Having faith in development work?
A case study about the role of Christian faith in the development work of a church in India
Acknowledgements

This thesis was made possible through a Minor Field Study-scholarship offered by Sida. Thanks to the scholarship I was given the opportunity to spend eight weeks in India to collect data for my study.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Julia Grosse, whose encouragement and guidance has been very valuable. Also the support and feedback from family and friends have been priceless.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the church I visited in India, for inviting and accommodating me. A special thanks goes to the staff and members of the self-help groups. I have learnt a lot and hope to share some of it in this thesis.
Abstract

The aim of this study is to enhance the knowledge about the role of Christian faith in the development work of a church in a religious pluralistic community in India. To attain this I chose to study a Christian church in India and especially its work to empower women based on self-help groups. The methods I used included participant observation, interviews and document studies to explore expressions of Christian faith and how it influences the development work. The background in the thesis presents the religious pluralistic society of India and the churches as an significant actor in international development work. Previous research stresses the influence of faith and exemplifies how it can play a role when mobilizing and motivating staff as well as when identifying beneficiaries. The results of the study illustrate how Christian faith plays a role in motivating and inspiring staff and to some extent when identifying beneficiaries, since expressions of faith promote a high and equal human value. There is however a religious pluralism within the development work as also other faiths are expressed among the staff and by members of the self-help groups. When working in communities of other faiths the church initially can encounter suspicions that the development work aims to convert people. One way in which the church encounters this is by separating its development work from the evangelical work and express the faith in actions rather than in words. The thesis finishes by discussing the results and different aspect of having faith in development work.

KEYWORDS: Church, Development work, Faith-based organisation, religious pluralism, India
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Introduction

In newspapers and other media I often come across stories that illustrate a world full of poverty and social vulnerability. I have seen many examples of this when travelling abroad which has caused frustration but also an increased interest in international social work, often referred to as development work. As a Christian I recognize that churches should be involved in these issues and since Christian faith plays a fundamental role in the life of a church I ask myself what role it plays in its development work. Everywhere the church encounters people of different faiths. India with its many religions seemed to be an ideal place to study the development work in a religious pluralistic context so I went there and visited a church for almost two months. The aim of my study is to enhance the knowledge about the role of Christian faith in the development work of a church in a religious pluralistic community.

Background

The context of India

The United Nations Development Program describes the situation in India in a country report addressing the development issues in the country. Although India has experienced an exceptional economic growth since 2004 it has not been sufficiently inclusive. More than 296 million people are illiterate and 233 million undernourished. Poverty is especially present among tribes and people of low casts and also women are a vulnerable group, of which 60 % are living in poverty. The report on India stresses the need on inclusive growth to reduce poverty and address the disparities of gender (UNDP 2007, p. 2).

According to Census of India (2001)¹ the religious groups in India constitute of Hindus (80,5%), Muslims (13,4%), Christians (2,3%), Sikhs (1,9%), Buddhists (0,7%), Jains (0,4%) and Others (0,6%). Proshanta Nandi (2004), professor of sociology at the University of Illinois, states that India is one of few countries in the world that can be described as a pluralistic society. The socio-cultural diversity within the country makes it impossible to uphold a simple, coherent conception of truth and faith in the society as the pluralism is present within all areas and covers politics, religion, philosophy and ideology. This is also evident as India is the birthplace of three major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism as well as a variety of philosophical and intellectual traditions. Add to this the presence of Islam and Christianity and nearly 200 years of colonial rule “and what you get is a socio-cultural kaleidoscope in the shape of a country” (ibid., pp. 39f)

¹ A census was done in 2010 but have not yet been published.
Eboo Patel and Becca Hartman (2009, p. 25) are researchers and describe in their article *Religious Pluralism - Civil Society’s Hope in a Diverse Country* that people from different religious backgrounds have been in conflicts all over the world and there is both a tendency of religious diversity that promotes conflicts and at the same time a religious pluralism that strengthens civil society. They refer to political economist Ashutosh Varshney (2002, in Patel and Hartman 2009, p. 26) who illustrates that there is tension and violence between religious communities in India, primarily between Hindus and Muslims, and that a critical factor in preventing these conflicts is that people of different religious communities meet in local networks of civic engagement. Patel and Hartman (2009, p. 26) argues that religious pluralism is being built on the fact of diversity: ”when people from different backgrounds seek mutual understanding and positive cooperation with one another” (ibid. 25f).

