

Christian Values and Beliefs in Development Practice: A Case Study of Faith-Based Development in Karen Hilltribe Communities, *Mae Sariang*, Thailand

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ไค ลิง ยี : ค่านิยมและความเชื่อแบบคริสเตียนในปฏิบัติการการพัฒนา: กรณีศึกษาการพัฒนาที่มีความเชื่อเป็นพื้นฐาน ในชุมชนหมู่บ้านกะเหรี่ยง แม่สะเรียง ประเทศไทย (Christian Values and Beliefs in Development Practice: A Case Study of Faith-Based Development in Karen Hilltribe Communities, Mae Sariang, Thailand) อ.ที่ปริกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: ฉันทนา หวันแก้ว, 108 หน้า.

ด้วยเหตุที่ว่าการศึกษาเกี่ยวกับองค์กรพัฒนาบนความเชื่อทางศาสนายังมีไม่เพียงพอ วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้จึงได้ เลือกลงานพัฒนาของมูลนิธิศุภนิมิตแห่งประเทศไทย (World Vision Foundation of Thailand) ที่แม่สะเรียง เป็นกรณีศึกษาเพื่อสำรวจแง่มุมของความเชื่อทางศาสนาในงานพัฒนา ในประการแรกการศึกษานี้มุ่งวิเคราะห์ว่า คุณค่าและความเชื่อตามศาสนาคริสต์ และ อัตลักษณ์ขององค์กร ศุภนิมิตสากล (World Vision International) ส่งผลต่อการก่อรูปความเข้าใจในภารกิจและงานพัฒนาของมูลนิธิศุภนิมิตแห่งประเทศไทยในลักษณะใด ประการที่สอง การศึกษานี้สำรวจว่า ปฏิสัมพันธ์ระหว่างคุณค่าและความเชื่อตามแบบศาสนาคริสต์และหลักจริยธรรมของศุภนิมิต กับ ความเชื่อทางศาสนาของชุมชนกะเหรี่ยง จะมีผลต่อการเสริมสร้างหรือลดทอน โครงการพัฒนา โดยการวิเคราะห์ประเด็นเรื่องความร่วมมือและความยั่งยืน

ผลการศึกษาพบว่าอัตลักษณ์ คุณค่า และ ความเชื่อตามแบบคริสเตียน ที่พบได้ในแนวคิดการพัฒนาเพื่อการเปลี่ยนแปลงชีวิต (transformational development) การเป็นพยานเพื่อองค์พระเยซูคริสต์เจ้า (Christian Witness) และ ในวัฒนธรรมองค์กร ก็ถูกนำมาใช้ในทางปฏิบัติ แต่ก็มีขอบเขตจำกัด เนื่องจากเงื่อนไขทางวัฒนธรรมของพื้นที่ และ ขึ้นอยู่กับความสามารถในการตีความ และ การปรับใช้ของเจ้าหน้าที่ภาคสนาม ในทำนองเดียวกัน การสร้างหุ้นส่วนในการพัฒนาของกลุ่มศรัทธาทางศาสนา เพื่อให้ก้าวข้ามการพัฒนาทางวัตถุก็ยังไม่มาก

ผลการวิจัยยังชี้ให้เห็นว่าชาวบ้านกะเหรี่ยงที่นับถือศาสนาที่แตกต่างกันมีปฏิสัมพันธ์แน่นแฟ้น เพราะมีวัฒนธรรมและประเพณีศาสตร์ร่วมกัน นอกจากนั้นชาวบ้านมีวิธีการเอาตัวรอดโดยการ โดยพึ่งพาสิ่งศักดิ์สิทธิ์และพิธีกรรมซึ่งเป็นช่องทางที่จะเก็บเกี่ยวการมีส่วนร่วมของชุมชนได้ ปฏิสัมพันธ์ระหว่างคุณค่าแบบคริสเตียนกับความเชื่อดั้งเดิมของชุมชนในเวลานี้อยู่ในระดับต่ำ และไม่ได้ช่วยเสริมให้เกิดความร่วมมือ และ ความยั่งยืนของ โครงการพัฒนา อย่างไรก็ตาม แผนงานพัฒนาพื้นที่แม่สะเรียงยังอยู่ในระหว่างการปรับปรุงออกแบบใหม่เพื่อเพิ่มขีดความสามารถให้กับเจ้าหน้าที่สนามที่จะทำงานกับกลุ่มศรัทธาทางศาสนา ซึ่งอาจมีนัยว่าปฏิสัมพันธ์ระหว่างค่านิยมตามคริสต์ศาสนาและความเชื่อของท้องถิ่นจะเพิ่มมากขึ้น นำไปสู่การมีส่วนร่วมของชุมชน และ ความยั่งยืนของโครงการเพื่อบรรลุเป้าหมายการพัฒนาในที่สุด



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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, it is recognised that the field of development studies has to engage with people's understanding of the world in light of their beliefs because religion has a strong influence on how people interpret society, the economy and politics. While the religious worldviews of community members of development projects are given more attention, there is also a need to study faith-based development organisations (FBDOs) or religious non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in understanding how they express their religious values, beliefs and identity in practice when interacting with the communities that they work with. World Vision, an international development organisation with its roots in a Christian evangelist's response to poverty, is driven by its evangelical Christian faith. The FBDO's American heritage and influence have impacted the way in which the organisation is set up internationally, including in Asia.

In Thailand, there are many development organisations which are motivated by faith, including those initiated by religious institutions (the key ones are namely, the Buddhist temple, Christian church and Islamic mosque). These FBDOs are believed to be effective in carrying out development work due to their religious beliefs and motivations. It is not only a statement of belief by the FBDOs, but their practice which is contributing to poverty alleviation.

In the case of Christian faith-based development work, European Catholic and Protestant missionaries have been in Thailand since the 1800s through the provision of medical supplies, but were not integrated into the Thai society. On the other hand, the work of Protestant missionaries among ethnic minorities and hill tribes has been relatively well-received due to the fact that these groups are marginal in the predominantly ethnic Thai society and they are able to receive social and moral support from the missionaries (Pongsapich & Kataleradabhan, 1997). As a result, work by the European missionaries was seen as threatening to national security by the government. There is a general perception that Christian FBDOs are foreign (or hold foreign beliefs

even when staff are locals), belong to the white man (hence, associated with imperialism) and related to proselytising.

In a country where Buddhism is the official religion and majority of the population is Buddhist, non-Buddhist FBDOs face differences in values and worldviews when helping the poor. FBDOs are also situated within the historical and socio-political contexts of the local stakeholders groups involved.

It has been found that little has been researched about the role and work of FBDOs, much less that of international Christian FBDOs, in bringing about poverty alleviation in Thailand. Furthermore, there is limited knowledge on how Christian beliefs shaped the work of FBDOs (Thaut, 2009) and how values and beliefs are integrated in contemporary development programming tools. In addition, the receptiveness of community members toward FBDOs whose faith are different from theirs has not been well-studied. Using World Vision Foundation of Thailand (WVFT<sup>1</sup>) and its child-focused development programme in two Karen hilltribe villages in Mae Sariang as a case study, this thesis aims to understand the extent to which the work of a Christian FBDO in Thailand is informed by Christian values and beliefs, and their interaction with that of other religions in the communities, in development practice.

World Vision International (WVI) as an established international Christian FBDO has been explicit about its religious values and identity when carrying out its development work. However, due to the varying contexts (in this instance, Thailand) in which the organisation works in, there may be different understandings and adaptations of how these Christian values and identity, which stem from the organisation's Western and Protestant Evangelical background, are presented. The interaction of these values and identity with the different religions in the Karen hilltribe communities in Thailand could impact the way the development programme is being carried out, and influence

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, the term 'WVFT' will be used to refer to the entity of World Vision International that is in Thailand; 'World Vision International' ('WVI') is used to refer to the collective corporate body on the international level; and 'World Vision' is used to refer to the organisation generally.

the potential of the communities towards achieving sustainability and community participation.

This thesis examines the faith-based aspects of World Vision's mission statement – 'transformational development' (TD), 'Christian Witness' and church partnerships, and how these impact on the mode of operations and organisational culture. In addition, the funding sources are also briefly analysed to understand if they have an impact on the extent of Christian faith-based development and vice versa. From understanding the impact on the World Vision entity in Thailand at the national level, there will be a better sense of how this translates down to the field level, where the WVFT is implementing a development programme in *Mae Sariang*, a Karen hilltribe community in the north of Thailand. While WVFT is an FBDO, there is not only the existence of the 'religious' (for example, prayers and recognising God's presence in the programmes), but also the 'secular' (for example, where contemporary development techniques are employed like any other secular agencies).

### **1.1 Research Question**

How are Christian values, beliefs and identity of World Vision Foundation of Thailand (WVFT), an international Christian Faith-Based Development Organisation (FBDO), demonstrated in and influencing development practice in Karen hilltribe communities in Thailand?

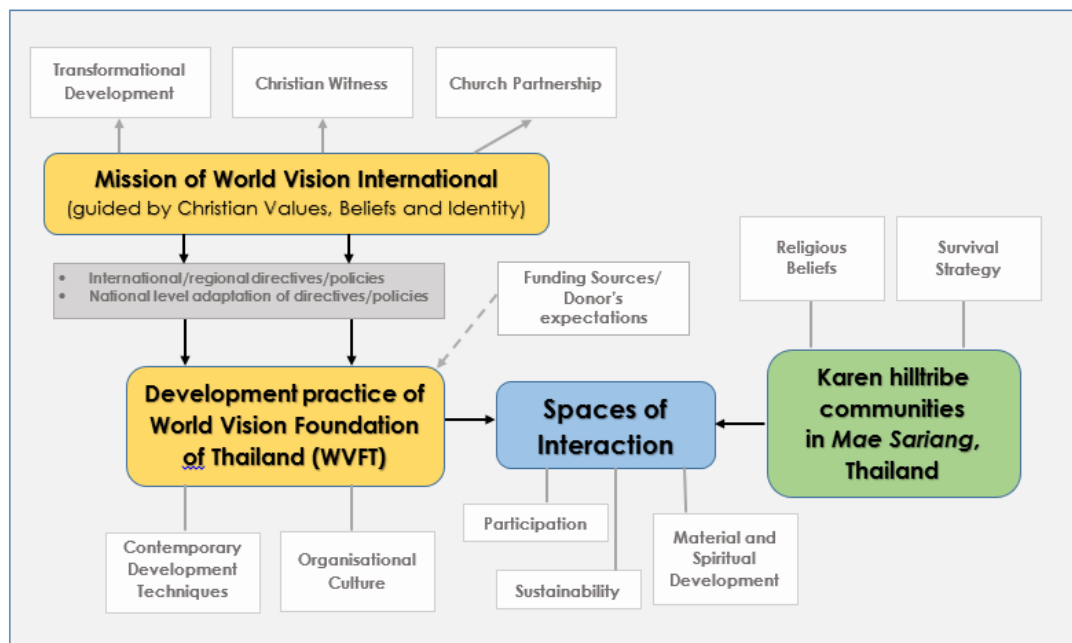
### **1.2 Research Objectives**

- To analyse how Christian values, beliefs and identity of World Vision International shape WVFT's understanding of its mission and development programme.
- To examine the interaction of Christian values and beliefs of WVFT with that of religions of Karen hilltribe communities in development practice.
- To examine the extent to which the interaction of religious values and beliefs enhance or impede development projects, in terms of community participation and sustainability.

### 1.3 Conceptual Framework

This section will discuss the concept of a Faith-Based Development Organisation (FBDO), which is used to describe World Vision Foundation of Thailand (WVFT). The Christian influence on development concepts of participation and sustainability would also be examined. In addition, this section would explore conceptual understandings of ‘faith and religion’, and ‘religious values and beliefs’ (see Figure 1 for conceptual framework).

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for understanding Christian values, beliefs and identity of WVFT in development practice



#### 1.3.1 Faith-Based Development Organisation (FBDO)

Several different terms (for example, ‘religious NGOs’, ‘faith-based organisations’ and ‘faith-based humanitarian agencies’) are being used in academic discourse to refer to FBDOs. For example, Berger (2003) uses the term ‘religious NGOs’ and refer to them as “formal organisations whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teaching of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and which operates on a nonprofit, independent, voluntary basis to promote and realise

collectively articulated ideas about the public good at the national or international level.” (p.16). In Clarke’s typology study of ‘faith-based organisations’, he defines ‘faith-based charitable or development organisations’ as organisations which “mobilise the faithful in support of the poor and other social groups, and which fund or manage programmes which tackle poverty and social exclusion” (Clarke, 2006:840). In general, FBDOs are differentiated from secular NGOs by their concern with the spiritual well-being of the community members – while secular NGOs aims to raise the quality of life of their intended beneficiaries, they are “not specifically concerned with the non-physical nature of the individual” (Berger, 2003:35).

This thesis adopts a broad understanding of FBDOs by accepting the definitions above. In addition, FBDOs are understood to be motivated and guided by spiritual sources and their religious values and beliefs, and carrying out community-based development work using contemporary development tools like Logical Framework (or LogFrame) and programme design, monitoring and evaluation (DME) that reflects their Christian values and beliefs.

However, it has to be recognised that these different definitions are not able to account for the complex nature of organisations – Jeavons (2003) argues that there is a lack of analytical clarity about the nature of faith-based (or religious) organisations and how they are different from faith-based *development* organisations and secular NGOs. These organisations can differ in terms of funding sources, congregation size and lifespans.

In the face of secularisation in the modernised world, it may seem that FBDOs are clearly set apart from secular humanitarian agencies. However, the ‘religious’ and ‘secular’ may not necessarily be distinct and mutually exclusive, instead, they can co-exist in the field of humanitarianism and development work (Barnett & Stein, 2012). This mingling of the ‘religious’ and ‘secular’ is evident in this case study of WVFT and the analysis will be presented in Chapters 4 and 5.



### 1.3.2 'Development' and 'Transformational Development'

The definition of 'development' is highly contested and has varying definitions mainly due to paradigm shifts in discourse over time (Rakodi, 2011 and Rennick, 2013). For the purpose of this thesis, the understanding of 'development' is not only the meeting of material needs, but spiritual needs of the targeted beneficiaries. Spiritual needs relate to moral values, based primarily on religious teachings. This thesis analyses World Vision's understanding that 'development' is beyond the improvement of material well-being, and that it is concerned with relationship-building with the poor and their experience with God and their spiritual transformation, for example, the restoration of their sense of dignity, self-worth and empowerment where community members feel fully human and know that they are made in the image of God (Myers, 2006). In other words, 'development' as understood by Christians relates to the well-being from a whole range of "human experience, social, mental and spiritual as well as material" (Myers, 2006:105).

In the same way, Robert Chambers proposes a shift "from things and infrastructure to people and capacities" (Chambers, 1997:9; cited in Myers, 2006:104). Chambers' analysis reframes the traditional focus of development to meet the material needs of the poor, to enhance their capacity through social networks and ultimately to well-being in a sustainable manner. Specifically, this thesis would examine how the interface of World Vision's Christian values and beliefs and the hilltribe communities' religious values and beliefs influences the areas of sustainability and participation.

In the context of communities in Thailand which places more emphasis on the role of the spiritual realm in the improvement of well-being, the establishment of physical religious institutions can also be seen as a development project, although it is not a mainstream understanding of development.

The notion of integrating both physical and spiritual development is relatively new among Christians – a few decades ago, development work was seen to be separate from the concern of Christians, who put more attention on missionary work to bring

about the conversion of people into the Christian faith. Development work was regarded to be out of step with traditional theological understanding. However, as the uneasy relationship between the two became more apparent, Christians began to see the need to have a response to the social issues of poverty and hunger. Today, even missions organisations have adapted principles of development (King, 2012) and Christian development organisations are seeing the need to approach social issues in a holistic manner by addressing all areas of human needs.

### **1.3.2.1 Sustainability**

The goal of facilitating impoverished communities to sustainability is situated within World Vision's discourse of TD, where development work is supposed to lead to restoration of the people in accordance to the image of God, i.e., how God has created them to be. Myers (2006) brings in the spiritual perspective that the ultimate source of sustainable life cannot be controlled by humans, but only God through Jesus Christ can sustain life. When World Vision eventually phases out and leaves the communities at the end of a typically 15- to 17-year development programme, the communities should be no longer dependent on World Vision and be able to stand on their own feet. This does not presume that the communities do not have their own survival strategy before the intervention of World Vision because they would be unable to exist without their own ability to sustain themselves in the first place.

### **1.3.2.2 Participation**

The idea of community participation is seen to be biblical and is imbued into the principles of TD – to be inclusive, regardless of differences in ethnicity, religion and gender. While 'participation' is a liberating development buzzword and a 'hurrah' term for development workers which at most times is morally indubitable for its hearers, it can become political when it is skewed towards certain groups of people to reinforce their status and sustain their interests. Chambers (1997) warned about those in the upper strata of society "whose place and circumstances of birth, education, and professional training result in an unspoken (and sometimes) sense of superiority that greatly

interferes with their hearing and seeing” (cited in Myers, 2006: 148). White (1996) proposes four levels of looking at participation (see Table 1) – nominal (community members are included in the process to visibly legitimise the role of the programme implementers); instrumental (community participation makes the project efficient as community members are expected to contribute with a cost, for example, their labour); representative (the project implementers see the need to have the community participation to ensure the sustainability of the project and the participants are actively involved in shaping the project); and transformative (power is shared by the parties involved and empowerment is experienced). These forms of participation would be used to analyse the type of community participation that is taking place in Mae Sariang, where WVFT is working in.

Table 1: Interests in participation (White, 1996)

<b>Form</b>	<b>Top-Down</b>	<b>Bottom-Up</b>	<b>Function</b>
Nominal	Legitimation	Inclusion	Display
Instrumental	Efficiency	Cost	Means
Representative	Sustainability	Leverage	Voice
Transformative	Empowerment	Empowerment	Means/End

### 1.3.3 Religion, Religious Values and Beliefs

There are various definitions of religion from the disciplines of theology and social sciences and there is no consensus on one single definition (Rakodi, 2011a and Rennick, 2013).

Rakodi (2011a) came up with two useful categories of definitions of ‘religion’ – substantive and functional. Some definitions also contain elements of both definition types. Substantive definitions focus on what religion *is* – its cross-cultural features which differentiates itself from other social phenomena; while functional definitions look at what religion *does* – its role in constructing people’s worldviews and social relationships (Rakodi, 2011a:44).

This thesis will use the understanding of ‘religion’ as an institutionalised system of beliefs and practices relating to the spiritual or supernatural realm, or the ‘sacred’ which is set apart by prohibitions (Durkheim, 1976; Lunn, 2009; Ter Haar, 2011). This set of beliefs and practices creates a ‘model’ *for* and *of* lived reality (Geertz, 1973), which provides a frame to make sense of how religious values and beliefs of World Vision and its staff influence the making of meaning(s) out of their work, and in turn inform the ways that development programmes are motivated, conceptualised, planned, and carried out in the context of Thailand. In the same way, this definition would frame the analysis of how the Karen hilltribe communities receive and accept the development projects, shaped by their religious values and beliefs. The systems of belief are linked to the material world, with understanding of the spiritual realm (or absence of it), are “integral to the processes through which individuals order their world and make sense of experience” (Bornstein, 2005:2).

The religious identity of a Christian FBDO would be largely shaped by its founding history and theological roots. In addition, it would also be influenced by other Christian or church-based organisations which form its base of supporters.

Religion is an important, but not the only, source of values and beliefs. The values and beliefs of people are not only perpetuated by religious institutions, but also from cultural traditions and global influences.

Values are principles on which people draw from to make moral/ethical decisions and these govern their behaviour. Rakodi (2011b) notes that values are operationalised through the prevailing social norms and practices which differ across places and time, a phenomenon which is apparent in the case of World Vision’s work in Thailand. Many religious texts and teachings, including that of Christianity, contain values and principles that are related contemporary development issues, for example, equality; justice; compassion for the poor; and inclusion of the marginalised. Beliefs refer to the cosmological lens through which people make sense of the world and their place within it (Rakodi, 2011a), for example, God’s ability and role to transform a

community; God's call on his people to respond to the needy; and the people's role in praying and responding to the needs of the poor. Such values and beliefs are reflected in the mission statement of WVI and concept of TD (see Figure 2 below), which would be analysed in this thesis.

Figure 2: Mission statement of WVI

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:

- 1) Transformational Development that is community-based and sustainable, focused especially on the needs of children.
- 2) Emergency Relief that assists people afflicted by conflict or disaster.
- 3) Promotion of Justice that seeks to change unjust structures affecting the poor among whom we work.
- 4) Partnerships with churches to contribute to spiritual and social transformation.
- 5) Public Awareness that leads to informed understanding, giving, involvement and prayer.
- 6) Witness to Jesus Christ by life, deed, word and sign that encourages people to respond to the Gospel.

(extracted from World Vision International, 2014)

In fulfilling the research objectives of this thesis, items (1), (4) and (6) of the commitments in the mission statement above are included as part of the conceptual analysis.

