children (Compassion International 2017c).

Over the next decade, the organisation would grow in reach, advertising in mainstream magazines, running clothing drives and partnering with orphanages in South Korea. It eventually changed its name to Compassion in 1963, the title of its regular newsletter, and taken from the words of Jesus in Matthew 15:32: "I have compassion on the multitude. I will not send them away hungry" (Compassion International 2017c). As with other evangelical FBOs, this narrative of supernatural provision in the founding years appears to play an important role in grounding the organisation's legitimacy and 'calling' as a ministry worthy of support.

Although a travelling preacher and evangelist, Swanson did not use the 'handshake' model of project support of Pierce, and later Graham.[10] Swanson's calling was bound to the fate of the South Korean orphans, and the FBO only worked in South Korea well into the 1960s. Its founder saw Compassion's work as a way to enact the theological image of the church as a family. Using the language of 'adoption' (another powerful Christian image), his prayer was that orphans deprived of parents by the Korean War could be reconnected with mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, all praying, writing, and sending love and support from thousands of miles away. He personally wrote regularly to sponsors, sending them updates on 'their' children's academic progress and religious education, and urging them to write and send gifts to the orphans (Lee 2014, 32). Although he might not have articulated it so, Swanson's vision was of a global Church, capable of bringing healing and restoration through the global body of Christ (a common motif describing church). He mobilised evangelical ideas of Christian global interconnectedness, and individual responsibility to react to opportunities. These ideas continue to animate Compassion's challenge to this day, which focuses on the idea that its supporters may not be able to change the world, but they can change the life of the child in front of them (interview with senior Compassion USA staff member, Colorado Springs, 19 March 2018).

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[10] He was uneasy about being the public face of the agency as it grew, and it was at his request that the name was changed from the Everett Swanson Evangelistic Association in 1963 (Lee 2014, 52).

Figure 2: The Korean Orphans Choir on tour with the Swansons in the US in 1964 (Compassion International 2017c). The tour of sponsored orphans was a successful and repeated awareness and fundraising venture in Compassion's early days (and borrowed from WV).

Swanson and his wife Miriam were the driving forces behind Compassion in its first decade. As well as establishing orphanages for street children, they opened Christian bookshops, published a bi-monthly 'revival paper' (*Jesus is the Victor*), and supported evangelist training through the country (E. Swanson, personal communication, December 7, 1953 as cited in Lee 2014, 32). They also established the Compassion Canada office in 1963, organised trips by sponsors to visit their sponsored children in South Korea and brought sponsored children to the US to meet their supporting churches (see figure 2). Everett Swanson died in 1965; during his tenure, the agency grew from initially supporting 35 to over 14,600 South Korean children by 1965 (Lee 2014, 65).

Battling Corruption

The year before his death, Swanson's time had been almost entirely taken up trying to resolve corruption allegations amongst the South Korean staff of Compassion's program office. Swanson had hired his former translator, Peter Kang, to be the Korean Secretary of the organisation in 1961, recognising the need for local leadership of the growing ministry network of orphanages.[11] Highly esteemed by Swanson, Kang was entrusted with a great deal of autonomy over the Korean office operations, including activities and finances. Over time however, it was revealed that Kang was demanding bribes and kickbacks from orphanage superintendents and local businesses. He was also diverting to himself funds and supplies from the head office that were sent out for the children,

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[11] In doing so, he pre-empted similar pushes by other evangelical organisations a decade later.

including selling their vitamin supplements on the black market (E. Swanson, personal communication, October 7, 1964 as cited in Lee 2014, 59).

Despite multiple complaints about Kang from local staff, and even eyewitness accounts of corrupt practice from his niece (a registered nurse who supervised the health care of the 149 orphanages in the program), Swanson simply could not believe that a fellow Christian could act so duplicitously. He did nothing for two years, until superintendents under Kang began swindling money from sponsors by writing to them directly with forged letters. In the resulting public scandal, Swanson's assistant executive director Robert Swaney convinced Swanson to accept a plan of action to deal with the problems (B. Swaney, personal communication, September, 1964 as cited in Lee 2014, 58). Swanson travelled to Seoul, confronted Kang with the allegations, and asked him to repent of his sins.[12] Kang instead went into hiding to escape criminal convictions, and Swanson and his team were left to try and fix the mess Kang's mismanagement in Korea had left. Swanson's ill health prompted a return to the US, where he would soon pass away.

The evangelical emphasis on individual calling and the family ties of the global Church in this instance inhibited Swanson's ability to understand and resolve the serious problems caused by the scandal, highlighting a vulnerability that can be seen in the other evangelical FBOs under study also. The high levels of trust generated by a shared faith worldview have a dark side; they can make corrupt practices both more difficult to detect and more damaging to the organisation when discovered. For Compassion, the early scandals in leadership greatly lowered the FBO's ongoing appetite for risk, and saw them internalise principles of good stewardship that heavily emphasised accountability and long-term trust building.

Four months after Swanson's death, the board appointed Henry L. Harvey as president in 1966. A retired missionary with theological expertise and a degree in business administration, Harvey resembled WV's second president Stan Mooneyham by combining mission commitment with management professionalism. Swanson's wife Miriam remained as vice president. Together they set to the challenging work of healing the damage created both in Korea and at home by the scandal. Harvey wrote to the board that although there were difficult challenges relating to the Korean 'oriental culture', if it persevered Compassion had a great opportunity to make a difference and help these children. They had influence "in the areas of nutrition, health, hygiene, sanitation, education, vocational training, and hundreds of other things to make up the training of a child" (Harvey,

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[12] Swanson and the board demonstrated their theological grounding in the way they approached disciplining Kang. At a special meeting convened to discuss the problem, Swanson mourned, "We realize only more than ever before that we are working in a heathen culture where all moral conceptions are relative and looking within ourselves we know that 'the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked'," (a paraphrase of Jeremiah 17:9) (E. Swanson, personal communication, October 7, 1964 as cited in Lee 2014, 59).

personal communication, Letter to the Board, 1966 as cited in Lee 2014, 72). At the same time, Harvey wrote presciently that their perseverance was necessary because "it is a true conviction of mine at this moment that the one opportunity in this century exists in South Korea; for the development of a truly Christian Protestant country in Asia for the first time in all history" (H. Harvey, personal communication, Letter to Dr. Hemwall, 1966 as cited in Lee 2014, 72).

Harvey's management expertise was greatly taxed in the first years of his presidency. A new scandal was uncovered in 1968, involving superintendents selling the children's milk supplies for personal profit. Korean Secretary Ed Kimball's tough stance against this fraud led to such an uproar amongst staff that the police became involved, the Korean Board of Directors demanded control of Compassion's activities and death threats against Kimball and his family led him to fire all of the staff, temporarily close the office, and flee to Singapore (E. Erickson, personal communication, 2004 as cited in Lee 2014, 92). Although things seemed dire, his relocation brought the expertise needed to start a regional field office for Asia. A new Korean Secretary was parachuted in (former Cub Scouts leader Wally Erickson) to re-open operations and Kimball became South East Asia Director, expanding Compassion's work into Indonesia, India and later Haiti and Singapore. In this way, Compassion was pressured by external circumstances to embrace and reflect evangelical ambitions to reach the whole globe.

Finding the Way Forward

In reaction to the Korean staff problems, the new country programs relied far more on expatriates than locals to drive ministry (VanderPol 2010, 127). In a crucial turning point for the agency, Harvey and Erickson also oversaw the expansion of child sponsorship to non-orphans, initially through the Family Helper program, first trialled in Indonesia in 1968 (Compassion International 2017c). This was partially based on the recognition that sponsoring 'orphans' had the perverse effect of encouraging desperate impoverished families to leave their children at Compassion-supported institutions. Erickson had also read research that children in institutional care had IQ scores ten to fifteen points lower than those who lived with a primary care giver. Thoroughly bruised by their experiences with the Korean orphanages, Harvey and Erickson made the decision to try to help poor families stay together and avoid the need for institutional care altogether (Lee 2014, 98). As Compassion grew in its new field locations, it allowed its Korean operations to shrink slowly.

The Family Helper program planted the seed for Compassion's contemporary child sponsorship model, and it drew on biblical grouping of widows, orphans and the 'fatherless' to justify supporting children of widows, or handicapped fathers, to stay in the family home (VanderPol 2010, 128). There, they received "school tuition, nutritious meals, medical care, Bible lessons and other benefits" (Compassion International 2017c). The success of Indonesia's Family Helper program trial

saw it launched in other countries through the 1970s. Education became increasingly emphasised in this decade, with Compassion assisting with school fees and uniforms, teacher salaries, books and supplies, and medical and meals in schools through many of its projects (Compassion International 2017c). Compassion opened school-based sponsorship programs in Thailand in 1970. Domestic assistance was trialled too, with sponsors sought for American Indian school students in Arizona (Lee 2014, 103). These forms of support allowed the agency to recover from its earlier difficulties and experiment with more effective measures for helping children in need, a focus they continued to enact as central to their work.

The Branching Path of Humanitarianism

US legal requirements led to a corporate split between Compassion, Inc (the child sponsorship non-profit) and Compassion International (later renamed Compassion Relief and Development) in 1972 to allow Compassion to access government funding in emergency situations (Lee 2014, 104). In 1974 ill health forced Harvey to resign as president, although he took on the relief branch instead. Compassion demonstrated willingness initially to attempt to engage with the government's requirements for secularised aid, but they would go on to find this straddle too compromising.

Compassion's association with TearFund (the Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund) began in Great Britain in 1975. The Australian branch of Compassion was established in 1978, by which time Compassion was operating in seventeen countries and the presidency had passed to Wally Erickson. During his tenure the numbers of sponsorships grew from 25,000 to 180,000.[13] 1978 also marked the establishment of Compassion's first critical needs fund, set aside for supporting sponsored children and families through natural disasters and medical crises. Compassion Relief and Development used USAID money to build water systems in Haiti during this time, but the interaction with the government-imposed limitations it required was an experience Erickson did not want to repeat. If the price was to lose autonomy over religious programming, Erickson did not want the money. They did not seek government funding again (W. Erickson, personal communication, May 31, 2005 as cited in Lee 2014, 127).[14] In a decision that would go on to set Compassion on a very different path to WV and SP, the executive rolled the two corporate identities back into one (now just Compassion

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[13] The former Cub Scout leader and Korean Secretary had spent time as the executive vice president before being elected as president. His Korea experiences firmly convinced him of the need to prioritise family unit cohesion to best help children in need. He completed the pivot away from orphanages that Harvey had begun. He also developed a program criteria that all six leading child sponsorship programs of the time agreed to adopt (W. Erickson, personal communication, Compassion Program Criteria, 1975 as cited in Lee 2014, 116). Erickson also made staff commitment to evangelical faith a clear requirement, including that field staff needed to 'feel called' to their service to children (W. Erickson, personal communication, May 25, 1993 as cited in Lee 2014, 117).

[14] They did, however, become a charter member of the ECFA in 1980, to demonstrate commitment to financial accountability despite withdrawing from federal funding bids.

International), and hired Don Smith to be Director of Relief as a sub-department of Compassion in 1980. This acted as a symbol of their rejection of the spiritual and the material divisions required by the mainstream aid environment, and a firming of their understanding of themselves as a ministry agency, not an aid agency.

The 1980s saw the introduction of a second foundational structure for Compassion's modern holistic child development model, the Non-Formal Education program. This program resourced church-run activities and training outside of school hours to equip children with a range of skills and principles to lift them out of poverty, from hygiene and nutrition to leadership. The Non-Formal Education program returned local staff in developing countries to the centre of Compassion's outreach, by resourcing the local church as the locus of the support work for "socio-emotional, cognitive and spiritual development objectives" (Sim and Peters 2014, 165). This model would go on to become a key point of identity for the agency, as its current mantra highlights: 'Christ centred, child focussed, church based' (Compassion International 2017b).

During this time, Compassion concentrated on mailing lists and magazine ads to increase its donor support base; the death of Swanson and then later his wife Miriam had ended many of the close personal ties they had built up with churches around the US. Lack of confidence to continue those relationships led Compassion to briefly move away from targeting churches as locations of donors, but by the early 1990s, this trend had been reversed as Compassion returned to fostering relationships with churches to aid child sponsorship (interview with Compassion staff member, Colorado Springs, 14 March 2018). Compassion resisted wider trends to move away from individually focussed child sponsorship models and grew quietly but steadily. The Child Survival Program was launched in East Indonesia in 2006, and in Thailand in 2007. After the tsunami, they expanded their ministries into Sumatra, where they had not worked before (interview with Compassion senior staff member, Colorado Springs, 14 March 2018). In 2013, positive research on the long-term effects of their child sponsorship model was published by economist Bruce Wydick, encouraging efforts within Compassion to develop their own in-house effectiveness research and evaluation capability.

The 2000s saw the Global office taking measures to devolve more autonomy to program countries. Like WV, Compassion has a federated model, where Compassion International sits at the head of a group of partner (that is, donor) and program country offices. Compassion now employs more than 3000 staff, and sponsors over 1.4 million children through 6500 church partners around the world (Sim and Peters 2014, 187). These numbers understate Compassion's scale, as church partners each employ between 10 and 100 staff and volunteers to run the development centres; meaning that

there are another 70,000 or so people engaged in delivering holistic child development work in their local communities (interview with senior Compassion staff member, Colorado Springs, 14 March 2018).

Compassion's strong initial focus on supporting war orphans – children who by definition no longer had family to protect and support them, pushed the individual child focus model. Compassion has been slow to move to a more nuanced view of the child in the context of a web of relationships, but is in the process of restructuring some of its global partnerships, with a more developed theology of change to guide its understanding of what to prioritise in the child sponsorship programming (email correspondence with Compassion strategy consultant, January 2018).

Compassion's core programs are Child Sponsorship, Child Survival, Leadership Development and Complementary Interventions (CIV). It chooses partner countries on the basis of need, mediated by risk and access. The CIV program incorporates HIV, Highly Vulnerable Children, Disaster Relief, Medical, Education and Non-Formal Education, Health, Infrastructure, Vector-Borne, Micro-Enterprise/Income Generation, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (From the Compassion 2020 Vision, as listed in Lee 2014, 3).

Mission statement

Compassion's mission statement is to "release children from poverty in Jesus' name". They identify themselves as a "child-advocacy ministry that pairs compassionate people with those who are suffering from poverty. The ministry releases children from spiritual, economic, social, and physical poverty. The goal is for each child to become a responsible and fulfilled adult". Their self-definition as a 'ministry' is at the heart of their understanding of their work:

> Jesus is the core of our ministry and his life and teachings shape our programs. They reflect the spiritual commitments of our staff. And they guide how we love people, respect communities and cooperate with nations. Because Jesus is our core, everything we do for a child has His best intentions for them at heart. All the checkups for physical care, the safe environments for play and interaction, and regular mentoring and tutoring are integral with the teachings of Jesus to love God and love our neighbor as ourself. This way of living is modeled and shared in age-appropriate, culturally relevant ways—and never through coercion, manipulation or forced compliance. (Compassion International 2017a)

Compassion's work is embedded in spiritually transformative understandings of development, centred on Jesus and the Christian message. Their tagline 'Christ-centred, Child-focussed, Church-based' was repeated over and over amongst the interview participants (almost every single one said the phrase, unprompted), a touchstone they returned to frequently in explaining Compassion's mission. They differentiated themselves from a mission agency though, noting for example, that "the point of our ministry isn't to run a circuit between different ministries and churches and preach

Christ and then move in, it truly is the art of discipleship… it is truly a discipleship model, not a conversion model" (interview with Compassion staff member, Colorado Springs, 19 March 2018).

Religious Affiliations

In Compassion's first official corporate policy statement in 1976 Erickson wrote that "Compassion International is an interdenominational, evangelical Christian organization" and that they shared the statement of faith of the NAE. Internal accounting classifies Protestant non-denominational/independent churches as the largest group of donors, followed by churches in the Baptist denomination (both likely to be majority evangelical) (interview with Compassion USA staff member, Colorado Springs, 19 March 2018). Compassion is not only strongly linked to Protestant religious communities, it is largely invisible outside of them.[15] It advertises on Christian radio, Christian print and digital media; it sponsors Christian artists and concerts, runs booths at Christian conventions, and sends relationship managers to speak to churches. It invests relatively little in cultivating broader relationships. This is also true of Compassion Australia. A 2014 Pareto Fundraising report labelled Compassion the 'dark horse' of the Australian charity sector, ranked the fourth largest charity fundraiser in the country for that year, beaten only by WV and various arms of the Salvation Army, and outranking local arms of MSF and Oxfam). Yet very few people outside of their targeted demographic (Christians) have ever heard of them (Probono Australia 2014). None-the-less, they are well known by Christians and invest heavily in church partnerships, creating long-term relationships with churches in developed countries, and connecting them to specific and ongoing projects to support. This partnership approach has made Compassion one of the two largest non-ACFID Australian aid NGOs in 2018 (the other being MSF) (Development Policy Centre 2019).[16]

Compassion has been particularly successful in creating long-term relationships with mega churches, such as its strategic partnership with Willow Creek. In fact, the current president Jimmy Mellado was previously head of the Willow Creek Association, a parachurch agency founded by and closely connected to (although formally independent from) the Willow Creek Community Church (one of the US' largest evangelical megachurches) (Lee 2014, 202). Compassion's religious affiliations are also evident in their disaster relief partners, such as Habitat for Humanity, Bible Society, and Opportunity International. They are also a member of the Accord Network (formerly AERDO).

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[15] It was not always so; when Compassion celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1977, notes of congratulation came from, among others, "President Jimmy Carter, Walter Mondale, President Pak Chung Hee of Korea, Yong Shik Kim, Korean Ambassador to the U.S., Billy Graham, and many more" (Lee 2014, 122).
[16] One observer noted drily that "half the children in Africa must be paid for by Hillsong!" Hillsong is an Australian-based megachurch, which has provided over 66,000 sponsorships for Compassion through their global conferences alone (Compassion Australia 2017).

Their most important and obvious religious affiliation is their consistent delivery partner, the local church. "At Compassion, we believe that the mandate to help the poor is through the church", (Paul O'Rourke, previous CEO of Compassion Australia interviewed in ChristianToday AU n.d.). Compassion's programming only establishes childhood development centres through local churches wherever they exist and are willing to be involved. Compassion believes that local churches are best suited to address children's holistic needs, able to effectively deliver Jesus-based teaching and whole of life care to impoverished children in their communities (Compassion International 2017b). This commitment is a strategy based in theology; grounded in a story of the body of Christ being the key to societal transformation and renewal. "The Church is the great hope for the world and is God's instrument to advance the kingdom of God. Compassion mobilizes and connects the global Body of Christ to fulfil her mandate for holistic discipleship of children in poverty" (Compassion International Ministry Philosophy Series: Church, 2011, 51, as quoted by Lee 2014, 18). Despite the language of instruments, churches are not instrumentalised in this narrative – they are not merely conveniently local actors with social capital to implement the NGO's programs. They are instead conceptualised as 'change agents' who bring "the lasting message of hope that is the true and often misrepresented message of Christianity" (Sim and Peters 2014, 164).

This is reflected in the process of vetting a potential partner church, which includes both checks on their practical and logistical capacity to support a development centre, and time spent developing a statement of faith that demonstrates unity between Compassion's approach and the local church's theological positioning. While there is great denominational and some doctrinal variety in the partner churches, one interviewee also noted that if "our ministry should attract people; our ministry should also repel people", referring to the importance of establishing a core set of shared beliefs with prospective partner churches (interview with Compassion staff member, Colorado Springs, 12 March 2018). This practice is a demonstration of a practical way that the FBO implements its faith-identity, seeking to mould its operating environment by restricting its delivery partnerships.

There are drawbacks to this model, as Compassion acknowledges. A commitment to working with theologically aligned, established churches in (relatively) stable political climates drastically reduces the pool of eligible working environments, despite their stated commitment to selection based on need. One senior staff member reflected that it means Compassion often does not reach the most desperately vulnerable and impoverished children globally, as conflict zones or anti-Christian regimes precludes churches for Compassion to partner with (interview with senior Compassion staff member, Colorado Springs, 15 March 2018). They cannot, for example, work in South Sudan, China,

Afghanistan, or Syria; they were recently pushed out of India (interviews with Compassion staff members, Colorado Springs, 14 and 15 March 2018).

Staff Policies

Compassion's approach to staff hiring reflects their vision of relief and development work as vocation: "our team is not employed by chance, but through God's calling, for His purpose" where staff "display commitment to the Church" by "striving to become more Christ-like in all they do" (Compassion International 2018). Demonstration of "an active spiritual life" is part of the hiring process, with questions about 'faith-walk' sitting alongside questions of technical skills, work style and problem solving abilities. Interview tips for prospective applicants include encouragement to "trust in the Lord's planning, timing, and will for your future career" (Compassion International 2018). Once hired, the staff environment includes prayer, weekly departmental devotionals, chaplaincy visits and chapel attendance. The Global Ministry Centre in Colorado is bedecked with Bible verse quotes, Christian worship music is piped into the bathrooms, and seats and tables are covered in pamphlets directed at staff to 'pray for the one' (reminding staff not lose focus on the individuality of their sponsored children). A number of employees (the relationship managers) work directly with churches, requiring them to participate in their prayers, singing, and perhaps even communion celebrations (also called Eucharist, or Lord's Supper) when they visit. Relationship managers sometimes even lead elements of the church service (interview with Compassion Australia staff member, Newcastle, 17 October 2017).

In the field, Compassion's partnership with local churches places employment conditions on the church. This means the vast majority of people carrying out Compassion's child development programs are not Compassion employees but are engaged by the local church (interview with senior Compassion staff member, Colorado Springs, 14 March 2018). The faith status of these workers then becomes a matter for the country office and local church partner to manage with reference to contextual appropriateness. In Muslim majority areas, for example, employment of a non-Christian cook may be a contextually sensitive solution to the need to provide halal food for Muslim children attending the programs (interview with senior Compassion staff member, Colorado Springs, 14 March 2018). None-the-less, delivering programs through local churches does allow Compassion to be confident that the vast majority of staff developing regular and long-term relationships with sponsored children are Christian.

One of the interesting side effects of this requirement for Christian staff is the growth of outsourcing strategies. In the Australia office, for example, the ability to outsource non-core work such as payroll and IT to other firms allows the office to mitigate some of the drawbacks of having a relatively small labour recruitment pool (limited by restrictions of staff faith, and their location in a

regional city) while retaining their commitment to (and reaping the benefits of) a highly 'christianised' corporate environment (interview with Compassion Australia staff member, Newcastle, 17 October 2017). This raises some interesting questions about where in the corporate structure of an FBO it 'matters' to be faith-based.[17]

Donor Support

Compassion raises funds and other resources almost entirely through Christian channels. Staff in interviews consistently highlighted their lack of government funding in particular as evidence of missional integrity. Various staff noted that they deliberately did not solicit government money to avoid perceived restrictions and controversies. The Australian branch staff, for example, noted a wariness of re-joining ACFID because "how we express faith in our programs may create barriers" despite ACFID's interest in the past in exploring their admission (video interview with Compassion Australia staff member, 14 December 2017).[18]

The FBO's major income stream is from their child sponsorship program, where sponsors commit to a monthly recurring payment to support a specific child to participate in a child development program at their local development centre. Sponsors can also pay for birthday and Christmas gifts for that child and their family (sent as cash to the centre, where staff buy appropriate gifts, like a musical instrument, clothing, or books) (Compassion Australia 2016). Central to this model is the long term, one-to-one relationship sponsors and children are encouraged to develop through letter writing. Compassion advances this relationship as a key part of their development strategy for the child in need, not just for the benefit of sponsor retention (although it has that effect). The prayers, encouragements and support – the love – sent to children in poverty through the writing mechanism, they argue, combats the 'lie of poverty', that a child has no worth. A significant proportion of Compassion's resources are dedicated to facilitating the letter exchange; one interviewee confided that they valued the relationship it created between sponsor and child so highly that they would continue to prioritise it even if it meant less revenue. Fortunately for Compassion, it does not have to choose. They have a highly loyal donor base, with a yearly dollar retention rate of over 85 percent. This means that over 85 percent of donors who give money to

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[17] It also addresses some of the grey areas of Australia's non-discrimination legislation. It may be easier to justify religious adherence requirements for staff with roles such as church relationship, or prayer and pastoral care managers, than for IT systems support. Compassion Australia office staff demonstrated keen awareness in interviews that lack of clarity in Australian law over the extent to which faith can be required in recruitment processes was a delicate matter for them. Branding helps: a HR executive said they had never had to turn away a non-Christian applicant from a core role because none had ever applied (interview with Compassion Australia staff member, Newcastle, 17 October 2017).