**Christian Churches in India**

Leonard Fernando and George Gispert-Sauch (2004) from Vidyajyoti College of Theology in Dehli, describe that churches in India have been active through history in providing social services, such as hospitals and education, to the community. Churches have done much for the development of education and health in India although several of the institutions originally meant for poor and low-cast people are now serving the elite in the community. Today the approach of social concerns within the church has changed from charity to promoting development, described as “helping people to help themselves” (ibid., pp. 235-238). Many development activities initiated by churches aim at enabling people living in poverty to develop their own potentials through schools of crafts, agriculture and vocational training (ibid., p. 238). Among churches in India it is a common understanding that the social initiatives are part of the missionary work: “it is an expression of their faith and of their contribution to the well-being of the country. Mission work includes education, justice, social work, awareness programmes, preaching, worship and other activities ”(ibid., 142).

**Churches and religion in development**

Katherine Marshall (2001), employed within the World Bank, discusses in an article an issue that has “been strikingly disarticulated from much mainstream international development thinking: the role of religion and religious institutions in development” (ibid., p. 339). She argues that poverty always has been an important issue and that “theologians from every

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2 World bank is an institution, owned by 186 countries, who provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world (www.worldbank.org).
religion have grappled with the whys and hows of poverty and misery, and faith institutions, everyone, plays a role in helping those in need and, in much more varying ways, working to overcome underlying roots of poverty” (ibid., p. 344).

Also within the Swedish International Development Agency\(^3\) (Sida) faith and religion in development work has been discussed. In 2009 Sida, together with Swedish churches and organizations, arranged a two day seminar on the role of religion in development work (Nordung 2009, p. 5). A report from the seminar discusses the work of churches and other faith-based organisations and the role of religion in issues such as poverty, democracy, gender equality, climate justice and development. The report concludes with the statement that “faith-based organisations have played, and are playing an important role in development both in Sweden and in an international context. However, the relationship between religion and development, needs to be further explored and the findings implemented” (Nordung 2009, p. 38).

An organisation that provides Swedish development assistance from Sida to churches around the world, for example to the church addressed in this study, is Swedish Mission Council. It is an association of 36 Swedish denominations, mission organisations and other Christian agencies. SMC is also a forum for reflection concerning the responsibility of the churches and Christian agencies with regards to international solidarity (SMC 2010). In a report called Churches in Development they describe that “Churches play a central role in development. They motivate voluntary action and advocacy. They provide vital services to the most marginalised and needy. They give hope to people” (James 2009, p. 3). In the report James (2009) discusses some contributions that churches make to international development work and describes that churches are found in remote areas and are part of the society they serve, which enables an important contact with the grassroots in the community. At the same time they can also be an influential voice in the nation speaking for political and social justice (ibid., p. 6). The report (ibid.) also shows that agencies engaged in aid have, until very recently, been sceptical to religion in development work. Religion has been seen as an inception for division and conflicts; being a regressive force maintaining or even promoting injustice such as slavery, colonialism, apartheid and gender inequalities. Religion can also be exported in culturally insensitive ways through development work, seeking to convert people of other faiths. This notion has however changed in the last years and official aid agencies,

\(^3\) Sida works according to directives of the Swedish government and parliament to reduce poverty in the world (http://www.sida.se/english).
such as the World bank, have had an increased “interest in the developmental role of faiths” (ibid., p. 6).

The role relationship between faith and development is also addressed within contemporary research although Laura Thaut (2009), a researcher at University of Minnesota argues that it has been an under researched area which is remarkable “considering the prevalence and importance in the field” (ibid., p. 321). Thaut continues:

Little is known about how Christian beliefs shape the principles and activity of the agencies, how they are distinct from secular agencies, and whether such a distinction is important (...) Without understanding the role of faith, it is impossible to identify the advantages or drawbacks of faith-based humanitarianism – its inherent tensions. (ibid.).

Thaut (2009) argues that it is important to understand the role of faith as it may shape the principles and activities of the organisation and Gerard Clark (2008), a senior lecturer at Swansea University in Wales, gives examples of areas where faith may play a role: when motivating and mobilizing staff and when identifying and working with beneficiaries. These issues will be further discussed below as the previous research is presented (ibid., p.32).

**Definition of problem**

India encounters development challenges such as poverty and inequalities. The background of the thesis illustrates how churches are engaged in development work in India and also recognized as important actors by international development agencies. It is also argued that faith plays an important role as it shapes the principles and activities of the development work for example when mobilizing and motivating staff or when identifying and working with beneficiaries. Also some concerns are expressed as faith may be exported in a cultural insensitive way or used as an inception for division and conflicts. The role of faith in development work is an important issue to study within a religious pluralistic community as the possible tension or conflict may affect people living in vulnerable situations.