With the interaction of values and beliefs between FBDOs and community members, especially when their religious beliefs differ, development becomes an ethical issue. When the values and beliefs of one single religion is put forth as the dominant one in an insensitive manner, an ethical problem arises. De Kadt (2009) cautions about the potential negative downside of FBDOs when they promote their beliefs rigidly, inflexibility and self-assuredly. This will limit individual freedom, as it sets the parameters in which social and cultural interactions take place, especially

around development-related questions like gender, patriarchy and the maintaining of indigenous cultures. However, it is inevitable that development workers will choose from the wide array of indigenous values those which are congruent to the “preferred ideology, philosophy or programme priorities” (Goulet, 2006:142). At the same time, we cannot assume that the values, beliefs and identities of local communities are static – they are constantly adapting and assimilating change over time and circumstances. Hence, the question is whether value selection by development workers are manipulative and avoidable. There are no easy answers to this question, but it has to be recognised that some form of value ratification by the people has to take place during the development project. Goulet (2006) suggests that “reciprocity between change agents and the interested populace is the best safeguard against manipulation and arbitrary value selection by the former” (p.142) and there has to be participation of the community members in decision-making that relates to the development of the community.

#### **1.4 Research Methodology**

##### **1.4.1 Case Study Research**

In order to fulfill the research objectives, a national entity of World Vision International in Thailand, ie. WVFT, is chosen as a case study.

While a single case study may appear insignificant and cannot provide reliable information about the larger class, it is argued that having concrete cases is essential to contributing to the evidence base of understanding (Flyvbjerg, 2001). As World Vision is an established international development agency that is committed to its Christian identity, values and beliefs; added with the fact that it has operations that span across almost 100 countries, the selection of World Vision in the context of Thailand is significant and revelatory. Using a case study approach in this thesis would bring about increased understanding about the nature of operations of an internationally-recognised FBDO and in turn, to the work of other FBDOs.

Furthermore, Flyvbjerg (2001) asserts the value of case study research, by underscoring the benefits of case study research for researchers:

“... the closeness of the case study to real-life situations and its multiple wealth of details are important ... for the development of a nuanced view of reality, including the view that human behaviour cannot be meaningfully understood as simply the rule-governed acts found at the lowest levels of the learning process and in much theory ... [and] cases are important for researchers’ own learning process in developing the skills needed to do good research. If researchers wish to develop their own skills to a high level, then concrete, context-dependent experience is just as central for them as to professionals learning any other specific skills.” (Flyvbjerg, 2001:72)

#### 1.4.2 Qualitative Data Collection

“Field research is the study of people acting in the natural courses of their daily lives. The fieldworker ventures into the worlds of others in order to learn firsthand about how they live, how they talk and behave, and what captivates and distresses them ... It is also seen as a method of study whose practitioners try to understand the meanings that activities observed have for those engaging in them.” (Emerson, 1988:1, cited in Neuman, 2006:278)

In gathering the data for this thesis, qualitative field research was the key methodology used. This is due to the ethnographic nature of the research objectives, involving the study of people, their relationships with each other, and their cultures and religious beliefs.

Participatory observations were carried out as an intern at both World Vision’s Asia and Pacific regional office and World Vision Foundation of Thailand (WVFT), through attendance at regular staff devotions, work meetings and staff trainings. This study also uses observations that were made at three other ADPs in Thailand – one during an informal day-long visit; and two during a learning visit which was organised by the CC regional team.

During the fieldwork in the two selected villages in an Area Development Programme (ADP<sup>2</sup>) where WVFT is working in, an ethnographic approach were employed to understand the construction of knowledge relating to the beliefs of the people (for example, meanings assigned to certain activities); the patterns of behaviour of people and groups; relationships between people and groups; and to allow community members to fully express themselves and communicate their experiences and their perspectives on issues related to the research topic. To gain an emic perspective in the local communities where the Christian FBDO is working in, two weeks of fieldwork were spent in the two selected villages. Both participatory and non-participatory observations were carried out within the villages. Specifically, to understand the religious worldviews and practices of the community members, I attended religious activities in the villages during the period of the village fieldwork, namely, an animist religious ritual; a ritual at the Buddhist temple as part of the Buddhist Lent; and a Christian evening devotion and church service. The participation at the rituals were also opportunities for me to build rapport and forge trust with the locals. The participatory observations were also able to help in the analysis of how different groups of people (for example, based on age, economic levels and religious base of people) respond to, or benefit from, the faith-based development intervention of WVFT.

This research was carried out in a reflexive manner – being both a Christian and former World Vision staff in the fundraising office of Singapore have influenced the research lens through which I looked at the organisation which may be both limiting and advantageous. Having spent two years as a World Vision staff, I may have taken for granted certain religious references or practices that the organisation takes up. On the other hand, the two backgrounds where I come from also give me an added

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<sup>2</sup> ADP is a technical term used by World Vision to refer to a community-based development programme, which lasts for 10 to 15 years. An ADP typically comprises of 30 to 50 villages, of population between 30,000 to 100,000 persons.



advantage in understanding why certain references to faith are made. Moreover, being a former World Vision staff has helped me to get up to speed very quickly on the modus operandi and culture of the organisation. This unique position puts me in a constant process of reflexivity, involving self-reflections and negotiating my identities as a researcher (to critically evaluate and analyse what I observed within the organisation), a Christian (to be involved in Christian ‘activities’ like prayers and devotions, and affirming myself as a Christian in the context), and a WVFT intern (to do my assigned work well).

On top of data collection through primary sources, there is the analysis of secondary data, including World Vision’s documents relating to values, mission and identity, history, theology, and programme design and implementation. Community baseline studies carried out by WVFT were obtained to understand if there were attempts to understand the perceptions, value and belief systems of community members before its development intervention. In addition, photographs and planning documents relating to development activities (for example, children’s camps) in the research area were obtained and analysed. Through this secondary data analysis, changes since WVFT’s intervention can be better understood. In addition, to understand religious beliefs of the Karen hilltribe in Thailand, books which have been written on such topics were referred to.

#### **1.4.2.1 Selection of FBDO and Study Sites**

I was able to gain access to the work of WVI at different levels – from regional, national to field level to gain an insight into whether there is an alignment of understanding of Christian beliefs and values when it comes to the work of the organisation. The fieldwork began in March 2014 when I was an intern with the Asia Pacific Regional Office with the Christian Commitments (CC) team. I was primarily supporting the Asia Pacific CC Regional Forum and a post-forum learning visit to two development programmes in eastern Thailand for staff in the region. The CC team in the Asia and Pacific region provides direction and guidance on WVI’s faith identity, which includes strengthening faith perspectives on development, and enhancing

partnerships and collaborations with religious communities and institutions, towards the well-being of disadvantaged children and their families. The Asia Pacific CcC Forum and post-forum learning visit, which were organised in Thailand for 1.5 weeks in April 2014, were intended to help relevant staff in the region (countries include Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Mongolia, Nepal and the Philippines) who are involved in CcC work learn from each other and develop action plans which they can apply back in their own contexts. The involvement with the Asia Pacific Regional Office is expected to end in December 2014 where I am currently involved in the drafting of CcC-related documents and resources.

Following the CcC Regional Forum, I was offered another internship at the Programme Quality Department at WVFT, where I conducted most of my fieldwork for a period of 3.5 months, of which two weeks were spent in two Karen hilltribe villages in Mae Sariang district (Mae Hong Son Province), *Ban Pamak* and *Ban Mae Kanai*, where WVFT is implementing a development programme (also known as the Area Development Programme or in short, ADP).

Due to the large physical expanse and population size of the ADP (refer to Chapter 3.4 for demographics of ADP), there has to be a selection process of sites for the purpose of the research. The selection of two sub-districts, namely *Mae Sariang* and *Mae Hoh*, and the corresponding villages in *Ban Pamak* and *Ban Mae Kanai* respectively, was based on the following criteria:

- a) ***Mae Sariang* sub-district as the base and starting point to implement the redesigning process** – the ADP office is based in *Mae Sariang* town, and due to its proximity to the sub-district, there is more focus to enhance the engagement of community partners (including faith-based groups) as part of the redesigning strategy. Hence it is seen to be more meaningful for data collection to select this sub-district;

- b) **Presence of various religious institutions in each sub-district** – this criteria is critical to ensure that there is the analysis of the interactions of WVFT with the Buddhist monk/temple, Catholic leader/church and Christian leader/church;
- c) **Physical accessibility of sites** – as the ADP spans across the whole of *Mae Sariang* district (which comprises of 7 sub-districts and 47 villages), with mountainous terrain, coupled with the rainy season, practicality in terms of access to the villages has to be considered. This was assessed in consultation with the ADP programme manager.

#### 1.4.2.2 Selection of FBDO's Components for Study

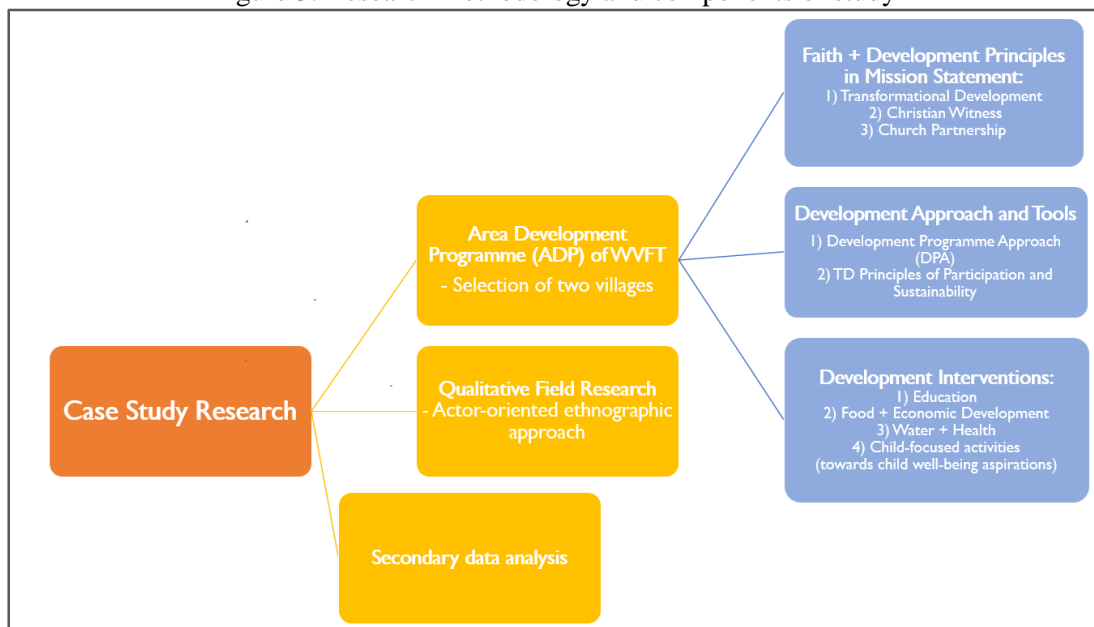
In order to understand the influence of the Christian faith on WVFT's work in development practice, components of the organisation which reflect this are identified for study. At the top level, the mission statement of WVI is examined to understand how faith values and beliefs have shaped the way development work is interpreted (refer to Figure 2 in Section 1.3.3). Commitments (1), (4) and (6) are selected for this thesis' analysis due to their explicit principle of integrating the Christian faith into development practice.

At the level of development implementation, the tool of Development Programme Approach (DPA) is used by World Vision internationally, with the aim of ensuring that the faith-based principles of the organisation are reflected in development programmes. The DPA is aimed to increase the capacity of field staff to work effectively with local partners, including churches and faith-based groups, towards the development goal of “sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable” (World Vision International, 2011). The DPA is newly introduced at WVFT for programmes which are undergoing redesigning (since 2014) and *Mae Sariang* ADP is the first ADP which goes through the process. Hence, the use of the DPA in the programme implementation of impact of *Mae Sariang* ADP is studied to understand the extent to which Christian values and beliefs impact development practice, in particular, in the areas of participation and sustainability.

At the ADP level, development interventions cover areas of education, food, economic development, water, health and child development and these aspects in *Mae Sariang* ADP are examined to understand the extent to which Christian values and beliefs are demonstrated.

Figure 3 below summarises the components of WVFT which are analysed in this thesis.

Figure 3: Research methodology and components of study



#### 1.4.2.3 Qualitative Interviews

In-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out with the following key informants (refer to Appendix B for list of key informants and Appendix C for interview guide):

- a) Christian Commitments Director of Asia Pacific region, World Vision International
- b) WVFT field programme staff at *Mae Sariang* ADP
  - ADP Programme Manager

- Development Facilitator of *Mae Sariang* sub-district (where *Ban Pamak* is located) and former education development facilitator
  - Development Facilitator of *Mae Hoh* sub-district (where *Ban Mae Kanai* is located) and former education development facilitator
  - Sponsorship Service Operation (SSO) Officer and only non-Christian in the ADP team
- c) Village volunteer for WVFT at *Ban Pamak*
  - d) School headmasters and teachers in both villages
  - e) Key religious leaders in both villages (namely, Buddhist monks, a Catholic preacher in *Ban Pamak*, and a Christian pastor in *Ban Mae Kanai*)
  - f) Politically-important people (namely, village heads)

In order to understand the interaction of religious beliefs at the village level and the level of value ratification of WVFT's work, selected households in the two villages were also interviewed. The interviews covered households from 1) the three main religions (namely Buddhist, Catholic and Christian) in the villages, and 2) those who were both directly and indirectly receiving help from WVFT (i.e. households which had children who are sponsored and not sponsored by WVFT respectively; refer to Chapter 3.3 for more details on the child sponsorship programme).

It was requested from the programme manager of *Mae Sariang* ADP to provide me with a list of households for interview selection. However, it was found that WVFT only has records of children who are sponsored by them, and the programme manager furnished me with a list based on his understanding that the children should be of appropriate age to answer questions. Hence, the youngest age of the sponsored child who was interviewed was 6 years old (the minimum age for a child to be sponsored under WVFT is 4 years old) and the oldest was 17 years old. However, due to the difficulty in soliciting responses from the children on questions relating to value transference, the questions were directed to their parents instead.

*Ban Pamak* consists of 175 households and 725 villagers. The main religions of the village are Buddhism and Animism and together, they consist of about 90% of the

total households. Animism in *Ban Pamak* is a syncretic form of Buddhism where the Karen traditional practices still form much of their beliefs, such that they are considered by the villagers to be traditional culture handed down by their forefathers, instead of religious and spiritual. After the selection process, 9 households and 11 children from *Ban Pamak* were interviewed (refer to Table 2 for breakdown of the household numbers and religions).

*Ban Mae Kanai* consists of 83 households and 367 people. Buddhists form the majority of the population at about 55.42% (46 households), followed by Protestant Christians (about 26.50%, 22 households) and Catholics. There are only two households which are Animists. After the selection process, 9 households and 17 children from *Ban Mae Kanai* were interviewed (refer to Table 3 for breakdown of the household numbers and religions).

In total, 18 households with 28 children were interviewed.

Below are the summary tables of the household interviews (a detailed table of the interviewees can be found in Appendix D):

Table 2: Overview of household interviews in *Ban Pamak*

	<b>Sponsored children</b>	<b>Non-sponsored children</b>
<b>Buddhists</b>	3 households (3 children)	2 households (2 children)
<b>Catholics</b>	1 household (3 children)	1 household (1 child)
<b>Christians</b>	1 household (1 child)	1 household (1 child)

Youngest child: 11 years old

Oldest child: 18 years old

Gender: Females: 4 children; Males: 5 children

Table 3: Overview of household interviews in *Ban Mae Kanai*

	<b>Sponsored children</b>	<b>Non-sponsored children</b>
<b>Buddhists</b>	2 households (4 children)	1 household (1 child)
<b>Catholics</b>	2 households (4 children)	1 household (1 child)
<b>Christians</b>	2 households (5 children)	1 household (2 children)

Youngest child: 2 years 5 months

Oldest child: 17 years old

Gender: Female: 9 children; Male: 8 children

During the interviews with community members, key religious leaders and politically-important people, life history and narrative methods were used when understanding religious experiences and their meanings as understood by the target groups. This method, when triangulated with other sources of data, would validate the data and help in understanding the historical and social context in which development work is carried out among the hilltribe people, including how Christian values of the FBDOs interact and influence religious worldviews as held by the people.

All interviews were noted, and most were voice-recorded and transcribed to facilitate data analysis.

#### **1.4.2.4 Gatekeepers**

The gatekeepers who facilitated the access to the site and interviewees changed in accordance to the setting. At the National Office of WVFT, my direct supervisor suggested that I conduct my fieldwork in Mae Sariang ADP as they are undergoing a programme redesigning process after 5 years of programme implementation. The Programme Quality Team is putting considerable attention in this redesigning process as it is the first ADP in Thailand which is going through this process. As part of this process, Christian values and mission will be integrated into the programme design.

My direct supervisor at WVFT was very forthcoming in allowing me to access the ADP and he helped to make contact with and obtain relevant approval with the relevant people in the field to ensure that arrangements are made during the period of my village field work.

In Mae Sariang ADP, the ADP programme manager become my gatekeeper – he not only ensured that I could access the two villages, he also facilitated my interviewees selection process by providing me with a list of children in the villages who are being sponsored under WVFT. On top of these, he made arrangements for accommodation and transportation for my translator and me.

When we arrived at the villages, gatekeepers were our homestay hosts. Each of the homestay host was familiar with the households in their village and they took up the responsibility of bringing us and introducing us to every family which we targeted to interview. We were hence highly dependent on our homestay hosts in accessing the households. The existing relationships of our homestay hosts with the villagers brought about the ease of conducting the interviews. As WVFT does not have the information of the children who are not sponsored by them, our homestay hosts were critical to point us to these households.

#### 1.4.2.5 Translation



Translators, both from within and outside WVFT, interpreted the interviews with the local staff and villagers in the ADP. Most of the interviews that took place in *Mae Sariang* were translated by an external and unbiased party, who is not a villager or staff of WVFT. The translator, of Karen ethnicity, translated the interviews from English to Sgaw Karen (a dialect which is widely spoken by the villagers in both *Ban Pamak* and *Ban Mae Kanai*) and vice versa. As a result of the hilltribes in northern Thailand learning Thai in mainstream schools, most of the interviewees speak Sgaw Karen with a mix of northern Thai. While my translator is from Myanmar, he had picked up the Thai language after living in Thailand for 12 years and was able to comprehend the spoken language. In some instances, he also translated some interviews from Thai to English. Prior to the fieldwork, he was briefed to provide literal translations and to highlight to me if he would like to include his personal comments or thoughts on the information that the interviewees were giving.

At WVFT, Thai is used predominantly and help is sought from Thai natives who are competent in both English and Thai to translate follow-up interviews with the ADP programme manager, work meetings and secondary information.



To verify the accuracy of the interview responses, information gained from the informants was constantly cross-checked throughout the period of the fieldwork (for example, with third parties and available secondary information).

### **1.5 Ethical Issues**

To ensure ethics of this research, consent from the interviewees was obtained before interviews are recorded and interviewees were asked if the information provided can be used for the purpose of this research.

As part of child protection, the names of the children and their family members who were interviewed as part of the household interviews are kept anonymous and will be identified based on the enumeration method reflected in Appendix D.

### **1.6 Research Scope**

The thesis is specifically focused on a WVFT's development programme (also known as ADP). Due to the large scale of ADP which cannot be covered comprehensively in this thesis' analysis, the study will be focused on the faith-based aspects of the development interventions of education development and child sponsorship projects. Also, as this research is concerned with child-focused development programmes, especially in terms of education and child sponsorship initiatives by WVFT, the role of schools in partnering with WVFT is examined.

### **1.7 Significance of the Research**

There is a need to give more attention to the role of religion in development studies and this study is intended to contribute to the academic discourse by providing some insights on the interaction of different faiths in the field of development. It is also hoped that this research can be an empirical evidence to contribute to attempts of understanding FBDOs. Studying a national entity of World Vision International is significant to understanding the faith-based aspects of the larger organisation which has

operations around the world. As this study is situated within Thailand, it contributes to knowledge on faith-based work of World Vision International as an FBDO in the context of this country, which is predominantly Buddhist.

In addition, this research is a contribution to the identification of areas in which development work of a Christian FBDO in a non-Christian setting can be understood to explore areas for improvement. With an increased understanding of Christian FBDOs' work, it is envisaged that there can be better collaborations between various institutions and community groups in bringing about development.

### **1.8 Research Limitations**



While efforts have been put in to prolong the research timeframe to gather as much qualitative data as possible and to gain deeper emic perspectives, the fieldwork period of about six months may not be sufficient for getting insights into deeper issues on faith in the organisation.