[18] They were also aware that their attractiveness to ACFID may have been due to the fact that ACFID dues are levied as a percentage of NGO income.

Compassion one year will give it to them again the next (interview with Compassion USA staff member, Colorado Springs, 19 March 2018).

In emphasising the letter-writing relationship between sponsors and children (as well as the one between children and development centre staff), Compassion enacts the evangelical belief in the power of personal relationships, and that they are necessary for transformation, since poverty is fundamentally about broken relationships. Compassion's literature defines poverty as economic – less than a certain number of dollars a day, but their holistic approach sees relationship restoration at the centre of the solution. In this, they reflect a conversionist paradigm of social engagement, in that only restored relationships can give lasting change.

Compassion also facilitates trips for sponsors to visit their sponsored child's development project. They offer these trips to showcase their integrity and transparency: "you can in fact visit your child, it is a real child, it's not a marketing ploy… we're willing to invite supporters to go and do that… that reinforces trust, that Compassion is effective, and that this is a real child, and they only have one sponsor" (interview with Compassion USA staff member, Colorado Springs, 19 March 2018). They have also invested in church to church partnerships, where a partner country church sponsors all the children in a program country church's project, with a sense of being a wealth transfer conduit from the church of the north to its sister in the global south (interview with Compassion staff member, Colorado Springs, 19 March 2018). Their heavy investment in church and Christian institutional support has necessitated that their donors are mostly Christian. "We certainly don't mind non-believers being sponsors" said the former CEO of Compassion Australia Paul O'Rourke (ChristianToday AU n.d.), but there are not too many that fit that category (interview with Compassion staff member, Colorado Springs, 15 March 2018).

Compassion's low risk appetite for financial controversy has made them hesitate to court donations from corporations until recently; assuming that corporate donors would not be interested in giving to an overtly Christian agency (interview with Compassion USA senior staff member, Colorado Springs, 19 March 2018). As their annual turnover approaches US$1 billion, they have begun to realise that they are now a major player in Christian relief and development (consider higher profile SP's lower turnover) and need a strategy to engage corporate sponsorship replacing previously ad-hoc responses to corporate approaches (video interview with Compassion staff member, 29 March 2018). Corporate sponsorships vary from lump sum donations to general funds, to businesses sponsoring individual children. Donations of goods and services have occurred, but are not generally encouraged – without a well-established logistics and supply chain, Compassion is largely unable to deal with gifts-in-kind.

Compassion's history and structure have influenced its understanding of its values and identities in quite a different way to the other two FBOs examined. Whereas WV and SP moved assertively into the mainstream humanitarian sector (albeit with very different engagement strategies), Compassion has remained largely connected to its founding identity as a child-support ministry, mobilising churches and individual Christians around the world to practise their faith through the transformation of impoverished children's lives. Their early scandals shaped a risk-averse culture and a preference to work with trusted and established partners, cultivating an identity and orientation deeply embedded in faith narratives and not particularly receptive to broader humanitarian discourses.

Conclusion

As this exploration of the three FBOs has shown, relying on simple categorisations of 'evangelical' humanitarian actors disguises a great deal of strategic and operational diversity. Although all three agencies are evangelical, they are shaped by unique histories with diverging strategies and practices. This is not to say their beliefs do not matter. On the contrary, understanding the development of the evangelical humanitarian ethos allows us to fit these agencies in a broader field of practice. It also allows room to see the fluidity of this identity, and the ways in which it changes dependent on context, as religious actors' lived experience of their faith interacts with their environment. Each agency was started in similar circumstances by similar people. Yet as they dealt with the challenges of their circumstances, they diverged from one another. The difficulties they encountered, the communities they embedded in, the conflicts they had, all these things interacted with their evangelical commitments in a constitutive way. WV's rapid growth and management-minded second generation of leadership led it into close and repeated contact with the broader humanitarian system, where they had to refine and develop their theologies of social engagement as they encountered secular actors, religious differences, and pragmatic field requirements. This embedded them in the broader IHO, enabling them to draw on and mobilise its resources, but consequently more exposed to its normative pressures and demands.

SP was created explicitly to avoid WV's path to professional humanitarianism. Instead, SP emphasised divine intervention, short-term Christian supporting ministries, and empowered central leadership to personally agree a patchwork of commitments. As a result, SP became highly risk tolerant, fostering a high-risk, high-reward strategic culture. SP consistently refused to separate physical and spiritual explanations of poverty and injustice, weathering public disagreements with government donors and wider detractors as a consequence. Compassion, by contrast, sits in the grey

zone between the humanitarian space and the mission field. Its work is focused on community development and poverty alleviation, but it articulates its motivations and its reasoning as a Christian ministry. This shields Compassion from pressure to conform to the normative framework of the IHO, but reduces its access to this community's resources, learning and assistance of this community of practice, particularly in times of strategic constraint, or high pragmatic demands in the field. Compassion's structures make it deeply risk-averse with a slow-moving approach to relief and development building relationships slowly over time and prioritising local ownership of programs. Next, I will explore how these organisations' varying orientations were expressed in different actions in the field, as I investigate their responses to the Indian Ocean tsunami and Cyclone Nargis in the coming two chapters.

Chapter Four: On the Ground in Indonesia

Figure 3: Map of regional Aceh

Introduction

Having explored the development of these three evangelical FBOs over the course of the twentieth century, I turn now to the task of understanding the implications of their identities and values for their disaster response. Over the next two chapters I examine these FBOs' programs as they responded to two different humanitarian disaster contexts. In this chapter, I focus on their humanitarian response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami in Aceh (see figure 3). I begin by introducing the regional context, the disaster and its impact. I then provide a macro-level overview of the humanitarian response by local, national, and international actors, before delving into the detail of WV, SP and Compassion's responses in Aceh. I trace the impact of context on their choices

and actions, drawing on the prism laid out in chapter two of this thesis: the role of normative pressures, strategic restraints, and pragmatic demands.

The Indian Ocean tsunami had a devastating impact on a region already rendered fragile by internal conflict and consequential poverty. The international response that followed had to reckon with difficult physical conditions, complex political machinations, and divergent expectations between donors and beneficiaries. This difficult environment was intensified by poor coordination and competing interests and agendas amongst NGOs. There were strong normative pressures from actors in the IHO to conform to the Indonesian government's demands and restrict their autonomy, to avoid expulsion. There were strategic restraints, such as those presented by the cultural and religious differences of the Acehnese population, and the projects required by the reconstruction. There were also pragmatic demands on FBOs in terms of staff available, building materials that could be used, and resources on hand. I examine each of the three FBOs in turn to demonstrate how their organisational orientations led each to unique responses as they performed their theological commitments in this complex environment.

The Disaster in Aceh

The Boxing Day tsunami of December 26, 2004 was caused by an underwater earthquake off the coast of Northern Sumatra. The movement of the sea floor generated a series of tsunamis, causing fatalities in fourteen countries across the Indian Ocean region. Almost 230,000 people were killed in total, with a further 1.7 million displaced; the earthquake and tsunami effects reached up to three kilometres inland in places (Telford, Cosgrave, and Houghton 2006, 16). Indonesia was one of the most heavily affected countries, with the death toll for Aceh estimated at around 167,000; a further 500,000 people were displaced (Zeccola 2014, 83). This had an enormous impact on a region of 4.27 million people. Damaging aftershocks rocked the area for months afterwards; one such earthquake devastated the island of Nias three months after the initial tsunami.

The tsunami devastated a region already in humanitarian distress. The thirty-year long civil conflict between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement – known by several names, but for simplicity's sake referred to by its Indonesian language acronym GAM, (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka) – had displaced large numbers of people from their homes, stunted economic development, undermined civic and political stability, and pushed many of the region's inhabitants below the poverty line. The earthquake and subsequent floodwaters that wiped away homes and villages did not wipe away the effects of the conflict; instead the two crises entered an "interdependent relationship" (Zeccola 2014, 97). The dynamics of that interplay between these very different stressors became an important part of the humanitarian response in Aceh.

Size of the Response

The reconstruction project in post-tsunami Aceh was enormous, one of the largest ever executed in the 'developing' world (Masyrafah and McKeon 2008, 39). The overall cost of the damage and losses to Indonesia specifically from the tsunami was estimated at US$4.45 billion (Masyrafah and McKeon 2008, 2). The destruction of housing was by far the largest source of damage to the region (see figure 4).
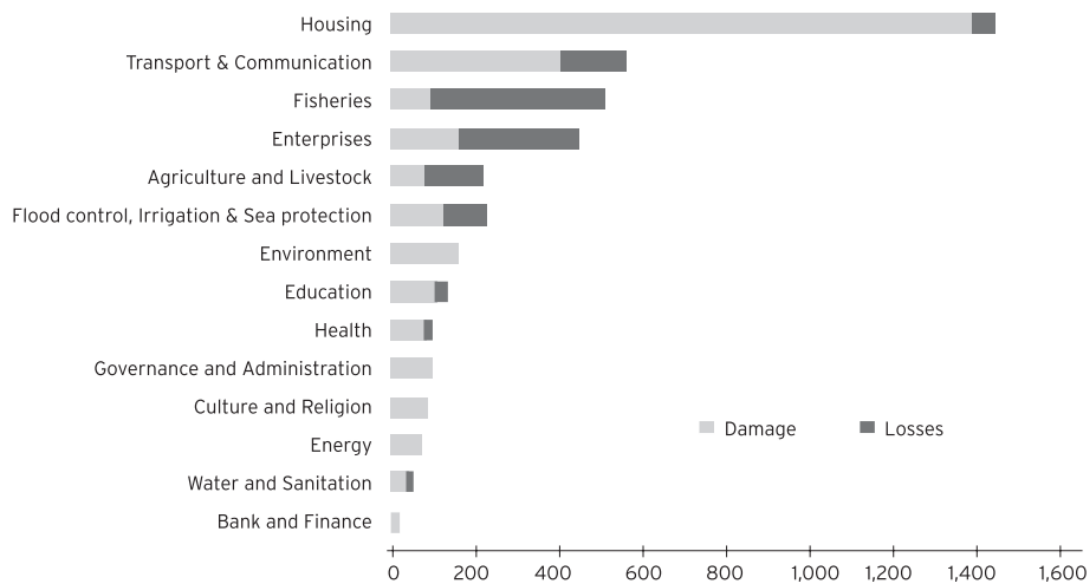

Figure 4: Damages/Losses in Aceh from tsunami. As presented in Masyrafah and McKeon (2008, 5).

The international attention to the crisis, both for the whole region that was affected and for Indonesia specifically, was also huge. Almost US$13.5 billion was raised in aid (Telford, Cosgrave, and Houghton 2006, 16). Partly this was a result of the scale of the crisis and the reconstruction effort it required; but it was also a result of timing. Many Western audiences were still on Christmas holidays, and many Western tourists were caught up in the actual flooding in several of the affected countries, leading to extensive media coverage. For example, Ashlin and Ladle found more than 10,000 articles in the British press containing the word 'tsunami' in the 19-month period after the event (Ashlin and Ladle 2007, 332). Australia's public interest in the tsunami was particularly strong, given the close proximity and relative familiarity of the affected countries.[1] The large financial response also facilitated the travel of thousands of overseas respondents to the disaster zone, both volunteers and paid staff from a large number of organisations, traditional and non-traditional aid

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[1] Indonesia and Thailand are two particularly popular Australian holiday destinations. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) fielded 85,000 calls on its hotline following the disaster, "with over 15,000 Australians reported as unaccounted for" in the days that followed(Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2014). While only twenty-six were confirmed dead, the initial numbers of missing Australians speaks to the large volumes of Australian tourists present in the affected area.

providers alike (Thompson 2011, 71). These factors together ensured the sustained and widespread attention of traditional donor countries and constituencies on the relief and reconstruction efforts, with Aceh receiving the greatest share.

Legacies of Conflict

The humanitarian response in Aceh initially began with the Indonesian government refusing to allow international agencies into the region immediately following the disaster. This was a continuation of their earlier policies in relation to the ongoing conflict with GAM. Since 1959, the Aceh province had existed with 'special territory' status, according it greater autonomy than other parts of the country and reflecting the disputed nature of the province through colonial history (Pandya 2006, 304). The central Indonesian government had struggled to integrate the region into the archipelago nation following its independence from the Dutch after Japanese occupation in WWII. The Dutch themselves had only had partially succeeded in folding Aceh into their East Indies holdings; and the emergence of GAM in the 1970s was in many ways a continuation of the province's historical resistance of forced integration into a broader polity. Many Acehnese considered that they had merely exchanged their Dutch colonisers for Javanese ones (Aspinall 2009, 69).

GAM's grievances against the central Indonesian government specifically concerned the region's control over its natural resources, and right to self-determination (Aspinall 2009, 69). The Indonesian military, known since 1999 as the TNI, met GAM's largely guerrilla tactics with harsh crackdowns and liberal use of force. The conflict spawned thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs), and disrupted key industries across a thirty year period (Zeccola 2014, 85). A number of local NGOs emerged over this time, concerned with responding to the problems created by the conflict, and addressing the human rights abuses perpetrated by the TNI. Several international agencies were also involved in supporting IDPs intermittently, preforming delicate manoeuvres with the central government to placate their fears they were legitimising narratives of human rights abuses by the military and supporting local NGOs with secessionist agendas. However, the declaration of a military emergency following a breakdown in peace talks with GAM in 2003 had the practical effect of expelling international agencies entirely from the region (Zeccola 2014, 87). This meant that international NGOS had hardly any pre-existing relationships or organisational capacity in Aceh to respond to the devastation of the earthquake and tsunami.

When the tsunami first hit, the Indonesian government was unwilling to lift their ban on foreign presence. However, as the scale of the damage became more apparent (and the pressure from the international community to let them in increased), the government relented and reversed course, permitting first national and then international agencies to enter the affected region within the

week.[2] None-the-less, the Indonesian government remained deeply suspicious of any perceived overtures towards the GAM combatants, a watchfulness that did not ease until after a peace deal was signed in August 2005 (Elliott 2014, 5). As a result, any relief that fell outside of very narrow tsunami-related criteria was considered problematic by the authorities. The Acehnese population, in turn, mistrusted the Indonesian government's motives in supplying aid. There was, for example, much negative press about the spectre of forced displacement under the guise of temporary shelters in the first few months after the disaster (UN-HABITAT 2009, 11).

The suspicious attitudes of both the central government and local population made the humanitarian response tricky work for NGOs, with serious consequences for missteps. At one point the UNHCR was temporarily expelled by the Indonesian government for taking too keen an interest in IDPs; a small number of human rights workers and Amnesty International researchers were also asked to leave (Dibley 2014, 52). This set the climate for the remaining agencies, impressing upon them the necessity of treading carefully around the issue of the conflict, and effectively rendering any conflict-related humanitarian issues off-limits (Dibley 2014, 52). Many agencies earmarked aid exclusively for tsunami victims in deference to the central government and their own donors. This led to situations where NGOs were unable to assist those they assessed as most in need because their destitution was the result of the civil conflict not the wave. The dissonance this created between NGOs' putative commitments to needs-based response and the obviously restricted categories of people they could assist further reinforced community distrust of the rebuilding process.

The International Response

Once international agencies were allowed into Aceh, they came in droves. The Indonesian government reported admitting around 124 international NGOs, 430 local and national level NGOs, eleven foreign and/or multilateral actors (such as UN coordinating bodies and foreign militaries) and three separate branches of the Red Cross (Zeccola 2014, 87).[3] The pause before international NGOs hit the ground meant that much first response work was done by locals, both Acehnese and national NGOs from further south, near Medan. The international agencies arrived and began to roll out their responses, starting with relief – water, blankets, search and rescue efforts, and food. The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition noted that international NGO efforts were at their best where they

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[2] This is not to suggest that the Indonesian government was aware of the scale of the disaster and did not want aid. Rather, the scale of communication infrastructure damage was so great that only when the Indonesian Vice President arrived in Aceh in person on the 27th December, did the central government really grasp how catastrophic the tsunami had been (Telford, Cosgrave, and Houghton 2006, 44). Once they understood the extent of the disaster, they requested international assistance immediately.

[3] There may have been as many as 200 additional international NGOs, which were not registered because they only stayed a few weeks, or came with a one-off donation (Telford, Cosgrave, and Houghton 2006, 55).

supplemented and reinforced pre-existing local relief efforts (Telford, Cosgrave, and Houghton 2006, 16). The relief and recovery phase of the response made a significant impact; secondary deaths, particularly from disease, were largely avoided by a fast and well-funded response rate.

The relief and recovery work occupied all actors for the first three months following the disaster, and it was gruelling. The combination of earthquake and tsunami had devastated communities up and down the coastline, sometimes leaving only the local mosque standing (as it was usually of sturdier construction). There were thousands of dead bodies; in underground car parks, in the streets, in the wreckages of homes, washed up on the shoreline, all to be recovered and buried (as related by several interview participants). The major road out had been smashed, the local airstrip was cracked, and the harbour was damaged.

The Indonesian government formed the BRR (Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi, or the Agency for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias) in April/May 2005 to coordinate the reconstruction of the region (Steinberg 2007). They sent out Dr Kuntoro Mangkusubroto to head up the agency. Initially regarded with suspicion (as a Javanese bureaucrat), 'Pak Kun', as he was known, turned out to be a good choice for the job of reconciling a devastated provincial administration with both the errant GAM leadership and the central Indonesian government. Under his leadership, the BRR worked hard to exert Indonesia's autonomy over the reconstruction process. This was a significant achievement. A common criticism of both the NGOs and the foreign powers involved in the reconstruction was that they treated Aceh like a failed state in a dysfunctional region (Telford, Cosgrave, and Houghton 2006, 93). This meant that they tended to disregard local processes and capacities, underestimate the importance of local first response, ignore local government coordination mechanisms and de-prioritise reporting and permission procedures. The BRR had to balance many competing interests and factions as they coordinated the reconstruction. They also had to manage their dual role as both regulator-cum-coordinator and program implementer, a balance they did not always get right.

A key desire of the BRR was to 'build back better' (first raised by Bill Clinton, the then United Nations Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery) (Elliott 2014, 5). They hoped to use the opportunity given by the tsunami to improve living and working standards in Aceh, and future-proof construction against further disasters. However, there were a number of complications needing to be worked through. Chief among these was the need for a new building code; it took Jakarta over a year to overcome its own bureaucratic tangles in clarifying standards for new construction in the region. Another challenge was the issue of land ownership. With so many dead, and so many records swept away, deciding who was entitled to live where was no easy task. Adding to this was the region's special

territory status (including its dispensation to apply sharia law), which meant inheritance law was a matter for Islamic jurisprudence – but many of the local imams with the knowledge and expertise to dispense these judgements had died in the disaster (interview with WV staff member, Melbourne, 20 April 2017).

A third major challenge for the rebuild was the effect the aid response had on local economies. Such high demand for construction materials and labour resulted in massive cost inflation – reflecting both the logistical difficulties of procuring both, and the local Acehnese refusal to participate in 'community building' models (a general trend noted by staff across several FBOs interviewed who were deployed to the response).[4] This led to difficult choices for implementing organisations: did they wait for building codes or move straight away to meet housing needs? Did they build for everyone who asked them, or limit their builds to pre-tsunami homeowners? Did they pay beneficiaries to rebuild their own homes or hire contractors? Did they accept largely illegally logged local timber or wait months for supplies from Medan and beyond? Each agency had to come to their own decisions on these matters. Their choices reflected a range of factors, including donor and beneficiary pressure, their own level of building experience, their budgets, and their logistics chains. With around 100 agencies involved in rebuilding approximately 125,000 houses across five years, there were wildly varying results (Elliott 2014, 6).[5]

The large number of agencies working in the region also affected the cohesion of the overall response. While governments, the UN and large donors were able to coordinate through peak representative and government bodies (the Multi Donor Fund, the BRR and the Office of the UN Recovery Coordinator), NGOs in the field did not achieve the same level of coordination. The BRR made an effort to be across their projects, but had trouble getting the NGOs to report with any regularity. Collectively, the NGOs had more cash than the UN, reducing its ability to act as the de-facto coordinator as it often does by controlling major programming.[6] NGO's efforts were split across multiple working groups rather than directed through a single point of coordination which prevented the streamlining of program rollouts. There was not, a "single, authoritative joint-assessment" rather there were many assessments limited to the specific responses of individual agencies which were often heavily influenced by media reports which took "the place of more

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[4] Community building models are where NGOs provide materials and carpenters, and residents provide voluntary labour to collaborate in rebuilding homes.

[5] For example, a group of twenty-five agencies (including ten Red Cross organisations) committed to build 50,000 houses but had only finished 500 by the end of 2006 (Telford, Cosgrave, and Houghton 2006, 56).

[6] For example, several international NGOs had access to helicopter support for their responses, but the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service went nearly four weeks after the disaster without helicopter access in Aceh, which had a real impact on the UN's ability to carry out initial needs assessments (Telford, Cosgrave, and Houghton 2006, 48).

formal assessments" (Telford, Cosgrave, and Houghton 2006, 22). The international NGOs' "reluctance to join forces, share resources, or find efficient ways of working together meant that opportunities for synergies were lost" (Masyrafah and McKeon 2008, 39). Zeccola suggests that this was a consequence of the unusually large amounts of funding the international NGOs had raised; that it was earmarked made the agencies inflexible, and the size of their budgets made them deeply risk averse. International NGOs also had heavy pressure to spend that cash quickly from donors impatient to see the fruits of their generosity (Zeccola 2014, 91).[7] As a result, the large numbers of well-financed NGOs often found themselves competing rather than cooperating to secure adequate numbers of local staff, skilled labour and supplies, leading to shortages and huge price inflations.

Religious Sensitivities

Meanwhile, the central government wanted the largely Islamic locals to see it as keeping a firm rein on the religious dimensions of the foreign presence in the religiously conservative province. Aceh had long been regarded as the 'Veranda of Mecca' (Serambi Mekkah), the doorway for Indonesia's connections with Islamic thought, trade and communities (Fountain 2016, 171). Nearly 98 percent of the region's population identified as Muslim, with most of the remaining non-Muslims living in districts along the North Sumatra border.[8] Even before the tsunami, Muslim identity played an important role in Acehnese ethnic identity; there was added to this a "religious revival" in Acehnese Muslim sentiment after the disaster, with religious narratives playing a large role in both the justification for and recovery from the effects of the tsunami (Bush, Fountain, and Feener 2015, 6–7).