**Aim and research questions**

The aim of this study is to enhance the knowledge about the role of Christian faith in the development work of a church in a religious pluralistic community in India. The aim will be attained by studying the case of a Christian Church in India (CCI below), which will be presented later, and by answering the following questions:

- How is Christian faith expressed in the development work of the CCI?
- In what way, and to what extent does the Christian faith influence the development activities of CCI?
Delimitation

I have limited my study to focus on the development work of the church and have not included other activities of the church, such as church services and house groups. The field is delimited to the work done by CCI in the city of Shaher and during a three-day staff workshop in another city. Although I acknowledge that other settings also could be relevant I consider the delimited field to promote more in depth study.

The focus of this study is on Christian faith although it was evident during the study that also other faiths played a role in the development work. The interaction with people of other faiths will briefly be addressed as it puts the role of Christian faith in its religious pluralistic context.

Definition of terms

Religion and faith

In the literature presented in the background and previous research the terms ‘faith’ and ‘religion’ are both used by scholars and by organisations engaged in development work. Also when gathering data in the field I came across both the terms and did not perceive any significant distinction between them. Jenny Lunn (2009) is a researcher who discusses the role of religion, faith and spirituality in development work and states that these terms tend to be used interchangeably but argues for a distinction. She defines religion as “an institutionalised system of beliefs and practices concerning the supernatural realm (…) and faith as the human trust or belief in a transcendent reality (although the word faith is also applied in non-religious contexts)” (ibid). In this thesis I will not stress the difference of these concepts and will generally, in order to be concise, use the word ‘faith’ as a short hand for ‘religion and faith’.

Development work

In the Development Program of CCI ‘development work’ is used when referring to the welfare activities. In *The Oxfam Handbook of Development and Relief* Eade and Willimas (1995) describe development work as: “strengthening people’s capacity to determine their own values and priorities, and to organise themselves to act on these” (ibid, p. 9).

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4 Oxfam is an international confederation of 14 organizations working together with partners and allies around the world to find lasting solutions to poverty and injustice (www.oxfam.org).
Furthermore it is illustrated as the process and outcome of challenging poverty, oppression, discrimination and empowering people to bring about positive changes in their lives (ibid). The development approach strives both for social and economic justice and is used when referring to international aid initiatives done together with partner organisation in development countries (Oxfam 2010). This thesis will focus on CCI as an actor in development work and only briefly address their relations with other actors.

Faith-based organization

When I reviewed previous research about the role of faith and religion in development work, scholars primarily referred to ‘faith-based organizations’ (FBO below). It can be defined as an organization where faith is embedded into the organizational structure (see Bradley 2009, p. 10) and is a term which Nieman (2006, p. 596) uses when discussing the development work of churches in South Africa.

Outline of thesis

This thesis is organised in chapters, each divided into sub-sections. Hereafter the previous research and theoretical framework will be presented followed by a presentation of the church which is the case addressed in the study. Next the methods and material used to achieve the aim will be discussed. Thereafter the results and analysis are presented before the last chapter where I discuss the conclusions in a broader context and suggest some areas for further research.
Previous research and theoretical framework

The presented background shows an increased interest from agencies engaged in international development in the role of religion, churches and faith-based organisations. In this section I will present research about development work of a church and an FBO together with research about development work with beneficiaries of other faiths. In addition to this theoretical framework will be presented addressing the role of faith in development work as well as the concept of human value. Both the previous research and theoretical framework will be used in the analysis of this thesis.

Development work of churches and FBO

In the background some research about the development work of churches in India was introduced. Here the development work of churches in South Africa and a FBO in India will be elaborated in particular.

Anna Nieman (2006), from the Stellenbosch University in South Africa, states that Christian churches historically have been engaged in social and political issues in order to help people who are sick, helpless or living in poverty. The activities organized however, may vary including charitable practices and actions for human rights. Traditionally churches have been engaged in relief programs and material aid but this approach has been challenged. Nieman (2006) gives an example of the African Indigenous Church in South Africa that provides social development interventions such as credit association and small businesses for its members to empower them in the post-apartheid society. There are also churches with a completely other approach to poverty and hardship though. The Dutch Reformed Church for instance rather focuses on poverty relief and setting up institutions such as old-age homes, orphanages and schools (Kinghorn 1998 in Nieman 2006, pp. 599f). Nieman (2006) argues that too much focus on material aid makes the beneficiaries mere recipients of aid and cause a welfare stigma. For the churches to be a significant player in changing the situation for people living in poverty they have to embrace an empowerment approach and utilize the beneficiaries themselves to be part of the work towards social development (ibid., pp. 600, 603).