As I am not a native speaker of Thai and Karen hilltribe languages, some information provided by the WVFT staff and local community members may have been lost or misinterpreted during the process of translation. Prior to the fieldwork, practical advice on overcoming language and cultural barriers was sought from non-native researchers who have conducted fieldwork in hilltribe communities. In order to minimise the challenge in translation, there was a selection process to identify a competent and fairly experienced Karen translator, who was interviewed prior to confirmation as a translator for the fieldwork. The translator is conversant in Sgaw Karen and basic Thai.

In addition, as Thai is the preferred working language of WVFT, efforts have been put in to learn the Thai language, especially in listening and reading skills. As a Thai work buddy was assigned to me, I sought help from her to teach me the commonly used Thai development-related terms which are used in the work setting, for example, during meetings.

There were instances when the interviewees were more comfortable using Thai (either because they were of Thai ethnicity or they were Karen people who were educated in the Thai language) and these interviews were also translated by the same translator, and other times with the homestay hosts. The latter resulted in double translation – my questions would be translated from English to Karen by my translator, and Karen to Thai by my village hosts. While there is a risk of information loss when the questions are translated twice, my translator’s listening ability of the Thai language is fairly good and he was able to verify the accuracy of Thai which was spoken. Another experience to recount is an interview which I conducted with a school headmaster – although he is of Karen ethnicity and it was apparent that my translator was more comfortable using the Karen language instead of Thai, he was persistent in using Thai in responding to my interview questions. Out of respect, my translator was obliged to translate my questions into Thai and he struggled to translate effectively. As a result, I was unable to dig deeper into the headmaster’s understanding of WVFT’s role in shaping the religious values of the school children. The following are two examples of questions that were not translated:

- In your opinion, which WVFT activities teach good values to the children?
- Do you think WVFT can teach good values to the children?

In order to overcome this research limitation of language barrier, the information that was provided during the interviews was constantly cross-checked and reviewed with the interpreter after the interviews, and triangulated with other interviews and information gathered from secondary sources, so as to ensure accuracy of data.

In addition, as this research aims to understand the contemporary practices of FBDOs in Thailand through the use of one case study, it cannot be fully representative of the situation in Thailand especially when communities across the country have varying religious beliefs and practices (for example, different forms of Buddhism and animism).

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section reviews the existing literature within the field of religion and development; attempts to define, classify and justify the importance of FBDOs; the work of World Vision globally; and Thailand-based case studies relating to religion and development.

#### **2.1 The Role of Faith in Development**

In the face of modernisation and secularisation, there is a general perception that religion is irrelevant, an inhibition to progress and should be kept in the private realm. This separation of religion is also reflected in the field of development studies and practice (Bornstein, 2005; Lunn, 2009; K. Marshall, 2011; Rennick, 2013). The field of religious studies emerged in the 1960s as a secular study of religion, and it is differentiated from theological studies, which is a field of insider discourse and focuses on religious truth claims. Religious studies take a non-confessional, non-judgmental and value-free approach which regard religions as key elements of human culture, and aim to produce knowledge and understanding of the social world in systematic and reliable ways (Iqbal & Siddiqui, 2008; Tomalin, 2007). Religious studies scholars examine “the content and nature of particular religious traditions, and how that impacts upon political or social change, than upon the broader structural or functional dimensions of religious traditions” (Tomalin, 2007:10). The researcher of religious studies would more likely employ the phenomenological approach, by suspending his/her beliefs and seeking to identify with and understand the beliefs, experiences, actions of the believers.

In a special issue of *World Development Journal* which is dedicated to looking at the role of religion in development, Wilber and Jameson (1980) traces the long debate between the relationship of religion and development, from the Protestant-ethic debate on the religious sources of managing capital, and how religion has become an opiate of

the people, in containing resistance against inequalities. Wilber and Jameson observe that the prevailing discourse has been on 1) how religion can affect development in economic terms; 2) religion as a social institution acts to impede development unless it is used by the elites as a tool to control the masses; 3) religion as a private matter can aid development by freeing individual energies to economic activity; and that 4) successful development can undercut religion. Following the paper, there was no sustained follow-up on the issues raised. In 2000, ver Beek (cited in Rakodi, 2011b) carried out a study of key development studies journals and found very few references to the role of spirituality or religion in development from 1982 to 1998. This led ver Beek to conclude that 'spirituality' is a 'development taboo' (Rakodi, 2011b:4). While religion was recognised in political and social analyses of developing countries, its influence on mainstream development was limited, due largely to the dominance of economics in the field (Rakodi, 2011a).

The first systematic analysis of religious NGOs was carried out by Berger in 2003, which involved a sample of 263 religious NGOs affiliated with the United Nations (UN). The study covered a wide range of religious identities of NGOs, which included Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Jewish. Berger (2003) attempted to map out the religious, organisational, strategic and service dimensions of the selected religious NGOs. The study contributes to understanding about the previously unexplored field relating to religious NGOs. In addition, it clarifies the nature of religious identity and functions of religious NGOs, by differentiating them from organisations with missionary or proselytising motivations. Berger highlights that Christian NGOs form the majority of the sample size, at 57%, and postulates that a combination of ideological, political and economic factors encourage the formation of Christian NGOs – for example, “the involvement of churches in the formative process of the UN” through the World Council of Churches, and “their desire to influence the secular polity” (Berger, 2003:34). Cultural differences also influence the characteristics of the religious NGOs, where Christian NGOs make few references to God or religion, but focus on Bible teachings relating to social justice as a basis for their work; and spiritual NGOs of non-Western origin are relatively loosely structured and focus on “the inner

life of the individual through the application of principles advanced by spiritual leaders” (Berger, 2003:34).

Religious studies has contributed significantly to research on the relationships between religion and social, political and economic change in developing countries. However, there has been much less explicit studies to understand the intersection of religion and international development specifically (Tomalin, 2007:2). Most research on religion and development attempts to use country case studies to make observations about faith-based groups and their activities, mission statement, staff profile, decision-making and religious roots. Examples of such studies are the World Bank’s publications “Mind, Heart, and Soul in the Fight Against Poverty” in 2004, “Development and Faith” in 2007; and the Religions and Development Research Programme (funded by the UK Department for International Development, or UK DFID), which carried out research projects from 2005 to 2010 focusing on India, Nigeria, Pakistan and Tanzania as country cases to understand the role of religious values and beliefs in development. The two books published by the World Bank focus on the role of faith-based groups in various contexts in fulfilling development goals, especially relating to the Millennium Development Goals, in terms of healthcare and education; and their potential towards peace in conflict situations. On the other hand, the works funded by UK DFID carried out country-based studies which contribute to increased understanding about the characteristics of faith-based organisations and how they are differentiated from secular NGOs; and their role in addressing social and moral issues (for example, corruption and gender inequality), with minimal attention placed on in-depth studies of the values of community-based FBDOs and their contribution towards holistic development.

The presence and importance of religion in the lives of the people in developing countries cannot be avoided, and there have been calls for the need to place more emphasis on the role of religion in development work (Bradley, 2009; Clarke, 2006; Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011; Hoover, 2010; K. Marshall, 2011; Rennick, 2013). In practice, development and religion are not separate spheres (Rakodi, 2011a).

One of the key reasons for the need to examine the relationships between religion and development is to gain a better understanding of how development actors operate, and in turn, how this can lead to improvements in development policy and practice (Rakodi, 2011b).

## **2.2 Faith-Based Development Organisations (FBDOs)**

There have been many academic attempts to make sense of the concept of FBDOs by describing and understanding the organisations. Based on Thaut's (2009) review of the existing literature on FBDOs, there are two schools of thought on how FBDOs are differentiated from secular development agencies. On one hand, some scholars (for example, Berger, 2003) argue that the mission statements of the FBDOs that are inspired by religious beliefs differentiates them from secular ones. However, when these mission statements are operationalised into development activities, they are no different from secular one. Hence, there is a mix of faith-based values and secular goals. On the other hand, academics propound that FBDOs can be set apart from secular agencies based on the extent to which religion informs the different aspects of the organisations. A study by Kniss and Campbell in 1997 (cited in Thaut, 2009) concluded that FBDOs are similar to secular agencies in the size and cost of their operations but the former are distinct due to their characteristics of supporting local development initiatives and focusing on church planting.

On top of describing FBDOs, scholars have attempted to categorise them. For example, using two analytical frames of 1) the extent to which faith is central to an FBDO's identity and 2) the degree to which faith influences the practice of an FBDO, Bradley (2009) attempted to categorise the continuum of FBDOs into three groups:

- Community-based FBDOs
- Intermediaries acting a bridge between larger donors and community organisations
- Missionary organisations that work with local communities but see development primarily as religious conversion.

Internationally, World Vision works on a federated model where the community-based development work is carried out in developing countries and offices in developed countries fundraise for such projects. Hence, World Vision as an international organisation can clearly be placed into Bradley's (2009) first two categories. As the work of WVFT is predominantly focused on community-based development, this thesis would only use Bradley's definition of "community-based FBDOs", which believes that focusing on the spiritual dimension of life will bring about development in other aspects of life (for example, political and economic). In addition, faith is embedded in the identity and work of the organisation. This typology of FBDO not only recognizes the material aspect of development, but "stresses the need for balance between the spiritual and monetary aspects of life" (Bradley, 2009: 103).

Thaut (2009) proposes a taxonomy specifically for Christian faith-based humanitarian agencies (or FBDOs), based on their theological roots. The classification is based on the influence of faith on four dimensions – 1) the agency's mission, which is a reflection of its religiosity; 2) its ties to a religious base or authorities, which would influence its style of operations; 3) its staff policies or working culture, and 4) its base of donor support. This thesis analyses World Vision by covering these four dimensions, with more focus on the first three. The taxonomy that Thaut (2009) puts forward is as follows:

- Accommodative–Humanitarianism: the operations of the agency are not to fulfill a religious agenda. In other words, the mission and work of the agency are not explicitly faith-based, and it is not likely to be linked to a religious denomination. An example of an agency is Christian Aid.
- Synthesis–Humanitarianism: while the agency operates largely like a secular one, it maintains a distinctive Christian identity and believes in building a just social order for God. This belief can largely be attributed to its theological roots relating to the ethic of social engagement. Evangelism is not the primary aim of the agency, instead, providing humanitarian assistance is seen to be a way to witness to the love of God. The agency would have closer links to a religious



denomination and its staff would more likely view their work as part of their Christian call. An example of an agency is Catholic Relief Services.

- Evangelistic–Humanitarianism: the agency’s mission would include expanding the community of Christian believers through evangelism and it believes that spiritual transformation can be a solution to the world’s problems. Its humanitarian projects are not the ends, but the means to spread the faith. The organisation would have strong links to religious denominations and its staff will be expected to have a strong personal faith commitment. An example of an agency is Samaritan Purse.

Thaut’s (2009) taxonomy only provides a framework and is not able to neatly categorise all Christian humanitarian agencies. Agencies like World Vision cannot be clearly placed into one category, but instead, will fall along the spectrum between Synthesis–Humanitarianism and Evangelistic–Humanitarianism. While World Vision does not proselytise in its work, it has an implicit goal of evangelism – to lead people into the Christian faith “through the witness of caring for the needs of others than by merely preaching Christianity” (Bornstein, 2005, cited in Thaut, 2009:326). In the same way, it is arguable as to whether the organisation fits into Bradley’s (2009) third category. Hence, this thesis would not attempt to categorise WVFT into any of the proposed taxonomies. While categorisation is useful to understand certain characteristics of the organisation, the attempt to ‘essentialise’ religion and for that matter, FBDs, is reductionist and usually carried out for functional purposes, for example, for political reasons and justifications for funding (Fountain, 2013). It is proposed that such mainstream methods of conceptualising and generalising faith and development should be put aside and instead, studies should focus on the uniqueness of each case based on its details and richness. This approach would be especially applicable for the case of WVFT – although it is part of a larger international organisation with a supposed common identity, the fact that it is situated within a unique context has to be recognised and appreciated. It would not do justice to the organisation by simply proving whether or not the existing classifications of World Vision is accurate based on this study in Thailand.

There have been many debates about the possible benefits and disadvantages of working with faith-based organisations (FBOs) as development partners (Bradley, 2005, 2009; James, 2011; Kirmani & Zaidi, 2010; Lunn, 2009). On the positive side, there is a belief that FBOs are more effective compared to secular NGOs, in reaching the poorest, due to their sincerity. Nicholas Kristof, a *New York Times* columnist who travelled the world to report on development-related issues, made an interesting observation that the “further he travels from the capital city, the greater is the likelihood the aid worker he meets will be from a religious organisation” (Barnett and Stein, 2012:3). In her discussion of religious organisations (ROs), Lunn asserts that:

“ROs stand out because of their commitment to and zeal for serving people and communities. They are perceived to work for the public good and, in comparison with government agencies, it is believed that they are more sensitive to people in times of catastrophe, chaos or conflict, are responsive to people’s needs and flexible in their provision, act with honesty and take distribution seriously.” (2009:944)

In addition, Clarke (2006) and Williams and Demerath (1998) suggest that FBOs are able to tap on spiritual and moral resources as motivating factors to gain support and effect social change. Furthermore, FBOs have access to networks both nationally and internationally, which give them a broad base of support for donors and participants. Berger (2003) and Candland (2000) see these networks as sources of ‘social capital’ for FBOs, which provide human and financial resources.

On the other hand, critics of FBOs warn against the potential dangers of working with them in development. There is a perception that FBOs’ are primarily interested in proselytisation and the poor and desperate are usually more vulnerable to pressures from FBOs to convert their religions (Lunn, 2009). In addition, FBOs are argued to grant privilege to religious identity negatively, by favouring one religion or identity over others. This can potentially be divisive, especially in sensitive conflict areas where there is already strife between religious groups.

### **2.3 Religion and Development at World Vision globally**

There have been several studies done on World Vision's Christian values and beliefs in development work in Africa and these studies serve as useful guides for the conceptualisation and methodological design of this thesis.

In Thaut's (2009) attempt to categorise Christian FBDOs, she analyses the characteristics of World Vision as a case study. This is done in a generalised manner, in other words, without looking at how each entity of the World Vision may operate differently based on contexts. However, her analysis is useful in setting the backdrop of this thesis, especially in terms of presenting World Vision's approach to 'Christian Witness', and the organisation's employment policy on Christians and work culture.

Bornstein (2001a, 2001b, 2005) carried out a series of anthropological studies based on two Christian FBDOs in Zimbabwe – World Vision and Christian Care. She wrote extensively on the economic development aspect of World Vision Zimbabwe's interventions in the local communities. Bornstein argues in her studies that faith is not in opposition with development and instead, it is the impetus for the desire to change. For example, the issue of traditional witchcraft in Zimbabwean communities was seen as posing a huge challenge to the development efforts towards modernisation, where community members have rejected rising up to leadership roles in economic development projects due to fears of jealousy which led to sabotage through witchcraft (Bornstein, 2001b). The recipients of development and success have been placed in a vulnerable position by jealous neighbours. As Christians, the World Vision development staff saw witchcraft as interfering with their work and something that has to be dismissed. While the staff assert that they can manage the contradicting religious practice of witchcraft through their Christian faith and beliefs (for example, organising crusades to combat the evil forces), they find that there are times that they are unable to do so. The fact that World Vision is faith-based in that context enables it to identify with the worldviews of the community members and it creates a space for its workers to address such 'religious' issues. The Christian discourse on economic development among Zimbabwean development workers and politicians echoed Max Weber's

Protestant Ethics where business is seen to be morally acceptable; those who work hard would find God's salvation through His providence and those who are lazy are susceptible to fall into evil ways, for example, engaging in witchcraft.

Through her research, Bornstein also found that ensuring the participation of community members was a religious act by the FBDOs which she studied. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) was a tool that World Vision Zimbabwe used extensively in its efforts to encourage development from 'within' the communities. While the development tool is being applied, development workers recognised that the problems that they encountered were beyond the control of the individual, communities and even the organisation – there was a need for 'divine intervention' and this was 'injected' through the spirit of prayer, to demonstrate their reliance on God for help.

Using World Vision South Africa (WVSA) as a case study, de Wet (2013) analyses the varying understandings of 'transformational development' (TD), 'poverty' and the organisational mission statement as interpreted by the National Office and an ADP in Umlambo. In her study, de Wet concludes that TD as an attempt to integrate both Christian and secular development discourse varies across WVSA – at the National Office level, there is a high degree of integration, and at the ADP level, it tends to diverge away from the official conception, left to interpretation and use by the field workers. In contrast with Bornstein's findings, de Wet observes that participation as a key means to transformation is understood in a secular manner, where WVSA "does not appear to engage with available religious resources to any meaningful extent, nor was the mobilisation of such religious resources within processes of participation and empowerment evident" (de Wet, 2013:106), rather, the use of religious resources was in parallel, instead of being integrated with the so-called secular development practices. The case study of WVFT as another World Vision office would hence be an interesting contribution to this knowledge of the understanding of participation framed within TD.

The studies which were carried out by Bornstein and de Wet were situated in contexts where the populations are predominantly Christian, and the World Vision staff teams are all Christian. There is hence a need for more knowledge on World Vision's

work in places where there are less Christians, to examine if this influences the modus operandi of the organisation.

There are also academic works on World Vision by internal commentators, who are either World Vision staff or Christian theologians. These works provide useful insights into the contexts of World Vision as an international FBDO, both historical and theological. Tripp (1999), the Vice-President of Advocacy and Government Relations at World Vision Canada at the time of writing, discusses about the integrating of faith into development practice at World Vision at a broad level. She zooms into the issue of gender equality and used Bible scriptures to discuss on issues relating to gender relations, sexual exploitations and women's role in the public sphere. Tripp also argues that using biblical teachings and values have brought about credibility to the World Vision's advocacy work on gender equality due to the fact that community faith leaders and villagers through their worldviews can relate to the organisation's spiritual response and motivation. Whaites (1999), former Global Director of Advocacy at World Vision, provides a comprehensive understanding of the interaction of Christian ideology and the larger development trends of World Vision on a global level. Whaites traces the history of World Vision since its founding and examined how its Christian identity waned momentarily and was reinforced later. This change brought about its current Christ-centred mission statement. Its current organisational structure of a global partnership model is also a result of its desire to define itself as a Christian development organisation. Similarly, King (2012) traces the history of World Vision, but in the context of its American evangelical roots and eventual influence on how the organisation responds to humanitarian concerns.

## **2.4 Religion and Development in Thailand**

In the case of Thailand, there are books written that trace the history of non-governmental organisations and they recognise the role of FBDOs in contributing to the development of the nation (McCaskill & Kampe, 1997; Pongsapich & Kataleradabhan, 1997; Shigetomi, Tejapira, & Thongyou, 2004).

Through a search on the existing literature, it was found that there are few case studies of faith-based development work in Thailand. Ashley (2008) carried out an anthropological case study of how Buddhist monks and a Christian FBDO, Upland Holistic Development Project (UHDP), contribute to development in a Palaung hilltribe community in Northern Thailand. In the Palaung community which was displaced, reconstructing the Buddhist institution in the new village location took precedence over secular development (Ashley, 2008). While Palaung people in northern Thailand were not involved with the *Dhammacarik* monks who were missionaries to the politically sensitive and economically poor hilltribe areas as part of the Thai state's attempt to civilise the hilltribe minorities, Buddhism is central to the identity of the community where the Palaung people are deeply committed to the religion. Religious efforts to build a temple and communal space for Buddhist ceremonies were prioritized by the people. The community received support from a Buddhist mission *Khruba Jaw Teung*, which funded not only religious festivals and structures, but also the construction of a much-needed bridge. Ashley argues that the re-establishment of religious institutions should also be seen as a development project in itself, especially in the context of Thailand, "where Buddhism is associated with being a civilized member of the national polity" (Ashley, 2008: 52).

Another study on the Catholic Council of Thailand (CCTD) found that human and social development in the current Thai society tends to focus on the material aspect of economic development and information technology, while attention on spiritual aspect of development is sorely lacking ((Pruikpadee, 2013).

In the context of Karen refugees camps in northwestern Thailand, Horstmann (2011) looks at the role of the Christian faith as a means to provide a form of identity and comfort to the Karen refugees, for example, where Bible teachings are used to make sense of their situation. While many of the Christian FBDOs working in the camps do not proselytise, they have close linkages with churches and the Karen Baptist missionary networks in reaching out to the refugee groups. With such social networks, the Karen Christian identity is further reinforced and the Karen refugees are offered protection and opportunities for social mobility through, for example, financial

resources, education and spiritual welfare. Instead of being passive recipients of aid, Horstmann (2011) argues that the Karen refugees are active agents capable of creating their social support through the expansion of the Christian community.