The 1978 Guidelines for the Propagation of Religion already made conversions a sensitive topic in Indonesia; a few months after the tsunami, Jakarta issued a warning that it would deport any individuals or groups found seeking converts amongst the tsunami survivors. This added another dimension of pressure to those involved in the relief effort not to challenge the prevailing religious, social and cultural sentiments of the province, for fear that they offend the local and central governments. The Muhammadiyah (a national Indonesian Muslim social organisation) became a

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[7] This led to uneven program delivery, and short-term thinking, as numerous anecdotes attest. For example, sewing machines given to women of the Nusa village without any training to use them, factories built for manufacturing industries that did not exist, crop changes in rehabilitated farmland without the accompanying irrigation systems required, or livestock donated for farms that were sold by the recipients by the end of the same day (Lamb 2014, 1). It also led to signing off on expensive purchases that were not necessarily the best fit, such as the pricey fibreglass fishing boats donated by the Kuwaiti Red Crescent Society that fishermen found alarmingly easy to sink. Their overpowered engines and design shape were not suitable for the sea conditions of coastal Aceh fishing (Indonesia Relief 2005; Telford, Cosgrave, and Houghton 2006, 38).

[8] Of the remaining 2.6 percent, the 2005 Indonesian census counted 1.7 percent as Protestants, 0.55 percent as Buddhist, and the rest as Hindu, Catholic and 'Chinese traditional belief'. Moreover, most Protestant Christians were not ethnic Acehnese or one of the several other ethnic minorities in the region, but Batak originally from North Sumatra province.

preferred partner for many of the big UN and international agencies in Aceh, due to their perceived cultural resonance with the Acehnese, as well as pre-existing "presence within affected communities and vast, quickly mobilizable networks" (Bush, Fountain, and Feener 2015, 6).   However, for the most part, international NGOs pre-emptively policed themselves and one another.   One staff member of an FBO responding with medical aid reminisced about the mortification they felt upon discovering that the painkiller medication their team had been handing out all day had the words 'Jesus Saves' stamped on the front (the pharmaceuticals were all from a central donated stash). The offending paracetamol was quickly collected and dumped (video interview with third-party FBO first responder, 7 June 2017).[9]   It was into this complicated, dynamic context that the three agencies under examination in this thesis arrived.

World Vision

WV reacted to the Boxing Day tsunami by initiating one of their biggest ever humanitarian responses, with an overall budget of US$350 million. The amount was so staggering that the agency felt the need to hire a private firm to conduct a parallel rolling audit of the money trail throughout the response (video interview with WV senior staff member, 13 July 2017). They began by creating an Asian Tsunami Response Team (ATRT), which coordinated projects in five different countries. The surge capacity of WV as a global NGO was enormous. They deployed 2700 extra staff into the region in the month following the disaster, the majority of these were newly recruited to WV or internal transfers from programs in Eastern Indonesia; less than 200 of them were pre-existing expat staff from outside the Asia Pacific (interviews with WV senior staff members, Melbourne, 20 April 2017 and by video, 13 July 2017).   WV stood up five separate responses in countries affected by the tsunami. Their Aceh project was the largest, involving a three year program spread across five locations in Aceh and Nias (see figure 5), focussing on seven key areas: shelter and infrastructure, economic recovery, education, health, water and sanitation, and child protection and advocacy (World Vision Indonesia 2007, 3). While WV Indonesia estimated it would need a budget of US$97 million for the Aceh response, the Asia Pacific evaluation indicated the total five-year expenditure was US$138 million, reflecting the inflated expenses of working in the region (World Vision Asia Pacific 2010, 7).

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[9] Islamic authorities, for their part, worked hard to make space for the ignorance of others. For example, after it was discovered that tinned pork products had been amongst the food donated to the Aceh relief effort, the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (the highest clerical body in Indonesia) issued a fatwa (official Islamic legal opinion) declaring food aid temporarily non-haram, or non-forbidden where its provenance was unclear, in order to give Acehnese Muslims guidance and peace about accepting foreign assistance (Telford, Cosgrave, and Houghton 2006, 52; UCANews 2005).

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Figure 5: WV's program implementation locations (World Vision Indonesia, 2007, 3).

For WV, the response was both an opportunity to implement solutions learnt from other disasters, and a challenge to their scaling capacities. Like other NGOs, they faced tough choices about rebuilding strategies, staffing resources and maintaining positive working relationships with a variety of parties. The structural constraints of their agency played a key role in their decision to withdraw from the region a year earlier than originally planned. One of the noteworthy aspects of their response was their resilience to normative pressures from their donors and their beneficiaries in some areas, and their commitment to appeasing it in others. Both of these phenomena were justified and interpreted through the lens of their organisational personality – in line with my contention that contextual factors are mediated in effect by their palatability within the FBO's broader narratives of self and belief. Understanding their choices requires understanding both their organisational orientation (as created by their faith-based identity) and how it interacted with contextual factors.

Responding to the Disaster

When the news of the tsunami's devastation broke, WV Indonesia was the first responder in the WV global structure. A senior staff member arrived in Aceh within 48 hours to assess the need. He and his companions handed out blankets and bottled water as they called for reinforcements (video interview with WV senior staff member, 13 July 2017). However, WV Indonesia quickly hit their capacity limit in the face of the sheer size of the disaster, and once international actors were allowed into the province, the WV Asia Pacific structure began to take over. WV has members of their Global Rapid Response Team (GRRT) in offices around the world, and was able to mobilise a number of those specialist responders to provide strategic operational direction (video interview with WV

senior staff member, 5 May 2017). Reflecting Australia's broader public interest in the disaster, WV Australia was a key fundraising office, supplying over $85 million to the region wide Tsunami Response program, the largest per capita national office contribution. It also supplied surge staff for the initial phase of the recovery (video interviews with WV senior staff members, 5 May and 13 July 2017). By the 4th of January, the Vice President of Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs and the ATRT Director were on the scene in Banda Aceh, assessing the scale of the damage to calculate the percentage of the ATRT funds they would divert to Aceh. They decided that it would receive the largest share of the funding, due to the completeness of the devastation, and their forecast of its relatively higher build-back costs (which they accurately predicted would be much higher than the other four countries in which they responded).

WV's positive attitude towards integrating with the broader IHO was observable in their response from the start. Committed to central coordination mechanisms, their staff liaised with other NGOs and UN agencies to decide which areas of response they would target.[10] Their presence at earlier large-scale humanitarian responses had given them pre-existing expertise and relationships, with staff who had coordinated with one another before and knew which agencies were likely to set up which programs.[11] The response team were also able to leverage the pre-existing relationship of WV Indonesia's board chair with Pak Kun, the BRR director to smooth out any tensions as they arose. This meant they felt they could roll out an extensive program and act quickly to resolve any issues.

WV deployed a standard three phase strategy for their response. For the first phase, "it was essentially emergency, in the purest sense of the word" (video interview with WV senior staff member, 13 July 2017). They chartered twenty-eight aid flights to deliver emergency goods to their programs in the five most affected countries, the lion's share of which went to Aceh. They set up twenty-six child friendly spaces in Aceh, and began delivering medical care and food and household good supplies (video interview with WV senior staff member, 5 May 2017). They also implemented short-term cash-for-work schemes. After a month or so, their focus turned to the second phase,

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[10] This coordination extended to being part of the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition Core Management Group, joining other NGOs such as CARE and IFRC, and UN agencies such as the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and UN Development Programme (UNDP) to review and evaluate the Indian Ocean tsunami response, and give recommendations for future improvement (Telford, Cosgrave, and Houghton 2006, 129).

[11] Although coordination was an issue overall for the Aceh response, the largest NGOs had a fairly well established rhythm for coordination amongst themselves, insofar as they did not replicate one another's programming, but sought to specialise in specific programs, such as under-fives feeding for MSF, child friendly spaces for WV, water for Oxfam, et cetera (interview with WV senior staff member, Melbourne, 20 April 2017). This included, and was in addition to, formal coordination mechanisms through OCHA. It raises pertinent questions, however, about the extent to which the dominance of these mechanisms by the largest ten international NGOs and subsequent criticism of smaller actors for failing to participate in them become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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which emphasised a transition to local development and empowerment by reducing aid deliveries in favour of sourcing goods and services from the local economy. They undertook agricultural projects (including desalination of 487 hectares of farmland), program to replace productive assets (especially fishing boats and livestock) and livelihood programs (such as industry cooperatives) (Vu 2005; World Vision Asia Pacific 2010, 8). They invested in infrastructure, repairing or replacing wells, public bathrooms, schools, health clinics, and much more. However, not all public buildings destroyed in the tsunami needed replacement. For example, one WV-constructed Banda Aceh school served as the merger for the two previous schools standing near the site, after only 140 out of the 835-strong student cohort survived (World Vision Indonesia 2007, 11). Reflecting their integration with the IHO, WV adopted a partnership with the World Food Programme. This required the provision of food aid for 150,000 people each month until it tapered to its conclusion in December 2006 (World Vision Indonesia 2007, 2). WV's third phase focussed on transitioning towards independence, providing training for teachers, health professionals, small business operators, farmers and fishers to prepare them for a gradual withdrawal of aid support.

Rebuilding

Due to the overwhelming destruction of Aceh's housing stock, a key pillar of WV's response was its rebuilding program, initially focussing on transitional accommodation before moving beneficiaries into permanent homes. 97 transitional centres and 450 transitional houses provided shelter for over a year in some cases, before permanent housing was available. WV also constructed 25 temporary schools and 16 temporary health clinics (World Vision Asia Pacific 2010). One of the most controversial decisions of the ATRT Director was to hold off permanent reconstruction (of both housing and public buildings) until the government released its updated building codes, and the beneficiaries received their appropriate land title certificates. In a situation of immense normative pressure from local media, foreign media, donors, the Indonesian government, and the Acehnese people themselves to move rapidly to provide permanent shelter, this decision created a lot of push back. The director reflected that although the pressure to move from transitional to permanent housing was immense, he was adamant that they would do it right:

> There was no way I was going to put a single brick on the ground until Jakarta had come up with a new building code. I wasn't going to rush ahead and build a two-storey hospital or school - school particularly - to the existing codes, risk another earthquake, and the death of 400 kids in a school, and then find out that the codes had actually strengthened six months after we'd built. (interview with WV senior staff member, Melbourne, 20 April 2017)

For months, the response team endured the pressure generated by negative media reports, and increasingly worried support office enquiries (which in turn came from their donors), as well as some pushback from Acehnese survivors stuck in the barracks-style temporary accommodation units while they watched their neighbours moving in to permanent houses built by other NGOs.[12]   They also faced the concerns of the WV Indonesia board, based back in Jakarta. There were good reasons for all of these parties to be concerned about the extensive use of transitional accommodation (see figure 6). As well as the usual drawbacks of communal public space, the transitional accommodation was an expensive use of already scarce lumber supplies. On top of it all, the difficulties of sourcing enough planks to build to minimum size specifications meant they were often not Sphere compliant (interview with WV senior staff member, Melbourne, 20 April 2017).

Figure 6: Emergency shelters (canvas tents) versus transition accommodation (wooden barracks). The canvas began to degrade in the tropical conditions very quickly, making the transitional versus permanent debate rather urgent (Images from Steinberg 2007, 154).

However, the senior staff maintained their position in the face of repeated questioning, refusing to start the rebuilding until they had a clear plan from the central government. Instead, they worked to redirect that pressure towards the Indonesian Government in Jakarta in an attempt to speed up the code revision, as well as providing assistance for over 4400 families to submit permanent land title applications (World Vision Indonesia 2007, 5).   WV ultimately rebuilt over 3500 houses (the most of any of the three FBOs studied in this thesis), alongside their recovery programs in their six other priority areas. Of this number, the ATRT Director knew of only two that required rebuilding; one because of an error, and one because it was too close to the shoreline during king tide events. He contrasted this with a number of other NGOs, secular and faith-based, he watched coming back to knock down and rebuild several hundred houses, as a sign that WV's strategy had been wise (interview with WV staff member, Melbourne, 20 April 2017).

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[12] Including being named as one of the twenty-five agencies that had 'not delivered' on their promise of 50,000 houses.

However, it is worth noting that this self-narrative stands in tension with criticism from other sources to this slowness. Pak Kun, head of the BRR, told news agencies he would 'throw out' international agencies if they did not submit progress reports to their office by June 2006, explaining why building commitments had not been met as expected (Reuters as cited in Telford, Cosgrave, and Houghton 2006, 127). Moreover, while WV staff emphasised quality concerns as their primary reason for holding back on permanent construction, they downplayed other factors such as difficulties procuring supplies and appropriately qualified labour.

WV's resilience to the normative pressures applied by external actors in this case was made possible by their robustness of both structural and self-identity factors. Partly, the FBO's size and strong leadership structures gave it the persistence it needed to hold this course in the face of donor (and recipient) backlash. Staff were committed to an ideal of professionalism and best practice – they wanted to be able to say that WV had built the best houses to last for the long term, not 'future slums' (interview with WV staff member, Melbourne, 20 April 2017). They drew on their experiences as long-term aid and development workers (several having been with the agency since the 1970s and 80s) to argue that a short wait in the present would be worth a better result in the future. In turn, their expertise was affirmed by the FBO, with executives further up the chain willing to "wear the heat" to protect their decision, rather than pass the pressure back down the line (interviews with WV senior staff members, Melbourne, 20 April 2017 and by video, 13 July 2017). Staff also articulated their course of action in language that evoked their self-identity as a faith based, highly professional core humanitarian actor. Staff spoke of WV as "professional", "the best", "a leader", working "to a high standard" to express their views on why they did not capitulate to the demands to build sooner. Here, the FBO demonstrated its ability to withstand external normative pressures by drawing on its organisational ethos to justify why the proposed contextual adaptation was not acceptable: it was not compatible with their view of who they were.

Being Evangelical
The second element of WV's response worth exploring was their presentation of their Christian identity in the Acehnese context. Contrary again to some of the expectations projected on to evangelical NGOs, WV was highly aware of the potential for conflict inherent in their faith identity. In contrast to their willingness to push back against normative pressures about their rebuilding project strategies, they were very deferential to external perceptions of their faith character. The WV Indonesia staff in particular were highly sensitive to the political and religious sensitivities of the region, and the effects that this could have on their welcome. The board members of the Indonesian branch insisted on comprehensive cross-cultural training for all staff heading to Aceh, international as well as domestic. "They [the Indonesian board] were adamant they [that is, all staff]

should be culturally briefed that they were moving into not just a Muslim majority community but a conservative Muslim majority community" (video interview with WV senior staff member, 13 July 2017). The board put a high priority on developing risk management strategies; a small number of staff were actually sent home as a precaution following some interactions with Muslim WV-employed staff that management deemed were 'too forward'.[13]

While WV have been engaged in thinking deeply about the presentation of its Christian identity for decades, their approach in Aceh was particularly cautious. This highlights the relationship between environment and faith identity that together produce specific practices. The normative context of the field exerted a strong pressure on the agencies to avoid offending Acehnese aid recipients or aggravating Indonesian government officials, for fear of both deterioration of security and expulsion from the region. WV altered its usual operating procedures even further than usual, in deference to this pressure. "Vanilla" was the watchword (interview with WV senior staff member, Melbourne, 20 April 2017).

The national office's original deployment of 30 or 40 staff contained "a number of highly experienced relief practitioners based in Jakarta" who were able to work with the national staff to offer "some pretty significant insights to the faith context" (video interview with WV staff member, 5 May 2017). For instance, when the team set up their first child friendly spaces they were at pains to hire as many Acehnese staff as they could find from the very beginning.[14] They recognised that Indonesian Christians from Medan or South Sumatra or Java were not much less culturally alien to the children of this formerly isolated province than international staff would be, and so prioritised having familiarity as a key trait for staff in face-to-face roles with the children. They also bought prayer mats for the centres, and facilitated educational workshops on "Children's Inheritance Rights under Indonesian and Syariah Law", with expertise from experts of Islamic jurisprudence (World Vision Indonesia 2007, 5; video interview with WV staff member, 13 July 2017). These initiatives were explained using the language of supporting children's rights to "development, protection and participation", where the right to practise their faith was considered a key part of the recovery. WV's proactive management of the staffing of their child friendly spaces paid off when they were able to distance themselves in 2005 from other Christian FBOs who stirred up controversy with plans

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[13] The experience of having to send some staff home because of failure to follow protocol around faith issues actually led to "a much more stringent and comprehensive process to equip our staff to be more sensitive" (video interview with WV senior staff member, 5 May 2017) including the creation of a Rapid Induction package.

[14] Child friendly spaces are rehabilitative centres where traumatised children can safely play and be assessed for further support away from the danger and distress of the clean-up.

to bring 'tsunami orphans' out of the province to be placed in Christian orphanages and foster homes (J. Burke 2005; Cooperman 2005).[15]

The Asia Pacific VP also took advice to decline the services of volunteer trauma counsellors coming from Western countries, out of concern that their insertion into the program would be "counterproductive because it is so culturally alienated" (video interview with WV staff member, 13 July 2017). This was a very polite way for the VP to express concern about the implications these volunteers might have for WV's ability to be sensitive to the religious context of the region. WV prioritised religious sensitivity in part because they had an eye to establishing a long-term presence in Aceh. WV Indonesia had not been prepared for their "plunge" into western Indonesia precipitated by the tsunami, but they were keenly aware that negative incidents in Aceh could have consequences for the rest of their work in other areas of Indonesia, not to mention kill off any hope of a continuing presence and future partnerships in Aceh. Accordingly, WV's heavy focus on sensitivity was justified internally by recourse to the national office's hopes of fostering long-term relationships in a new area. The national office's ability to shape WV's field practice in this way flows from WV's organisational preference for autonomous national office leaderships within its federated structure.

However, in investigating the meaning making processes that FBOs engage in to understand their own values and practices, it is important to note that the emphasis on sensitivity did not mean that WV refrained from 'being' Christian. The Asia Pacific VP reflected that he personally requested his Christian witness director to prepare special daily devotions for the frontline staff after visiting Aceh. He was deeply concerned that the scale and trauma of the initial response would overwhelm them: "I knew that it was important that they actually spend time before they did their day's work each day, just nourishing themselves" (video interview with Asia Pacific VP, 13 July 2017). WV Indonesia's first responder, Jimmy Nadapdap, highlighted the difficulties of the response: "it was a shock not only for Aceh, but for Indonesia. People did not have any idea what a tsunami did, or any idea that they would be impacted by a disaster that huge. People were quiet. They just didn't know what was going on. Things were happening so fast" (Jimmy Nadapdap 2014).

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[15] Agencies attempting this, such as WorldHelp, did not realise they were running afoul of Indonesia's (pre-existing) regulations requiring orphans to be raised within their own faith communities when they tried to find group homes to take 300 Acehnese orphans of uncertain futures in early 2005. The botched placement raised such a backlash in Indonesia that the government passed further legislation banning the removal of Acehnese orphans from the province altogether, except where they were being released into the custody of relatives (Cooperman 2005).

Nadapdap and his team had faced the arduous task of an initial needs assessment and preliminary handout amongst shocked and sometimes angry survivors, navigating "tense" environments in the first few weeks where aid shipments where late or insufficient to need (Chan 2005). They worked in a physically decimated landscape, where for days afterwards, "many bodies are rotting and still left untouched" (Nadapdap, as quoted in World Vision International 2004). In this taxing environment, spending time each day in prayer, reflection, and Bible reading was considered a powerful defence against despair and burnout. Makeshift worship services on Sundays were prioritised, even in the hectic mood of the initial relief effort. Even as the FBO went to considerable length to present as non-confrontational to the Acehnese public, they drew heavily upon their theological resources to sustain and encourage their Christian staff throughout the response. This is a clear example of how pressure from context can only change practices up to the point where they can still be reconciled with the beliefs and identity of the FBO. To require staff to desist from their daily practices of faith (both personally and communally, or corporately) would have undermined WV's commitments to its theological worldview, even if it may have further shrunk their risk profile in the sensitive province. Indeed, WV's response was to increase the space for staff to spend time encouraging themselves and one another with their beliefs, even as it sought to police the presentation of those beliefs in the name of context-sensitivity externally. WV's prioritising of worship and reflection practices as a source of staff support and care even as it deprioritised expressions of public witness points to the importance of analysing how FBOs themselves interpret the meaning and significance of their faith-based identities. Their reliance on experiential practices (as expressed by Schwarz 2018, 187) played an important role in their response, but is invisible if one's concept of religion is not sensitive to these complexities in presentation of identity.

Choosing To Go

At the beginning of 2007, WV Indonesia committed to the Aceh Development Programme (ADP) as a follow up to the initial three-year tsunami response. They planned to phase in this longer-term program by the end of December. However, the ADP never fully eventuated; one year in, it was shelved, and WV Indonesia left the province. This change of plans took a long time to come to fruition. Former staff described the agony of the decision-making process to get to this point: very reluctant to let the opportunity to be involved long term in the west of Indonesia pass them by, but deeply concerned about the cost to their eastern programming. As the year passed, it became clear that they were unable to sustain the ADP at the level they felt it required, without sacrificing service delivery in their existing program areas in other parts of the country. The pressure from these areas to have their resources and staff returned to them became greater and greater over time. WV Indonesia had sustained the initial relief response by 'bleeding' staff from the east, putting long-

term plans on hold while personnel were diverted to the west (video interview with WV staff member, 13 July 2017). There was much back and forth at the board level between those who hoped to make long-term changes in Aceh, a part of the country previously hostile to them, and those who saw the real possibility of losing the gains they had been slowly making in building up their national office and its pre-existing programs. WV had already had to withdraw from Indonesia in the early 1990s, and did not take their future in Indonesia for granted, by any means. Eventually, they made the decision that their existing programs needed to be prioritised, that the headway they were making in Aceh was not enough to justify the resources a continued ADP would require. They did, however, return to Aceh in 2016 for a second relief program delivery, when fresh earthquakes rocked the region (World Vision UK 2016), indicating a continued interest in being involved in the north-west of Sumatra in the future.

WV's decision to withdraw highlights the importance of understanding strategic constraints and pragmatic demands faced by FBOs. In an ideal world, purely on principle, they wanted to stay. However, Aceh was an expensive place to operate in, both financially and in terms of the sensitivity training required for WV staff. WV Indonesia did not feel it had the resources to adequately meet all these new needs, and was constrained by the responsibilities and relationships it already had. This decision was very much driven by the pressures of context, but it was still justified in language compatible with WV's organisational orientation. Language about commitment and 'not abandoning' the communities that already depended on them featured, as did subtle indications that continuing to support Christian communities was ultimately a more effective use of resources than labouring to establish a foothold in a hostile environment. This framing fits with an ethic of social engagement that sees the church, and Christian communities, as important agents of change in their societies.

Samaritan's Purse

SP's humanitarian response to the tsunami was in many ways an archetypical picture of the agency's dynamism and complex humanitarian identity. They responded with great speed and flexibility, based on pre-existing relationships grounded in their evangelistic endeavours. They had access to and utilised a range of vehicles, established logistics chains, made partnerships on the fly, and focussed on empowering decision makers as much as possible. They mobilised large numbers of volunteers and quasi-volunteers, relying on short stints until they could find local partners to whom they could hand their programs over. They were able to redirect funds quickly as circumstances demanded. They were also involved in controversies over their president's past criticism of Islam

and over their rebuilding strategies, and risked deportation at one stage. SP's organisational personality, as derived in the previous chapter, clearly set the direction for their intervention, but the impact of context was critical in understanding their response as well. The normative pressures of the aid environment in Aceh affected their ability to highlight the faith elements of their programming, and the pragmatic demands of the field undercut some of their usual assistance strategies. They faced similar structural restraints to other NGOs, which frustrated their staff immensely; but the need to align their practical choices with their values provided boundaries on possible action.

Responding to the Disaster

SP was fast in their response; their staff actually knew about the disaster before international media outlets started to run the story, thanks to their pre-existing relationship with a number of Medanese Christian communities through Operation Christmas Child (OCC). SP staff had been working with these church groups to hand out shoebox gifts in their local community in the lead up to Christmas; these communities then urgently contacted SP requesting their assistance in providing disaster relief to their regional neighbours (interview with SP staff member, Boone, 28 March 2018).[16] SP stood up an IMT (Incident Management Team) and was on the ground in Sumatra within the week. They established a head office in Medan and four field bases around the Aceh region.