In the article Does compassion bring result? A critical perspective on faith and development Tamsin Bradley (2005) presents a case study addressing a Christian FBO in India. He argues that their work to provide water for the people in Rajasthan is motivated by the Christian notion of compassion. In Christian faith the notion of compassion is expressed
through images of Jesus helping the poor and deprived which causes a sense of duty among the believers to do the same. Another root to this notion is the biblical description of the early Christian community that was founded on mutual love and a desire to help one another (Bradley 2005, p. 340f). The notion of compassion is often expressed through symbols and narratives which emphasises the bonds between the people in need with the church. This serves as a motivation for development work and promotes a long-term commitment in local communities. However Bradley (2005, p. 341f) states that the notion of compassion itself has limited impact and can sometimes block the complex picture of the situation of the people in need and replace it with a simplified picture of a poor underdeveloped Other who is not able to help him- or herself. This may hinder a true dialogue between the FBO and the beneficiaries and limit the foundation for development work.

**Work with beneficiaries of other faiths**

Bradley (2005) argues that giving aid is ethically problematic for all organisations engaged in development work, both secular and faith-based. Since the giver of aid does not want anything material in return the receiver is situated in a position of indebtedness and therefore becomes pliable to the giver. People living in poverty desire to improve their material standards and may therefore be willing to conform to the faith or values of the giver and convert to the values of their giver, for example Christianity. Though this concerns all forms of organisations it can be more explicit when it comes to Christian FBOs (ibid., p. 342; Stirrat and Henkel 1997, in Bradley 2005, p. 342).

According to Thaut (2009, pp. 324f) faith-based agencies may have an advantage when working in communities where religion is part of the everyday life. It makes it easier to understand how people perceive differences in faith and how they understand reality and their own situation. However the faith of a faith-based agency can also cause a tension when working with people of different faiths. The tension can be caused by an intention to combine evangelistic outreach with humanitarian aid and form the work to “save lives and souls” (ibid., p.325). The tension can result in danger for the staff as well as the beneficiaries depending on the tolerance of religious diversity in the country (ibid., p.325). Thaut concludes that faith matters in development work but that it is important to understand the different uses of faith among faith-based agencies (ibid., 346).

Furness and Gilligam (2010) stress in their book *Religion, belief and social work* the importance to acknowledge the potential impact of faith or absence of faith when interacting with people in the field of social work. This is especially important when working with people
of other faiths since there is a risk that the person practising the faith devalues or demonises the belief system of the beneficiary while continually viewing his or her belief as normal or superior (ibid., p. 39).

Nieman (2006) articulates the importance of churches to adapt an all-inclusive style of interventions that implies a willingness to reach out to different communities and cultures. Collaboration and partnership is a key-issue in social development as it involves the beneficiaries in the work being done. For the church to work jointly with beneficiaries of other faiths it is important to have an acceptance for religious and cultural differences (ibid., p. 598).

**The role of faith in development work**

Several scholars provide concepts to understand the role of faith in development work (see Thaut 2009, Lunn 2009). Here I focus on the framework of Gerard Clark (2008) because it uses concepts that are possible to observe in the development work while the other two rather discuss the theological foundation.

Clark (2008) states that there is a variety of FBOs active in the development context and that the principles of faith may play a role in different ways which influence the development practise. For example some FBOs may use principles of faith to mobilise and motivate supporters in the development work while others may use teachings in promoting social exclusion or opposing modern ideas that could reduce the vulnerability among poor (ibid., pp. 24, 39). Clark (2008) discusses how faith may play a role in motivating and mobilizing staff and when identifying, helping and working with beneficiaries and distinguishing four ways in which FBOs link faith to development or humanitarian activities (ibid., p. 32): passive, active, persuasive and exclusive.