Another relevant paper is by Platz (2003), who examines the dynamic interactions and tensions between Buddhism and Christianity in Karen communities in Northern Thailand. While the paper does not focus on the role of the religions in development, it provides a context to the place of the two key religions in an ethnic group in Thailand. The paper discusses the attitudes of both religions towards tradition; how social networks (or social capital) are strengthened or weakened as a result of (different) religion(s); the idea of environmental conservation and agricultural practices (which is related to development) amongst the Karen people which is regardless of religion – Christians are also familiar with ecological ideas although they are independent of spirits; and identities relating to ethnicity and religions. It is also observed that Karen Christians are generally more open to modernisation, not because of abandonment of spirit worship, but due to missionary help.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The review of the existing literature has revealed that there is a need for more in-depth research on the role of religion in the field of development. While there have been attempts to classify FBDOs, it is argued in this thesis that there is no necessity to do so for the case study of WVFT due to the unique context in which it is operating in. Hence, this research does not aim to contribute to the existing classifications that have been set up, but instead intends to present a case study of a Christian (Protestant) FBDO in Thailand, an area where there is a lack of study. It can also be seen from this literature review that there is a lack of research on community-based FBDOs in Thailand and how they demonstrate their values, beliefs and ethics in development practice, especially when interacting with communities of differing religious beliefs. With the outstanding studies that have been done on World Vision in South Africa and Zimbabwe, it is hoped that this research contributes to knowledge about World Vision's

efforts to integrate religion and development in the context of a predominantly non-Christian and Asian country.





## CHAPTER III

### SETTING THE CONTEXT - WORLD VISION FOUNDATION OF THAILAND IN MAE SARIANG DISTRICT

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will set the context in which this study is carried out. The faith-based development environment in Thailand will be outlined to provide an understanding of the context in which World Vision Foundation of Thailand (WVFT) operates in. Subsequently, a background of the *Mae Sariang* Area Development Programme (ADP) will be provided, followed by the key religions and background of the two Karen hilltribe villages which were studied.

#### 3.2 Faith-Based Development Organisations in Thailand

Traditionally, faith-based development in Thailand was carried out in and through Buddhist monks and temples, where they were seen as centres of the communities to provide for those in need, for example, where children learned to read and write, as playgrounds for children, as a place to receive food, and a refuge or accommodation for visitors or the homeless (Pongsapich & Kataleeradabhan, 1997). There are also monks who are activists of development for the poor, known as *phra patthana* (or development monks), who not only encouraged the poor in spiritual development through meditation and instilling self-confidence and self-worth, but also involved in nature restoration, farming and capacity-building projects (Ratanakul, 2005). This counters the common understanding that Thai Buddhist monks prefer to be detached from worldly matters.

Since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Catholic and Protestant missionaries arrived in Thailand, with the aim of spreading the religions and this was carried out through the meeting of social needs, for example, building of schools and hospitals.

The activities of Catholic missionaries is classified into three phases by Pongsapich and Kataleeradabhan (1997): 1) the exploratory phase (16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries); 2) the modern phase (1859 to 1965); and 3) the contemporary phase (the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council – present). From the year 1567 to 1568, the first Catholic missionaries arrived in Thailand from Portugal, followed by Spain and France. The first mission, Siam Mission, was set up in Thailand in 1669 and since then, a hospital and youth group were established. During this exploratory phase, work was considered to be unsuccessful as there were no Thai converts and the philanthropic work by the missionaries were not integrated into the Thai society. During the reign of King Rama IV from 1851 to 1868, the king led the country into modernisation which opened up the country, including to the work of Catholic missionaries who were successful in spreading the Catholic faith throughout Thailand. In this second phase, there was the legalisation of Catholic missions owning land, which led to the expansion of not only churches, but social institutions of schools and hospitals. As an outcome of the Catholic Church's effort to stay relevant within the Thai society, a reform was carried out, involving a paradigm shift that "religion should be viewed as a vehicle to bring solutions to social problems" and "local culture and indigenous knowledge became important criteria and prerequisites for development workers to learn and find ways to integrate with the (western) Catholic concept of salvation" (Pongsapich and Kataleeradabhan, 1997:16).

For Protestant missionaries in Thailand, their history can also be seen in three phases, following that of the Catholics. The exploratory phase began in 1828 when the missionaries first came into Thailand, since King Rama V proclaimed the freedom of choice of religion in the country. The American Presbyterian Mission arrived in Thailand from 1835 to 1840 and started social establishments like clinics to treat deadly diseases. After World War I, the Protestant Mission, like the Catholic Mission, expanded its work not only in terms of preaching, but also building hospitals, schools and leprosy centres. During this time, the Mission also worked with other minority groups in Thailand.

From the history outline above, it can be seen that faith-based development work by the Catholics and Protestants were limited to the areas of education and healthcare.

Although the Catholic missionaries came to Thailand earlier than the Protestant missionaries, it was found that they were not as successful when working with the Thai ethnic people (Pongsapich & Kataleeradabhan, 1997; Smith, 2004). On the other hand, the Protestant missionaries who came later were able to reach the Chinese and hilltribe people. It is observed that the ethnic hilltribe minorities, including the Karen hilltribe, who are marginal to the Thai society, were more ready to receive help from missionaries.

### **3.3 World Vision International (WVI) and World Vision Foundation of Thailand (WVFT)**

World Vision International (WVI) has its roots in an American evangelist, Bob Pierce, who in 1950, responded to the needs of the children orphaned by the Korean War. Since its founding by a single missionary, WVI has morphed into one of the largest development organisations in the world and it was largely influenced by the 'new evangelicalism' Protestant Christian movement in America which took place during the 1940s to 1980s, involving the belief that the Bible is infallible; that personal salvation comes from a personal trust in Jesus Christ and his atoning work; active evangelism; and emphasis on social concerns (Bornstein, 2005).

In the mid-1970s, after its realisation that its traditional evangelical identity was unsustainable, the organisation shifted from its missionary outlook to focus on more contemporary social issues of world poverty, relief and humanitarian aid. It was during this time that World Vision endorsed the United Nations' definitions of human rights and targets for social improvements (Whaites, 1999). In an effort to make the organisation more effective globally, a Declaration of Internationalisation was made and took effect from 31 May 1978. This Declaration essentially separated the organisation from its US-centric past with the creation of a partnership secretariat and a governing body which constituted the organisation's constituents. The Declaration

was also a response to pressures from non-Western field staff that expressed that the US office had “paternalistic and controlling tendencies” (King, 2012: 933). The Declaration had an awkward mix of Christian and development jargon where the church language is kept but to express aims that are similar to humanitarian agencies – it is the first document that places greater emphasis to aid than evangelism.

Towards the end of the 1980s, signs of the organisation’s shift away from its evangelical core beliefs began to be apparent and there was a diversity of views on the meaning and the implications of its evangelical beliefs on its work. This brought about an unwieldy understanding of the organisation’s philosophy and identity. The World Vision President at that time made a decision to draft the Core Values, Mission Statement and Covenant of Partnership to align the identity, purpose and inter-office relationships (Whaites, 1999). In the documents, the ethos of ‘following’ Jesus Christ through ‘Christian Witness’ was emphasised over the relatively aggressive message of Christian evangelism. Proselytism, where aid is disbursed with the coercion of religious conversion, was prohibited and instead, the focus was to demonstrate Christian concern in a culturally-sensitive manner. These documents are relevant up to today. With this set of new documents, World Vision has been able to maintain a balance in keeping its Christian values and pursuing development goals.

Today, World Vision carries the identity of an international Christian non-profit organisation which focuses on relief, development and advocacy. Globally, WVI is explicit about its Christian identity. The development organisation is child-focused and uses a holistic approach in working with the world’s most vulnerable children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. Child sponsorship is a key mechanism through which the organisation delivers its service and raises its funds. Currently, WVI is a supranational organisation which works in almost 100 countries and has about 50,000 staff and volunteers worldwide (World Vision International, 2014).

With this historical backdrop of World Vision on an international level, there can be a better understanding of how the office in Thailand has been influenced in its

organisational ethos and structure. The tensions that exist between secular development and traditional Christian missions are not only felt at the global level but also in the Thai context. This would be further examined in the analysis chapters of this thesis.

In Thailand, World Vision started its work in 1972, working with orphans in Udon Thani Province. Subsequently, child support centres were set up in the Northern and Northeastern Province. In 1974, the organisation was registered as World Vision Foundation of Thailand (WVFT) and it was focused on the well-being of children, humanitarian emergency relief and Indochinese refugees at the Thai border. From 1980, WVFT changed its direction to community-based development, with focus on children and their families. Currently, WVFT works in 70 projects in 42 provinces of Thailand, with 94,627 sponsored children<sup>3</sup>. WVFT staff are distributed at the national and field levels – there are 826 staff, of which 253 are office staff (including those based at the National Office) and 573 field staff (most of whom are working in the ADPs). More than half of the WVFT staff are Christians.

Like all World Vision office, WVFT's main source of income is through the child sponsorship programme, which is funded by fundraising offices in developed countries. In the case of WVFT, the key World Vision fundraising offices are from United States, Australia, Canada and Malaysia (WVFT, 2012). Based in the ADPs, the sponsorship programme selects children eligible for sponsorship based on factors like their economic status, enrolment in schools and willingness of their parents to participate in the programme. Children who are sponsored under the programme are given priority in terms of receiving material benefits (for example, school materials and livestock for their families). While the sponsored children receive individual benefits, most of the sponsorship funds are pooled together for each ADP field office to implement community-based development interventions relating to education, food security, water access, health and economic livelihood, which indirectly benefits the

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<sup>3</sup> Accurate as of 10 October 2014, from World Vision Foundation of Thailand's website: [http://www.worldvision.or.th/about\\_history\\_eng.html](http://www.worldvision.or.th/about_history_eng.html), accessed on 22 October 2014.

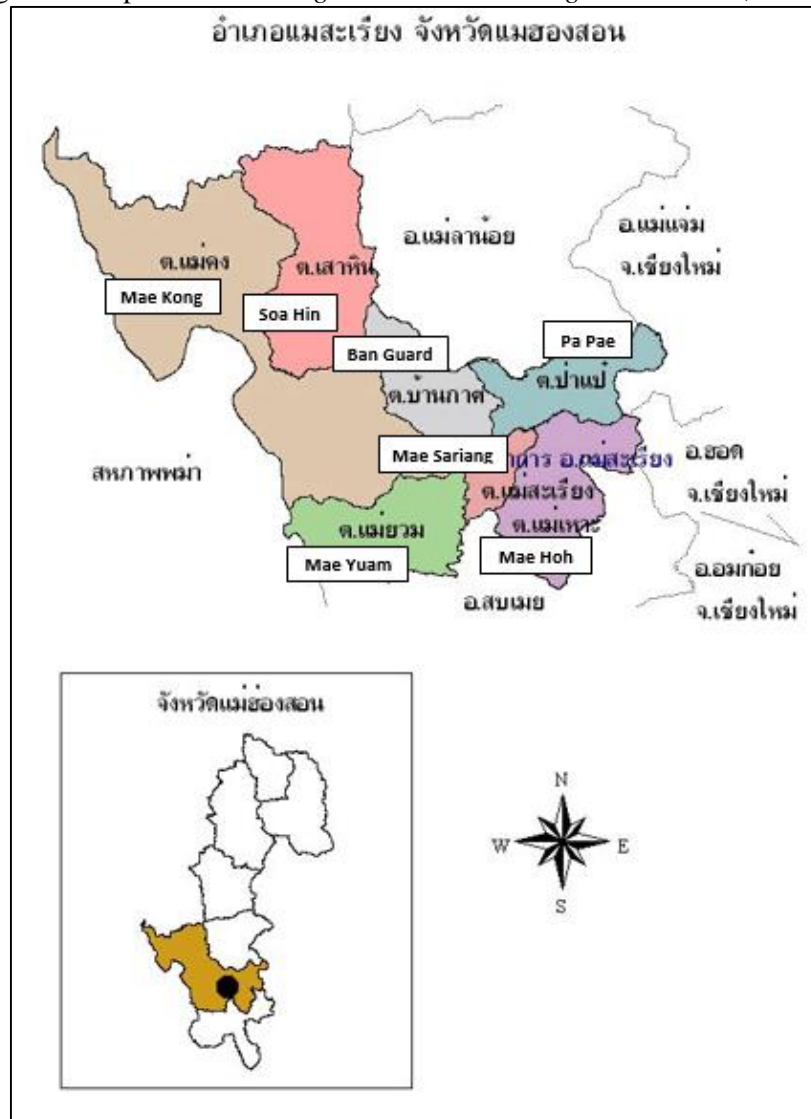
non-sponsored children and their families. These development interventions are rolled out over a period of about 10 to 15 years, in phases of 5 years each. Currently, WVFT is introducing the Development Programme Approach (DPA) from WVI to ADPs which are new and undergoing redesigning after 5 years of implementation. In this new initiative, each ADP (usually a district as defined by Thailand) would be subdivided into sub-districts, each taken charge by a field staff who is known as the Development Facilitator (DF). The DF is responsible for the implementation of the development interventions within the sub-district that is under his/her charge.

### **3.4 Profile of Mae Sariang Area Development Programme (ADP)**

*Mae Sariang* ADP, with its office based in *Mae Sariang* town, implements its programme in all seven sub-districts in Mae Sariang district and they are namely, *Mae Sariang*, *Pa Pae*, *Mae Ho*, *Mae Yuam*, *Ban Kat*, *Mae Khong* and *Sao Hin* (refer to Figure 4 for district map). The ADP was set up in the year 2010 after WVFT's assessment that the area is vulnerable due to factors like economic poverty and that there are no other NGOs working in the area to avoid overlaps in development efforts. The programme, with focus on child sponsorship, economic, education and health projects, is targeted to complete by the year 2024. In addition, ADP has organised child-focused activities like children's moral and ethics camps and field trips that would contribute to World Vision's child well-being aspirations and outcomes, in particular the third child well-being aspiration of "Girls and boys experience love of God and their neighbours" (refer to Appendix E). The programme is currently funded by World Vision Malaysia, with its main source of income from child sponsorship.

There are 47 villages in *Mae Sariang* ADP, with total population size of 52,401 people, of which 7,279 are direct beneficiaries and 25,460 are indirect beneficiaries. There are 3,000 children who are registered under WVFT's child sponsorship programme. In the ADP, 80% are Buddhists/Animists; 15% Christians and 5% Muslims. (*Mae Sariang* ADP programme manager, personal communication, 17 September 2014)

Figure 4: Map of Mae Sariang district in Mae Hong Son Province, Thailand



There are 15 WVFT staff in the ADP, 3 of whom are on part-time employment. All staff in the ADP are Christian or Catholic Karen, except one who is a Buddhist of Thai ethnicity.

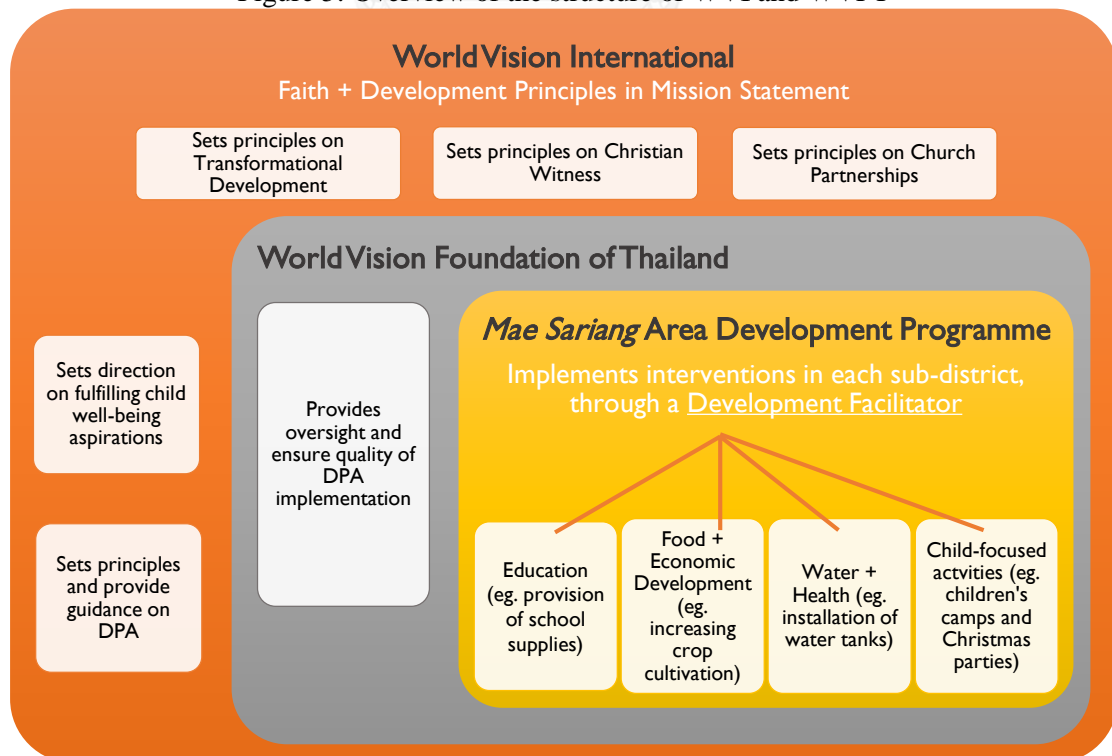
The ADP is now finalising its plans for the second phase of the programme, by going through a programme redesigning process. During the period of the fieldwork, the ADP team spent four days in a training on World Vision's DPA conducted by the National Office's Programme Quality Department. For the second phase in the next five years, there will be a revised LogFrame with focus on community capacity-

building and enhanced relationships with faith-based organisations, in particular, churches. In the revised plans, there will be a shift away from service provision. This change in approach can be attributed to the recent re-envisioning of the transformational development (TD) direction by World Vision International (de Wet, 2013).

At both *Ban Pamak* and *Ban Mae Kanai*, the ADP team would consult with the village headmen whenever they have proposals for development projects in the villages. At *Ban Pamak*, the village has appointed a volunteer who disseminates information that relates to WVFT to the community members (for example, an upcoming distribution of gifts to sponsored children). For *Ban Mae Kanai*, an ADP staff will travel to the village to share any relevant information. At the point of the fieldwork, WVFT has distributed water tanks, installed latrines, distributed cash crops, distributed school materials in both villages, and set up a backyard garden in the school in *Ban Mae Kanai*.

Figure 5 summarises the overview of the structure of WVI and how WVFT fits into the overall picture.

Figure 5: Overview of the structure of WVI and WVFT





### 3.5 Background of Karen Hilltribe Communities in Mae Sariang, Thailand

The Karen hilltribe most commonly refers to a distinct Tibeto-Burman family with several different but related ethnic groups which speak varying dialects. The two most common Karen dialects are Sgaw and Pwo. The Karen are mostly in Myanmar and in northern Thailand. On the side of Thailand, there are at least 300,000 Karen people, out of approximately 900,000 people of the hilltribe population (AIPP, 2014; Delang, 2003; Platz, 2003). In Thailand, the main settlement areas of the Karen people are in the provinces of Mae Hong Son and Tak which are along the border that is shared with Myanmar, and the western part of Chiang Mai Province. The main form of livelihood is traditionally subsistence dry rice planting in the mountains, and this is mixed with wet rice cultivation in the flatlands.

As a result of long historical tensions with the predominant ethnic Thai in the nation-state, the perceptions of the Karen hilltribe in Thailand has been in flux from an ‘insignificant other’ to ‘backward and vulnerable’, leaving the Karen in an “ambiguous state of *chao khao*, ‘hilltribe’ ” (Laungaramsri, 2003:22). The conception of the Karen ethnicity by both the people and the Thai state is considerably recent – it started since the 1960s, after the Thai government was pressured to impose a ban on the production of opium poppies and consequently carried out research to ascertain the people who were living in the areas where the poppies were produced. The Karen were then categorised as *chao khao*, which carries with it the meaning of ‘problem’ (*panha*) or ‘threat’ (*kankhomkhu*) to the Thai state (C. F. Keyes, 2003). On the other hand, the Karen themselves seek to break from this stigma by putting forward their distinctive culture based in particular localities.

#### 3.5.1 Religious Beliefs and Cultural Identity of Karen Hilltribe Communities in Thailand

In terms of religious beliefs, Buddhism is the main religion among Sgaw-Karen, and Animism is officially subsumed under this category, hence there are no official statistics for the number of Animists (Platz, 2003). Based on findings from fieldwork

in the two villages, it was found that *Ban Pamak* with majority Buddhists (approximately 90% of the villagers), followers syncretise their Buddhist beliefs with spirit worship; in *Ban Mae Kanai*, there are only reportedly one to two households who are practising pure Animism. Due to the complexity in ritual practices and numerous taboos, Animism is in decline (Platz, 2003). This is also in light of the realisation by the people that their localised animistic practices are increasingly disjunctive with the world that they are part of, and the need to adapt to the dominant cultural practices and changes in the outside world (C.F. Keyes, 1996). This is also reported in villages where there are high number of conversions from Animism to Buddhist or Christianity due to the cumbersome nature of the rituals, for example, all members in the family are required to gather during a ritual which makes it difficult since internal migration for work or education is common within the villages. A villager also remarked that some Animist spiritual leaders are corrupt by asking for gifts and money for personal interests, instead of genuinely using them to appease the spirits. Such distrust is also a contributing factor for the decline in the number of Animist followers.