For the first few weeks, SP prioritised supplies, partnering with Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) to fly relief supplies out of Medan to cut-off communities in Aceh and on the offshore islands. MAF's small fleet of light aircraft in the area included amphibious craft capable of water landings; in this way, SP was able to drop supplies and personnel in communities even without runways. Later, they would add helicopters to their capabilities, further increasing their mobility. SP's response included food and medical aid, as well as water purifiers, tarpaulins and other household items, in quantities capable of supplying tens of thousands of people (World Radio Missionary Fellowship 2005). As the relief turned into reconstruction, SP were involved in supplying fishing boats and nets, and rolling out women's livelihood programs, including one on behalf of the UNDP. They reported building around 2800 houses to the BRR (UN-HABITAT 2009, 241); nine projects in total were listed in the Indonesian government database, with just over US$20 million committed, and around US$19.9 million listed as spent. When an earthquake hit Nias three months later, they expanded to absorb

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[16] This is another example of the fascinatingly complicated role that OCC plays in SP's unique approach to relief and development. As raised in earlier chapters, OCC is almost universally decried by outside observers, but is steadily promoted within SP. The role that it played in securing community relationships and access in Medan and thus Aceh points to the utility the controversial program has for SP's wider humanitarian programming, even as it is held by even the agency itself to be 'not development'.

that response into their programming as well; their access to light aircraft proved invaluable to a number of NGOs with whom they partnered.

In line with their voluntarist ethic, SP staff had a high turnover for the first six months of the response, as volunteers and short-term staff cycled through. The Banda Aceh base alone was onto its fourth base manager by July (Coffey and Koeniger 2007, 5). This was partly because conditions were very difficult, physically as well as psychologically. It was also a result of their preference to be a temporary boost to local ministries, meaning that by mid-2005, they were also starting to try to phase out Westerners from their field bases, and replace them with national staff. In line with their hiring preferences for Christian staff, these employees were mostly Medanese, with some Javanese also.

Rebuilding

Housing construction projects were a particular priority for SP, with staff focussing on getting as many houses built as possible as quickly as land title distributions allowed them. Like many NGOs, they faced difficult choices in the post-tsunami conditions, plagued by runaway inflation of prices and a lack of steady building supplies. Their organisational personality had an important influence on their response, as their promotion of individual autonomy in decision making and their preference for fast and decisive action guided their practices. Unlike WV, they were highly receptive to the normative pressure of the Indonesian government and the Acehnese people to provide housing as promised, on time. In adopting this priority, they encountered difficulties of a different kind.

One particular case illustrates the different situations this created well: between 2005 and 2006, the Banda Aceh base was responsible for four 'Shelter' projects (that is, village rebuilds) totalling over 400 houses (M. Coffey and Koeniger 2007, 4). These projects were run on a community-based method, which employed locals in partnership with carpenters to rebuild their own villages.[17] The largest of these, the Cot Aron Shelter project (around 230 houses), required SP to return in 2007 in order to repair many of the houses due to the development of cracking in the walls. The locals blamed the cracking on the poor quality of materials procured by the SP building team; an assertion SP disputed (it is relevant to note that the SP team imported their own bricks from Medan rather than buying from the locals at hyper-inflated prices). An engineering study found that the design for

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[17] An SP base manager noted that several previous SP staff had observed how unpopular the volunteer aspect of community participation models was in other NGO rebuilds, and so they adopted a model that paid villagers labourer wages to participate in their housing reconstructions. They also left their construction supplies in the middle of the villages, and made it clear that any supplies that went missing would not be replaced. The staff felt that these two policies in combination reduced their problems with theft, doctoring of supplies, and community sabotage significantly (interview with SP base manager).

the houses had been adapted from a different SP Shelter project, which came in turn from the BRR. This original design did not contain fully detailed plans itself (most notably missing certain support trusses), but when the Cot Aron project had changed to building more of the homes in brick rather than wood, it had not adjusted the design to account for the heavier load. This, in combination with variable standards of workmanship by the carpenters and beneficiaries, had led to cracking in the walls soon after completion (M. Coffey and Koeniger 2007, 20). After complaints from locals, SP contracted a Christian engineering ministry to survey the problem and recommend a redress strategy, and ultimately fixed a number of houses in the project.

This story illustrate neatly the style of SP's approach, as it interacted with its context. In deference to the normative pressure to get people in permanent homes, SP prioritised speed of construction that necessitated fast responses to challenges by their staff. They valued getting people into permanent homes quickly, particularly in an area where the regional government had freshly subdivided the land – increasing the value of getting permanent structures in place before circumstances might change again. However, the rollover of short term, semi-volunteer staff in the base (five Base Managers over the 18-month period, often lacking a specific Shelter Manager for durations of the construction) meant that they were left without oversight that might have picked up the design flaw and corrected for it. Involving beneficiaries in the rebuild increased community buy-in and certainly decreased theft and doctoring of materials (both serious problems for many rebuild projects), but also led to some quality concerns in the workmanship. Pressure from the international community to avoid purchasing illegally logged lumber necessitated a quick change to masonry; but this exacerbated the issues of missing support trusses that had gone unnoticed.

In the end, SP was willing to return and fix up any cracked walls as the trade-off for engaging in a speedy building process that solved problems quickly as they arrived and encouraged communities to take ownership of their own rebuilds. They were particularly proud of their ability to move people straight from emergency shelter to permanent housing. This reflected their broader ethos, as highlighted by one interviewee: "Problem? Go, take this [suitcase of money] and solve it" (interview with SP staff member, Dallas, 23 March 2018). This attitude did lead to friction with some other NGOs working the area. SP's participation in coordination and evaluation mechanisms fluctuated ("arguing over boring details"), and sometimes they built "other people's villages" as a result (interview with SP base manager, Dallas, 23 March 2018). SP's approach was very different to the one taken by WV, outlined above, and reflected SP's organisational orientation towards speed and pragmatism as it interacted with normative pressures to rebuild quickly and pragmatic demands of staff and construction labour availability.

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Being Evangelical

Contrary to their public perception, SP staff were as mindful as any about the sensitivity of religion in Aceh while they worked there. As noted with WV, the normative pressure from the international media, the Indonesian government and other aid groups, not to mention the negative reactions of many Acehnese to any perceived evangelism was a powerful limiting force on any FBO's evangelistic tendencies. Journalists in the first few months of the response noted the discomfort of SP staff on the ground when media reported on President Franklin Graham's infamous 'Islam is a very evil religion' comments (made several years prior in reference to 9/11) that resurfaced when SP found itself working in Muslim-majority Aceh (Gartland 2005). Staff spoke of removing gospel tracts from parcels sent by well-meaning US donors, inking out the stylised cross in their logo on clothing, and going to some lengths to reassure building project beneficiaries of the unconditional nature of their aid. One manager reflected that as "the guy" (that is, the head of the local base), he had to take seriously his responsibility for mollifying any locals concerned by other SP activities such as OCC. This is an interesting example of SP's ability to adapt to the environmental circumstances, modifying behaviour and presentation to suit the expectations of both recipients and governmental authorities. This dovetails with Agensky's observations of 'mainstreaming'.

However, the effects of these environmental pressures were still interpreted through the lens of SP's faith orientation. Faithfulness to God's calling looked like showing the Muslim inhabitants of Aceh that Christians cared about them, and supporting the local Christian population to be a more visible presence, and taking hold of the 'opportunities' provided by the tsunami's temporary social reset. If the context did not suit talking about their faith, then it was a place to show their faith through action (SP base manager, as interviewed in Gartland 2005). Staff had a clear sense of divine purpose: "I definitely felt called, and I knew very very much that this was where I was definitely supposed to be at the time" (interview with SP staff member, Dallas, 23 March 2018). Donor facing media emphasised the breaking down of walls, the gratefulness of recipients, and their [the recipients'] conscious linking of the aid with the Christianity that drove it. This accords with the 'earning a hearing' approach to evangelism – building trust and positivity in relationships, showing care and concern – termed as Jesus' love – through action, not, in this case, through the verbal retelling of the Christian message, or handing out of religious texts (although as Gartland 2005 notes, some SP workers were happy to engage in verbal sharing). This willingness to witness silently through action accorded with SP's broader ethos. The SP model does not require that their staff cultivate relationships with recipient communities for their own evangelism long term; instead they envisioned their work as a temporary 'boost' to the church communities that already existed in the area (or the ones that might, in the future).

This is not to suggest that SP encountered no difficulties as a highly visible evangelical Christian agency in a deeply conservative Muslim population. Tensions escalated when the Indonesian government asked SP to leave Nias (somewhat ironically, an island with a sizeable Christian population) in October 2006 to demonstrate their willingness to act against FBOs engaging in any evangelistic activities. SP had been involved in rebuilding churches on the island and as they were wrapping up operations, they were publicly asked to leave the island, more because of their evangelical reputation than any reported instances of proselytism. Several observers noted that SP ground staff had not actually been in any particularly compromising situations, but that they had not been 'known' by Jakarta (interviews with WV staff member, Melbourne, 20 April 2017; third party FBO worker, Canberra, 20 June 2017). By this they meant that SP had not managed to cultivate strategic relationships in the government to protect themselves from arbitrary enforcement action. This highlights the vulnerability of evangelical FBOs to becoming targets of practical instrumentality in bigger conflicts because of the highly visible expressions of faith they maintain, even where they take pains to present a contextually-sensitive version of themselves.

Overall, SP carried out their preferred style of intervention as far as practical, finding local Christian churches and civil society organisations to partner with and ultimately to which to hand over. They took advantage of opportunities for collaboration and integration with the broader humanitarian community as they arose, running livelihood programs for the UNDP and often providing transport and logistics for other NGOs where needed, although sometimes SP staff were impatient with the slow-moving nature of the broader humanitarian community framework (interview with SP staff member, Dallas, 23 March 2018). They did not have a vision for a long-term role in the region, but saw themselves as short-term fixers whose role was to boost the capacity of the local churches, and be part of building positive associations for Protestant Christianity, and for Jesus. This self-understanding had important impact on their behaviours, as they valued responding to the immediate needs and preparing to exit well.

Compassion

In contrast to the two agencies just examined, Compassion's response to the tsunami in Aceh was relatively modest. Moreover, unlike WV and SP, Compassion's response was very out of character. Compassion had no existing child development centres in western Indonesia at the time of the tsunami, and no initial plans to respond to the disaster (Tunya 2009). As highlighted in the previous chapter, their disaster relief programming had evolved piecemeal, and very much in response to the specific needs of their child development centres when they were affected by disaster. Up to this

date, they had never engaged in pure relief work outside of this strategy (even their short-lived Haiti water relief program with USAID funding in the late 1970s was done in conjunction with their broader programming). However, for some reason, Aceh was different. My interview research to discover why uncovered some fascinating insights into the timeline of the decision to fund a disaster response. Pressure from donors coincided with an enthusiastic desire to seize the moment from domestic staff, culminating in a highly unusual decision to fund a relief and reconstruction effort in a non-program area. This decision, in turn, was then framed through a theological lens; understood and digested by the staff as fitting their broader faith commitments in a kind of feedback loop. This timeline makes visible the effect of external normative pressures and structural constraints on the bearing of an FBO, demonstrating their ability to change the course of an agency's orientation. However, these contextual pressures still needed to be internalised compatibly with Compassion's pre-existing mission, which usefully explains the boundaries of action that an FBO can take because of external pressures.

Choosing to Respond

When the reports of the disaster in Asia first began to come in, most of Compassion's global office staff were on Christmas holidays. The skeleton crew who came in that day after Christmas discovered a mountain of correspondence waiting (interview with Compassion staff member, Colorado Springs, 15 March 2018). Compassion's offices in Australia and the US particularly fielded a veritable deluge of communications from anxious sponsors about the welfare of their sponsor children. At first, Compassion was occupied with the task of reassuring donors that they had no 'assets' on the ground in the affected area and advising them to donate to other more relief-oriented NGOs for the response. However, as the calls and emails kept coming, a clear trend emerged: donors wanted to give money to the relief work in Aceh, and they wanted to give it to Compassion. In fact, the disaster response team was somewhat disconcerted to find that it had raised over US$1 million in Indonesia-directed funds within the first week without asking for it; their sponsor base had simply started sending them cash (interviews with Compassion staff members, Colorado Springs, 14 and 15 March 2018). Sponsors were very worried.

Some of this anxiety stemmed from confusion about the location of Compassion's Indonesian child development centres (eastern as opposed to western Indonesia). Perhaps because of poor media reporting, or their own lack of familiarity with Indonesian geography, a good proportion of donors believed Compassion's partner churches were affected by the disaster. This compelled them to pick up the phone, and call. However, after learning 'their' children were not affected, they still wanted to donate (interview with Compassion staff member, Colorado Springs, 15 March 2018). This is an instance of an FBO experiencing strong normative pressure from its environment: Compassion had

no history and no initial intention of responding to tsunami-struck Aceh, but their donors believed strongly that the Christian child-focussed agency that they supported *should* be using its expertise to do something. This strong moral expectation from without pushed Compassion to consider something that ordinarily they never would have.

At the same time, there was a removal of a key structural restraint. Compassion's choices in the past to stay away from general relief work (other than in response to disasters affecting their sponsored children) meant that the organisation had real structural barriers that might have otherwise derailed a push from donors to act, key among which was that they had no logistical groundwork to get them started. However, the Compassion International Area Director for Asia at the time, Dr Budijanto, was a former National Director at Compassion Indonesia, and he saw an opportunity. Dr Budijanto had extensive local contacts and leverage, and a deep understanding of the national office's context and organisational personality (interview with Compassion Asia Pacific staff member, Colorado Springs, 12 March 2018). They (and the wider Indonesian church leadership) had been concerned for several years that the Christian populations they worked amongst struggled with a 'circle the wagons' mentality – that is, a tendency to stay within their own communities for safety and support, rather than participate fully in the broader social fabric.

Dr Budijanto was receptive to Compassion Indonesia's desire to be active in the tsunami response as an important opportunity to demonstrate practical Christian love towards a non-Christian community. His intercession to the global office for the Indonesian office to be involved was critical, and it came at the same time as the unsolicited money from donors was swelling the coffers. Dr Budijanto used his networks to produce a third-party agency, Aceh Relief, to be the face of Compassion on the ground, providing logistics and programming that removed the structural constraints that might have prevented Compassion from responding. Having a third-party intermediary meant that Compassion did not have to put their own brand directly on display, providing comfort to the more risk-averse within the FBO. Once the door was opened to a relief program, Compassion Australia announced it would pay an extra AUS$500,000 into it, reflecting the high Australian donor concern for the local region (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2005). Shortly thereafter, Aceh Relief rolled out the ARIEF temporary relief program, initially planned for 12 months relief work.

Hitting the Ground

Compassion's response began in in Banda Aceh, the capital, with emergency aid and counselling focussing specifically on children. Working out of a damaged school, staff from the Asia Area Office, along with volunteers visited displaced-peoples camps to distribute food and other supplies such as stoves, cooking pots, buckets and plastic sheeting. They brought medical personnel with them to

treat survivors for injuries, diarrhoea and skin infections, and counsellors to help with emotional trauma (Sheridan 2005). After the initial distributions, the team set up education relief centres – teaching units for children in shelters, with attached family assistance measures (Tunya 2009). Christian staff from other areas in Indonesia came to volunteer in the response, hopeful of improved relationships between Christians and Muslims through their help. "Maybe through our presence here we can slowly change their mind about Christians. Not their religion, just the way they think," one Javanese Aceh Relief worker reflected (Aceh Relief worker as interviewed in Gartland 2005). The employment of Christian Medanese was not without consequence: the FBO's planned headquarters in Banda Aceh was never completed due to local community suspicion it looked too much like a church and their accusations (and forced expulsion of the building crew) saw it left abandoned (McGregor 2010, 729).

Mindful that the tsunami struck on a Sunday morning, killing many of the few Christians in Aceh while they attended church, the team did prioritise church building clean ups and congregation welfare. They sought out surviving church leaders to help link them into support networks, paid surviving congregants for their church clean-up work, and ensured their children were enrolled in their programs (Sheridan 2005). In this, Compassion's organisational preference for child-focussed ministries and for building up the capacity of the local church was clearly visible, despite their venture into new territory.

After six months, the ARIEF program was wrapped up, and Aceh Relief was taken over by Pelayanan Desa Terpadu, or Integrated Village Ministry (PESAT) (Tunya 2009). It is worth noting that PESAT itself was a ministry founded in 1987 by Dr Budijanto, who was the Executive Director until 1997, two years before he joined Compassion International, and who remained on the board for many years (Integrated Village Ministry (PESAT) 2017). PESAT maintained the name Aceh Relief while it continued its reconstruction efforts – firstly "the restoration and replacement of new homes, roofs, latrines and running water systems for the houses in Loh and Lempuyang villages in Breuh Island… rebuild[ing] 83 homes inhabited by more than 500 people" (Tunya 2009). Through 2006, they built around 250 houses in the Aceh Besar and Aceh Barat districts (UN-HABITAT 2009, 127) PESAT also took over the follow-up work for beneficiaries of the ARIEF program, including ongoing school fees and apprenticeship costs. To this, PESAT added its own health and education focus, "to see a holistic transformation for village communities in Indonesia through reaching people in inaccessible areas" (Integrated Village Ministry (PESAT) 2017). They have been successful in transitioning this reconstruction work into long term relationships, and since then PESAT has continued to work in multiple locations in Sumatra, including several in the Aceh province at the time of writing (Integrated Village Ministry (PESAT) 2017). Compassion wrapped up its involvement once PESAT

took over and did not establish any child development centres in the region, although it did end up with a long-term development office in Sumatra, amongst the more Christian Batak people group.

Understanding the Response

Although it delivered a small program when compared to larger NGOs, Compassion's response was none-the-less a large departure from standard operating procedure for the church-ministry focussed agency. However, while the relief effort may have been out of character, Compassion's personality was still reflected in their choice of interventions. Child wellbeing, family assistance and church community rebuilding were their priorities. Compassion's commitment to local-led ministry was also evident in their relief response: they did not bring large numbers of expats in to steer the programs, but instead mobilised at the national Indonesian level to find staff and volunteers. They also quickly handed off to an Indonesian Christian ministry, one that they felt would appropriately value both children and long-term relationship building.

The normative pressure from their donors and the alleviation of structural restraints by their Asia Area Director combined to push for an intervention. However, these contextual forces did not have free rein over the agency's processes; they were understood and internalised through recourse to their overarching mission and values. This provided both the framework and the limits for the range of potential responses Compassion could choose from. Compassion's leaders articulated their decision to fund a response in terms of the moral obligation to help the non-Christian population of a Christian minority country in which they worked. A staff member there at the time reflected: "if we didn't respond it would have looked like, 'oh well, you guys only care about your churches, Christians', but no, this is bigger than that" (interview with Compassion senior staff member, Colorado Springs, 14 March 2018). The leadership worried that to check the momentum towards response would communicate that they cared more about 'their own' than about helping those most in need in the moment and undermine the vision of the Indonesian national office. This was ultimately interpreted through the lens of God's leading – God had provided the money, and the people on the ground willing to do the work, and so Compassion's decision makers felt obliged to submit to this clear divine directive. All of these factors came together to create the environment that enabled and encouraged their relief and reconstruction efforts in Aceh.

Conclusions

The responses of the three FBOs examined to the Indian Ocean tsunami highlight the complex nature of relief and development work. The context of the environment created very specific pressures and demands on the actors. Their responses to these pressures came from the

combination of their organisational orientations (generated by their values and identities as FBOs, developed over time) and the range of normative, structural, and pragmatic options available to them. WV's actions as an FBO balanced between a synthesising and an evangelical theology of social engagement, which when combined with their situation as a high income, highly integrated humanitarian agency, saw a wide-ranging program rolled out with a hope to cementing a long-term development program. Structural constraints saw this hope eventually disappointed. SP prioritised speed, flexibility, dynamism, and a short-term 'boost' approach which delivered quick results of variable quality, especially with regards to construction, an outcome they were willing to tolerate if it meant being decisive in action. However, SP struggled to build the relationships needed to shield themselves from political intervention targeted at their evangelical identity. Compassion found itself engaged in a relief program it never intended to do, swayed by the strong pressures and removal of key constraints from both within and without the agency. Each approached their response from a very particular narrative of Christian identity, and all their choices and reactions to the contextual pressures of the environment had to be fed back compatibly through that lens. In this chapter I have examined the unique responses this produced for each actor. In the next chapter, this set of responses will be compared to those responses found with the pressures and demands generated by a different context – the post-disaster environment of 2008's Cyclone Nargis.
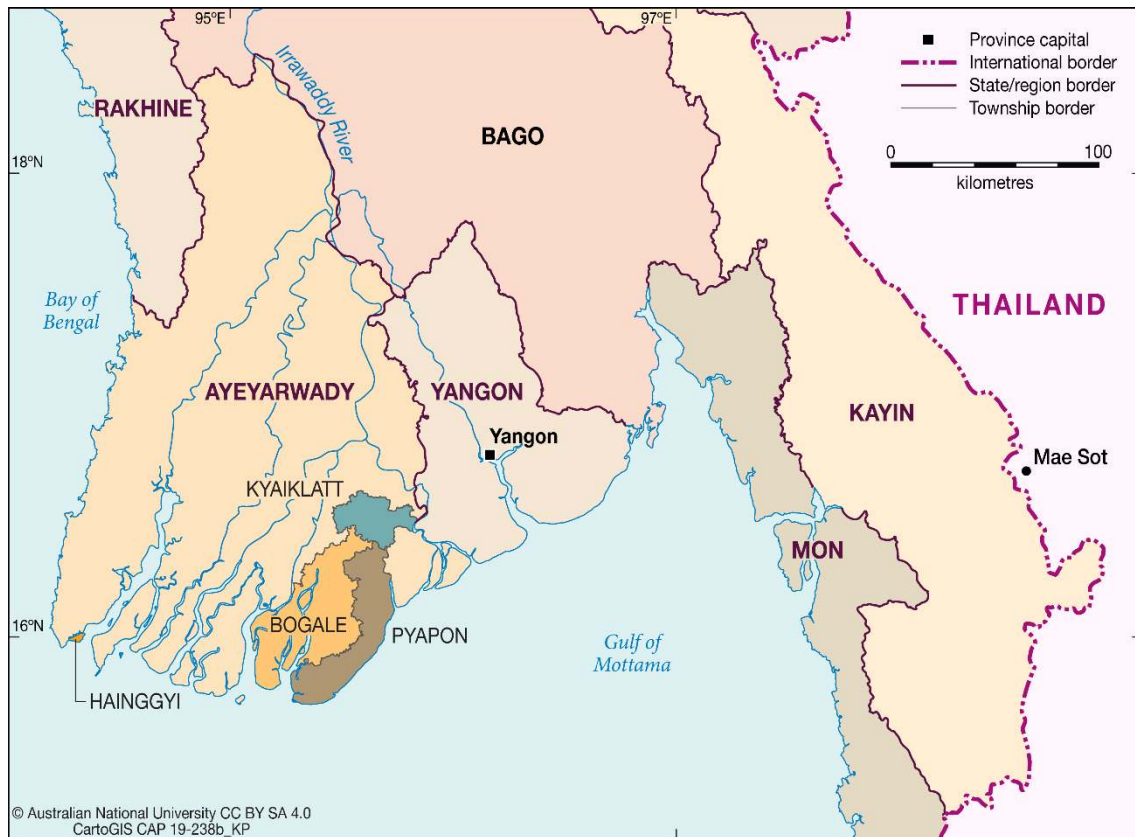
Chapter Five: Responding to Cyclone Nargis

Figure 7: Map of affected regions

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I examined the humanitarian practices of WV, SP, and Compassion through attention to their Indian Ocean tsunami response; I turn now to examine the responses of the same three FBOs to a different disaster, that of Cyclone Nargis which devastated the Southern regions of Myanmar in May 2008 (see figure 7). By comparing and contrasting the contours of this response to the decision-making processes seen in Aceh after the 2004 tsunami, I deepen the analysis of the relationship between FBO identity, organisational orientation and environmental pressures, which gives rise to varied humanitarian practices. One of the clearest differences between the response to the tsunami in Aceh and Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar is the complexity of the communities that were affected. In Aceh, the FBOs were dealing with relatively homogenous communities in terms of ethnicity and religion; by contrast, when responding to Cyclone Nargis they encountered a community divided across many levels.