**Passive**

Faith is “subsidiary to broader humanitarian principles as motivation for action and in mobilizing staff and supporters” (Clark 2008, p 32). Also when working with and identifying beneficiaries or partners the “faith plays a secondary role to humanitarian considerations” (ibid.). The passive role is common among FBOs working on an international level and is linked with mainstream Christian churches, such as Caritas International which is connected with the Catholic Church. They mobilize churches working in developing countries but faith-based principles are secondary to broader humanitarian principles in the development work and they support people of all faiths on an equal basis without discrimination (ibid., p. 34)
Active
Faith plays an important and explicit role as a motivation for action and to mobilize staff and supporters. The faith also has direct influence when “identifying, helping or working with beneficiaries and partners, although there is no overt discrimination against non-believers and the organisation supports multi-faith cooperation” (ibid., p. 32). The active stance of faith can be found within missionary organisations as well as faith-based charitable and development organisations. Here the principles of faith are overt on the inside of the organisation as well as when interacting with beneficiaries. Mother Union is an example of a FBO that is overt with the Christian faith and declares that this helps to engage people of other faith traditions that relate more to committed religious belief than to secularism (ibid., p. 36).

Persuasive
Faith plays a significant role when identifying and working with beneficiaries and partners. Faith is the dominant basis for engagement and the development work “aims to bring new converts to the faith and/or advance the interests of faith at the expense of others” (Clark 2008, pp. 32f). For that reason it is important that the staff shares the faith of the organisation and may therefore sign a statement of faith as part of their contract. Clark (2008) states that the persuasive role is more common among missionary organisations than faith-based development and charitable organisations and gives examples of some Muslim and Christian organisations that are actively trying to convert people to their faith. But he says that it does not exclude that they also bring positive development outcomes (ibid., p. 32).

Exclusive
Faith plays the most important role when motivating and mobilizing staff and supporters for action. The significant difference from the other approaches is that faith plays the principal consideration when identifying beneficiaries in the way that they only support people of the same faith while excluding people of other faiths, causing a direct or indirect discrimination. There are organisations where faith is used in an exclusive way and still are important in international development because of the opportunity of ethno-cultural bonds that unite people with the same faith. One example is World Jewish Relief which exclusively helps the Jews living in poverty. There are also groups that do not only help their own community but also work to advance the interest of the faith or the group in a “sectarian matter” (ibid., 34, 38).
Clark (2008, p. 33) presents some caveats about the framework and states that since FBOs are highly networked and constitute of different parts there may be several approaches operating in different parts of the organisation. The policies and practices can differ and in some areas the work of an FBO may have a passive approach while in other areas the role of the faith is persuasive or exclusive.

**Human values**

Erik Blennberger (2005) is a senior lecturer and researcher at Ersta Sköndal Högskola in Sweden, and argues that human value is expressed within all religions. He describes it as a universal principle and the fundamental principle for human existence as well as for ethical and social work. The fact that all humans have a *high and equal* value and that it is *superior* to animals compels us to reflect on how we treat one another and in what way social services are carried out (ibid., p. 34).

**Arguments for human value**

Blennberger (2010, p. 5) acknowledges that it is difficult to define the human value and to present a cogent proof although several arguments promotes the concepts. Here I will present an argument based on religion and two arguments that Blennberger (2010, p. 5) argues are of certain interest: the experience of love and the reaction on violation.

Blennberger (2005, p. 34) exemplifies that within Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions humanity is the supreme creation of God. Therefore everyone has a divine code and is worth respect and care and you should not make distinctions between someone you know or a stranger, friend or enemy. However Blennberger (2010, pp. 4f) acknowledges that it is not sufficient to argue for human value by solely referring to a superior norm system, such as a Christian or Jewish tradition, as it requires a trust in an external authority rather than a personal experience or understanding of life itself that everybody can acquire.

The human value can be argued for by trying to explain and comprehend the experience of love of life itself. This includes the experience of the meaning of life and the idea that other people are recognized as subjects. This together with a notion of love for humanity says that all people are equal and hence have the same human value (Blennberger 2005, p. 36).

Blennberger (2005, p. 38) argues that the human value is considered as a general truth that is easily recognized when violated. The reaction when we or other people are treated unjustly or with a lack of respect illustrates the concept of human value.
The consequences of human value

What are the consequences of stating that all humans have a high and equal value? Blennberger (2005, p. 43) address the concept of human value and discuss some of its consequences within the context of social work.

*Human rights* set the norm for the political agenda and the relation between citizens, government and the collective resources while also addressing the everyday social interaction between people. Human rights are expressed in political decisions and jurisprudent assessments (Blennberger 2010, p. 5).

*Humanism* is a consequence of human value and encourages a helper to acknowledge the needs and difficulties of people and to take the responsibility to change the situation. There are some risks with humanism as it tends to promote a distinction between the giver and the receiver, between the strong and the weak (Ibid., p. 6).