Buddhism was propagated among the hilltribes in the north of Thailand since the 1960s when the state associated nationalism and good work ethics with the Buddhist doctrines (Platz, 2003). This was due in part to the insecurities at the northern borders. Buddhism became institutionalised with the setting up of the *Dhammacarik* programme in a 'Wat' (or Buddhist temple) in Chiang Mai, to spread the religion to the hilltribes. On top of spiritual teachings, the monks also provided opportunities for education and improvements to agricultural methods. This use of Buddhism was part of the state's strategy to unify the nation, where the ideology of 'to be Thai is to be a Buddhist' (Smith, 2004; Suthivorayan & Krungkanjana, 2005) was used to integrate the hilltribes into the Thai culture, through inculcating love for the King and the nation.

The Karen people have one of the highest numbers of Christians in Thailand – about 20 to 30% of the Sgaw-Karen are Christians (Platz, 2003). The main denomination is Baptist, followed by Catholics, and in many instances, the term 'Christianity' is used collectively to refer to both Catholicism and Protestantism.

The first Protestant church in northern Thailand was started in Chiang Mai by two American Presbyterian missionaries, although the missionary movement was largely driven by American Baptists (Platz, 2003; Worland, 2010). With the founding of the Karen Baptist Convention in 1955, most Karen Christians now belong to the Baptist denomination and this is observed in both *Ban Pamak* and *Ban Mae Kanai*. Catholic missionaries came much later to northern Thailand in 1951. The high conversion rate to Christianity could be attributed to the alignment of their traditional beliefs with that of Christianity – when the Karen people first came in contact with missionaries in the early 1800s, they were reminded of their creation myth which mentioned about a lost book of wisdom which was given by the Creator God, *Yoà*, to the people, and would one day be found by a white brother (H. I. Marshall, 1997; Platz, 2003). The appearance of the missionaries with the Bible was seen by the Karen people as a fulfilled prophecy of this myth. In addition, there are other similarities between the traditional beliefs and Christianity – the concept and name of the Creator *Yoà* was similar to that of *Yahweh*, the God of the Israelites; and concepts of morality with regards to fidelity and sexual intercourse correspond. The opportunity to know about Christianity gives access to the outside world and removes the limitations of the local spirits, while the Bible represents the ultimate truth and is set against the religion of the dominant ethnic group” (Platz, 2003:478). Unlike Buddhists who syncretise their practices with Animism, the Protestant Christians refrain from participation in Buddhist or Animist rituals. On the other hand, Catholics are more open to participating in traditional rituals. With the already prevailing perception of the Karen hilltribe people as marginal to the Thai society, the high conversion of the Karen to Christianity further perpetuates that they cannot be real ‘Thai’ (Laungaramsri, 2003).

In terms of the choice of religion, it was revealed in the research by Platz (2003) that the Karen people would prefer to have a single religion within each nuclear unit of the family, and this was also observed in both *Ban Pamak* and *Ban Mae Kanai*. When family members do have different religions, it is when they have established their own households outside the nuclear family.

Despite the varying religious beliefs that are present in the Karen community, the ethnic identity is still strong. Adhering to a religion that is not traditionally Karen does not indicate dissociation from the Karen ethnic identity, the latter still takes precedence in bonding the community together. It is observed that Buddhist, Catholic and Christian Karen continue to maintain their ethnic identity through a common language, customs and clothings.

### 3.5.2 Profiles of *Ban Pamak* and *Ban Mae Kanai*

*Ban Pamak* (*Ban* = ‘village’ and *Pamak* = ‘forest of Betel Nut trees’) is a village of more than 100 years. Karen people formed the majority of the population at about 70% and the rest consist of Thais. From the fieldwork that was conducted for this thesis, it was found that the main form of livelihood is rice farming, domestication of buffaloes and cows for sale. There are two Buddhist temples in the village. The other religions in the village are Catholics and Protestant Christians. There is no church building in the village and the Catholics meet in a preacher’s house every Sunday for worship services.

*Ban Mae Kanai* (*Ban* = ‘village’ and *Mae Kanai* = ‘bee’), is a village of almost 200 years (about three generations, according to the Village Headman). There is a Buddhist temple (Picture 1, Appendix F) and Protestant Church (see Picture 2, Appendix F) in the village. The Catholics currently meet in the preacher’s house and are planning to build a church building within the village. Through interviews with the households and the pastor-in-charge of the village church, it was found that the Catholic and Christian households converted from Animism from intermarriages since one or two generations ago.

In both villages, relationships among the different religions are generally harmonious – villagers of different religions interact on a daily basis (for example, helping each other in farming activities, visiting and/or financially support the religious events of another religion during special occasions).

It can be seen that there are differences in religious profile of both villages – while both villages comprise of Buddhists, Catholics and Christians; and both have Buddhist temples, *Ban Pamak* has a predominantly Buddhist profile compared to the *Ban Mae Kanai* and only the former has a Catholic church building, while the latter has a Protestant church building. This sets an interesting context in which faith-based development can be understood, due to the varying community dynamics which influences the way the development programme is carried out by WVFT and received by the communities.

In terms of education, Both *Ban Pamak* and *Ban Mae Kanai* each has a primary school (for ages up to 12). In *Ban Pamak* School, there are 82 students, of whom 70 are receiving help from WVFT. Most of the students are Buddhists (about 70 students) and the rest are Christians. In *Ban Mae Kanai* School, there are 76 students and almost all of them are receiving help from WVFT. There are 60% Catholics and Christians and 40% Buddhists.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented a background in which this study is done. It has provided an understanding of faith-based development in Thailand, with its history of in the work of Buddhist monks in meeting social needs, and subsequently by Catholic and Protestant Christian missionaries who were instrumental in medical care and educational development, while spreading their religions.

In addition, this chapter traced the history of World Vision as an international organisation and its Christian roots which have impacted the characteristics of the office in Thailand. As this research is based in two Karen hilltribe villages where WVFT is working, this chapter also provided a background of the Karen people in Thailand and their religious beliefs. The demographics and profiles of the two Karen hilltribe villages, *Ban Pamak* and *Ban Mae Kanai*, which are related to this research are also presented.

An understanding of the intersection of contexts of Thailand and World Vision would provide a more robust appreciation of the analyses that are to follow in Chapters IV and V, which discusses the impact of Christian values, beliefs and identity on the development programme of WVFT and interaction of these aspects with the religious beliefs of the community members.



## CHAPTER IV

### CHRISTIAN VALUES, BELIEFS AND IDENTITY OF WORLD VISION AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON DEVELOPMENT WORK IN THAILAND

#### 4.1 Introduction

The Christian values, beliefs and identity of World Vision have many influences upon its development programme, including in the context of Thailand. This chapter will examine the extent to which Christian values, beliefs and identity relating to ‘Transformational Development’ (TD), ‘Christian Witness’, church partnerships, organisational culture and funding sources, have an impact on the work of WVFT. With its international discourse on how development work should be carried out, it is found that these high-level concepts, when operationalised into the Thai context, are subject to interpretations and adaptations by the local field staff and cannot be fully fulfilled due to the sensitive context which is predominantly Buddhist.

#### 4.2 ‘Transformational Development’ in Practice of WVFT

A development conceptual term which is commonly used at World Vision is ‘transformational development’ (refer to Appendix A for WVI’s policy), coined by Dr Bryant Myers<sup>4</sup> and defined as “a process and actions through which children, families and communities move towards fullness of life with dignity, justice, peace, and hope, as the Bible describes the Kingdom of God” (World Vision International, 2002). This term is commonly used within WVI instead of the traditional ‘development’ to avoid 1) associations with past meanings, some of which are not positive. It also conjures up thoughts of changes in the material world; and 2) ideas that it is about westernisation

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<sup>4</sup> Dr Bryant Myers is a theologian and key management leader at WVI for 30 years. He was instrumental in developing the term ‘Transformational Development’ and is the key thinker and advocate of the concept.

or modernisation which may not necessarily be good for the intended beneficiaries (Myers, 2006).

De Wet (2013) observes that ‘transformational development’ (TD) is “framed by core Christian beliefs, particularly the biblical narrative of the Kingdom of God and its attendant themes of individual salvation, transformation and connection to God, and redemption” and “incorporates developmental insights and practice alongside the mobilisation of religious resources” (pp. 99-100). This development concept aligns with World Vision International’s mission statement (refer to Figure 2 in Section 1.3.3).

TD is an area which contributes to the fulfilling of the mission statement, along with ‘Christian Witness’ and ‘church partnerships’ (which will be further discussed in the next sections 4.3 and 4.4). TD offers an expanded perspective with regards to helping the poor – it is not only about God’s concern for the oppressed or Jesus’ teachings and responses to the poor as put forward by theologians like Baggett (2005), but a larger biblical story involving the God’s Creation, the Fall of Man, God’s redemption through Jesus Christ and the church’s continuing role until the end of history. The Kingdom of God perspective provides the framework in which poverty is understood and consequently, the Christian response – it recognises that the current world is dysfunctional because of broken structural and interpersonal relationships, with the result of poverty (both material and non-material), loss of dignity, loss of opportunities and loss of ability to achieve their God-given potential (Christian, 2011; Myers, 2006). In order for the impoverished to achieve fullness of life, churches and Christians have a role to respond to their physical, social and spiritual needs (Myers, 2006). Myers (2006) puts forward that work which is pro-life and enhances the quality of life points towards the Kingdom of God. The emulation of Jesus Christ provides a guidance in meeting the needs of material and spiritual aspects of the poor. TD takes a holistic approach by not only targeting the development of children, but the larger context in which they are situated in.

TD holds the principles of community ownership, sustainability, holism and mutual transformation (refer to Appendix A). For the purpose of analysis in this thesis,



focus is placed on the first two principles – that transformation is the responsibility of the people and hence, they should be empowered and involved in the development process of their communities; and the future of the beneficiaries should be sustained, even after World Vision leaves the communities.

As the use of TD is an attempt to integrate both Christian and secular development discourses towards helping the poor, the understanding of TD has had an influence on the use of contemporary development techniques and modus operandi of World Vision. Specifically, there are TD-related documents for design, monitoring and evaluation (DME), witness to Jesus Christ, partnership with churches and technical interventions that address development issues like education, health and livelihoods (refer to Appendix A).

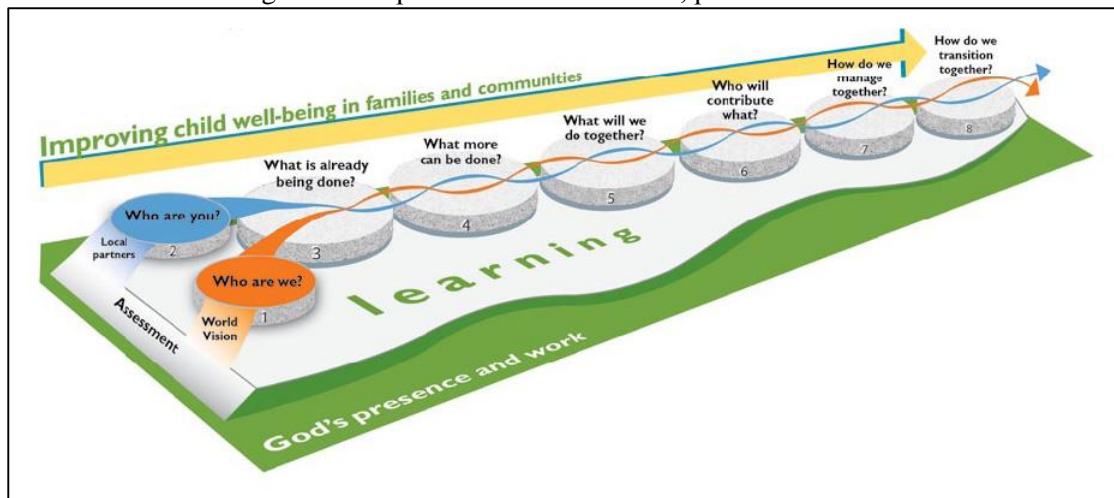
The concept of ‘Transformational Development’ which is motivated by Christian values and beliefs, has an impact on how development processes (for example, the Development Programme Approach or DPA) are organised and how development programmes are implemented. This allows the principles of TD to be demonstrated in the field where World Vision’s role is to provide technical support, oversight and funding for programme implementation at the community level. When translated into development practice, World Vision uses contemporary development techniques like Design, Monitoring and Evaluation (DME) and Logical Framework (LogFrame), with development outcomes and measurable indicators, to achieve development goals. There are also TD indicators, which are a set of programme indicators to measure the quality of life in communities. While it can be seen that the operations of World Vision are not distinctively different from secular development agencies, the underlying mission and concept of TD which drive these operational strategies are informed by the organisation’s Christian values and beliefs.

#### Interpretation of TD documents

The DPA, which is used in *Mae Sariang* ADP’s redesigning process, encompasses principles from TD involving the integrating of World Vision’s work and

building of staff capacity to engage local partners. As part of the DPA, there is ‘The Critical Path’ process (see Figure 6) which involves eight simple questions that are asked at various stages of the programming process to evaluate the current situation of local communities and improve World Vision’s work with local partners which is seen to be able to contribute towards the well-being of children.

Figure 6: Steps in ‘The Critical Path’, part of the DPA



(extracted from World Vision International, 2011:25)

In the guide on ‘The Critical Path’, the presence of God is acknowledged and sought in discerning God’s involvement in the community (see green area in Figure 6). This is done through prayers and biblical reflections as staff listen to children, partners and communities. At the international level, WVI developed a spiritual resource guide for field staff to use during devotions, prayers and reflections as they move through ‘The Critical Path’. When the ADP programme manager at *Mae Sariang* was asked whether he saw the component of ‘God’s presence’ in the ‘The Critical Path’ diagram, he was not able to recall it. However, he could very confidently articulate how he saw the involvement of God as he went through each step of ‘The Critical Path’. For example, for Step 3’s “What is already being done?”, he recognised the need to look back and thank God for the blessings that He had given; and for Step 6’s “Who will contribute what?”, he saw that as something biblical, similar to how the 12 disciples of Jesus Christ allocated work amongst themselves. The confidence that the programme manager displayed was due to the fact that he has had many years of experience in

community development work and he did his self-study to make sense of his work using texts from the Bible. From this, it can be seen that the understanding of development work from a biblical perspective is largely left to the interpretation and initiative of each individual staff. While there are resources available like the spiritual resource guide to help staff discern the Christian basis of development work, their access (because the resources are developed at the global level in English and not widely understood by Thai field staff) and extent of use (because these resources are only for voluntary use and there are already many technical aspects to the DPA to pay attention to, hence understanding the spiritual aspect of the development approaches is not on the priority of field staff) are limited.

#### Field level's activities in achieving TD-related goals on child well-being

In achieving the goal of children having the fullness of life as part of TD, one of the development aspirations of World Vision is “Girls and boys experience love of God and their neighbours.” Under this development aspiration, there are four outcomes:

- 1) Children grow in their awareness and experience of God’s love in an environment that recognises their freedom;
- 2) Children enjoy positive relationships with peers, family, and community members;
- 3) Children value and care for others and their environment; and
- 4) Children have hope and vision for the future.

At *Mae Sariang* ADP, the development aspiration is fulfilled through activities like children’s moral and ethics camp and school-based Christmas celebrations. During the children’s camps, child participants (both Buddhists and Christians) are asked to close their eyes and bow their heads in a prayer position before meals to give thanks for the food. The prayers also asked God for protection over the children during the camp. This act of praying led by WVFT staff is carried out to help all child participants appreciate the importance of being thankful for blessings, and in the case of the children’s camp, for the provision of food. In addition, it is aimed at helping Christian

children experience the love of God, by recognising God's involvement in the activities. During the children's camp, participants are grouped to discuss and present their hope for the future.

During the Christmas celebrations, the character of Jesus during his childhood days is talked about as a role model for the child participants, where "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man" (Bible verse from the Book of Luke, chapter 2, verse 52). Through the Christmas celebrations, it is hoped that children can also understand the love of God, where He sends Jesus into the world to care for those in need.

In achieving the goal of children having the fullness of life as part of TD, one of the development aspirations of World Vision is "Girls and boys experience love of God and their neighbours." Due to the sensitive context of presenting a Christian identity, the development aspiration has been adapted by WVFT to mean "Children to have good morals and generosity to others" in Thai (Thai text: "มีคุณธรรมและเอื้ออาทรต่อคนรอบข้าง"), where the reference to God has been removed. As a result, staff of WVFT may not be able to fully appreciate the aspiration to introduce appropriate development activities that can contribute to the spiritual development of children. During the process of drafting the LogFrame for the second phase of development at *Mae Sariang* ADP, the problems brought up by staff which impede the meeting of the child well-being aspiration were all relating to low morality of children and the low social support of their families, schools and communities, without any reference to spiritual state of the children. Furthermore, the ADP team at *Mae Sariang* are focused on correcting so-called bad moral behaviour which relates to the failure of the child to fulfill his/her duties in the family (for example, not helping with the household chores, and disrespect for elders) and school (for example, poor attention in school, and dropping out of school). While such efforts can contribute to values formation of children, it is perhaps a lopsided effort to fully contribute to the child well-being aspiration. The loss of meaning because of translation is a lost opportunity for Christian staff at WVFT to appreciate the spiritual motivation behind this aspiration, and carry out development

programmes that align with the international direction. While there is an initiative at WVFT to align national policies to contribute to the spiritual development of children as a cross-cutting theme to contribute to the child well-being aspiration, it is still at an infancy stage with much consideration needed for its definition and contextualisation.

While there are efforts at the global and regional level to attempt to integrate faith into development work in World Vision, it is perhaps a long process, as can be seen in the case of Thailand where it is a relatively new concept and certain spiritual concepts have been watered down as a result of translation and sensitivity in the Thai context.

#### **4.3 ‘Christian Witness’ of WVFT Staff**

‘Christian Witness’ defines the identity of the organisation and its staff. Myers (2006) adopts the term ‘Christian Witness’, which has an extended meaning from ‘evangelism’ (usually understood to be a loaded word which brings to mind the verbal proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ). ‘Christian Witness’ not only includes the declaration of the gospel by words, but also life and deed. In such a proclamation of Christ through how they lead their lives through love of God, Christian development workers are believed to inevitably provoke the question to which the gospel is the answer and this is with the hope that non-Christians in the community will understand the Christian faith or eventually come to accept Christianity as their personal faith. ‘Christian Witness’ is hence an extension of ‘transformational development’ where through the work of the Christian development practitioner, the poor are restored to reach fullness of life through spiritual transformation. During an interview by Bornstein (2005) with the Director of Sponsorship Ministry and Funding at World Vision United States, the latter discusses World Vision’s understanding of introducing Christianity to the communities and the organisation’s potential to introduce God’s presence through ‘Christian Witness’ –

“We are planting the seed..., but ultimately God is responsible for bringing it up. You see you can bring scripture even into everyday life; that’s the whole

essence of integrated Christian development... Even where you are not necessarily buying a Bible for somebody but ... buying seeds, you are introducing God, and saying how God can be involved in that situation.” (p. 49).

To depict the same concept, Bornstein (2005) coined the term ‘lifestyle evangelism’, where evangelism involves “living a life in the manner of Christ, and providing an example for non-believers” (p. 50), by building relationships with, and loving, the people, through their Christian lifestyle. I would use ‘Christian Witness’ in this thesis for clarity in usage of term and because it is more widely used.

#### The separation of evangelism from development work

In discussing ‘Christian Witness’, it is necessary to consider the tensions that arise when development is associated with evangelism or proselytisation. There is the general sense in the development field that evangelism adulterates development work and should be kept separate. In other words, the spreading of religious opinions should be delinked from humanitarian action (Fountain, 2015 (forthcoming)). This is a result of modernisation which edges out religion from the public sphere into the private sphere, resulting in the secularisation of development work. With the rise of capitalism which emphasises the accumulation of material capital, cultural values correspondingly became secularised, with more focus on the material world and less so on the spiritual realm (Bocock, 1996). Secularisation is hence socially constructed, perpetuated by human imagination and its translation into action (Barnett & Stein, 2012). The evidence of both material and spiritual development as seen the WVFT work in *Mae Sariang ADP* will be discussed further in Chapter 5.2.

Along with capitalism, rationality that came with modern science also resulted in secularisation in many areas of life (Weber, 1970, cited in Bocock, 1996:171). This has impacted the conception of development, which primarily focuses on using science and technology to address the issues of the poor.

In addition, Fountain (2015) also propounds that there is an ‘amnesia’ which demarcates humanitarianism from evangelism, often forgetting that “contemporary Western development is a direct descendent of Christian proselytising impulses, dispositions, practices and organisational forms” (p. 12).

Furthermore, evangelism is seen to be problematic in Thailand because conversion to Christianity threatens statehood which is formed primarily by Buddhism, used a means to unify the nation and perpetuate the Thai identity. Hence, it is important to critically evaluate this separation and not deem evangelism as an essentially religious act, but as a practice with “intentional moral practices of transformative interventions aimed at reworking the social practices of others” (Fountain, 2015:22), similar to development projects which are value-laden and have roots in certain traditions. In this thesis, I consider the separation as perceived by the WVFT field staff when they carry out development projects in *Mae Sariang*.