Nargis was the worst natural disaster in Myanmar's history to date, with analysts noting that "the impact of Cyclone Nargis on Myanmar was similar in scale to that suffered by Indonesia following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami" (Belanger and Horsey 2008, 2). The national government struggled

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to cope with the scale of the damage, but was unwilling to allow outside actors freedom to act in the region. For international NGOs, the political, religious and social complexities of Myanmar made for perilous terrain to navigate, with complex schisms between domestic and foreign, military and civil society, Buddhist and Christian, ethnic majority and minorities. Humanitarian actors had to make difficult choices about when to challenge the central authorities, and when to work with them; how much autonomy their regional partners should and could have; and how to decide who to help in the aftermath of the crisis. The three FBOs under study in this thesis all reacted differently to the disaster; in tracing these decisions, I again operationalise the conceptual tools I have developed in this thesis to explain why they chose the paths they did, and the implications this has for how we understand and engage with faith-based actors.

The Disaster in Myanmar

When Cyclone Nargis rolled in off the coast of southern Myanmar on the 2nd May 2008, it made landfall in a country poised on a precipice of political uncertainty. The ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) had surprised observers earlier that year when it announced it would hold a national referendum to ratify a new constitution. Although the country once known as Burma had nominally transitioned to democracy when it gained independence from British colonial rule in 1948, it had been ruled by a succession of military dictatorships from 1962 onwards. These regimes were marked by their struggles to contain a state riven with internal challenges, from communist insurgencies to separatist rebellions. Ethnic divisions have always played a role in this: roughly forty percent of the population consists of various ethnic minorities (with the remaining forming the Burman ethnic majority) (Farrelly 2013, 313). "In all the ethnic states – Mon, Karen, Karenni, Shan, Kachin, Chin and Rakhine – ethnic minority groups have built armies, some of them with tens of thousands of fighters, to fortify their political claims…. Many of which have been fighting for more than half a century" (Farrelly 2013, 313). For much of the post-colonial era, large sections of the country spent significant periods functionally un-ruled by the capital.

In this environment, the central government ruthlessly supressed discontent, sometimes even within its own ranks. One struggle that broke out into significant violence was the 8888 Uprising, a series of pro-democracy protests in 1988 sparked by economic missteps and political crackdowns by the military-derived ruling party, the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP). A new faction arising from the military responded with martial law, killing thousands of protestors and suspending the constitution to take control of the government from the BSPP in a kind of 'self-coup' (Farrelly 2013, 317). Calling themselves the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), they changed the

name of the country from Burma to Myanmar in 1989 (in an attempt to reflect a less ethnically exclusive claim) and set about revising the constitution. Although they allowed multiparty elections to be held in 1990, which were won by the National League for Democracy (NLD), they did not allow the elected assembly to convene. Instead, they held the two leaders of the NLD under house arrest for several years, including Aung San Suu Kyi, famous daughter of Aung San, the 'Father of the Nation' who negotiated independence from the British before being assassinated in 1947. The national assembly was finally allowed to meet in 1993, but was placed under so many restrictions by the SLORC that it was eventually dismissed in 1996 without having resolved the problem of a new constitution.

The military junta's handling of the failed 1990 elections, as well as its policies for dealing with ethnic minorities, with political dissidents, and with the wellbeing of the population in general earned it the ire of many in the broader international community, who had generally largely ignored earlier coups through the Cold War (Farrelly 2013, 315). However, the poor economic situation in Myanmar had led the UN to list the nation as one of the Least Developed Countries in the late 1980s (a list on which it remains), highlighting the difficult conditions the people of Myanmar faced in everyday life. The country became subject to numerous sanctions, including from the US, UK, the EU, Japan and Australia among others, who condemned the government's 'anti-democratic' actions and poor human rights record (Barber 2009, 27; R. H. Taylor 2015, 915). Many Western powers became champions of the imprisoned Aung San Suu Kyi (Belanger and Horsey 2008, 3). However, not all states followed their lead, with China, Singapore and Thailand playing particularly important roles in supporting the Myanmar government and sheltering it from some of the worst effects of the Western government-imposed sanctions (Farrelly 2013, 323).

These difficult relationships abroad were paralleled by difficult political relationships internally. As well as controlling the democratic parliamentary processes, the ruling military junta fought insurgencies from various ethnic states throughout this time. Internal opposition to the central government, as it had since independence, tended to fall on ethnic lines, with many ethnic groups fighting for nationhood or regional autonomy in their home states. The Tatmadaw (the Myanmar military forces) conducted large-scale operations against various ethnic insurgent groups throughout the 1990s to destroy their military footholds and weaken their resistance. This 'final push' came in tandem with renewed and largely successful negotiations of ceasefires and peace agreements. In 1997, they changed their name again, this time to the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

In 1993, the SPDC took steps to make progress on the question of stalled parliamentary proceedings, initiating their seven-step 'roadmap to democracy' plan. However, with no timeframe for

implementation or verification mechanisms, expectations of its effectiveness were low. In 2005, the SPDC again convened the national assembly (although without the NLD and a number of other pro-democracy parties), in another attempt to nail down a new constitution; they were dismissed a year later without making a breakthrough. At the same time (2006), the Tatmadaw launched a major offensive – Operation Perseverance – against the Karen National Union (KNU) in Karen/Kayin State, displacing thousands of civilians and pushing unprecedented numbers of refugees across the border into Thailand as they fought the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA, the armed wing of the KNU). These civil conflicts did not help soften international pressures against them: in January 2007, the Security Council debated (although ultimately rejected) a resolution calling on Myanmar to "cease military attacks against civilians in ethnic minority regions and to cease violations of human rights and humanitarian law" (Barber 2009, 27). Economic and political sanctions continued.

Government policies were the focus of more anti-government protests in 2007. These protests were referred to as the 'Saffron Revolution' by some observers, after the Buddhist monks who led the demonstrations. Thousands of protestors rallied at the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon, one of the holiest sites for Buddhists in the country, and with a well-developed pedigree as a public space for dissent (Seekins 2009, 730). The military responded harshly. The number of protestors killed or detained was a figure of some disagreement, with some saying only a handful of monks were killed or beaten, but others claiming thousands of arrests and hundreds of deaths. It was against this highly charged backdrop that the SDPC announced in early 2008 they would hold a referendum to break the constitutional deadlock, and that they would aim to hold elections based on that new constitutional framework in 2010. The referendum was scheduled for the 10th of May 2008. The United Nations Security Council issued a presidential statement about the referendum early on the 2nd May, calling on the SPDC to "establish the conditions and create an atmosphere conducive to an inclusive and credible process including the full participation of all political actors and respect for fundamental freedoms" (United Nations Security Council 2008). Later that day, Cyclone Nargis hit.

Cyclone Response

The cyclone was devastating in reach and effect, raging through the delta region of southern Myanmar for over 24 hours. Although the delta was affected by cyclones with some regularity, no one was prepared for such a severe storm (UNDP Myanmar 2009, 9). Myanmar's national weather service had initially predicted it would pass further to the north and with a much less force. Nargis had started out looking similar to other storms common in the season, but had suddenly surged in power from a category two to a category four storm just before it made landfall (Marr 2010, 16). Interviews with villagers in Pyapon reveal the utter and unexpected nature of the devastation of their community: "We heard that a storm was coming, but there was no warning about the cyclone

in our village. The cyclone started hitting us… We ran to high land. I lost my three children. Our house collapsed. Nothing was left. Everything was washed away" (Human Rights Watch interview with Aye Aye Win of Pyapon township Nov 2009, see Loevy 2014, 64).

The combination of strong winds and heavy flooding across the low-lying region was disastrous. Whole villages were swept away, herds drowned, crops inundated. 90,000 were confirmed dead in the aftermath, while another 56,000 reported missing were never found, leading to total death toll estimates of 146,000. Up to two million people were displaced (Loevy 2014, 62). The storm and accompanying floodwaters also devastated the agricultural infrastructure of the area. The delta had once been known as 'the rice bowl of Asia' due to its high rice yields, as well as its fishing industries (Beyrer 2011, 372). All of this productive capacity sustained heavy damage.

The Government Reaction

The Myanmar central government, led by the SPDC, enacted its emergency response through the National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee (NDPCC), as the reports of the damage emerged on the 3rd May (Loevy 2014, 65). In the immediate aftermath officials were uncertain about the extent of the disaster and estimates of its impact fluctuated wildly. They first declared five areas as disaster zones: Yangon, Ayeyawady, Bago, Mon and Kayin state, but then revised this down to Yangon and Ayeyarwady three days later. The population of the initial five disaster zones was some 24 million people; nearly half of the country's population: a national catastrophe. The population of the revised two disaster divisions was less, but still substantial at around 13 million, including the most populated city (OCHA 2008a, 5).   In the days following the cyclone, the government allocated emergency funding (about US$5 million), assigned emergency response roles to cabinet ministers and Prime Minister Thein Sein took a tour of the affected areas within a week. On the 5th May, government representatives met with UN officials to indicate that they were willing to accept international aid, but only at a bilateral level (Loevy 2014, 65). Concurrently, local community actors began to mobilise their resources to find out the needs and start helping people. However, the military moved to restrict movement within the affected regions through road and river checkpoints, and to keep foreign assistance away, maintaining that the government should manage all aid directly.

The next several weeks saw a strange dance play out as the SPDC government attempted to assert its sovereign jurisdiction over management of the disaster, both internationally and among its own people. On the domestic front, it moved to frustrate the attempts of civil society aid providers to mobilise assistance, insisting that all relief efforts must be delivered through the government. It did not seem to count a strong and diverse compassionate response from broader civil society as an asset to deploy, but rather "viewed private aid activities as a danger to its own power monopoly"

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(Seekins 2009, 731). Domestic actors of all walks – various business communities, prominent public figures, medical workers, students, local arms of global NGOs as well as domestic charities, to name a few – flocked to the region to bring help, but struggled to actually get that help to the survivors (Suwanvanichkij et al. 2009, 4). Buddhist networks tended to be more successful in moving relief supplies; local authorities were more likely to wave them through to stock monasteries throughout the delta. Christian church groups out of Yangon also managed to get some relief out to fellow Christians in the Karen regions of the delta (Seekins 2009, 730). Many other responders, however, found increasingly serious roadblocks (both metaphorical and literal) placed in their way. By June government intervention had escalated to aid confiscation and even arrests. In this way, the post-disaster response of the people of Myanmar was no less ensnared by the fallout of the state's political conflicts than many other civil society activities prior to the cyclone.

However, it was not merely assertion of control by the ruling party that hindered domestic aid efforts; it was arguably also a lack of understanding. The Myanmar government did not initially grasp the size of the disaster. Their initial estimates of the death toll hovered between 10,000 and 20,000 (OCHA 2008a, 5); a far cry from the final estimate of over 140,000. As a result, whether by design or accident, the SPDC's lack of engagement with the scale of the cyclone's impact was evident on numerous levels. The planned 10th May referendum on the constitution was carried out despite calls for it to be postponed; the only concession to the cyclone's damage was to allow the areas worst hit to hold the vote on the 24th of May, two weeks later (Seekins 2009, 726). State-directed corporations continued to export rice from the region even as concerns of starvation among its residents grew (Suwanvanichkij et al. 2009, 50). Aid was stockpiled in Yangon, stuck in limbo as a combination of local level corruption, official confusion and contradictory directives made it too difficult to move.

A similar drama unfolded on the international stage in parallel with these domestic difficulties as the Myanmar government tried to ensure that foreign aid was admitted only on its own terms. As the scale of the damage became evident, the international community – both humanitarian agencies and foreign governments – offered aid and expertise to the SPDC. For example, in the first few days after the storm, India dispatched two naval ships carrying relief and medical supplies, Thailand airlifted emergency supplies across the border, and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) announced activation of its Standby Arrangement and Standard Operating Procedures (SASOP) disaster response mechanism. This included an Emergency Rapid Assessment Team (ERAT), who mobilised into the delta on the 9th May, the first officially accepted international response team (Marr 2010, 34). A number of larger international NGOs, such as the World Food Programme (WFP), World Vision, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and CARE began to move stockpiled emergency

health kits and water purification supplies from warehouses in Dubai (all as described in OCHA 2008a, 8). However, the poor relationship between the military junta and certain actors in the international community, particularly the US, the EU and the UNSC, made post-cyclone access incredibly difficult (Barber 2009, 27–28). An atmosphere of distrust permeated every interaction. The self-imposed isolationist Myanmar government was deeply concerned about the motivations of foreign actors and potential for negative effects should they be allowed to operate freely in the delta. The international community, in turn, was highly sceptical of both the SPDC's willingness and ability to unilaterally direct a multi-million-dollar aid response fairly and equitably to all in need.

Tensions Over Access

The result of this distrust was a distinct slowness from the Myanmar government in accepting help and approving access. Teams of experts and officials found themselves stuck for weeks in Bangkok, waiting for visa approvals to enter Myanmar (OCHA 2008a, 7). For the few who made it into Yangon, it was incredibly difficult to move freely around the delta region (interviews with World Vision staff member, Canberra, 13 July 2018; third party agency staff member, Canberra, 20 June 2017). For example, although 72 international UN staff were granted access to the city of Yangon two weeks after the disaster, none of their visas permitted work in the more seriously affected delta region (Barber 2009, 21). This in turn increased humanitarian actors' worry that survivors would be left without help in that critical post-disaster window. Unlike Aceh, where swift relief was credited with having almost entirely prevented secondary deaths, there was a great fear that many people would die from secondary causes after Nargis, without timely access to fresh water and medical help.

The humanitarian community issued increasingly urgent warnings in the days and weeks after the cyclone of the consequences of delaying aid. The largest two risks for those who survived the actual storm were starvation and disease. The high risk of disease following large scale water contamination was particularly dire: "in those conditions, a 2-year-old child can die of diarrhoea in a couple of days" (Melanie Brooks from CARE International, as quoted in McCurry 2008, 1737). However, the Myanmar government did not respond to these concerns with an increased urgency. It was two weeks after the cyclone that the government announced they would allow even fellow ASEAN members to help oversee foreign aid distribution (McCurry 2008, 1737).

As the access crisis reached its peak, mutual suspicion remained a recurring theme. The SPDC refused entry to foreign reporters, while the "international media refused to use reports from the Myanmar government's own media outlets" (R. H. Taylor 2015, 921). Fear of influence on the domestic population by foreign institutions and powers displaying hostility to the SDPC regime was a clear concern for Myanmar (as surveyed in Dany 2013, 6). The government had expelled Charles Petrie, UN Resident Coordinator, UN Humanitarian Coordinator, and UNDP Resident Representative

to Myanmar just months earlier (in November 2007) over accusations he supported proponents of the Saffron Revolution. The ruling party's long term isolation from the international community also likely meant that they were simply unfamiliar with what a large-scale international disaster response looked like. Accordingly, they were possibly unsure of the kinds of practices and expectations considered routine for both affected state and outside responders (Belanger and Horsey 2008, 2).

The response of the international community to this refusal to grant humanitarian access was to attempt to find effective levers to force Myanmar to let them enter. Many avenues were pursued, including phone calls to the ASEAN Secretary General from UK Members of Parliament, and encouragement (or pressure) from Australia and other donors to Indonesia to leverage its relationship with Myanmar (Loevy 2014, 82, 83). Not all attempts were friendly persuasion. US, French and British naval ships sat off Myanmar's coast, threatening to land aid supplies in contravention of the government's ban on foreign ship-to-shore operations (Belanger and Horsey 2008, 4). Unauthorised aid drops by air were floated as a potential solution (Barber 2009, 30).

International NGOs especially came under increasing pressure to find alternative routes to affected populations. Staff waited across the border "going around like hornets in a nest as there was no pressure release. There was a huge build-up of people in Bangkok, but nowhere for them to go" (Daniel Collison, Director of Programme Development and Quality for Save the Children, as reported in Marr 2010, 25) The Save the Children response director, stuck in Bangkok, began to investigate the risks of illegal border crossings through Karen State (video interview with WV GRRT team member, 21 September 2018). Tempers ran high. There were accusations of 'genocide by neglect' (interview with third party FBO first responder, Canberra, 20 June 2017). Things came to a climax with the French Foreign Minister raising the possibility of UNSC-authorised armed intervention under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, with some arguing that Myanmar's refusal to allow foreign aid workers into the region constituted a crime against humanity. However, this invocation of R2P by Western actors only served to harden the regime's stance against outside involvement (Walton 2015, 338).

Finally, three weeks after the cyclone, the international pressure paid off and ASEAN stepped into the crisis to play an important role in negotiating access (Christina Bennett, Foley, and Pantuliano 2016, 39, O'Hagan and Hirono 2014, 420). ASEAN, possibly seeing the opportunity to build its regional profile by solving the threat of 'global' intervention, held the Special Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers on the 19th May, where a number of foreign ministers convinced Myanmar to accept the ASEAN-led Humanitarian Taskforce for the Victims of Cyclone Nargis (AHTF) as the lead for disaster management (Loevy 2014, 84). ASEAN's ERAT team, who had been in the delta since the

9th May, had recommended the urgent establishment of a "mechanism that would allow ASEAN to bridge the humanitarian gap between the affected communities and the international humanitarian community" (Marr 2010, 35).

Internally, the leaders at the meeting reportedly warned Myanmar's government representatives that the alternative to the AHTF was that they would stand alone in facing the risk of the international community invoking R2P and delivering aid without state authorisation; ASEAN would not help the SPDC resist this (Marr 2010, 38; Loevy 2014, 84). As a result, the Myanmar government accepted AHTF leadership of the cyclone response, and cooperated in negotiating its main operational taskforce, the Tripartite Core Group (TCG). The TCG was made up of three representatives from each of the UN, ASEAN and the Myanmar government, and became the forum for raising and resolving key response issues (Barber 2009, 29). Chaired by Myanmar's Deputy Foreign Minister (a senior government official authorised with a high level of decision making, as advised by ASEAN's Secretary General) and given the power to grant visas and travel approvals, the TCG had an immediate impact in relieving the humanitarian bottleneck. ASEAN's strategic mediation calmed relations between Myanmar and the outside world greatly. It provided the Myanmar government with a "face-saving" means of accepting an international relief response, while including enough external 'advisors' in the process to allay the international community's suspicions of government interference (Belanger and Horsey 2008, 4; Loevy 2014, 85).

The International Response

Once mechanisms for getting aid into the delta had been ironed out, humanitarian agencies and donors began to consolidate needs assessments and targeted responses, which had both been constrained thus far. The Post-Nargis Joint Assessment was carried out by the AHTF and the Myanmar government. This assessment program gave a more thorough investigation of the impacts of the storm and the scale of rebuild required, although it took some time to complete.[1]

Livelihood recovery support was a major focus area for responders, as was education and child protection, and broader WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) programs. Although affected populations did not lose mature crops (due to the season), they did lose many of their farming supplies and equipment, as well as dealing with the impact of salination on fertile grounds. There was also a huge loss of animal life, both primary production animals, and working beasts. Established fishing industries were also heavily impacted. Agencies were surprised however, when it

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[1] In prioritising the joint assessment, humanitarian responders demonstrated they had learnt from the problems of insufficient assessments after the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. The main drawback of the post-Nargis Joint Assessment was that preliminary results were not available until 6 weeks after the disaster, with the full report taking even longer (interview with WV staff response member, Canberra, 20 June 2018).

emerged that the scale of secondary deaths was actually much lower than they first predicted (interview with WV staff member, Canberra, 20 June 2018). The large domestic relief effort, hampered as it had been by the government, was ultimately credited with doing much to alleviate the risks and preventing many secondary deaths.[2] The other factor that had a significant impact on this predicted figure was the unusually high proactivity of the affected population in securing their own recovery immediately after the storm.

Aid workers commented repeatedly on the resilience of the local communities, on how autonomous they were in taking charge of their own recovery. One responder explained that they were used to deploying to a disaster context and finding people dazed and passive, overwhelmed by the scale of the trauma. In the delta, they found instead energetic mobilisation, with self-clustering into key areas of need, and villages working together in coordinated fashions to rebuild homes and secure food and medical supplies (video interview with WV first response staff member, 21 September 2018). This observation aligns with Seekins' analysis:

> the common image of Myanmar as a 'totalitarian' country ruled by an all-powerful military-state is belied by the strength of horizontal solidarity in a society that has learned to depend on itself rather than the state for survival… the SPDC's indifference and neglect was a fact of life, almost as inevitable as the cyclone itself. (Seekins 2009, 719)

Partly, their rapid recovery reflected the low level of pre-disaster infrastructure and development; as one aid worker commented wryly: "once you put your shack back up, you're kind of where you were at the beginning" (interview with WV staff member, Canberra, 20 June 2018). However, it was also the case that many of the communities devastated by the cyclone were used to depending on themselves. They were used to the reality that no help was coming. Although government neglect of these areas contributed to their lack of disaster preparedness, it also meant they were highly autonomous and self-sufficient in their recovery.

Ongoing Controversies

Although the TCG mechanism eased access issues for the international humanitarian community, it did not fix the problem of relations with the Myanmar government in any deep sense. A year into the rebuilding, criticisms of the government's response continued to flow, particularly of the level of assistance allocation across different communities. One such criticism was from an assessment conducted by the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Emergency Assistance

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[2] Highlighting again the point noted by the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition about the Indian Ocean disaster response, namely, that actors in the broader IHO tend to systematically underestimate the importance of local first response, disregard local processes and capacities and ignore local coordination mechanisms (Telford, Cosgrave, and Houghton 2006, 93).

Team (EAT).[3] The report consisted of interviews with survivors and aid workers (done without the Myanmar government's knowledge or permission) and alleged significant human rights violations by the SPDC in the aftermath of the cyclone, as well as criticising other assessing bodies for choosing to work with the government. These collaborations, they argued, blinded the assessors to the broader human rights abuses perpetrated by the SPDC, since it was able to direct them away from survivors and communities experiencing the biggest problems. The report claimed "systematic obstruction of relief aid, wilful acts of theft and sale of relief supplies, forced relocation, and the used of forced labour for reconstruction projects, including forced child labour" (Suwanvanichkij et al. 2009, 12).

However, others disputed this position, arguing that "the government's post-cyclone relief efforts were ignored, and an international campaign was launched to provide a means of intruding into the political process [the constitution referendum and reform] under way" (R. H. Taylor 2015, 911). Twenty-two international NGOs, including WV, signed an open letter contesting the findings of the EAT report, and arguing its publication would damage opportunities for ongoing recovery efforts in the delta (Open Letter from 22 INGOs 2009). These controversies and confrontations continued to plague the response until it wrapped up and handed on to long-term development programming.