*Solidarity*, like humanism, expresses a responsibility for people in vulnerable situations. The difference is however that solidarity acknowledges that there is a sense of unity between the giver and the receiver and that the support foremost concerns those who are identified as part of the same group (Ibid., p. 7).
Presentation of the case

In order to attain the aim of this study I have studied one of the churches engaged in development work in India. The name of the church is kept confidential (see ethical discussion) but will be referred to as Christian Church in India (CCI below). This section gives a brief presentation of CCI and the development work in the field I visited with the purpose to describe the context in which the study was conducted. The presentation is based on data gathered during the study which will be presented later together with a more extensive presentation of the informants.

A Christian Church in India

CCI was established by Swedish missionaries and handed over to Indian leaders about 40 years ago. Today there are around 18 000 members in more than 100 congregations, both in rural and urban areas and in different states of India. CCI is engaged in evangelical work by for example, establishing churches, building reading rooms, organizing youth camps and women groups (CCI 2010, pp. 2f).

CCI is also engaged in development work around India and describes its development program (CCI 2009) as follows:

The Programme aims at empowering the communities and addressing poverty and poverty related issues such as education, health, environment, ecology and human rights. This will be done through forming and strengthening self help groups and other CBO:s (community-based organisations, authors addition), and networking with others. The focus will be on the poorest of the poor, with special emphasis on the most vulnerable such as tribal, dalits, women, trans-genders, CSW (commercial sex workers, authors addition), child labourers. The program will be implemented in rural areas as well as in slum areas in 14 districts (9 states) of India (ibid., p. 1)

CCI still has a vast cooperation with the Swedish organisation that first established the church. Their Swedish partner organisation is member of the Swedish Mission Council through which they apply for development assistance from Sida that finances parts of the development work of CCI.

Resource centre in Shaher

One of the cities where CCI is involved in development work is Shaher5, which I visited for two weeks. Shaher is a city with a population of less than 500 000. Christians constitute about one percent, which is less than the average in India (India census 2001b).

5 The name of the city is kept confidential but will be referred to as Shaher, meaning city in Hindi.
In Shaher development work is organised through a resource centre. It is located next to a church and a school, both run by CCI. There are two members of staff working with the development projects and to their help they have five volunteers who are part of the communities where projects are carried out. Sometimes they also use resource persons who help without payment by sharing their knowledge, for example a law student who has a seminar about human rights. The target groups of the development work in Shaher are women and children. A folder describing the development work in Shaher states that the aim is to “empower the women and children with all skills, knowledge and information that will equip them to secure their rightful place in the society” (CCI folder). Since the children had summer holiday and no activities where ongoing I decided to focus my study on the work to empower women.

**Women empowerment**

Drawpadi describes empowerment as “enabling people to help themselves and to stand on their own two feet. Empowerment is also getting access to resources”. According to Drawpadi most of the development work is not done at the resource centre but through the 27 self-help groups in the slums of Shaher and in the surrounding villages.

A self-help group constitutes of 12-20 women who come together once or twice a month. The group serves as a platform for women to meet and “work collectively in accessing resources and addressing issues which concern them leading to a sustainable change” (CCI 2009). One way of accessing resources is the work with the micro savings. Basavva explains that every member of a self-help group pays 100 rupees (around 17 SEK) a month which the leader of the group takes to a bank where they have a saving account in the name of the self-help group. When the group has been saving money for one year they can take loans from the bank which allows the members to invest to ensure their livelihood and generate more income. The women I meet when visiting the self-help groups had taken loans to buy buffalos, hens, goats, a noodle making machine or to establish a shop. When taking a loan the self-help group pays back an interest of one and a half percent to the bank, which Drawpadi explains is a low rate compared with the alternatives.

In addition with facilitating micro savings CCI also has income generating and skill development projects. Drawpadi explains that they, together with resource persons, have

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6 One of the staff working at the resource centre who will be furthered presented below.

7 One of the beneficiaries who will be furthered presented below.
workshops for the members of the self-help groups in how to start and run a business or manage livestock as well as how to make candles, jewellery or artificial flowers. A member of a self-help group tells me how their group just learnt how to make curd from milk, which she can sell on the market for at good price. CCI also teaches women tailoring and how to decorate saris by making embroider and attaching pearls. According to Drawpadi these skills enable the women to support themselves and their families, which makes them less dependent on their husbands or others and therefore more empowered.

Drawpadi also describes how CCI conducts awareness programs where they have seminars on issues such as human rights or maternal health. This is primary done in the communities where they have self-help groups and are often done together with resource persons with competence about the issue.
Methods and Material

Research approach and choice of methods

The research of this thesis is done as a qualitative case study, which Yin (2003, pp. 4-9) describes is a method well suited when studying contemporary, complex social phenomena within its real-life context. He states that a case for example can be an organisation which is studied to gain more knowledge about the phenomenon. In this study certain parts of the development work of CCI serves as a case to enhance the knowledge about the role of Christian faith in the development work of a church in a religious pluralistic community of India.