In a Christian development organisation which places importance on its Christian identity and uses biblical values to transform the communities that they work with, Christian field staff are seen to have a special position in the communities to bring about TD.

However, introducing spiritual elements into development can be a touchy issue in light of modernisation which secularises the interpretation of many dimensions of life, including the understanding of how development should be carried out. This is evident in the work of the *Mae Sariang* ADP team, which seeks to carry out its work in a way that follows closely the methods of contemporary and modernised development practitioners. Furthermore, WVFT works in a context where Christian organisations are perceived to be primarily involved in the conversion of people to Christianity (wherein there is a level of apprehension among communities towards Christians), especially in the hilltribe areas in northern Thailand where there is a long history of missionisation. While World Vision does not take advantage of the vulnerability of the community members to pressure them towards conversion to Christianity (a global policy that came out of WVI’s efforts to clarify its Core Values, Mission Statement and Covenant of

Partnership as discussed in Chapter 3.3), should any of them indicate a desire to do so, staff of World Vision can identify an individual (for example, a Christian from the local church) who can support the community member in his/her decision, taking into account the potential sensitivity in the context. From this policy, it can be seen that World Vision would choose not to be directly involved in the conversion of the intended beneficiaries that they work with, to avoid any potential complications in long-term relationships within the communities.

The separation of the Christian faith from development work is apparent in *Mae Sariang* ADP. Christian beliefs and practices are very much kept within the ADP team and at times, Christians in the communities. The Christian ADP staff who were interviewed mentioned that they are happy and comfortable in the work environment due to the fact that they are able to express their faith freely with their colleagues, for example, by participating in staff devotions, worships and prayers. They were also able to talk about God in the work setting. They were also of opinion that sharing the same faith helped them in carrying out their work, much like brothers and sisters working together.

“Perhaps the topic on faith is kept to the private realm among the staff in the organisation. In the organisation, what matters more is the fulfillment of the technical programming expectations and not so much on how dependent you are on God. This is further supported by what was observed at the training sessions where there were morning devotions and prayers, but during the rest of the day, there were not much references to God.” (Fieldnote during ADP staff training on the DPA redesigning, 29 June 2014, *Mae Sariang*)

While the Christian faith is freely expressed with the ADP team, it can be seen that there is restraint when they work with the intended beneficiaries, due to their understanding that there should somewhat be a separation between their Christian belief and their work with the villagers. One of the field staff understands her work as not preaching about God like a missionary, but to show God in and through her work (for example, by showing love to the people), i.e. to be a ‘Christian Witness’ in the mild sense of the term. She sees the priority to be the development of the people. In the same



way, another field staff sees his role to not evangelise to avoid potential disputes, but to only encourage the spiritual growth of Christians.

During the children camps where children are asked to go into the prayer position, the WVFT field staff was clear to explain that the children are not the ones praying and this is not to convert them. While the act of praying and giving thanks to God by WVFT in public asserts its identity as a Christian organisation and to show the reliance of the field staff on God in their work, it has only been demonstrated in child-oriented activities and not in other community activities like the installation of water tanks and the distribution of school materials due to the presence of adults from other religions which made it inappropriate for prayers to be initiated, as explained by the programme manager of *Mae Sariang* ADP.

This conservative understanding and practice of 'Christian Witness' by the WVFT staff at *Mae Sariang* ADP is quite different from what was observed during a short informal visit to another ADP in Thailand where I witnessed the programme manager being very explicit about her faith to a community health volunteer who is Buddhist – she shared about her miraculous quick recovery of her toe after a bad fall and gave thanks to God for healing her. It was surprising to see her boldness in expressing her faith, without fear of being accused of trying to proselytise. During the visit, she also shared with me on how she contributed to bringing a community member to conversion to Christianity a few years ago. This behaviour of the ADP programme manager is 'Christian Witness' taken to the extreme since she was unconstrained by her professional identity, but instead in her interaction with community members, she is actively involved in the proclamation of Christ not only through words, but also living her natural self as a Christian who passionate to share the gospel.

The characteristic of *Mae Sariang* ADP field staff of making few references to God, especially when relating to community members, supports Berger's (2003) claim of Christian FBDOS, compared to those which are of non-Western origin, which are focused on the inner spiritual advancement of individuals. However, this characteristic

differs across ADPs within WVFT, as exhibited in the case of the other ADP as discussed above.

#### Awareness of WVFT's Christian identity in Karen hilltribe communities

Out of the 18 households which were interviewed, 12 (66.67%) know that WVFT is a Christian organisation, of which 8 only found out through conversations with the WVFT staff (it appears that to know a person's religious belief was a common conversation topic among the Karen hilltribe people and the religious identity of a Karen is seen to be important). Most respondents are not able to tell that the WVFT staff are Christians based on their behaviours. While it was not through 'Christian Witness' that the villagers know about their religious identity, the fact that most of them only meet the WVFT staff for 2 to 5 times a year at *Ban Mae Kanai* (possibly due to the fact that the village is more inaccessible compared to *Ban Pamak*, where the villagers meet the WVFT staff about 12 times a year) do not give them many opportunities to observe the demonstration of Christian values and beliefs through life and deed. Perhaps 'witnessing' can come not only from the lives of the ADP staff, but also through the material items, like school notebooks and water tanks, where the World Vision logo is imprinted. Some villagers commented that there are hints of Christian identity in WVFT – the organisation's Thai name, *Supanimit* (ศุภนิมิต), is Christian sounding; the organisation logo looks like a Christian cross; and the write-up of WVFT in the school notebooks has a Christian slant.

Hence, based on the above, it appears that 'Christian Witness' among the field staff at *Mae Sariang* is minimal and the demonstration of Christian values and beliefs are only kept within the ADP team and towards Christians in the communities. WVFT staff are left to judge how they should demonstrate their faith as staff representatives of the FBDO. Hence, there seems to be a very limited space when it comes to the religious interactions between WVFT staff at *Mae Sariang* and its community members, especially those who are non-Christians. 'Christian Witness' seems to be done

primarily through the material goods that WVFT distributes, instead of through the lives of the Christian field staff themselves.

#### **4.4 Extent of Church Partnership**

“WV (World Vision) especially recognises and affirms the essential role of churches in contributing to the well-being of children within families and communities. This commitment to work with churches is part of WV’s Christian commitment, grounded in the biblical call to serve the poorest and most vulnerable. WV seeks to build on the strengths and initiatives that churches already have and work with them in mutually beneficial collaboration for the sustained well-being of children.” (World Vision International, 2011)

It is clear from the above statement that churches are seen as strategic partners for World Vision to fulfill its development mission. World Vision also recognises that partnership with churches is a core part of its identity, regardless of denominations (including Catholics, despite World Vision’s evangelical Protestant roots), as part of fulfilling the work in the Kingdom of God, by bringing about fullness of life with characteristics of dignity, justice, peace, and hope. As such, churches are seen to be key in bringing about community transformation due to their potential in operationalising the restoration to fullness of life and spiritual development of community members (de Wet, 2013).

While World Vision in the TD and DPA recognise the importance of partnering with as many community groups as possible to build up the empowerment and sustainability of the communities that they work with, special priority is placed on partnering with, and building up the capacity of the local churches to contribute to the transformation of communities where they are in. World Vision sees the high value of church partnerships due to their potential to bring about the development goal of bringing fullness of life to the children, families and communities that the FBDO works with.

In both *Ban Pamak* and *Ban Mae Kanai*, church partnerships with WVFT were almost non-existent. When asked if WVFT can work more closely with the Catholic church in developing the community, the village Catholic leader at *Ban Pamak*

responded to say that WVFT has already agreed to give them money for the refurbishment of their church building. On further probing, he mentioned that perhaps WVFT can directly disburse funds to the villagers when purchasing livestock, and he asked about whether the youths in his church can work for WVFT with a Grade 12 qualification. From this, it can be seen that partnership with WVFT on a deeper and sustainable level is not in the conscious of the local church at *Ban Pamak*.

On the other hand, although the Protestant Baptist church in *Ban Mae Kanai* has no existing relationship with WVFT, the pastor-in-charge appeared ready to be involved in community development, on the premise that WVFT is clear about their goal of working in the village. He highlights that God's presence can enter in the village through many ways, including through WVFT. Implicit in this statement is that of sharing the gospel and in turn, increasing the number of Christian believers in the village.

At this point in time, WVFT at the national level attributes the low level of church engagement to the corresponding low capacity of field staff to do so and there is the aim to increase the capacity of staff to engage local churches in the ADP, which is also part of the strategy of the DPA process. Furthermore, field staff do not have an adequate understanding of TD to appreciate the value of engaging churches in the communities that they work in. While the WVFT national office has earmarked the equipping of field staff to involve churches in the development process and the ADP team has indicated the plan to increase the engagement of churches, it is yet unknown how this would be done, especially in a context where work that is overtly Christian would rather be avoided by the ADP field staff, as discussed in the previous section.

#### **4.5 Faith-Based Organisational Culture of WVFT**

The culture of a faith-based organisation is a reflection of Christian values and beliefs, based on working culture, staff policies, activities that staff do on a regular basis, and the priority that is given for such activities. Furthermore, they can serve to reinforce the Christian identity of the organisation.

To maintain the integrity of the Christian identity and ‘Christian Witness’ in development work, it is an international policy that World Vision offices employ local field staff who are Christians. The rationale of employing local staff is so that the organisation’s workers can relate with World Vision’s intended beneficiaries, in terms of culture, language and communication style, to encourage development from ‘within’ and not present the organisation as Western and foreign. The prerequisite for staff to be Christians is characteristic of FBDOs which mobilise workers who are motivated by their faith and belief that they are doing the work of God (Thaut, 2009). Through interviews with, and observations of, the Christian staff at *Mae Sariang* ADP, it is apparent that they are committed Christians. Of the three Christian ADP field staff whom I interviewed, two of them believe that God has called them to work at WVFT and constantly make references to the influence of God in their work in *Mae Sariang*. Fern, the Development Facilitator of Mae Hoh sub-district, shared that when she was a child, her teacher asked about her ambition and her innocent reply was that she wanted to work with children. Fern remembered her response to her teacher and has since been focused on seeking vocations related to child development. She believed that her child-like response was a calling from God. Similarly, Bom, the Development Facilitator of *Mae Sariang* sub-district, sees the importance of partnering with God in his work, he shared

“I cannot do things by myself, unless God gives me the strength. We need to ask help from God by praying. We not only meet with parents, children and the villagers, or leaders, we also meet with high-ranking people, so this kind of things I cannot do it unless God is there. So I need to pray. God has to give me the knowledge and strength.” (Bom, personal communication, 4 July 2014, *Mae Sariang*)

However, in places where qualified local Christians cannot be hired, exceptions can be made and due processes put in place by WVI have to be followed to allow non-Christians to be employed. This can be seen in the *Mae Sariang* ADP where there is one non-Christian staff, Aom, who is Buddhist due to the fact that Thailand is a predominantly Buddhist country and it is relatively challenging to employ competent

Christian staff in the development field. While it may seemingly be challenging for the Christian identity of WVFT to be maintained due to the presence of non-Christian staff, Ajit Hazra, the South Asia-Pacific Regional Director for Faith and Development at WVI explains the organisation's perspective:

“As a Christian organisation, we have certain values that all staff both Christian and staff of different faiths need to understand and agree with. You don't have to be a Christian, but these are the values and perspectives that each person has to understand because this guides how we work with people ... so in order for anyone to work with us, they also need to appreciate these perspectives. Some of these perspectives are not specifically Christian ... but also inclusive of other faith traditions. Inclusive not in the sense, 'okay, we all have the same common beliefs', ... [and] asking those not of the Christian faith to participate in Christian rituals, but we are asking each staff to understand our Christian motivation and perspective in the work we do, whether you are Christian or not ... Our mission says that we ... follow our Lord Jesus Christ. So when we say we follow, how do we follow? We follow not in terms of going to church, but we follow in terms of how Jesus worked with the people and the Christian perspectives on, such as, giving dignity, advocacy, caring for the poor and working with the communities.” (Personal communication, 19 August 2014, Bangkok)

Hence, in order to overcome the different religious beliefs which can be potentially divisive, World Vision will choose to find common grounds for the purpose of development and serving the poor.

As a Christian FBDO, field staff are individually appraised based on the extent to which they follow the example of Jesus, involving the attributes of love, justice, humility and servant leadership when they engage with community members and partners. At World Vision, being a Christian staff involves “a constant translation between the expectations of the institution, defined according to codified Christian principles that directed the work of the NGO, and the religious expectations of its employees” (Bornstein, 2005:61). As discussed earlier under ‘Christian Witness’, while staff seems to be left to evaluate some parts of the work of WVFT vis-à-vis their own faith; dialectically, they are also evaluated based on their performance. This is exemplified in the case of *Mae Sariang* ADP where the programme manager, Dee, is expected to evaluate his staff based on the values of Jesus – he observes whether they

use what they have learnt in church to share at the Monday morning devotions and whether they display characteristics of responsibility, love, care and unity. With a non-Christian in the team, and it would seemingly be difficult for Aom to be appraised according to the above requirements due to her different religious belief. However, Dee interprets this as a non-issue – Aom is not expected to know the Bible; as long as she shows love and care for others, he sees it as a reflection of God in her life. At the end of it, Dee indicates more importance for the ADP staff members to perform in their work and their ability to meet their work responsibilities, regardless of their religious beliefs.

The *Mae Sariang* ADP staff team gathers for devotions every Monday morning. In the ADP team, staff rotate duties to lead worship and share devotion messages based on Christian values at each devotion session. The Monday morning devotions are sacralised as a religious activities for the staff team as everyone in the team are expected to set aside the time on Monday mornings for God and are not allowed to make work arrangements. The expectation to participate in the morning devotions is regardless of the religious beliefs of the staff and it is seen as essential to bond the team together within a corporate structure. Despite Aom having a different religious belief, Dee does not exclude her from this involvement and sees that everyone in the team has a shared responsibility and to be involved as a corporate body in staff devotions. Aom has to duty to lead staff devotions and although she does not draw direct references from the Bible, she will find positive messages to encourage her colleagues in their work, and she finds this beneficial for the team. It has to be noted that Aom was a former WVFT sponsored child and subsequently a volunteer before becoming a staff member, hence, she is familiar with the organisational culture, even when she has to be involved in religious devotions which is not of her own religious belief. Her colleagues also do not see an issue in having a Buddhist sharing during a Christian-centric devotion. While there appears to be a potential disjuncture between World Vision's expectations of its staff based on Christian values and the religious beliefs of non-Christian staff, which could be divisive to the corporate body, it appears that the only non-Christian staff in *Mae Sariang* ADP has been integrated into Christian environment despite her being the only non-Christian (and non-Karen) in the team. While the act of having morning

devotions is being sacralised, it is done so for the whole ADP team, regardless of religious beliefs. This act of regular devotion meetings is therefore not a fully spiritual Christian act, but one that is made ‘sacred’ within the organisational structure of creating opportunities for staff bonding. In other words, a seemingly religious gathering with reference to the spiritual realm is now being interpreted to serve an organisational purpose – a co-existence of the ‘religious’ and the ‘secular’.

Another characteristic of a Christian organisational culture in the *Mae Sariang* ADP staff team is their commitment to pray, for example, before each work task, as a way to recognise the role of God in their work. This commitment which was shared by the ADP field staff, was also observed by a Christian villager at *Ban Mae Kanai* who is the cook of the local nursery school (and whose children are sponsored by WVFT, Household No. 15) – once when she was in the ADP office to collect the money to purchase the ingredients for the meals, she saw that the staff gathered to pray before going to the villages to carry out their work. As discussed in Chapters 4.2 and 4.3 of prayers by WVFT staff during children activities, such an act of prayer is also being made ‘sacred’ as a way to affirm the team’s affiliation with the larger organisation’s Christian beliefs and identity.

#### **4.6 Christian Funding Sources and their Influence on Development Activities**

There would not be a complete picture without examining the impact of funding sources on the extent of faith-based activities in World Vision’s development programme. Financing of an FBDO has a significant part in determining its character and agenda (Berger, 2003; Thaut, 2009). WVI has been able to maintain its organisational independence through private funding through the child sponsorship programme.

World Vision internationally works on a federated and so-called franchising model which allows them to have more control over the global brand and at the same time allowing local offices to have context-based strategies that maximise their fundraising capacity (Hopgood & Vinjamuri, 2012). The offices in developed countries



use marketing strategies to fundraise for the field offices and decide fund disbursement based on development goals in the programme documents. In some countries, World Vision appears to be more Evangelical Christian, while in others, it is more secular. In Bornstein's (2005) case study of the ADP in World Vision Zimbabwe, the donor office of Hong Kong supported a separate budget for 'Christian witnessing' which funds activities like an annual all-night revival to bring churches of different denominations together. These all-night revivals were unprecedented until the arrival of World Vision in the community – previously, there were misunderstandings among the Christian denominations but such gatherings turned out to be a unifying force within the community. It can be deduced that the Hong Kong donor office has a constant stream of Christian donors in order to sustain such activities which are not easy to account as conventional development projects or activities.

In the case of *Mae Sariang* ADP, World Vision Malaysia is supporting the programme financially. While World Vision's fundraising income on an international level has been remarkable in an increasingly competitive 'market' because of its religious credentials (Hopgood & Vinjamuri, 2012), the religious identity of World Vision in Malaysia do not have a big influence on its fundraising capacity as it is operating in a country with minority Christians and Christians do not form its main source of funding. Based on the interview with the *Mae Sariang* ADP programme manager, there has been no request from World Vision Malaysia to have any faith-based activities due to donor's expectation and this is perhaps the reason why there is also low focus to integrate faith into their development programme processes and to engage churches and/or Christian faith-based groups in the ADP. At the same time, it was observed that WVFT at the national level applies for Christian commitments-related funding from World Vision United States. Hence, it can be seen that even within the same entity in WVFT, to secure funding sources, development programmes are shaped by donor expectations and the faith traditions which WVFT is responding to.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

As put forward by Stoddard (2003), FBDOs, when compared with secular NGOs, are not distinctively different in terms of their operations, but their mission has been influenced by their religious beliefs and values and they seek to integrate these with secular goals (cited in Thaut, 2009: 327). As an FBDO, WVI's mission statement has been shaped by its Christian values, beliefs and identity and in turn, guided the understanding of 'Transformational Development' (TD), 'Christian Witness' and church partnerships at the WVI global level. This has also influenced the work of WVFT where there are aspects of its operations which reflect the organisation's Christian beliefs, values and identity. As identified in this chapter, areas like Development Programme Approach (DPA) and child well-being aspiration of "Girls and boys experience love of God and their neighbours" reflect the ethos of TD which has been informed by the Protestant Christian background that the organisation came from.

While it is natural that WVFT takes on the understandings of these concepts as part of the international partnership, they also have been reproduced in the Thai context. This chapter examined instances where WVI's international policies and guidelines have not been fully reflected in WVFT. For example, as part of following the international standards of the DPA process, WVFT attempts to use the guide developed by the international office in the programme implementation of *Mae Sariang* ADP. However, the spiritual component of God's involvement in the process has been opened to interpretation by field staff. In the same way, the understanding of staff devotions and core capabilities of field staff based on Christian values and beliefs have also been reproduced, due partly to the fact that there is a non-Christian staff in the ADP team. Such activities of staff devotions and prayers have been made 'sacred' as part of the organisational upkeep of Christian values, beliefs and identity of WVFT, instead of them being fully spiritual acts – an evidence of the intermingling and co-existence of the 'religious' and 'secular'.

Furthermore, due to contextualisation of the child well-being aspiration, the reference to God has been removed in the Thai translated text, which in turn shapes the characteristics of child-oriented activities at the field level, with more emphasis on

developing the moral and ethics of the child, with the Asian slant of responsibilities of the child, instead of allowing the child to experience the full spectrum of development, including that of spiritual nurture. This is also due to the challenge of WVFT not being able to display more explicitly its Christian identity, due to the history of Christian missionisation in Thailand which brings with it apprehension towards the Christian faith. There is hence more focus on implementing development programmes in a 'professional' way, guided by rationalism, in light of the secularisation of development work which has been influenced by modernisation.

The sources of funding of WVFT also have an influence the extent of Christian-based development programmes – in the case of *Mae Sariang* ADP, as the programme is largely funded by World Vision Malaysia of which donors are non-Christians, there is less pressure for the ADP to implement projects relating to TD, 'Christian Witness' or church partnerships.

While it can be seen that WVFT has adapted well to the context by being culturally-sensitive in order to maintain its relationships with intended beneficiaries due to the long-term nature of the development programme, this has also resulted in the less-than-ideal demonstration of Christian values and beliefs and has been restrictive for the organisational goals of TD, 'Christian Witness' and church partnership to be met.