Discrimination in Aid

One of the claims that sparked particular controversy from the EAC report was that of systematic ethnically and religiously motivated discrimination in aid distribution. For example, interviewees in the report claimed Karen villagers were often evacuated last by the military, that aid was given out first to ethnically Burman villages, and that non-government aid workers faced extra hurdles in trying to bring supplies to Karen populations. They also reported that this often led to a cycle of discriminatory aid distribution. One relief worker complained that because the government favoured the Buddhists in aid distribution, then "every church only give[s] rice to the Christian". Another relief worker further elaborated that "Karen groups often distributed aid only to Christian communities and Christians within mixed communities… the Karen groups provided the reasoning that Burmese authorities don't want Christians interacting with Buddhists; Karen groups also explain that many villagers are afraid to talk with Buddhist groups"(relief workers in Bogale interviewed in Suwanvanichkij et al. 2009, 40). In turn, "when the government comes to help people in the affected area, they leave behind the Christian groups because they know they may be helped by Christian organisations" (relief worker interviewed in Suwanvanichkij et al. 2009, 40).

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[3] The EAT identified itself as a "grassroots organisation dedicated to providing aid and assistance to the people affected by Cyclone Nargis… formed through the collaboration of several Burmese community-based organisations on the Thai-Burma border" (Suwanvanichkij et al. 2009, 1).

These claims were incendiary in part because they tapped into a strong pre-existing narrative around the treatment of non-Burman minorities in Myanmar. Indeed, one of the factors contributing to a high international engagement with the disaster was the large-scale successful advocacy work done by many evangelical Christian communities on behalf of ethnic minorities such as the Karen and the Kachin in the years prior to the disaster. This was particularly the case in the US, where, for example, then First Lady Laura Bush had become an advocate for both Aung San Suu Kyi and the KNU, and so was primed to push against the SPDC's isolationist stance to humanitarian aid in the aftermath of the cyclone (R. H. Taylor 2015, 916). She publicly criticised the Myanmar government for their failures to warn delta communities before the cyclone and assist their recovery afterwards. By doing so, Mrs Bush became a public face of international attempts to shame the Myanmar government into opening up (Rowland 2008; MacGinty and Peterson 2015, 77).

Evangelical Support

Other evangelical constituencies, both within and beyond the US, were likewise already invested in the people of the delta through transnational faith-based networks of support and missions. The Baptist denomination had a long history of work in both Myanmar and Thailand, and its members were an important part of the Christian response. The Myanmar Baptist Convention, a network of roughly 5000 churches (Griffiths 2016, 63) which partners with various civil society actors including other faith groups, NGOs and local government representatives in response to humanitarian disasters, was one such example. The (unofficial) humanitarian arm of the Southern Baptist Convention, Baptist Global Response was quick to reach out through the networks of the Myanmar Baptist Convention to try and help local partners get out to affected areas, although they struggled, as did all US-based groups, with the government restrictions (Christian Examiner 2008).

The status of the Karen had a particular resonance for evangelical communities: their status as 'first' tribe in the region to see converts to Christianity in the early 1820s inculcated a complex relationship with the British. This increased their access to global Christian networks, and encouraged a separate communal identity from the (largely Buddhist) Burman majority.   As a result, despite representing less than twenty percent of the ethnic Karen population, Christian Karen tended to dominate the group's representative leadership positions. They infused their political struggle for autonomy from the SPDC's rule with a spiritual significance, a story of the persecution of Karen brothers and sisters for their trust in Jesus. In doing so, the Karen tapped into the community bonds of worldwide Christianity, showing their plight as part of a "powerful narrative [for all Christians] about social suffering and Christian liberation… the suffering of the Karen people provides the platform for the heroic efforts of Karen Christian relief teams that provide humanitarian aid to the wounded" (Horstmann 2011, 515).   The Buddhist and animist Karen thus found themselves in awkwardly

undefined middle ground between the Karen Christian (and their dreams of *Kawthoolei*, or 'flowering country', a Karen Christian nation) and the Buddhist Burmese, who play the role of the aggressive 'other' in the story.

These narratives were reinforced and spread through the work of organisations such as Partners, the Backpack Health Workers, and the Free Burma Rangers, as they assisted minority groups fleeing conflict in the border regions. The Free Burma Rangers, for example, was founded by a US expat missionary who put his Special Forces survival training to use assisting IDP communities to evade the Myanmar military. Alexander Horstmann argues that these narratives of suffering shared by the Karen Christian leadership have meant that "secular and faith-based organisations that provide humanitarian aid to the refugee camps [on the Thai-Burma border] consciously or unconsciously thus support and keep alive a political and military project and help to legitimise and justify the evangelical imagination of a Karen homeland" (2011, 514).

Additionally, Christian Karen have not only taken on Christianity, they have by and large adopted a particularly evangelical variety; meaning they cultivate the expertise and desire to share their faith within their own ethnic group, as well as with others in Myanmar. This commitment to evangelism acts as a signifier of the authenticity and 'rootedness' of their faith to the rest of the evangelical global community. As highlighted in the second chapter, this is a central plank of evangelicalism – to spread the gospel of Christ – and there are few more powerful ways to belong than by valuing it highly.

The shared Christian identity of the Karen across the border, and the resources mobilised to support them by the global Church, has in turn been a strong anchor of their wellbeing as they sought to evade Myanmar's military. Through the networks of faith community, Karen displaced children are educated, healthcare is available, work and food and shelter are found. Hopes for a better future are nurtured; dreams for a Karen state, and 'a world that knows Jesus' abound. In this environment faith-based agencies are forced to balance the often conflicting values of impartiality and neutrality with those of justice and advocacy. FBOs' vulnerability to co-option into resourcing conflict (and indeed, sometimes, their deliberate support of combatants) increases the points of friction and moral ambiguity in their interactions with the Myanmar government. The suffering of the ethnic groups targeted by the Myanmar military was the catalyst for strong ties with global Christian communities and many faith-based agencies were deeply invested in the political struggles of

Myanmar's ethnic minorities.[4]   All of these tensions had to be navigated through the Nargis response.

The Cross-Border Dimension

For NGOs involved in providing aid to Myanmar's refugee communities along the Thai border (many, although not exclusively, Christian FBOs), Nargis represented a frustrating exercise in being close, but not close enough. Most of them had little or no presence in Myanmar proper, and while many were contacted by donors hoping they could be a viable conduit for aid into the delta region that bypassed the problematic political situation, the strategic and logistical difficulties of stretching beyond the immediate border region were too high a barrier for most (Preston 2008). Some of these agencies formed the EAT (the After the Storm: Voices from the Delta report co-authors) and physically crossed into the delta region in order to bring aid to the victims of the cyclone (Suwanvanichkij et al. 2009, 2). Others braced for a possible influx of new refugees. The then Thai Burma Border Consortium fielded inquiries about a surge, and the possibility of providing for cyclone victims through this route.[5]   However, Saay Tae Tae, a coordinator with the Karen Refugee Committee (which the Consortium has worked through since its inception) was pessimistic that assistance could feasibly make a difference in this manner:

> The Delta is where most of the Karens live, but it would be very difficult for them to get here. Travel is very restricted by the army, and the people have no money to pay for transport… It will take four or five months until we see the real picture. (as interviewed in David Challenger 2008)

These difficulties inherent in securing cross-border aid strategies (either by bringing the survivors to border aid, or border aid to the survivors) ensured that the NGOs with pre-existing 'boots on the ground' in Myanmar held a distinct advantage in providing assistance. World Vision and Save the Children, as the international NGOs with the largest pre-existing domestic presence, typified this, as they were able to deploy the two largest responses. However, for all NGOs, two of the largest issues in the wake of the cyclone were access into the delta and navigating the restrictions and demands of the government. These are the issues I keep in the foreground of my examination of the three FBO responses in the next section of this chapter.

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[4]This is true of both shared faith and cross-faith relationships. A desire to evangelise the Shan people for example, has seen large sums of Baptist money funnelled through NGOs and churches working in that state (interview with third party FBO first responder, Canberra, 20 June 2017).
[5]The Thai Burma Border Consortium is a union of international NGOs working together to provide services in the border refugee camps, now rebranded simply The Border Consortium.

World Vision

WV's national Myanmar office had been delivering relief and development programming in the country for eighteen years prior to the cyclone, and at the time, employed over 550 staff (World Vision Myanmar 2010, 4). Its large and pre-existing domestic footprint gave it a huge advantage in overcoming access issues. It already ran several development projects in the Ayeyarwady Delta region, and these communities became its first base of response after the cyclone had passed through. While this presence was a key benefit, WV's response had to wrestle with the complex political balancing act of pushing for greater access to the neediest victims whilst not jeopardising the future opportunities of their pre-existing programming. National and international staff had to resolve competing priorities, differing working cultures and a significant divergence in their tolerance for risk. Pressure from donors to push through roadblocks was intense. Through it all, WV's faith-based identity presented it with both opportunities and challenges. Its responses to the challenges posed by the context highlight the complexity of the interplay of Agensky's mission-emergency spectrum, where humanitarian and religious goals merge, diverge, and refract.

Tracking Disaster

WV Myanmar's national office is situated in Yangon, so they not only knew of but experienced the cyclone as it buffeted the city. As it passed, they began to mobilise as many staff as they could muster in the city. When the scale of the disaster became apparent, the WV Myanmar office began to search for and re-deploy staff from all across the country to the southern region. As many as 340 of their nearly 600 strong national workforce was re-deployed in this manner. Rudimentary needs assessments and a process of checking in on villages where they had pre-existing programs were quickly initiated. The office began to send emergency food, water, shelter supplies such as tarpaulins and blankets, and cooking sets (World Vision International 2008). As soon as possible, they also initiated WASH programs to fight potential disease outbreaks (World Vision International 2008). However, WV Myanmar did not have enough stockpiled supplies to meet the need they found, nor the political influence to force their way into cut-off areas.

WV International called into action their Global Rapid Response Team (GRRT), deploying members nearby and available to the region. They arrived in Bangkok soon after the cyclone, in constant contact with the national office and its needs. However, like all other international NGOs, the GRRT experts could not secure visas and travel approvals to enter Myanmar. The government told them that while they could send money and provide technical support to their national office colleagues, foreign nationals were not allowed to enter the country to provide aid directly (video interview with WV GRRT member, 21 September 2018). This posed difficulties for WV, whose relief response is predicated on the ability to parachute highly experienced senior humanitarian experts into high

intensity disaster scenarios on short-term placements (about six weeks). Without that capacity, the team had to scramble to try and find out what was happening, and how best to support their national office from a distance. They found that they were able to return national staff to Myanmar who had been working in overseas postings. The Myanmar-born regional HIV program advisor Kyi Minn was dispatched back from the Asia Pacific Office to become the Nargis Response Director. Kyi Minn was then able to direct the response from Yangon, under the remote supervision of the GRRT (Minn 2018).

The GRRT staff did their best to provide support from Bangkok, as the atmosphere became increasingly tense.   Days turned into weeks without the bottlenecks being resolved; fears of catastrophic secondary death numbers continued to grow. Some of the staff began to discuss alternative routes to access the delta region, weighing the risks of unauthorised border crossings with the potential for getting eyes on the situation firsthand. It was an attractive proposition, but the team leader for WV ultimately dismissed these suggestions as venting of frustrations, rather than a serious proposal (video interview with WV GRRT member, 21 September 2018).   The spectre of the scandal should an NGO be caught by the Myanmar authorities in such a position, combined with the damage it would do to the reputation of the national office was too great a risk to take. WV stayed committed to finding a government-sanctioned solution.

Eventually this commitment paid off; after four weeks of waiting in Bangkok and providing auxiliary support to the national office staff, the GRRT members were able to move into Yangon. Several of them only got to spend two weeks there; their six-week window for deployment having been largely spent waiting in Thailand (interviews with WV staff members, Canberra 13 July 2018 and by video, 21 September 2018). Once in country, the GRRT worked to catch up with the national office's lead. Although overwhelmed by the size of the disaster, WV Myanmar had worked incredibly hard to find solutions to being unable to draw on the broader WV structure to its full extent. The country response director, in response to a question about what they could realistically hope to achieve while the government refused to allow international NGOs to enter the country, was pragmatic:

> It will be a big problem but we cannot wait for the international aid to come. We have to rely also on the local communities. So what we are also doing is we also mobilise the local communities there and nearby villages. And there's a very high spirit of voluntarism, so they are also helping each other. They bring in food and water supply to the affected area wherever they could. So we are working together with the local communities there. (Kyi Minn, as interviewed in Colvin 2008)

As outlined earlier, the initiative and the community spirit of the Myanmar people in the face of the cyclone was unusually positive. The WV Myanmar office was able to tap into this high level of community support and assistance, using its pre-existing ADP (Area Development Programme) ties in order to cover some of their shortfalls. They also stepped into the roles usually inhabited by the international team. The national office got involved in, for example, representing WV in its cluster responsibilities, such as meeting with the Ministry of Education on 6 May with other members of the cluster for education in order to discuss the needs of some 517,000 primary school children and their 13,311 teachers in the aftermath of the storm (OCHA 2008a, 8). When the GRRT arrived, rather than sidelining the office, they experimented with a buddy system of leadership, where each GRRT member had a national counterpart to shadow their role and share the responsibilities (interview with WV staff member, Canberra, 13 July 2018). The strategic constraints of the situation thus led to a greater leadership role for the national office.

WV Myanmar estimates they assisted 350,000 people in the aftermath of the storm. They ultimately ran 108 Child Friendly Spaces, caring for 17,000 children over the course of the response and recovery. World Vision rolled out assistance in 399 villages, focussing on the townships of Bogale, Hainggyi, Pyapon, Dedaye, and Kyaiklatt (World Vision Myanmar 2010, 2). By the third year of the response, the Cyclone Nargis Recovery Programme (CNRP) was transitioned from a Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs responsibility to a Transformational Development programme. This saw a scale back of the rebuilding and development in 143 villages across three townships – Bogale, Hainggyi, and Pyapon. Although Bogale and Pyapon transitioned all of the CNRP projects to long term programmes, Hainggyi did not, phasing out all elements except the Child Protection programme (which they handed over to a community board organisation). World Vision exited Hainggyi in June 2010.

Hard Choices Over Access

The context of the disaster – particularly the political and ethno-religious tensions within the country – shaped WV's response in important ways. One of those was where they could work. Access requirements were a pragmatic demand of the field that butted up uncomfortably against broader humanitarian commitments to neutrality and delivery of aid based on need alone (interview with WV response staff member, Canberra, 13 July 2018). There were many people in need affected by the cyclone, but those who were most in need were often not easy to access. It was very difficult to get into parts of the delta, not just because of damaged infrastructure but also the government's efforts to deflect the humanitarian response into the areas it wanted the aid and international attention to go (interview with WV response staff member, Canberra, 13 July 2018). Pragmatically, it made sense for WV to begin by helping the communities in which they were already engaged.

Similarly, when WV had to choose further sites for recovery it did so based on where it could get to, and who else was working in the area, not just on how dire the scale of need. In the end the tension between convenience of access and need based aid "was only a theoretical tension, not a practical tension" remarked one GRRT member, because the opportunity to go beyond the areas they already had access to never materialised.

Throughout the response, the desire of the Myanmar government to control and direct aid, combined with local level corruption and poor governance meant that WV staff were often put in compromising situations as they tried to navigate competing demands and agendas. Staff spoke of the extreme delicacy of the situation, in attempting to balance the needs of the response and an advocacy framework that demanded a focus on human rights with the long-term security concerns of the local office. The knowledge that the Myanmar government could not only put a stop to the immediate humanitarian response program, but also might hamper WV's ADPs over the longer term was in the background of every staff meeting (interviews with WV staff members, Canberra 13 July 2018 and by video, 21 September 2018). This tension was increased by the unusually prominent leadership role of the national office. The dynamic was not just an issue for WV. The ability of NGOs to address human rights issues in Myanmar had been severely constrained for some time, subject to the whims of powerful figures in the national government and in constant danger of being shut down (see further the discussion in Jacob 2014, 155). The national office had slowly built up its range of programs (including the highly sensitive work of repatriating trafficked children from across the Thai border) in the shadow of the government's constraints (Jacob 2014, 156). They had real and pressing fears that a public confrontation of any kind with the SPDC would jeopardise everything they had worked to achieve. However, this put WV at odds with its own commitment to the 'prophetic tradition' of speaking truth and standing up for the vulnerable (its theological framework for understanding advocacy work over human rights issues, as introduced in chapter three). These competing aims created a highly charged dilemma for the agency.

The normative pressure exerted by the government of Myanmar for agencies to act a certain way and toe a certain line was very strong. In response, WV censored its advocacy programming facing the domestic level. Fear of adverse reactions from the government were so high at one point that the in-country advocacy advisor was pulled out rapidly (within 48 hours) after the publication of one of his reports over concerns it was too publicly critical of aspects of the government response in the delta.[6]

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[6] Whether this action was to protect WV staff, placate SPDC officials, or both is unclear.

However, even as it avoided overt advocacy within Myanmar, WV simultaneously worked to find alternative avenues of influence to challenge the injustices it encountered throughout the recovery. For example, advocacy advisors focussed on briefing key donors of issues that arose, in the hopes of getting these actors to press for change at a higher level, or making anonymous 'off the record' comments to journalists, in an effort to focus media attention on those subjects (interview with WV response staff member, Canberra, 13 July 2018). These included issues such as the requirement for international NGOs to convert their funds into the local currency, a process that included a hefty cut for the government far above any reasonable processing or transaction fee. The impact of faith in dealing with this environmental constraint is visible as it generated tension within WV between these two positions: pragmatic compliance with unjust government pressure, and principled defiance in the 'prophetic tradition'.

These tensions sat alongside and were in turn exacerbated by other cultural divisions that already exist between relief and development practitioners. The national office had taken the primary role in the response but they were not experienced disaster responders, mostly coming from development programs. The country response director, for example, had been an ADP operations director in Myanmar before working on the regional HIV program at the Asia Pacific level; he had to quickly update specialties. While members of the GRRT praised the quickness and competency of these national staff as they transitioned to rolling out the recovery program, there were still differences that had to be managed (video interview with WV GRRT staff member, 21 September 2018). National office staff worried that the GGRT would be too risk tolerant, too insensitive to the realities on the ground, and too focussed on short term goals that could not be sustained long-term by the national office. The GRRT, in turn, had to navigate its relationship with the national office that seemed at times frustratingly risk averse, and too sensitive for fear of what might happen in twenty years' time to take bold action to change the present (interviews with WV staff members, Canberra 13 July 2018 and by video, 21 September 2018).

Shared faith played a part in both highlighting and soothing these tensions. Members of the GRRT described some of the differences of the two arms of WV, relief and development, as having a theological dimension in bringing different approaches to its faith-based mission (interview with WV senior staff member, Melbourne, 20 April 2017). One mused that relief workers in the GRRT are sometimes considered 'less Christian', or at least, much worse at letting their faith guide their work, and doing it for the glory of God. He contrasted this with the far more tangibly religious practices of many national offices and noted the tensions that this created when GRRT members represent the international structure of the FBO to the national branch and seem 'less Christian'. When cultural expressions of faith that are taken for granted by the national office staff are not practised by their

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GRRT guests, this can cause frustration and division. Another GRRT member noted that the tensions experienced in the Nargis case could have been far more pronounced than they were. He noted that the Myanmar staff were actually far more guarded in expressions of faith than many national offices tend to be, because of the mix of Buddhist and Christian staff, and the historical tension between the two in the country (interviews with WV staff members, Canberra 13 July 2018 and by video, 21 September 2018). None-the-less, differences in understanding and interpreting their faith traditinos and expressions between the two different arms of the FBO generated disagreement in how to position the agency in response to the government's restrictions.

However, as well as deepening the tensions between different groups of its staff, WV's faith-based identity also gave it the tools it needed for the staff to work through these differences. They called on their shared faith: "I'm a strong Christian man, you're a strong Christian man, let's work this out" (WV GRRT member, recounting a disagreement, in video interview, 21 September 2018). Their shared beliefs were simultaneously a source of similarity that became the starting point for dialogue. Through constant conversation and interplay, even in the difficult environment of a disaster response, this gave them a shared language to draw on as they disagreed.

Navigating Faith-based Identities

The navigation of local loyalties was a delicate balancing act that highlighted this interaction. Many of the Myanmar national office staff (particularly below management level) were both ethnic Karen and Christian (interview with WV response staff member, Canberra, 13 July 2018). In a country riven by ethnic and religious divisions, their preference to help their fellow Christian Karen affected by the cyclone had to be constantly evaluated against the wider needs of the delta region. This is not to accuse them of strong bias; rather, their experiences of the hardships faced by this group meant they knew firsthand the vulnerabilities they faced, and did not need convincing that their need for assistance was great. WV Myanmar also had a number of close pre-existing relationships through development programs run amongst the delta Karen, and the responsibility to come to the aid of those they were already in relationship with was felt keenly, although they did work to find other partners. "The networks were much more oriented to the Karen and Christians in the delta, but within a few weeks, they had broadened that out" (interview with WV response staff member, Canberra, 13 July 2018). This was another example of the effect of a normative pressure, but one not from the broader mainstream aid community. It was instead the normative pressure of one group to honour their ties of loyalty to one another, and the normative pressure of co-religionists to not abandon their 'brothers and sisters in Christ'. This desire was also pressing in light of the broader discrimination in aid delivery going on through the region, as detailed in the background section above.

In balancing these pressures, WV tried to not explicitly privilege Christian partners, and in fact worked quite closely with a number of delta Buddhist monks and monasteries as the opportunities arose (video interview with WV response member, 21 September 2018).

The connection with Buddhist partners highlighted an interesting dynamic for FBOs in Myanmar. WV staff felt there were advantages to being a faith-based agency, or at least one that had long-standing connection to the local communities. Chief among these was the unique identity pitch WV was able to make to a government deeply suspicious of outside actors. Despite their identification with a religious minority (with ethnic overtones) having a sufficiently religious connection made WV staff cautiously confident that they were different enough from UN-affiliated organisations to be less threatening to the military government (interview with WV staff member, Canberra, 13 July 2018). In this way, their faith-identity gave them a recognisable reason for helping in a non-secularised country: "particularly in an environment where they hadn't been exposed to development and humanitarian work before, charity – religious based charity – is quite understandable and accessible to them, so World Vision made sense", as one WV staff member put it.

WV's work in Myanmar highlights the tension all agencies face: to focus on greater needs, or to focus on best access. However, it also demonstrates the way in which NGOs attempt to navigate various pressures from external actors and environments by finding alternative pathways to their goals. WV modified its on-the-ground practices of advocacy because of the pressures it faced to not get removed by the Myanmar government, but it still found ways to express that advocacy in ways that were consistent with its orientation and values. The tensions generated by different understandings and expressions of faith at national and international team levels were in some respects more difficult to reconcile, because they represented a difference in values itself. Nonetheless, the staff were able to draw upon resources from their shared faith in order to overcome these differences and work as a united front to deliver their response. Having successfully managed their difference, the international team was eventually able to hand over back to the national office. They continued to work with populations in two of the three major response areas, transitioning into longer term development projects. Their sense of identity as a 'best practice' NGO, as with Aceh, shaped their engagement with the government's restrictions and expectations, making them cautious of being caught up in scandal or illegality. At the same time, however, they felt their distinctively Christian identity gave them a story and a justification for being in the delta that was accessible for the local people, and the national government. This informed their willingness to engage as a 'Christian' agency, not just as a 'humanitarian' agency.

Samaritan's Purse

The response of SP to Cyclone Nargis reflected a very different set of priorities and values compared to WV. SP prioritised flexibility and speed of response, preferring to take risks in the name of having aid pre-positioned even if it might go to waste. They leveraged relationships, sought to support the local churches, and relied on 'stepping out in faith'. Their preference for short term help rather than long term bases meant they were not hampered by questions of long-term future sustainability for their programs in the country. There were two particular outcomes that SP's faith orientation generated in their response. Firstly, their standing operational strategy of finding local faith-based partners for delivery worked well in the delta context, where international actors struggled to move freely and had to rely heavily on local communities and agencies to roll out recovery programs. Secondly, their rapid decision-making model ('stepping out in faith') and their risk tolerance meant they responded quickly to take advantage of short windows of opportunity for assistance.