I have used an abductive approach in the study which means alternating between inductively and deductively inspired methods in social research. An inductive approach starts in the field data and creates theories about the reality while a deductive study is directed by existing theories. The results and analysis of this study are based on the data gathered during the field study. I have also used the theoretical framework to get an understanding about the role of faith in development work which has been used when directing my study (see Larsson et al. 2005, pp. 22f).

Pre-understanding and acknowledgment of social self

When doing a qualitative study I as a researcher am the main instrument of gathering data. Therefore it is important to do a self-assessment and acknowledge my social self, my role as a researcher and how it affects the field I am studying (Neuman 2009, p. 15).

As mentioned in the introduction I am a Christian and also acknowledge the importance of the development work of churches. This prior insight can help me when exploring the work of a church and the expression of faith. However this study addresses a context different from my own, which demands of me to not be ethnocentric in my understanding of Christian faith.

I am also member of the partner organisation of CCI and there are some possible biases associated with this. One is that I may become a supporter of CCI and give an untruthful and favourable report about their work (see Neuman 2009, p. 387). The work of CCI has made an impression on me in many ways but my interest in gaining more knowledge in the issue also encourages me to present an as accurate picture as possible.

I acknowledge that me being a white, Christian man from a rich country in some cases makes the relation with informants and interviewees unbalanced which could affect the gathering of data, especially since I study women self-help groups. I have tried to address this
during my study, for example by using female interpreters and not wearing any cross or other symbols.

**Literature**

The literature used in the background is primary from organisations involved in development work and has direct or indirect influence on the development work of churches in development countries and especially the work of CCI. The previous research presents articles published in peer reviewed journals or in some cases books written by senior lecturers or professors at established universities to ensure the academic quality of the framework in the study.

When doing a literature review I began by searching literature on ‘social work’ of churches and then primarily found research addressing churches in North America. Since both Anna Nieman’s (2006) article and the report from Sida (2009) discuss churches involved in development work as FBO I include research about FBO when addressing the relation between faith and development work. When determining what research to present I selected contemporary research and considered how it corresponded to the religious and social context of the case in India. The additional concept of human value (Blennberger 2010) was included as I during the study saw that it would enhance the knowledge about the role of Christian faith.

I have used the database of Academic Search Premier, SocIndex, Jstor, Springer Link and Library of Ersta Sköndal University College to find literature. The following terms were used when searching: ‘faith’, ‘church’, ‘faith-based organisation’, ‘development work’, ‘religious pluralism’, ‘India’, ‘multi-faith’, ‘role of faith’, ‘religion’, ‘Christianity’. Also the references in articles were used to obtain further literature.

**Collecting data**

The strength of a case study lies in the ability to use multiple sources of data and to triangulate these to gain a better understanding of the case (Yin 2005, p. 101). In this study the sources are participant observation, interviews and documents. The method of collecting data and the material will be presented here.

**Participant observation**

In order to better understand the role of Christian faith in the development work of CCI I used participant observation. Participant observation is used as a method to gain understanding and
first hand information about a phenomenon in its social context (Fangen 2005, p. 29). Claster and Schwartz (1972, p. 70) articulate that participating in the field is a way of gaining access to situation where observation can be made. In my study the participation in the field enabled me to observe the actual development work and it also gave me access to both documents and informants I otherwise would not have had access to. Fangen (2005, p. 141) discusses different levels of participation and in this study I adapted a role as ‘partly participant’ as I was part of the social interaction as a visitor and researcher but not integrated in the development work as a member of staff or beneficiary.

To collect data I observed the physical settings, staff and beneficiaries, their actions and what they said which was recorded in detailed field notes. During the observation I wrote short, temporary notes and immediately after leaving the field I wrote a detailed description on my computer of what I heard or saw. These notes were accomplished with notations where I discussed the meaning of the observation and the progress of the study (see Neuman 2006, p. 398-401).

I got access to the field through CCI’s Swedish partner, which I am a member of. They served as a gate-keeper and introduced me to the field (see Neuman 2006, p. 387). When entering the field I spent three weeks in the city where CCI has their main office. There I visited some projects, became familiar with the field and planned the process of my study. I choose to focus on the work in Shaher as it was a field that was easier to grasp with two staff employed and one target group in focus, women. During two weeks I stayed in an apartment at the resource centre in Shaher, the base of the CCI’s developing work in the area. There I observed the women empowerment work and visited self-help groups in the slums and surrounding villages.