## CHAPTER V

### RELIGIONS IN DEVELOPMENT: SPACES OF INTERACTION

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter would examine the spaces of interaction of religious values and beliefs between that of WVFT and the Karen hilltribe community members in *Mae Sariang*, framed by development concepts of sustainability and participation of the people. Through the understanding of these interactions, considerations can be made on whether the Christian values, beliefs and identity of WVFT potentially enhance or impede the FBDO's development projects.

#### 5.2 Sustainability – Material and/or Spiritual Development?

In the first phase (from the year 2010 to 2014) of the programme implementation in *Mae Sariang* ADP, the development goals of WVFT relate to child sponsorship management, economic and income development, education development and health development – with more focus on service provision in terms of meeting material needs like handing out of water tanks, livestock, school materials and improving education infrastructure (for example, the building of a school library at *Ban Pamak* School, Picture 3 in Appendix F). Project activities that relate to spiritual development are only the moral and ethics camps for children in the target areas. Almost all the villagers who were interviewed remember WVFT for the material help that was extended to them. This perception of WVFT as a distributor of material help is also detected in the Catholic leader of *Ban Pamak* (discussed in Chapter 4.4), who talked quite extensively about the involvement of WVFT in church refurbishment and purchase of livestock. An ADP staff also reported that a Buddhist monk in one of the villages in the ADP has also suggested that WVFT financially support a children's playground.

While material hand-outs are distributed with the good intention of granting access to items of basic needs that the villagers did not previously have, it brings the question of whether this would create dependency of the villagers on WVFT if not managed well and allowed to continue in the longer term. Furthermore, the fact that villagers see WVFT as foreign-funded, due partly to its Christian identity, is a potential impediment of bringing about development which is more community-owned.

It cannot be ascertained at this point whether dependency of the villagers would occur. In the case of World Vision South Africa, while the existence of a 'dependency culture' among the communities was in the belief of staff at both national and ADP levels, several academic studies carried out in South Africa have debunked this belief (de Wet, 2013). The concept of the 'dependency culture' is found to be strongly influenced by theories of 'welfare dependency' which argue that the constant provision of social welfare would create reliance among the recipients – an argument which shifts the blame from structural poverty to the perversity of the people (Somers & Block, 2005).

In the case of *Ban Pamak* and *Ban Mae Kanai*, villagers exhibited their abilities to survive without external aid, which indicates that they are less likely to be dependent on WVFT. This survival strategy is where the communities have existing well-established patterns for making sense of their world and staying alive in it (Myers, 2006). In TD's understanding, the community already has a history of their own before World Vision enters and the people have the ability to sustain themselves, if not, they would not be in existence. The heads of both villages discussed their ability to survive, where they are confident that their villages are able to stand on their own without any external assistance, although the intervention of WVFT is appreciated by the villages as it is able to bring relief to their lives.

In a community's survival strategy, there is the part of the world, seen or material, which can be controlled by the community members themselves. On the other hand, the part that is outside the direct control of the community members relates to the spiritual realm of gods, spirits and ancestors; where gods, shrines and sacred places are

assigned to make sense of the unseen influence on their vulnerabilities (Myers, 2006). This is evident during the research fieldwork in the case of *Ban Pamak* where villagers carry on the Karen animist tradition to ‘feed’ the water spirits through a religious ritual before the planting season, to ask for protection of the water source and for good harvest (Pictures 4 to 6, Appendix F). In the case of Christians in *Ban Mae Kanai*, it is common for them to call upon the help of God during small group devotions or church services, to heal any bodily discomforts.

In addition, the fact that there are already very close interactions among the different religious groups through social and religious activities in both villages (especially apparent in *Ban Mae Kanai*) demonstrate strong community support despite the vulnerabilities that they face. This can prove to be advantageous for community cooperation towards development, as opposed to heavy dependence on an external organisation. There is a sense that the community bonds or kinship ties that are already in existence could be due to the shared Karen identity that supersedes the differences in religion. As put forward by Durkheim (1976), this socially shared identity, or ‘collective representations’, provide a structuralist framework for the individual experience and thought, in this case, with regards to the assistance that WVFT Karen staff is extending. Their understanding is not conceived individually, but shared standards which are formed collectively within the community. A mother who is Buddhist (Household No. 1) expressed that it is good that her Karen ‘brothers and sisters’ from WVFT are extending help to her family when they are in need and this is regardless of their differences in religious beliefs. This ethnic bond that is among the Karen is very apparent during the fieldwork, which is perhaps due to the political history that the Karen in northern Thailand has gone through as discussed in Chapter 3.5.

While the community members at the two villages perceive that WVFT is primarily an organisation which distributes material help, ADP programme manager, Dee, sees the need to have both material and spiritual development happening hand-in-hand. However, he recognises that the spiritual development of children (which is primarily the inculcation of ethics and moral values) is an uphill task which does not

happen overnight and effort has to be put in influence the consciousness of the community members. This is reflected in the fieldwork results where only two of the Christian households which were interviewed reported that as a result of encouragement by WVFT field staff, their children are now more motivated to attend church and in turn have developed in terms of moral and spiritual values.

The desire for WVFT to contribute to the spiritual development of their children was expressed by parents in both villages, the local church and school in *Ban Mae Kanai*:

“We want them (WVFT) to help strengthen the beliefs of our children.” (Personal communication with mother of two sponsored children, Catholic family, Household No. 13, 13 July 2014, *Ban Mae Kanai*)

“Of course! I have been waiting for somebody to ask me this question. I hope *Supanimit* can provide a teacher to teach about God and run activities for the children. Someone who is more talented and interesting than me to increase the learning of the children... We are not good enough to teach.” (Sunday School teacher of *Ban Mae Kanai* Church when asked if WVFT should be involved in the spiritual development of the children in the church, personal communication, 13 July 2014, *Ban Mae Kanai*)

Most of these interviewed parents who echoed this desire for WVFT to be involved in spiritual development are Catholics/Christians and one of them is Buddhist. This can be attributed to the fact that WVFT is seen to be a big establishment which ‘knows better’ and has more resources than the smaller faith-based groups in the villages (i.e. churches and temples). On the other hand, a senior teacher at one of the village schools opined that the school already has enough material help from other organisations and would prefer WVFT to be more involved in the development of moral values, whether it is spiritual or not. This hope of the community for the children to be developed in moral and spiritual values has also been captured by the ADP team when an ADP-wide needs assessment was conducted.

While there is the potential for WVFT work with the local church at *Ban Mae Kanai*, there is a hint of dependency in the response above since the Sunday School

teacher is of opinion that external help is preferred over the ability of the local community to be directly involved in developing their children. Hence, strategy to build up the capacity of the local church for child well-being has to be considered.

At this point, it is crucial to note that ‘spiritual development’ as used by the ADP team has been used interchangeably with ‘teaching of morals and ethics’. As discussed in Chapter 4.2, the ADP team has been largely focused on correcting negative moral behaviour of children (for example, disrespect, poor attention in school and teen pregnancy) instead of enhancing children’s experience of the love of God and their relationships with others due to the loss of message through translation. Hence, it can be seen that at the field level, the holistic understanding of children’s spiritual development (based on the four outcomes of the child well-being aspiration) has been watered down. As the ADP team is addressing common moral values and ethics of children regardless of religious beliefs, it is relatively easy for them to broach this topic with parents and their communities. However, in the next phase of the programme implementation the *Mae Sariang* ADP team has the plan to separate the children into the key religious groups of the community, namely, Buddhists and Christians, in order to carry out child development activities which are faith-based and addressing deeper issues involving the spiritual development of children, for example, the *Ra-Wee* (ร่ำวี) Camp, a children’s bible study camp. While such camps involve Christian teachings, non-Christian children are not intentionally excluded and are welcomed to join. The ADP staff do not want to arbitrarily separate the children by their religious beliefs and at the same time, create the impression that they are involved in proselytisation if every child is asked to be involved regardless of religious beliefs. Hence, they would consult with teachers and parents on the feasibility of *Ra-Wee* Camp in each community of *Mae Sariang* ADP.

The *Mae Sariang* ADP staff have also invited Buddhist monks and Christian pastors to preach about morals and ethics in schools, as part of being an organisation which embraces religious diversity in the community, instead of favouring one religion over another. However, while these religious leaders are asked to speak about issues



that impact the moral development of children, it is inevitable that they will broach religious principles and teachings that are out of the scope of child development. While World Vision does not avoid the engagement of these religious leaders and they see their crucial role in contributing to the spiritual nurture of children, what World Vision can do is to try “minimise the controversies” (Ajit Hazra, WVI South Asia-Pacific Regional Director for Faith and Development, personal communication, 19 August 2014, Bangkok), by directing the faith leaders to focus on addressing child-related issues (for example, child protection or child rights):

“... if we concentrate on the [development] issue, I don’t think it’s usually a problem. There would definitely be some overlap between religious teachings and moral values, because we are a religious culture. But in general, it’s not an issue because we can sit in the temple and discuss development together. ... The more we are comfortable going into the temple to meet the priest and the monk and have a chat, the more he can accept us and we can accept him ..., and he will understand, these are the things that we don’t do.” (Ajit Hazra, WVI South Asia-Pacific Regional Director for Faith and Development, personal communication, 19 August 2014, Bangkok)

World Vision also sees the importance of building relationships with these community faith leaders as partners for development on a long-term basis, even after World Vision leaves the community. Indeed, relationship-building at the community level is a long process and requires the openness of both World Vision and the faith leaders to be willing to understand each other’s religious beliefs and values, and build trust to contribute to the common goal of child well-being and community development.

### **5.3 Participation of Communities**

The participation of communities in *Mae Sariang* ADP is closely linked to what has been discussed earlier. While WVFT strives to include the participation of children in development activities that promote moral values and ethics, it is inevitable that there is exclusion due to differences in religious beliefs amongst children, depending on whether the activities carry Christian messages which seem to favour one religion over another.

Similar to de Wet's (2013) finding at Umlambo ADP, the means through which transformation takes place at *Mae Sariang* ADP is seen within a secular framework. Prior to introducing a development intervention, extensive needs assessments are carried out within the ADP to find out the needs of the community members and their level of readiness to participate in the development process. At the same time, the design, monitoring and evaluation (DME) approach that is taken by WVFT seeks to incorporate the participation of community partners. This perspective by development workers differs from that held by the World Vision staff at Zimbabwe, who used the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tool by introducing the element of 'divine intervention' – a vocabulary which was commonly associated with the discourse of common participation. 'Divine intervention' in the Zimbabwean context alluded to the need to pray to ask God to motivate the people to be involved in the participation process to solve their own problems. This is also an opportunity for 'Christian Witness' where staff demonstrate their reliance on God and show the ability of God to bring about change – "... Christianity itself might inspire the community members to realise that since you have tried all possible options perhaps if we also try this one it might help" (Bornstein, 2005: 126).

Based on the two villages at *Mae Sariang* ADP, the level of community participation is between 'nominal' and 'instrumental' based on White's (1996) interests of participation. Due to the child sponsorship programme which most children in the village are part of, children and their families are inevitably participating in a nominal manner in the process where WVFT carries out assessments to understand the needs of the children and their communities. When community-owned items like water systems are distributed to the villages, community members will participate in an instrumental way where they would have to contribute their labour by installing the water pipes and purchasing the other accessories required for the installation. In addition, the villagers are responsible for the maintenance of the water systems by setting up a village committee which collects fees from the community to upkeep the water system. This is seen to be effective by the development organisation as a form of granting ownership to the community in a long-term manner since the organisation would only be working in the community for a limited period of time. The participation of the community with

their labour is after the assessment of development workers. Although the development is conceived to be coming from within, it was supported and financed from without. This whole process of participation is wholly perceived in a secular manner at *Mae Sariang* ADP.

An assumption for the participation of community members is that they are ready to be engaged and in turn, participating (Bornstein, 2005). The readiness of community members and groups in *Mae Sariang* ADP to be engaged is understood by the ADP team to be key for community participation – there is a need to assess the level of readiness of the community members and groups. For the very poor, they would have to be provided with basic material help first before they can progress on to be ‘trained’ in being more involved in community development. Even for faith-based groups, the ADP team observes their low readiness and sees the need to influence their consciousness to participate in the community’s development, through the DPA redesigning process by piloting the formation of church-based youth groups in each sub-district.

In the case of Buddhist temples at both villages, other than the temple buildings being used as a community gathering space by WVFT, the monks’ participation in development work is low. In the first place, their knowledge about WVFT’s presence in the villages is remote. There is an added difficulty of working with the Buddhist monks as representatives and leaders of the FBOs as their perception of social development is only through giving spiritual advice and comfort to the villagers; the villagers should be the ones extending material help to the temples instead (for example, giving money and food offerings). One of the monks attributed this to Buddhist teachings where monks do not help the people and instead, the people should be helping the monks as the latter are not allowed to have any material possessions. He made the comparison with Christianity which he believes is a religion where followers have more money. This is perhaps due to the perception that Christianity is a foreign and western, and hence richer. This matches Max Weber’s argument on the Protestant Ethics that wealth is not necessarily ethically bad as long as it is not used in a sinful manner (Weber, 1930). The Buddhist monk also suggested that WVFT as an organisation with funds,

can also help in the construction of temple buildings, which would be controversial for a Christian organisation to support the infrastructure of another religion (it is also a policy of WVI to not provide resources with the intention of promoting other world religions). A potential complication that would have to be addressed would be that in *Ban Mae Kanai*, the village head is of the opinion that the Buddhist monk is ready to be engaged by WVFT, although my personal interactions with the Buddhist monk during the fieldwork proved to be otherwise.

This disinterest among the Buddhist monks to be involved with worldly materials and development issues, is starkly different from how Buddhism in Thailand is traditionally involved in social development. Contrasting the situation at *Mae Sariang* ADP with two other ADPs which I visited as part of World Vision's Christ-centred Commitments regional learning visit, the Buddhist monks in the two villages were considered good case studies for World Vision as they were very forthcoming to be engaged and took up active roles to be involved in community activities that contribute to the well-being of elderly in the villages. Although these activities are not directly contributing to the well-being of children which is the focus of World Vision, they create a platform in which further engagement of faith-based groups can be carried out. Hence, as can be seen in the case of *Mae Sariang* ADP, it is uncertain as to how the Buddhist temples at the two villages can be participating to contribute to development.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has analysed the interaction of Christian values, beliefs and identity of WVFT in relation to that of religions that are in present in the *Mae Sariang* ADP. Using the concepts of sustainability and participation to frame this discussion, there is the analysis of whether this interaction will enhance or impede the development programme.

With the first phase of the development programme at *Mae Sariang* ADP, there is more focus on the handing out of material help to the intended beneficiaries at both

*Ban Pamak* and *Ban Mae Kanai*. This brings the question of whether this will create dependency of the community members on WVFT and affect the ability of the community to sustain itself after WVFT phases out from the programme. However, there are evidences (for example, the survival strategy and close kinship ties of the villagers) that indicate that they have the potential to bring about enhanced development within their communities.

There is also the hope by both WVFT and community members and groups for the spiritual development of children to be introduced. In the planning for the second phase of development at the ADP, there are proposals to introduce faith-based activities like bible study camps for children, and to increase the participation of faith-based groups, to bring about the sustained development of the community. However, with the current low participation of the faith-based groups due largely to their lack of awareness of their potential to contribute towards development issues in the community, much will have to be done to enhance their participation in community development.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 Conclusion of Research

Using World Vision Foundation of Thailand (WVFT) as a case study, this thesis has sought to analyse how Christian values, beliefs and identity from the international level of World Vision has shaped the understanding of WVFT's mission and development programme, in particular, its work in the hilltribe communities of *Mae Sariang*, Thailand (refer to Figure 7 for overview of research findings). The interaction of Christian values, beliefs and identity of WVFT with the religions of the Karen hilltribe people in development practice is also examined. Focusing on the areas of community participation and sustainability, this research has sought to examine the extent to which the interaction of religious values and beliefs between that of WVFT and the community members enhance or impede development.

World Vision International's (WVI) faith-based organisational concepts of 'transformational development' (TD) and 'Christian Witness' which are part of the mission statement, have been shaped by its founding history and Protestant Evangelicalism in the West. While there are instances where the development programme of WVFT reflects Christian values, beliefs and identity, they are also reproduced as a response to the context which focuses more on modernistic development techniques, instead of the role of the spiritual realm. For instance, spiritual aspects of the Development Programme Approach (DPA) and staff appraisal have been left to the interpretation of the field staff, even when the International Office has developed a spiritual guide to help staff go through the process of recognising God's role while the technical stages are being fulfilled. Furthermore, the Buddhist and Asian values that are prevalent in Thailand have steered the development approach towards a focus on education, moral values and ethics which can be seen in the case of the child well-being aspiration which is intended to bring about the spiritual nurture of children through their experience of God, but when translated into Thai to suit the context, the

Christian value is replaced with a focus on the roles and responsibilities of children in relation to their family, peers and teachers. There is hence little priority placed on involving community groups, including faith-based groups like churches, to achieve the spiritual development of children. At the same time, ‘Christian Witness’ which is part of the organisational mission has been re-interpreted to a mellowed form down due to the Buddhist backdrop and history of evangelism in the nation – a culturally-sensitive move in order to achieve conventional development goals (which is after all the priority of a development organisation), but at the same time, a shortfall in terms of how WVI defines its mission and desired outcomes in relation to its intended beneficiaries.

The organisational culture has been shaped by the international guidance of prioritising the employment of Christian staff and having regular devotions at work. However, an exception has been made in hiring a Buddhist staff at *Mae Sariang* ADP, who has been integrated into the Christian environment, due to the fact that devotions are seen to be more for the purpose of team bonding, instead of reinforcing the staff’s Christian values and beliefs. In the same way, while part of the staff appraisal is supposed to be based on the commitment of the staff to Christ, this has been re-interpreted by the programme manager of *Mae Sariang* ADP for the non-Christian staff, in a way that is secularised, based on work effectiveness.

While the material help that is extended by WVFT is very apparent in *Mae Sariang* and appear to be an indication of dependency of the recipients on handouts, the fact that the communities already have their own survival strategy (through community ties and the communities’ reliance on the spiritual realm to address their vulnerabilities) before WVFT’s intervention may serve as an opportunity for sustained development to be achieved. Moreover, the communities have expressed the desire for more to be done in terms of the spiritual development of their children, which is also reflected in the plan of the ADP team as part of the redesigning process.

The participation of community members in *Mae Sariang* ADP is seen in a secular framework and currently at a nominal level, with faith-based groups having minimal involvement in community activities that are geared towards development.

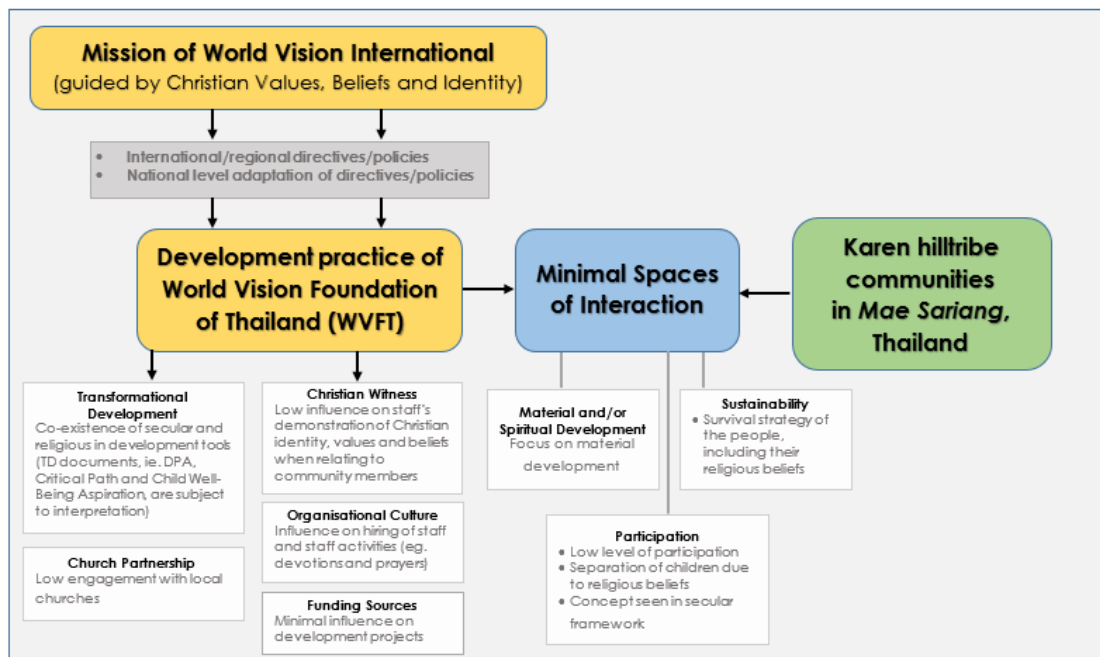
This non-religious perspective of community participation is similar to de Wet's (2013) study on World Vision South Africa, but is in contrast with Bornstein's (2001a, 2001b and 2005) studies on World Vision Zimbabwe, where participation was a religious act, from the use of the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tool among staff to the reinforcement of relying on the spiritual realm when involving community members in the participation process. As the second phase of the programme implementation at *Mae Sariang* ADP delves deeper into spiritual development of children and facilitating the participation of faith-based groups in the villages, it has to be treated with caution that there is the existence of varying religious beliefs and development proposals to separate children into religious activities may be potentially divisive, although it is found in this research that the different religious groups of the Karen hilltribe communities in *Mae Sariang* have close interactions due to their shared cultural identity and history. In general, while it is important to involve faith-based groups in the communities (in the spirit of contributing to development of the community and recognising that faith leaders have a strong influence upon the people), there needs to be sensitivity in managing different faith-based groups in the communities, especially when segregation to involve different faiths are considered.