Providential Timing

SP, as noted in the earlier chapter, did not have a national office in Myanmar when Nargis hit. This is because of their decision to not establish a large number of permanent national branches through a federated structure. Nevertheless, when the cyclone hit Myanmar, SP actually had senior members of its Canada chapter in Yangon. They were there to meet with various government officials to discuss potential development project partnerships that they hoped to initiate (interview with SP senior staff member, Boone, 26 March 2018). This turn of events put SP in a prime position to both make some preliminary assessments as to the scale of the disaster and try to get on the front foot in terms of mobilising a response. SP saw this very much in terms of being put by God 'in the right place at the right time'. An Incident Management Team (IMT) was stood up at International Headquarters in Boone, North Carolina, to coordinate the many moving pieces that were soon to come into play. Some of SP's non-US staff were able to secure entry into the country two days after the storm, a Canadian team of water specialists (interview with SP staff member, Boone, 26 March 2018). Additional specialists who were unable to get immediate visas flew to Bangkok, with a team made up of members from seven countries as they waited for access also.

To begin with, SP focussed on getting supplies and financial assistance to local church partners in the delta area. Echoing the tenor of Bob Pierce's early missionary reports (as highlighted in chapter three), SP's reports from Myanmar focussed on the bravery and faith of local Christians: "our staff partnered with local Christians who willingly put themselves at great risk to lift up the Name of Jesus by serving their neighbors. They loaded boats all day and sailed through the night to reach the most

remote, hardest-hit areas with these desperately needed supplies" (Samaritan's Purse Canada 2009, 8).

By the 9th May, SP had a tentative agreement with Myanmar government officials to begin airlifting 747 cargo flights loaded with water filtrations systems and heavy-duty plastics from their warehouse in Charlotte to Yangon, much earlier than other agencies' access timelines. SP ultimately flew ten of these cargo flights in the first few weeks of the disaster. They also moved water purification sachets and kits from their Dubai warehouse to Bangkok, in preparation for future border crossing permissions (email to supporters, as shared by Guy Melton 2008). They sent money to local Christian groups to help them care for 'cyclone orphans' and to set up medical clinics with volunteer doctors (Samaritan's Purse Canada 2009, 8). SP also called on supporters to pray: for the victims of the disaster, for wisdom for the IMT as it managed the response, and for SP the organisation that it would to continue to find "favor with the government so that we will be allowed access into the country" (email to supporters, as shared by Guy Melton 2008). For SP, prayer was an important resource to draw on to allow them to find open doors to access the situation.

During the response, SP had a relatively high level of cooperation with other actors from within the IHO, partnering with other agencies through the cluster system, working on agriculture, education, food, shelter and WASH (see references throughout reports such as OCHA 2008a, 2008b, 2012). A few months into the recovery they were given government permission to establish a field office, an answer to the prayers they had called for: "the Lord opened the door… enabling us to continue helping communities in the delta as they work to rebuild their lives" (Samaritan's Purse Canada 2009, 8). Through this field office they were able to expand their service provision, with services such as a food supplement program for 15,500 families replanting rice crops in the delta, and extra boat and net distributions to 9,700 fishermen (Samaritan's Purse Canada 2009, 8). They were also able to contribute further to the agriculture cluster work, rehabilitating "108 ponds with fences in the Pyapon and Kyaiklat regions and distribut[ing] US$280,000 of emergency rice and fishing gear throughout the Delta… [and] starting several small grant projects through cooperating partners for agriculture livelihood restoration" (OCHA 2008b, 2).

Providential Resourcing

SP's logistics chain was again particularly important for the organisation, as shown by their shipment of another international NGO's water purification systems. This episode also neatly captures the role of faith in SP's approach to relief. SP's Canadian water-purification team in Yangon immediately post-cyclone had flagged to SP international headquarters that the need for clean water would be very great. Accordingly, when contacted by Water Missions International (a US not-for-profit that makes water filtration systems, generators, and pumps) shortly after the cyclone to ask if they would

be able to take twelve of their water filter systems to Myanmar, SP was quick to say yes, even though at that stage they had no idea when or even if the supplies would be allowed into the country. Lindsay Wine, spokesperson for Water Missions, commented that "we're stepping in on faith… people are dying. That's why we have to act now. When those borders are open, we can act immediately" (Hsieh 2008). Assured by the 'God Room' principle, SP chose to commit to sending WASH supplies when the opportunity arose, not when they had permission. At the same time, they worked their Myanmar-facing relationships frantically, and were able to secure permission to land the cargo plane in Yangon and distribute its contents out to the delta region, where each water filtration system set to work cleaning 40,000L of water per day for affected communities (Samaritan's Purse Canada 2009, 8).

This 'stepping out in faith' approach directed their strategies in preparing all sorts of supplies to ship to Myanmar. They were highly tolerant to the risk that they would have to either cross it over illegally or be turned back. They took gifts in kind from other charities and donors, utilising their supply chains to get them positioned. Ultimately, they were satisfied that they risks paid off; they were able to enter the country with non-US staff well before visas were granted for the bulk of international NGO experts waiting in Bangkok. The narrative that SP interpreted this through was that of 'favour' – that God was providing access to the nation that other NGOs were denied; it had to be God's handiwork because it defied human reason and expectation that they would be allowed to work there (interview with SP staff members, Sydney 24 August 2017 and Boone 26 March 2018). SP's emphasis on relationships and the 'handshake' model of ministry also assisted here, as personal networks were quickly leveraged to find access points.

The other lens through which the response was interpreted was an evangelistic one. Myanmar was seen as a 'closed' country, but the cyclone meant that local Christians were given an opportunity to be 'salt and light' in their communities. SP reported that "they [local Christians] proclaimed the message of the Gospel in word and deed as they distributed life-saving relief to people suffering from starvation, exposure, and waterborne illnesses". The tone of SP's reporting reflected this:

> Local officials and even leaders of other religions in the delta area have expressed their gratitude for our quick response to help meet the needs of their devastated communities. "We thought the world would not care about us because we are poor and powerless," said one village leader. "Then Samaritan's Purse came to help us. In your staff, we saw the meaning of Christian love and compassion." (Samaritan's Purse Canada 2009, 8)

SP continued to operate in Myanmar after they wrapped up their relief and recovery work as a result of these relationships. For example, SP Australia invested in clean water projects for the communities of Taunggyi and Pathein, as well as water collection and filtration systems and WASH training programs for schools in the township of Bogale (Samaritan's Purse Australia 2011, 7). They also stayed plugged into future disaster planning mechanisms with the broader IHO, through the Inter-Agency Contingency Plan, where they stayed on in the clusters they had worked with throughout the response (see various mentions in OCHA 2012). While they could not get initial permission for a field office and began to wind down in 2010, by 2014 they were able to move back into Myanmar to establish longer term programming (interview with SP staff member, Boone, 26 March 2018).

SP was keen to seize the opportunity to 'do good', help out, and provide a resource pool for the Christian communities in Myanmar to draw upon. They prioritised Christian delivery partners on the ground, and worked on using the window of opportunity available to get as much done as possible, while trusting that God would use their work to further the local church. This is a typical reflection of their style and strategy, and these characteristics were fully evident guiding SP's actions as it dealt with the environmental pressures of the Nargis response. Their understanding of their role as short term interveners shaped their practices, as did their interpretation of events as happening by divine intervention (such as having a team in Yangon when the cyclone hit) and requiring an active response of faith.

Compassion International

The story of Compassion's response to Cyclone Nargis provides an interesting foil to their experience of the Indian Ocean tsunami. Compassion has been involved in setting up child development centres in Thailand since 1978. Many of these have been established in the border areas, and many directly serve the Karen refugee communities that have moved and continue to move across the border as a result of the Tatmadaw's conflict with the multiple armed ethnic insurgent groups that inhabit Karen State (see for example Suwaratana 2015). As well as health, parenting and education support, these centres assist with a range of problems directly connected to these communities' refugee status, such as UNHCR refugee placement applications, Thai citizenship, registration papers for children, and education about work rights. Compassion had strong local ties across these communities that had been in place for some time.

Compassion's donor base was also pre-disposed to support extending their involvement at the border further into Myanmar to assist in response to Cyclone Nargis. The majority of donors who

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support Compassion's work along the Thailand-Myanmar border are evangelical Christians. These are people who are also likely to support direct missions work amongst the ethnic groups in Myanmar including the Karen and share the political vision that these ethnic groups espouse. Compassion's donors are familiar with and sympathetic to Christian minorities in Myanmar in part because of American evangelical churches' engagement with the ethno-religious homeland building narratives of the Karen (interview with Compassion senior staff member, Colorado Springs, 12 March 2018). It was already clear in the response to the Indian Ocean tsunami that Compassion's donors' strong concern for the wellbeing of children leads to an expectation that Compassion will mobilise on behalf of children at risk, even unsponsored ones. This concern equates geographic proximity with capacity to assist, regardless of the impediments that local geography and political divisions may impose.

The Indian Ocean tsunami also demonstrated that Compassion can be compelled to act outside of its usual modus operandi, and provide relief to communities without child development centres. On the surface, Nargis seems like a similar case. It hit a region close to a large number of child development centres where Compassion was well established. It garnered a lot of media attention for a prolonged period. The story had a familiar hook for evangelical audiences (persecuted ethnic minorities) and it was in a country where Compassion would like to work at some future date (interview with Compassion Asia Pacific staff member, Colorado Springs, 12 March 2018). There was a high risk for children as a category after the cyclone. At least a third of the casualties were children, and many 'cyclone kids' (displaced, orphaned or separated) were in danger of abuse and exploitation, notably, from the sex industry, but also recruitment as child soldiers from ethnic armed groups or the Tatmadaw (Seekins 2009, 723).[7] Many NGO needs assessments identified child protection and education as core recovery areas (see for example in the reports of World Vision Myanmar 2009; OCHA 2008b). Accordingly, there was a prima facie interest case for Compassion to act, particular given the lessons of Aceh, where donor concern about *children*, specifically, drove their response (even though in Aceh children were not a large proportion of survivors, most having died).

Barriers to Responding

In light of these similarities, it important to analyse just why Compassion chose not to respond. This does not just mean that there was no relief response (which, to be fair would be a highly unusual event). It means there was *nothing.* There was no special fundraising. No relief packages. No extra funding roll-out to border development centres in expectation of increased refugee flows away from

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[7] Indeed, a Human Rights Watch report published in 2007 listed Myanmar as having the highest number of child soldiers in the world (as cited in Jacob 2014, 138).

the crisis. No international or even national office level support coordination for those looking for lost ethnic kin. Nothing. And more intriguingly than that, not only was there no response, but there was not even any momentum for a response apparent from the recollections of staff (when there clearly was for Aceh, even fourteen years later). Nargis did not appear to register as a moment for a non-routine intervention.

Interviews with staff working for Compassion in 2008 indicated that they did not provide any assistance in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis because Compassion "doesn't do relief". When reminded that they in fact did 'do relief', as exemplified both by their Complementary Interventions programming, and their experience in Aceh, the staff reflected that they made a decision not to get involved in the Nargis response effort because it did not impact enough of their existing work in Thailand, and because there was no prospect of opening an office in Myanmar until the political situation there changed. The interviews also revealed that there was no enthusiastic figure in the regional office, like Dr Budijanto in Indonesia, to drive action and coordinate between national office and global headquarters.

The lack of a Myanmar national office likely made a large difference also. In Aceh, Compassion Indonesia was keen to show care to their fellow Indonesians; even though Aceh was an autonomous region with no Compassion footprint or connections, this shared national level identity was a big factor in convincing global headquarters to let them intervene. In the Nargis case, by contrast, there was no national office; and it appears the connections made along the border with the ethnic minority groups did not exert enough of an influence on the Thailand national office or its leadership to step into that role.

Inhabiting the Humanitarian Grey Zone

The differences between Compassion's response to the Indian Ocean tsunami, and Cyclone Nargis are important because they highlight the high threshold outside pressures have to reach in order to affect change to an FBO's orientation. While it is not impossible that Compassion might carry out more relief activities disconnected from their usual practices, it shows that it takes a great deal of outside pressure to make them change paths. The FBO is much more able to change course where it can square away the action as fitting into at least the grand scheme of its mission and goals – more than that, where it can see it fitting its ethos and operating style. It also highlights how the position of the FBO further along Agensky's 'religious-emergency imaginary', operating in the shaded space between humanitarianism and mission, inhibited a child-focussed, needs based response, by making it harder to justify that the agency had a duty to respond to the situation. Compassion did not see itself as having a ministry or a mission to the needy children of Myanmar. And so, it did not act.

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The balance of external normative pressures, strategic constraints and pragmatic demands did not act to push Compassion towards action in this similar case. Moreover, there was no corresponding internal pressure to push them either. This gives critical context to how powerful the pressures of donor expectation and the removal of key strategic constraints in the Aceh case actually were. It also highlights the importance of the conversation around identity and values that took place in the Aceh case. It shows the difficulty of predicting FBO behaviour; but it also reinforces the need to understand the mechanisms through which decisions are made and change is affected. Both the lack of response to Nargis and the extra-ordinary response to Aceh make sense and can be explained when understood through the prism of Compassion's orientation as an FBO, as it is acted on by normative pressures, structural restraints and pragmatic demands. In Aceh, the constitutive interactions between faith identity and context produced momentum to a response; in Myanmar, they inhibited it. Compassion's own understandings of its role and reach in this case proved a barrier to the opportunity to respond to the needs of children in peril, as its articulated goals and values moved it away from humanitarian action.

An interesting question is what Compassion would do in the future should a similar event occur. By 2013, Compassion was involved in work in Myanmar, through a cross-border scheme that allowed them to use their existing centres on the Thai side of the border as anchors for programs that worked across the boundary into Karen State (interview with Compassion staff member). Children who live in Karen State, Myanmar can now be enrolled in Thai-based child development centres, as long as they live within a certain travel distance. Complementary interventions funds are used to help start development projects for displaced people who still live in Myanmar. Pregnant women from these communities can participate in the Mums and Bubs Survival program, and development centres can assist in livelihood projects, such as tea plantations in Karen State that are being planted and supported to maturity by Thai-side centres, for the benefit of the communities living there (Suwaratana 2015). The stepping-stones of connection reach further into Myanmar now and arguably increase the chance of assistance in the event of future disasters.

Conclusion

The humanitarian response to Cyclone Nargis was defined by a battle to get to help those most in need of assistance. The complicated political context at both the domestic and international level threw up multiple barriers to the relief effort. Domestically, the government's attempts to place strict controls on civil society responders, and their inability to engage with the full scale of the disaster left gaping holes in their response capacity. Internationally, profound and mutual mistrust

over the motivations of the international community in helping and the domestic government in wanting to control the help seriously impeded the flow of aid supplies and expertise into the delta region. Given this difficult context, the three FBOs at the heart of this study had difficult choices to make about what they would do and how they would approach the disaster. WV relied on its strong pre-existing relationships and staff cultivated by its national office in Yangon; the large footprint of the branch enabling them to roll out one of the largest NGO response programs in the country. The quick response and autonomy of WV Myanmar staff became a boon when the GRRT staff found themselves unable to enter the country for the first few weeks of the disaster. However, WV then had to manage the shifting relationship structures this departure from normal operating procedures created, a structural constraint brought on by the pragmatic demands of the field. Differences between the GRRT and the national branch took patience and effort to overcome, and reflected both diversity in faith values and in cultural expressions of that faith. The competing loyalties of faith, ethnicity and humanitarianism posed a hard challenge, representing normative pressures to prioritise certain groups first. The agency's faith-based identity both added to and provided the resources for soothing these tensions.

For SP, Cyclone Nargis was a case of God's provision – unlikely timing, strange coincidences and odd bedfellows all coming together in a narrative of being shown favour – both from earthly authorities, and ultimately, from God. Individuals who were empowered with high levels of decision-making autonomy found themselves in situ when the disaster unfolded; logistics chains were mobilised with the right donations of goods on faith that the border would open to them; and local partners were found who were fit the bill of being 'brave and eager' to leap into action with the backing of Christian 'brothers and sisters' overseas. The pragmatic demands of the field suited the organisational orientation of the FBO; handshake relationships, dynamic supply chains and creative partnerships with local groups with flexible future intentions all fit the strange and constantly changing demands of Myanmar's context.

Compassion provided a contrasting case to SP – acting according to its own organisational orientation, as a highly risk averse and process-committed evangelical agency, it had neither the dynamism nor the flexibility to pivot to a response to the cyclone. This was despite its prior form in doing so in the Aceh case in the previous chapter, and the multiple threads of pre-existing connection that the FBO had to the disaster through its long-term strategic planning, and its strong presence amongst ethnic minority groups along the Thai-Myanmar border. However, the barriers to change were in this case too high for the FBO to act against its own momentum. Moreover, their understanding of their work through a ministry lens, rather than primarily a humanitarian one, reduced their receptivity to humanitarian relief-based calls to action. They did not see the disaster

as falling in the remit of their ministry, and there was not enough force exerted, either by normative pressures, structural constraints or pragmatic demands in order to move them into the emergency end of Agensky's spectrum. The lessons that this generates for understanding the role of faith in guiding humanitarian action I reflect upon, in the final and concluding chapter of this thesis.

Conclusions

> *Poverty is not just a low income. It is lack of dignity. It is the sense of humiliation. It is the sense that I am godforsaken because of my caste, or my gender, or my disability. I am Godforsaken. I did something wrong in a last life, my karma means I am now in this caste, or this body, or this gender…*
>
> *We believe in World Vision that every person carries the image of God. Whatever their gender, whatever their caste, whatever their tribe, whatever their power – or lack of it – they deserve access to services, to equality, opportunity, health, education, and civic participation.*
>
> - Reverend Tim Costello, Chief Advocate of World Vision Australia (2019)

When Tim Costello stood up to give the annual Gandhi Oration at the University of NSW in February 2019, he did not draw upon the language of human rights, or of national loyalty, or of cosmopolitan duties in order to reflect upon the role of Australians in making the world a better and fairer place. Instead, as the above quote highlights, Costello described the world's most vulnerable as 'godforsaken'. In doing so, he defined their poverty not as financial primarily, but as spiritual – a sense of being disordered in their relationship with the cosmos, being abandoned by the gods. Costello then reminded his audience that it is World Vision's belief in the *imago Dei*, in humans as made in the image of God, which drives the FBO's passion to see all people, regardless of circumstance, experience full and expansive justice. The invocation of the rich Christian doctrine of *imago Dei* points to a picture of humanity that marks out humankind as the image bearers of God himself, the site of his creative bestowal of rationality, freedom, love, hope and redemption. Although the poor and the vulnerable see themselves as godforsaken, WV sees them as 'fearfully and wonderfully made' (a quote from Psalm 139: 14). It is out of this understanding of their true human dignity and worth that the FBO can then assist in restoring them to full participation in their communities and their world.

It is remarkable to consider that such a clearly spiritual diagnosis of the problems of humanitarian injustice in our world can be at the heart of an annual (secular state) university lecture aimed at addressing the major human rights issues and activists of our time.[1] On one level, it speaks to the changing winds of a post-secular age that Costello felt no need to either excuse his recourse to faith-based narratives, or to translate them into more palatable 'universals' for his audience. On another

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[1] Also one that is not particularly relative in its treatment of spirituality either: it is not that they think they are godforsaken and that WV works within their paradigm, but that WV's *rejection* of their self-image as godforsaken and its *insistence* that they are in fact, made in God's image is what undergirds their ability to respond.

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level, it is a sign of how deeply marginalised religious narratives of humanitarian need have been that this speech still feels a little shocking. In this thesis, I have explored some of the complexity of the social and political conversations that have created this oddly patterned space. Religious communities have claimed authority over questions of justice, mercy, sin, and charity for thousands of years. Yet the work of modernity in the West has been to consistently recast the work of humanitarian action as secular, universal and (increasingly) a job for the 'professionals' (A. Ager and Ager 2015, 5). As Schwarz reflects in her conclusion to her study of faith-based organisations in transnational peacebuilding, there is an "ontological and epistemological disconnection between [FBOs] and their secular funders and partners, as well as researchers" that tends to categorise and portray these agencies "in ways that do not align with FBOs' own understandings" (2018, 190). In this last chapter of the thesis, I reflect on the implications of these two conflicting trends for how we approach evangelical FBOs, faith in humanitarianism, and religious actors in global politics more generally.

The Promise and the Problems of Humanitarian Engagement

At the core of the humanitarian imperative is the claim that the moral duty of responding to human suffering has a first order status in international society, above politics or ideology, grounded in the inherent worth of humanity, and the urgency and temporality of the disasters that threaten it (Grayman 2014, 335). It holds that "whatever the differences between oneself and another, the duty to be humane should never be over-ridden by any other claim" (Bretherton 2015, 449). As this humanitarian imperative has been increasingly encased in a system over the past two centuries, it has developed structures that deem some actors, practices, and norms legitimate, and others not. While such delimitation serves important goals, it also complicates the ethical claims that drive the humanitarian endeavour.

For religious communities, the explicitly secular framing of humanitarianism through the twentieth century created barriers to their claims to have a legitimate stake in the work of responding to the distant vulnerable beyond their borders (A. Ager and Ager 2015, 14). Many of them learnt to speak the language of the mainstream aid community in order to maintain their claim to access; they could enter, but at the price of becoming 'Oxfam with hymns', as Michael Taylor (2010) so incisively described it. For those who declined to pay this price, they tended to become invisible to the growing order. This explains why scholars have identified both a strong secularisation narrative in the institutionalisation of the IHO, and the continued growth of the FBO sector, in both size and

numbers through this period (such as Barnett 2011b; Barnett and Stein 2012a; Swart and Nell 2016; Ver Beek 2000).

The secular framing of humanitarianism has a prima facie appeal. In asserting its neutrality with regards competing religious frameworks, it reinforces the claim that the humanitarian impulse is both beyond sectarian divisions, and above them. However, as Charles Taylor's seminal work in *A Secular Age* emphasizes, there is more than one kind of secularism. Rather than simply a retreat of the truth claims of religion from the public sphere, Taylor sees the growth of the idea of secularity as a 'context of understanding' that frames belief and unbelief as different possible options for engaging with the world (2007, 3). This is not neutral with regards to religion, but rather, destabilises and seeks to remake it (Shakman Hurd 2004, 242; Wilson 2017, 534). By delineating what religion is not, secular actors are functionally engaged in defining what it is by default (Schwarz 2018, 184).

This distinction can be seen, for example in the humanitarian response to Aceh. Although the aid community was attempting to be neutral with regards to religious spheres of activity, the very act of asserting that there was such a distinction required this secularised definition of religion as apart from politics, community, and the public space. This led to what Andrew McGregor identified as the aid community "effectively secularising the landscape," via their donor and policy-imposed constraints in the types of buildings they could rebuild (for example, replacing mosques with community centres) (2010, 741).

The turn of the twenty-first century has seen this landscape changing rapidly. There is a growing reproach of the "shocking conceit" of thinking that relief and development action can happen "without engaging with the primary source of meaning of the vast majority of communities… their religious worldview" (Mitchell 2017, xxii). As critiques of secular modernity have created space, FBOs are increasingly confident to tout the advantages of a faith-based approach to humanitarian work in a faith-based world. Retired WV Australia executive Bob Mitchell's (2017) examination of WV programming in Senegal and Tanzania led him to argue that those WV country offices enjoyed an interfaith advantage over secular NGOs. He asserted this was because WV staff and the Muslim communities they were working in shared "a theistic frame of reference" in their approach to relief and development challenges, while "the 'neutrality' of secular agencies in Senegal and Tanzania meant that communities were sometimes confronted by an unfamiliar modernist philosophy" (Mitchell 2017, 59). Meanwhile, anthropologist Dena Freeman's study of Pentecostal churches working in Africa pointed to the dividends of the evangelical focus on personal transformation, musing that "when it comes to bringing about social and economic change, it seems that approaches

that focus on individuals are rather more effective [than community level transformation]" (Freeman 2012, 4). And SP argued strenuously for the advantages of a faith-based mission when it premiered the film 'Facing Darkness' about Ebola survivor and SP doctor Kent Brantly, linking evangelical commitment to stay in Ebola-infected communities with the declaration: "Jesus Christ didn't run. He helped people. When a crisis like Ebola blazes up, we run to the fire – we don't run away from it" (Franklin Graham 2017). In turn, donors and multilateral organisations are increasingly willing to work with faith-based actors.

However, this change is uneven and still often underpinned by the 'master-narrative' (as K. Davies 2012 terms it) of secular humanitarianism. Research on relief and development FBOs by scholars such as Rick James (2011, 2009), and Bob Mitchell (2017) shows that they themselves are still working out what faith-based humanitarianism means, and still reflecting on the extent to which their mandates, values, goals, and practices have been shaped by this secular framing. Andrea Paras likewise points to the extent to which FBOs "have also internalised the separation between religion and politics that is at the core of the secular fiction" (2012, 232).

In turn, scholars criticise donors for an engagement that is still primarily instrumental in nature, interested in faith-based partnerships that do not force potentially uncomfortable introspection over their own construction of values and meaning (Grills 2009; Rees 2011). By unquestioningly adopting values of modernity (the progress brought by modernisation) and neutrality (that it is possible to separate out the religious from other considerations), secular framings of humanitarianism continue to routinely privatise, marginalise, and instrumentalise religious actors, beliefs and communities (A. Ager and Ager 2015, 12). Thus humanitarian dialogue continues to function as though "the secular were the benchmark, and the religious were the 'deviation'" (Barnett and Stein 2012a, 22).

One of the more insidious consequences of this secularist presumption is the implication that only one kind of actor – religious – has a problem with coercive conversionary practices. As Cecelia Lynch and Tanya Schwarz so forcefully argue however, humanitarianism's real 'proselytism problem' is largely not a question of religious agencies harming recipient populations through 'nefarious' conversions; rather, it is found in the pressure of donors on field partners to implement their agendas, to 'convert' populations to their values and beliefs of 'neoliberal governmentality' (2016, 637). This leads to somewhat of a perverse focus in the humanitarian field where religious agencies are held to a standard that is not necessarily practised by those they are pressured to emulate.

Recasting the Evangelical Mission

Approaching religious actors holistically requires understanding them on their terms; beginning with engaging their beliefs, their meaning-building narratives and activities. This is evident in my treatment of the concept of evangelicalism through this thesis. Adopting a theological definition that is deeply grounded in its socio-historical context gets us beyond superficial pictures of neo-missionaries (such as in Gartland 2005; Woods 2018), to consider more deeply the implications of such a label. While all evangelicals share the 'Bebbington's quadrilateral' corner posts of conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism, attention to historical context shows how evangelicalism is defined by the unique wiring of these theological commitments that generates distinctive tendencies towards individualism, solidarity and globalism (Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 19, 20). These traits set evangelicals apart and help to explain their dynamic energies in their engagement with global social action, particularly humanitarianism. English historian WR Ward may have been facetious in defining evangelicalism as "a penchant for building orphanages", but he was onto something in his identification of the energy of action inspired by their cause (as quoted in Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, 276). Many current accounts of evangelical humanitarianism do not pay enough attention to these diversities and dynamism.

The key empirical contribution I have generated through this thesis has been my examination of evangelical FBO work in a more holistic context that seeks to find an alternate perspective. The three agencies of focus were all born of evangelical moments in post-WWII USA, driven by dynamic energies of a theological commitment to the transforming power of the gospel message in a dark and suffering world. They all harnessed the tendencies of evangelicals towards individual action, with a special concern for the poor and oppressed, according to a sense of global-sized mission. They were founded because their driving personalities saw the need to provide for the physical urgencies of a suffering world, even as they preached a message for its spiritual needs. As the decades passed, these three agencies began to diverge, as their unique encounters with their contexts gave expression to their beliefs. WV's acceptance of a more diverse array of staff and perspectives, as well as its rapid expansion, led it away from its strictly mission support origins. As differing theological traditions (as well as non-Christian approaches) have been enfolded into the agency, its position has moved further towards a 'synthesis-humanitarian' model. This can be seen in its development of more expansive understandings of the role of institutions, the divine in each human, and the picture of the possibility of human flourishing through transformation that is spiritual without conversion to Christianity. These characteristics were on display in both the Aceh and the Myanmar field sites, particularly in the way staff dealt with difference, and emphasised the importance of local community leadership, regardless of faith. Their picture of the flourishing of

Acehnese children as involving their (Muslim) faith community is a particularly strong indicator of their move away from more conservatively underpinned theological positioning.

However, it is important to note the role that a federated structure plays in complicating this narrative. While this is true of WV as a global NGO, it is a process that is at different levels of advancement depending on the country or regional office. WV Australia has developed a far more expansive theological basis than WV USA, or WV India, for example. Reinforcing the overall message of this thesis that context plays a constitutive role in shaping expression of belief, the cultural and historical particulars of each country or region have led to faceting of the FBO's expressions of corporate religiosity. In Myanmar for example, the complexities of the relationship between ethnic and religious identities for political positioning made carving out a space to be a distinctively Christian FBO a fraught activity. However, in both responses, WV was also able to draw on broader shared narratives about religious charity in order to situate themselves as legitimate providers of aid with the locals, even those of different faith traditions.

For SP, the more streamlined structure of their organisation helps to mitigate some of these pressures towards diverse articulations of faith. Even though some field offices have been open for decades, their officially temporary status ensures a clear hierarchy. SP embodies a far more straightforwardly evangelistic-humanitarianism model. Their establishment helped to shore up this model; engineered explicitly to correct for the 'defectives' of WV's trajectory of professionalization (VanderPol 2010, 156). Its internal spiritual narratives help to structure it to pursue a high risk, high reward approach to relief and development work. If God is in charge, and people do not always understand his ways, then they are free to try new things without fearing that things will turn out differently to how God desired. If a strategy failed, it was meant to be. If a long shot paid off, it was divinely ordained. This approach carries dangers as well as strengths. Often, only one or the other is emphasised. In Aceh, the agency was criticised for its overt evangelical stance. However, their presence on the ground was often much more self-censored than initial narratives would suggest. Staff worked proactively to manage the agency's image, downplaying their president's past anti-Muslim statements and emphasising their commitment to showing love to the Acehnese without condition. However, their high-turnover semi-volunteer rota made it difficult to spot problems in their building programs, which damaged their reputation with local communities. In Myanmar, the agency found quick access and was flexible to support local Christians to help out their communities; the language of God's blessing and open doors presented these opportunities as divinely ordained. However, the possible long-term effects of this focus on Christians as first responders in a community divided along religious and ethnic lines are difficult to predict or assess.

For Compassion, an evangelical faith-based identity has shielded them from the demands and tempo of the mainstream humanitarian environment. Compassion's evolution from mission agency to relief and development organisation saw it shed most of its emergency relief capacity when confronted with the pressure to conform to 'master-narrative' norms about the boundaries of their aid projects. The resulting overriding commitment to independence from government in the name of integrity of Christian mission has kept it largely invisible to the broader humanitarian community. It has instead developed a highly risk averse, long-term community development model based on principles of stewardship and ministry through churches that has a lot more in common with various Christian missionary agencies than mainstream humanitarian NGOs. Its commitment to child-sponsorship as a key fundraising mechanism has fed this risk aversion – donors want long term relationships with their sponsored children, so the FBO is hugely incentivised to prioritise stable church partnerships at both ends of their pipeline.

However, while this pressure is practical, it is engaged with through faith-based ideas and narratives. Like Costello's opening description of WV, Compassion is committed to the idea that children are precious in the sight of God, created in his image and worthy of love, hope, investment and care. They express the individualist lens of evangelicalism in the way they portray the responsibilities of the donor and the prospects of the child. They mobilise pictures of the global connectedness of the church through their vision of themselves as a wealth transfer conduit from congregations of the global North to their brothers and sisters in the global South. And they centre the evangelical focus on the poor, and the transforming power of the gospel to change their circumstances in their image of the need for Christians to be the ones caring, teaching, encouraging and supporting their program beneficiaries. In Aceh, Compassion deviated from its normal operating procedures in funding a relief program unconnected to prior beneficiaries. However, its justification of its necessity in the name of Christian love served to reinforce the FBO's core evangelical ethos. Nonetheless, this unique expression of belief in context was not enough to change the FBO's general orientation; it did not see its mission as involving Myanmar's cyclone-affected children (or Christians) when that disaster occurred. This highlights the way in which relief and development agencies that operate in the shadow-space between humanitarian and mission agency can have a more bounded vision of responsibility.

In considering the relationship between faith and practice for these three FBOs, I have shown how theological orientations considered similar by many (such as Thaut 2009; Clarke and Jennings 2008; J. Ager, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, and Ager 2015; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2012) do not necessarily generate the same practices on the field. This does not mean that faith does not matter; rather, it shows how important it is to consider faith in action. One of the results of tracing the broader history of

evangelicalism is that it highlights the evolution of these actors' thoughts about poverty, disaster response, and best practice development in evangelical FBOs. From a beginning in highly reactive relief models, and paternalistic welfare with a clear preference for engagement at the individual level, they have had to work through the consequences and outcomes of their various strategies. They have had to experiment with the ways in which their commitment to the 'good news' of their faith can be contextualised and shared, and the circumstances in which it is appropriate to do so.

While sometimes this leads to practices that conform with broader secular norms about humanitarian action, it also engenders a range of approaches and values that might not. This highlights the agency of evangelical FBOs in responding to the environments in which their faith is expressed. They are a lot more capable of responding sensitively and agilely to difficult situations than commonly given credit for. They know that their particular identity has possible repercussions, and they act to compensate for that where they are able. They exercise agency in their strategies of how they will approach the various pressures of the context in which they are operating. Their flexibility in how they choose to present their identity is not, I would argue, a sign of increasing secularisation necessarily, or of a disingenuous or cynical adoption of identity, but a sign of their understanding of the importance of context in shaping their self-presentation. SP did not become 'less evangelical' in Aceh and 'more evangelical' in Myanmar; rather, their staff on the ground responded to the opportunities and restraints of the specific context in how they expressed their faith identity.

In highlighting this finding, I am not arguing (or agreeing with those who argue) that these FBOs only allow faith to 'matter' on their donor-facing side (such as Hopgood and Vinjamuri 2012). It is not that they were not affected by faith identity and values. However, their expression looked different depending on contextual factors. As noted above, their style is distinctive. Not only do they value different principles and goals, they operate according to a whole different worldview. However, just like secular agencies are all different, and find some contexts more challenging than others, some FBOs are more structurally challenged in some contexts. In this sense, commentators must be careful not to expect more of them than they do other actors in the system. This is hypocritical, and leads to further isolation and suspicion for FBOs who often already chafe under the perceived double standards. For example, SP's troubled status can become a self-fulfilling prophecy – the less space there is for inclusion, they less they may be likely to seek to work with other agencies.

This matters because FBOs potentially have a lot to share with other actors in the broader IHO about the need for self-reflection, and the need to be careful of and attentive to the value differences and crucially, the power differences between them and their beneficiaries. FBOs have had to justify their

existence as legitimate humanitarian actors for the better part of a century; this makes them a valuable resource for mainstream humanitarians in considering how to think seriously about the impact of their own values and beliefs on those around them (see the broader discussion in Lynch and Schwarz 2016). FBOs have had to learn about coercive conversion, wrestle with cultural difference and diversity, understand how to create healthy boundaries with people who do not agree with them and have different agendas. Studying how they balance resilience to change with receptiveness to criticism could yield insights for a whole range of actors. FBOs such as WV have committed extensive resources to understanding how their worldview affects what they do, and how other worldviews might make different conditions and choices in a complex and multilayered world. They know that they have to engage with the spiritual life and landscape of the people they assist, and they have spent a great deal of time thinking about how far they are able to accommodate difference without sacrificing their sense of integrity as a Christian agency. This experience is invaluable in guiding deeper thoughts about when to accommodate different values and when to challenge them.

All of the above means that these evangelical FBOs tend to be incredibly resilient to external criticism. They are used to being the pariah, the 'cowboy', 'invisible', and the 'weird' ones (terms used by interview respondents in self-description). They have powerful internal narratives and sources of truth to buffer them. Therefore, if criticisms of their practices are to be influential, they need to speak to their vision and values. My study of these three FBOs showed that where they could justify changes of practice according to their broader ethos and self-identity, they had lower barriers to that change. If they felt they were contravening their self-identity, they became incredibly resistant to change.

This does not mean that practices closely associated with their faith identity and values are beyond reproach, but it does mean that dismissive, de-legitimising and external targeted criticisms are not particularly effective mechanisms for change. For example, WV changed its approach to development when it took on a more diverse set of staff and took on board their broader vision based on diverse experiences and training. Likewise, Compassion is moving to rewrite its theology of change strategic framework, incorporating far more community-based supports than ever before, and re-evaluating how to address the family unit of their sponsored children more holistically, in a more best-practice fashion (interviews with Compassion strategy staff and consultants, Colorado Springs, 14 March 2018 and by email correspondence, January 2018). That change did not come about because they were convinced by sceptical academics and practitioners that an individual child sponsorship model had been debunked (and they still do not think that). That change is happening because staff members on the ground asked for more support, and because sympathetic academics

were willing to work collaboratively and constructively with them in order to find solutions and correct problems (interviews with Compassion strategy staff and consultants, Colorado Springs, 14 March 2018 and by email correspondence, January 2018).

Re-imagining Faith in Action

These implications are visible because of the move beyond framings of humanitarianism that emphasise the proselytising dangers of evangelicals, towards a more holistic picture of the connection between faith and action on its own terms. This space to explore the rich empirical landscape of these kinds of religious actors was generated by a theoretical approach that pushed back against the secular biases of the broader humanitarian system. Ager and Ager argue that "the secular framing of humanitarianism structures an understanding of religion that – in reflecting a particular Western perspective – is not conducive to meaningful partnership with local faith communities" (2015, 14). As discussed earlier in this chapter, this secular framing privatises, marginalises and instrumentalises religion, setting up a false dichotomy that is blind to the range of ways NGOs need to be mindful of their impact.

Some argue the only way to move past secularisation narratives is to do away with analytical frameworks that use the descriptors 'faith-based', 'religious' or 'secular' altogether (Hynd 2014, 2). Others criticise mapping faith in religious NGOs as seeking to "make static what is actually a dynamic, fragmented, diverse, and fluid array of phenomena so as to proffer a vision of the world conducive for the top-down optics and macro-level analysis of administrators, donors, and auditors" (Fountain and Feener 2017, 1). These criticisms serve as an important reminder that the lenses we use change what we see. All relief and development agencies move between the sacred and the material in their approaches, and have to choose how to navigate these interactions (J. D. Smith 2017, 70). As the history of evangelicalism traced in chapter two showed, religious groups are not static. The interpretation and application of their theological commitments evolves in response to their context and their community. Too rigid an application of categories stifles sensitivity to the dynamic changes these groups are going through, as their identities are 'formed and reformed', as George Lawson says, through their encounters with history. The black and white application of 'evangelistic' or 'evangelical' to humanitarian NGOs is a prime example of this. It closes down the space for change, experimentation and growth that they might otherwise have. "Evangelicalism has always been made up of shifting movements, temporary alliances, and the lengthened shadows of individuals" (Noll 1994, 8). When we reify this category, we foreclose opportunities to change and adapt.

This has been the insight that has driven my theoretical contribution through the thesis. Theoretical frameworks that implicitly or explicitly generate spectrums of religiosity (such as Sider and Unruh 2004; Clarke and Jennings 2008; Thaut 2009) reproduce secular bias by implicitly measuring FBOs by how much they deviate from a secular norm. They also they fail to account for the role of context in shaping how belief can appropriately be expressed. This leaves scholarship prone to either over or underestimating the effects of faith on practice.

In reimagining faith in action, I have built on the work of Thaut (2009) and Agensky (2013) (in turn building on the work of authors before them) in order to better trace the impact of distinct beliefs on practice. This model demonstrates how four different elements of an FBO provide organisational entry points to their ethics – their mission statements, staffing policies, institutional affiliations and donor pool. Combined with a thorough history of the FBO, these elements paint a picture of the FBO's organisational orientation: that is, what it values, who it employs, who it works with, whose money it spends, and where it came from all together generate a distinctive style of practice for that FBO, momentum towards a default reaction and pattern of activity that is difficult (although not impossible to overcome). However, this orientation must be understood as only half of the equation in understanding the relationship between faith and practice. Belief does not exist in a vacuum; it is expressed in its encounters with specific times and places and people. The role of context is therefore not merely a mitigating factor in understanding the impacts of faith; it is in fact a key component of giving shape and body to that belief. Contextual factors including normative pressures, strategic constraints and pragmatic demands thus have a constitutive influence on the faith-derived practices of FBOs.

This approach highlights the agency of FBOs as they navigate the complex environments of humanitarian action; it also cautions against assigning inherent suspicion to a category of actor because of their theological orientation. It does so by accounting for the ways in which secular framings of humanitarianism do not account for their own specific values and the impact they might have on a religious world. On this approach, the power of humanitarian action is seen not in its claim to be ideologically neutral, but in its role as the meeting place where worldviews encounter and enrich each other, where 'our stories converge' (A. Ager and Ager 2015, 24; Myers 2011, 205). As O'Hagan and Hirono argue, the opportunities for enriching dialogue and cooperation across cultures in pursuit of humanitarian aims requires not stricter delimitations of the concept, but better attention to the various cultures of humanitarianism that exist and their potential for synergy (2014, 411). Including religious actors and communities of practice in those cultures for consideration is just as key. This points to different answers for questions about what matters in understanding 'good' humanitarian practice. It suggests that rather than focussing on evangelism per se, we should

instead be asking questions about an agency's ability to operate in a pluralistic setting, to navigate difference and to express their identities in culturally appropriate ways.

Renewing Religion in the Global Space

This reimagining of faith-based humanitarianism reveals the conceptual clarification this thesis brings to the question of religion in the global space. As a discipline, IR has seen increased interest and scholarship about religion.   However, the relatively short amount of time and the high variation in approaches mean that religion is still shallowly conceptualised by many scholars. The underlying task of answering the questions of why and how religion 'matters' is still ongoing (Bellin 2008). In advocating a family resemblances approach to the category of religion, I have contributed a way of studying religious actors in the global space that seeks to avoid the twin pitfalls of IR scholarship; on the one hand, the tendency to oversimplify religion into a singular and static variable of analysis undermines the richness and nuance of the many diverse actors, beliefs, communities and practices that are encompassed in the term.   On the other, the temptation to totally disaggregate the category forces the question of the point of 'seeing' religion in our analyses at all (Desch 2013). I have instead advocated a conceptually rich picture of religion in chapter one as a constructed but non-arbitrary category whose boundaries are fluid in the vein of a family resemblances approach.   It holds 'religion' as a meta-category very lightly, but it affirms the grouping and studying of different communities and organisations as a coherent category of analysis. This middle road approach avoids the temptation to oversimplify and so flatten the richness of religious identity on the one hand, whilst still pursuing a level of analytical clarity.

Looking Ahead

The aim of this thesis has been to contribute to understanding the role of religion in the global space. In investigating how ontologies shape practice, I have argued that the specific values and beliefs FBOs construct their identities from matter in understanding FBO action. They provide the basis for a strong organisational orientation towards certain styles of response, which interact constitutively with context in order to produce unique and specific practices. Evangelical FBO refusal to accept the poor and destitute of the world as 'godforsaken' is a powerful driver of care and change. The opportunity to understand how this infuses their practice and what this looks like as it is shaped by engagement in specific times and places casts light over the broader normative commitments of our global system, pressing us to strive for clearer and better ways of engaging it.

All humanitarian actors have weaknesses and vulnerabilities, problems and blind spots. Jonathan Agensky (2013) called for more research that paid attention to the microphysics of humanitarian practice. In this thesis, I have contributed to this research agenda by looking closely at the inner lives and outer actions of three evangelical FBOs that, whilst being considered similar in much of the current IR literature, have been shown through this process to embody very different expressions of their commitment to their faith-based identities and values.

Looking ahead, there are more opportunities to further this agenda. For instance, in this thesis I have looked at three large and well-established evangelical FBOs. Questions about how smaller agencies perceive themselves, what their vulnerabilities are, and how they interact with the idea and identity of humanitarianism would be fruitful avenues for future research. This would be especially interesting in the light of the rise of mega-church development activity, which further blurs the boundaries between mission and humanitarianism in the NGO format (as noted in Gramby-sobukwe and Hoiland 2009). Likewise, Ngo (2015) notes that some agencies opt out of identifying with humanitarianism, despite clearly participating in relief and development work according to a humanitarian impulse. She argues that they do so because of the baggage and the pressures of conformity that this label brings them. Understanding how these choices affect the way in which the boundaries of humanitarian action are reproduced is another avenue for future research that would build on the work I have done through this thesis.

At a different level of analysis, these findings speak to a broader research agenda in investigating distinct cultures of humanitarianism. Answering questions about who is perceived to be a legitimate humanitarian actor, and the boundaries of action set for them is part of understanding how different cultures of humanitarianism contribute diverse expectations, standards and norms to the work of relief and development across the globe (O'Hagan and Hirono 2014; Hirono and O'Hagan 2012). The frameworks developed in this thesis are a valuable toolkit for moving beyond the realm of evangelical Christian agencies, in order to see the relationship between identity and practice for other religious actors, as well as other kinds of humanitarian-providing groups such as civil society initiatives and civil-military groups. Increasingly diverse action grouped under the banner of humanitarianism risks fragmentation of a global order that aims to address human suffering and death; fostering a healthy pluralism is an exciting, and challenging, task for academics and practitioners alike to which this work makes one kind of contribution, and provides a platform for creating more.

Table 1 Taxonomy of Christian faith-based humanitarianism

Taxonomy of Christian humanitarianism	Type of humanitarianism	Mission	Authority/affiliation	Working policies	Financial support	Example agencies
Accommodative humanitarianism (Christ of culture)	Blurs line between secular and religious nature of work	Absent strictly religious goals	Unlikely to be tied to a denomination or to justify work in religious language	Christian faith not required of staff	Funding not dependent upon religious sources	Christian Aid Heifer International
Synthesis humanitarianism (Christ above culture)	Attempts to balance Christian orientation and secular goals	Emphasize a just and peaceful world	More likely to be tied to a religious affiliation and justify work in explicitly religious language	More likely to have Christian working environment (staff culture)	Appeal for funding to Christian religious base and secular institutions	CRS CAFOD Church World Service American Friends Service Committee Lutheran World Services Mennonite Central Committee
Evangelistic humanitarianism (Christ transformer of culture) + (Christ and culture in paradox)	Humanitarianism for the sake of evangelism	Spiritual transformation	More likely to be religiously affiliated and justify work in explicitly religious language	Christian faith a likely requirement of the staff	Funding appeals primarily directed to Christian base and churches	Samaritan Purse World Vision International Mission Board of Southern Baptist Convention
Radical non-engagement (Christ against culture)	Humanitarian non-engagement; church missions as central goal	Focused mainly on christian fellowship; engages in religious social institutions for evangelism purposes	Tied to a denomination or religious authority	Christians within the denomination	Funding for missions from local denomination or denominational head body	N/A

Figure 8: Thaut, 2009, 331

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