Thus far, the interaction of WVFT's Christian values and beliefs with the Karen hilltribe communities has been minimal and has little contribution to community participation and sustainability. This is in contrast with the dynamic space of religious interaction between World Vision Zimbabwe and the local communities, where the Christian field staff had to deal with the local practice of witchcraft which was seen to be interfering with the progress of economic development interventions. At the same time, the faith-based nature of World Vision allowed the Zimbabwean staff to broach development issues at a spiritual level as they were able to identify with the worldviews of the people. It can be seen from the studies carried out in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Thailand that the experiences of each World Vision national office differ according to the context it operates in, whether or not it is predominantly Christian and the interpretation by the organisation's staff when carrying out their work and when interacting with the poor.



In conclusion, due to reasons like the translation of Christian development concepts from the Western to Asian context and interpretations of development by field workers, it can be seen that the operationalisation of WVI's faith-based components in the Thai context has reproduced variations of the international expectations, with the co-existence of the 'secular' and 'religious' in development practice. While WVFT is explicitly an FBDO, its modus operandi in relation to community members is not distinctively different from secular organisations, but at the same time, references to their religious values, beliefs and identity are still evident in the organisation. The Christian values and beliefs of the WVI have played a greater role on the staff members of WVFT as compared to the communities that it works with. Although it is commendable that the FBDO takes a holistic approach in looking beyond the material well-being of its intended beneficiaries to address their spiritual development based on the principles of 'transformational development', the extent that it is demonstrated on the field level is still limited in the context of Thailand. Christian values and beliefs at World Vision have stretched to the national level in the Thailand office but they are further minimised at the field level when interfaced with the local communities, with little contribution to community participation and sustainability. However, as the *Mae Sariang* ADP undergoes redesigning to increase the capacity of field staff to work with faith-based groups, the interaction of both Christians and local religious values and beliefs may increase to bring about community participation and sustainability for the fulfilment of development goals.

Figure 7: Overview of research findings



## 6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

### 1) Continue study in the next stage of programme life cycle

It was discussed in this thesis that the current development programme in *Mae Sariang* ADP is focused primarily on meeting the material needs of the communities, with limited focus on social and spiritual development. Since the five-year old ADP is moving into the second phase through the DPA redesigning process, there is predictably a shift in focus to community engagement and increased partnership with FBOs. Hence, it would be meaningful for another study to be carried out to examine the changes in direction for faith-based development towards the end of the programme life cycle.

### 2) Carry out studies on other ADPs

While this research has contributed a case study based on an ADP of WVFT, more of such case studies should be carried out on other ADPs of WVFT, so that there is more evidence to validate or refute the findings in this thesis. In addition, since it is observed that there is a dearth of knowledge on FBDOs in Thailand and Southeast Asia, more studies can be carried out to contribute to increased understanding about faith-

based development in this region, especially with the backdrop of Buddhism which guides many of the values and beliefs of the poor, and influences conceptions about development.

**3) Conduct studies on secular agencies' impact on spiritual development**

Also, since this study has presumed that only FBDOs are concerned with spiritual development, it would be interesting for a study on how non-FBDOs are already contributing, or can contribute, to the spiritual well-being of their intended beneficiaries.



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**APPENDIX**

The logo of Chulalongkorn University, featuring a central emblem with a sunburst and a tiered base, set within a circular frame.

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

## Appendix A – WVI Policy on ‘Transformational Development’

Approved by the WVI Board  
18 September 2002

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### BOARD POLICY

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#### TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

##### Preamble

Transformational development is one of the ministries in the World Vision Mission Statement and therefore is a required core competency of World Vision. World Vision intends its transformational development to be fulfilled in an integrated and holistic way in relation to the other ministries in the Mission Statement. Transformational development programs and processes are carried out in a way that is consistent with World Vision Core Values.

##### Definition and Approach

1. *Call for humility:* World Vision engages in transformational development programs accepting that transformation is a continuous process of holistic change brought about by God. People need to be free to discover God’s work among them for themselves.
2. *Definition:* Transformational development is a process and actions through which children, families and communities move toward wholeness of life with dignity, justice, peace and hope, as the Bible describes the Kingdom of God.
3. *Approach:* World Vision’s approach to transformational development is Christ-centered, child-focused, community-based, value-based, sustainable and holistic.

##### Principles

4. *Community ownership:* Because transformational development is the responsibility of the people themselves, actions are taken that empower the community and all of its members to envision, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate the program in an interdependent relationship with World Vision, local governments, businesses, churches and other NGOs. World Vision provides technical support, funding and technical oversight.
5. *Sustainability:* Transformational development programs are designed with the expectation that the changes are sustainable economically, environmentally, socially, psychologically and spiritually.
6. *Holism:* Transformational development programs reflect an integrated physical-spiritual understanding of human beings; the world they live in and the way people develop.
7. *Mutual transformation:* World Visions involvement in transformational development seeks the continuing transformation of all partners, including World Vision staff, boards, donors as well as communities, churches, NGOs, businesses and governments.

## Impact

8. *Well being of children.* The well-being of children is most enhanced by healthy family life. Transformational development programs employ processes, actions and sectoral interventions that enhance the capacities of families and communities to a) ensure the survival and growth of girls and boys, b) enhance access to health and basic education, c) provide opportunities for spiritual and emotional nurture, d) develop sustainable household livelihood and enhance the capacity of children to earn a future livelihood, and e) protect girls and boys from abuse and exploitation.
9. *Empowered children* Transformational development programs employ processes and actions that enable girls and boys to participate in the development process as agents of transformation in age- and culturally appropriate ways.
10. *Transformed relationships:* Transformational development programs employ processes and actions that 1) invite a restored relationship with God, 2) promote both just and peaceful relationships within individuals and families and among households, communities and social systems, and 3) encourage a responsible relationship with the environment.
11. *Interdependent communities:* Transformational development programs employ processes and take actions that mobilize people, communities, and churches to influence and shape their surroundings by forming coalitions and strategic alliances at local, national and international levels for mutual cooperation and action for change.
12. *Transformed systems and structures:* Transformational development programs intentionally address policy, systemic and structural constraints on development by promoting change in systems and structures in accordance with the Ministry Policy on Promotion of Justice.
13. *Transformed donors:* World Vision's relationship with donors and sponsors results over time in changes in values, giving patterns and lifestyles that are consistent with Christ's concern for the poor as well as an enhanced relationship with God.

## Transformational development programming

14. *Design, monitoring and evaluation:* The partnership program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation framework is used to plan and manage transformational development programs. Appropriate impact measures are established and measured to help the community and World Vision assess program effectiveness. Reports are made on the partnership transformational development indicators every three years.
15. *Witness to Jesus Christ:* Transformational development employs processes and actions that integrate intentional Christian witness without proselytism. This witness is consistent with the requirements of the Ministry Policy on Witness to Jesus Christ.
16. *Churches:* Transformational development programming builds inclusive ministry partnerships with local churches that meet the requirements of the Ministry Policy on Strategic Initiatives.
17. *Technical interventions:* Transformational development programs include appropriate sectoral interventions, such as education, health, agriculture, and others. These interventions are

planned and implemented to build local capacity and accountability. Technical interventions meet internationally accepted sector-specific standards and guidelines.

18. *Sponsored children*: Transformational development programs using sponsorship-funding impact sponsored children and their families in identifiable ways, in accordance with the World Vision Sponsorship Policy.
19. *Child Protection*: Transformational development programs employ processes and actions that equip families and the community to identify and respond to the needs of vulnerable girls and boys in a manner that is in the best interest of the child. Transformational development programs meet the requirements of World Vision's Child Protection policies and guidelines.
20. *Gender and Family*: Transformational development programs intentionally reveal the social situation and potential of women and girls as well as men and boys, and strengthen families and communities to empower girls and women as well as boys and men for participation, equal access and equal opportunity, consistent with the policy on Gender and Development.
21. *Resilience to crises*: Transformational development programs aim for peace and reconciliation and employ processes and actions that reduce risks and enhance capacities of families and communities to cope, mitigate and respond to disasters, conflicts and HIV/AIDS. Emergency responses meet the requirements of the Ministry Policy on Emergency Relief.
22. *Economic development*. Transformational development programs address the economic underpinnings of poverty by enabling sustainable access to financial services, markets, technology, information and know-how in ways that increase the economic security and resilience of the whole community.
23. *Rights and responsibilities*: Transformational development programs increase awareness of human rights and international conventions and promote just practices for all, regardless of gender, ethnicity, caste, disability, religion or age.
24. *Marketing*: The marketing strategies and messages about transformational development programs are consistent with the principles and practices contained in this policy, and are consistent with the Ministry Policy on Public Awareness.
25. *Integrated resourcing*: Integrated use of child sponsorship, major donor gifts, government grants, food, monetized food and GIK is essential to providing the resources necessary to fully deliver on our vision of transformational development.
26. *Accountability*: Resources invested in transformational development match the purposes for which they were given. Regular reports on impact and use of resources are made. Customer service for sponsors meets requirements of Customer Service Handbook.
27. *Building capacity*: The quality of transformational development programs, including our Christian witness, depends on the lives of our staff and their relationships with one another and with the poor. Regular investment is made to enhance the commitment, character, competence, critical thinking and care of staff teams. This is equally true for community leadership with whom we work.

## Appendix B – List of Key Informants

### List of interviewed World Vision staff

S/No.	Pseudonym	Role in World Vision	World Vision Office	Years of Service at World Vision	Religion	Age	Gender	Additional notes
1	Dee	Programme Manager	<i>Mae Sariang</i> ADP Office	8	Catholic	32	M	4+ years at another ADP as economic development specialist and got promoted to work at <i>Mae Sariang</i> ADP as programme manager
2	Bom	Development Facilitator for <i>Mae Sariang</i> sub-district, former in-charge for Education Development project	<i>Mae Sariang</i> ADP Office	5	Christian	NA	M	Since <i>Mae Sariang</i> ADP started
3	Fern	Development Facilitator for Mae Hoh sub-district, former in-charge for Education Development project	<i>Mae Sariang</i> ADP Office	5	Christian	31	F	Since <i>Mae Sariang</i> ADP started
4	Aom	Sponsorship Service Operation (SSO) Officer	<i>Mae Sariang</i> ADP Office	10	Buddhist	NA	F	Former sponsored child under WVFT; Only non-Christian and non-Karen in the ADP team
5	Ajit Hazra	Faith and Development Director of South Asia-Pacific region	World Vision International	NA	Christian	NA	M	

### List of key informants in villages

S/No.	Village name	Role in village	Religion	Age	Gender	Additional notes
1	<i>Ban Pamak</i>	Village Head	Buddhist/Animist	Almost 60	M	
2		Headmaster	Christian	-	M	
3		School Teacher	Buddhist	-	M	
4		School Teacher	Christian	27	F	
5		Catholic Leader	Catholic	73	M	
6		Buddhist Monk	Buddhist	-	M	
7		Buddhist Monk	Buddhist	-	M	
8	<i>Ban Mae Kanai</i>	Village Head	Catholic	50	M	
9		Headmaster	Buddhist	40s	M	
10		School Teacher	Buddhist	Early 30s	F	
11		School Teacher	Catholic	Mid-20s	F	Only non-Buddhist in the teaching staff
12		Pastor in Protestant Church	Christian	22	M	From a Buddhist family
13		Buddhist Monk	Buddhist	60	M	

## Appendix C – Interview Guide

### Questions for Ajit Hazra, Faith and Development Regional Director, South Asia and Pacific Region, World Vision International

- World Vision is a large organisation working in varying contexts – How is contextualisation carried out, while ensuring that the Christian identity and values are kept? Are some Christian values being compromised in the process and how is that managed?
- How do World Vision manage and ensure that the organisational mission is achieved with non-Christian staff in the team?
- At WVFT, the third child well-being aspiration of children experiencing the love of God and their neighbours, when translated into Thai, means "children to have good morals and generosity to others", where the word 'God' and reference to spiritual nurture of children are absent due to contextualisation and sensitivity of bringing out the Christian identity. How then can the goal of spiritual development can be brought across, especially to the Thai staff who are implementing the development programmes and what is the recommendation of the regional office?

### Questions for ADP Programme Manager

- How is the current redesigning different from what was done in the past five years?
- It seems like the current focus is on providing material services (eg. water tanks, animals and school materials), is this an intentional priority? What is the focus in the next phase?
- Now that the LogFrame is being developed, how would the FBOs be further engaged?
- How do you know about God's involvement in each step of the Critical Path?
- Are you aware of the child well-being (CWB) aspirations in English (experience love of God and neighbours)? How are the CWB aspirations interpreted? Since the Thai version takes out the word 'God'.
- Buddhist monk to teach Buddhist values, and pastor to teach Christian values – is it happening now? If yes, how is that managed?
- Do you think that the Buddhist/Animists beliefs interfere with how you do development in the village? (another way of asking – are there any challenges when working with Buddhist/Animists?)
- Other than prayer and devotions, what other Christian-related things are put in place in the ADP team?
- How is evaluation of staff performance review done? Programme Effectiveness Self-Review 8.2: Programme team follows Jesus' example of love, justice, humility and servant leadership in their engagement with community members and partners (how can this be evaluated with non-Christian staff?)
- Do you think God has called you into the organisation?
- Do the villagers ask them why they are helping them?

### Field programme staff of WVFT, Mae Sariang ADP

- What do you think makes World Vision's work Christian?
- What do you think is your role as a (Christian) staff in World Vision?

- Are there times when you think you need to pray about something related to your work?
- How have relationships of World Vision been with the religious and church leaders?
- Have there been instances when community members propose a project activity which is different from your understanding of the mission statement/beliefs of World Vision and/or your own beliefs? If yes, how do you manage that?
- What do you think about evangelism?
- Are there any 'spiritual' incidents/challenges in the community? Good or bad?

**Non-Christian ADP staff of WVFT, Mae Sariang ADP (Sponsorship Service in Operations Officer, CS)**

- How long have you been with World Vision?
- How did you come to join World Vision?
- Why did you decide to join World Vision?
- Did you know that World Vision is a Christian organisation when you applied for the job?
- Can you identify with the (Christian) values of World Vision?
- What do you think makes World Vision's work Christian?
- How do you feel about being the only non-Christian in the ADP team? (Any times when you felt uncomfortable about Christian beliefs and practices?)
- What is your religion?
- What do you think about working in a community which has more Christians than a typical community in Thailand?
- Have you interacted with the churches, temples in the ADP? How were the experiences?
- Have there been instances when community members propose a project activity which is different from your understanding of the mission statement/beliefs of World Vision and/or your own beliefs? If yes, how do you manage that?
- Do you think the children have develop moral values over time?
- Are there any 'spiritual' incidents/challenges in the community? Good or bad?

**Community members (ie. teachers or community volunteers) involved with development projects**

- Who was the one who initiated this project? The community group or World Vision?
- Do you want development in your family and community?
- What do you think is the role of World Vision in the community?
- How do you think the community has benefitted from this project?
- How do you think the lives of children/villagers have changed after World Vision started its work in the community? If yes, in which areas?
- Do you think the project is able to help the children/villagers spiritually/learn some values? If yes, in which areas?



### **Intended beneficiaries and their families**

- (find out religious beliefs of children and families, the type of development-related religious activities that they are involved in)
- How was life before World Vision started working in your village?
- How has life changed after World Vision started working in your village?
- Do you want development in your family and community?
- What do you think is the role of World Vision in the community?
- Are the Christian values and beliefs that were communicated by the staff easy to understand?
- Do you see these values and beliefs in the community project/activities/events? If yes, where and when?

### **Key religious leaders**

(for example, Buddhist monk)

- How do you think the lives of children/villagers have changed after World Vision started its work in the community? If yes, in which areas?
- What do you think is the role of World Vision in the community?
- Have there been instances when you felt that World Vision is proposing something that is against your beliefs? If yes, how did you manage the differences?
- Has your perception of the church changed after World Vision started its work in the community?

### **Church leaders**

- What is the relationship of your church with World Vision? How do you think it should be?
- How do you think World Vision has helped you in your work as a church? Or has it challenged you?
- How has World Vision changed your perception on your role as a church in the community?

### **Politically-important people**

(for example, village head and community leaders)

- How do you think the lives of children/villagers have changed after World Vision started its work in the community? If yes, in which areas?
- Has your perception of the church changed after World Vision started its work in the community?
- Do you want development in village?
- What do you think is the role of World Vision in the community?

### **Other questions:**

- Why do you think there are more Christians among Karens?
- What are the religious beliefs in the Karen village?

## Appendix D – List of Interviewed Households

Household No.	Village name	No. of children in household	No. of registered children under WVFT	Religion	Age	Gender	Additional notes
1	<i>Ban Pamak</i>	2	1	Buddhist	15	M	
2		3	1	Buddhist	13	F	
3		2	1	Buddhist	12	F	
4		3	3	Catholic	10	F	Triplets
5		3	1	Christian	17	M	
6		5	NIL	Buddhist	18	M	
7		2	NIL	Buddhist	18	M	
8		2	NIL	Catholic	8	F	
9		2	NIL	Christian	15	M	
10	<i>Ban Mae Kanai</i>	6	2	Buddhist	12, unknown	F, M	
11		2	2	Buddhist	13, 17	F, M	
12		5	3	Catholic	7, 13, 15	All F	
13		2	2	Catholic	6, 9	F, M	
14		3	3	Christian	10, 12, 14	F, M, F	
15		2	NIL	Christian	9, 12	Both M	
16		1	NIL	Buddhist	2	M	
17		2	NIL	Catholic	4	M	
18	2	NIL	Christian	12	F		

## Appendix E – World Vision’s Child Well-Being Aspirations and Outcomes



### Child Well-being Aspirations and Outcomes

World Vision focuses on improving children’s well-being through child-focused transformational development, disaster management, and promotion of justice. The Child Well-being Aspirations and Outcomes provide a practical definition of World Vision’s understanding of well-being for children.

Our goal is “the sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable.” World Vision views the well-being of children in holistic terms: healthy individual development (involving physical and mental health, social and spiritual dimensions), positive relationships and a context that provides safety, social justice, and participation in civil society.

The Child Well-being Aspirations and Outcomes are intended as a catalyst for dialogue, discussion and visioning as World Vision partners with children, parents, community partners, churches, governments and other organisations. World Vision does not proselytise nor do we impose our understanding on others. These aspirations and outcomes reinforce each other and enable an integrated, holistic approach to ministry. While our active contribution to specific outcomes varies from context to context, our definition of “well-being” remains holistic.

Goal	Sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable			
Aspirations	Girls & Boys:			
	Enjoy good health	Are educated for life	Experience love of God and their neighbours	Are cared for, protected and participating
Outcomes	Children are well nourished	Children read, write, and use numeracy skills	Children grow in their awareness and experience of God’s love in an environment that recognises their freedom	Children cared for in a loving, safe, family and community environment with safe places to play
	Children protected from infection, disease, and injury	Children make good judgments, can protect themselves, manage emotions, and communicate ideas	Children enjoy positive relationships with peers, family, and community members	Parents or caregivers provide well for their children
	Children and their caregivers access essential health services	Adolescents ready for economic opportunity	Children value and care for others and their environment	Children celebrated and registered at birth
		Children access and complete basic education	Children have hope and vision for the future	Children are respected participants in decisions that affect their lives
Foundational Principles	Children are citizens and their rights and dignity are upheld (including girls and boys of all religions and ethnicities, any HIV status, and those with disabilities)			

*World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. Motivated by our Christian faith, World Vision is dedicated to working with the world’s most vulnerable people. World Vision serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.*

**Appendix F – Photographs from Fieldwork**

Picture 1: Buddhist temple in *Ban Mae Kanai*



Picture 2: Protestant Baptist Church in *Ban Mae Kanai*



Picture 3: School library funded by a private company, a partner of WVFT, at *Ban Pamak* School. The logos of the company and WVFT are both prominently displayed on a sign in front of the library





Picture 4: The wife of the village head at *Ban Pamak* cooking the animal sacrifice from the Animist ritual for community sharing



Picture 5: Praying to the water spirit for its protection before the community partakes of the cooked animal sacrifices



Picture 6: Community members preparing the animal sacrifice for cooking



## VITA

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