I also participated in a three day staff workshop where around 30 development officers responsible for the development work in different parts of India were gathered to discuss, evaluate and plan the development work of CCI. The staff meeting was both in English and Hindi but when visiting the villages I hired two interpreters from a local university. They were fluent in English and interpreted simultaneously when needed in the field.

Fangen (2005, p. 29) describes that participant observation is often conducted over longer periods but that it also works when operating with a limited time frame. As the result will show the development work studied was decentralised and located in villages of the beneficiaries rather than in the compounds of CCI. Because of this and the limited time it was difficult to study the interaction between staff and a specific group of beneficiaries. However,
the number of groups visited allowed me to observe patterns between several groups and physical settings where the work was conducted.

**Interviews**

When doing a case study, interviews are an important source of information because they give an insight into the experience and thoughts of individuals and can also direct the process of the research (Yin 2009, p. 108). In this study I had both informal conversations with informants during observations and two semi-structured interviews.

The informal conversations were done in field and helped contextualise the observations and also obtain the understanding of the informants about the events. The conversations were recorded together with the field notes.

The semi-structured interviews were done at the very end of the study with the purpose of recording the understanding of the interviewees and corroborate with information already attained from other informants, the observations and the documents (Yin 2009, p. 107). These interviews were done with an interview guide based on former observations and the theoretical framework (see appendix 1). The questions in the guide do not include the observations and was not fully followed during the interview as more prominent issues turned up. Therefore I will occasionally include my questions in the presentation of the results to promote the reliability of the study. During the interviews I also asked for comments about my observations to obtain their understanding. However if the observation addressed a question in the guide I would share my observation when they had answered the initial question so my observation would not affect their answers.

The key-informants and interviewees were not selected to represent a population but because I appraised they could contribute with different perspectives to address the aim of the study (see Fangen 2005, p. 58). In my study I interviewed staff and beneficiaries since they are both involved in the development work and have experiences about the role of Christian faith in the development work. Here follows a short presentation of the key-informants and interviewees, all names are fictional for ethical reasons:

*Drawpadi* is a Development Officer and describes herself as a Christian. She has the overall responsibility for planning and monitoring the development work in Shaher and is also director of the school next to the resource centre. The interviews were done as informal conversations both during the staff workshop and throughout the time in Shaher. Also a semi-structured interview was conducted that lasted for one hour and was recorded and transcribed by me.
Chandu describes himself as a Hindu and works as a community organizer to support the self-help groups and help with contact with banks and to organize awareness programs. I followed him when visiting the projects and interviewed him through informal conversations during the observations.

Basavva is a beneficiary and member of one of the self-help groups supported by CCI. She says that she is a Hindu and is running a small business that was started by funds from microloans facilitated by CCI. The interview lasted for 45 minutes and was done in her home together with an interpreter translating word by word. To ensure the quality of the interpretation I hired a translator, with experience in anthropology research, to transcribe and comment on the interpretation. Some corrections were made but the overall interpretation was correctly done.

Documents
Yin (2003, p 101f) states that documentation is relevant in almost every case study as it provides specific information that can confirm or contradict data from other sources and also give a better understanding of the field. In this study the Development Program (CCI 2009) for the years 2009-2011 is used which is the governing document for the development work of CCI. It is a 60 page document that describes the areas of involvement, development goals and strategies, the vision and mission statement and policy documents. Since CCI used the Development Program (2009) when applying for funds the document has been written for this reason and I therefore do not read it as a literal recording of their actual development work (see Yin 2003, p.103). Also a folder about the resource centre in Shaher was used.

Methods of analysing data
Neuman (2006, p. 15) writes that it is common in qualitative research to collect, analyse and interpret data simultaneously and throughout the study, which I also did for this thesis as I spent several weeks in the field. When analysing the data, abductive inspired methods (see section ‘research approach and choice of method’) were used which include both deductive and inductive approaches.

A deductive approach was used in the theoretical framework (primarily Clark 2005) directing the collection of data as it indicated possible roles that faith may have in development work. During the process of the study, different aspects of the theoretical framework were addressed both in the observation, the interview and when reading documents. However, I was flexible towards these concepts during the study and explored
more deeply the roles of faith that I found more prominent. As the study proceeded two themes were distinguished as influencing the development work more prominently; ‘motivation and inspiration’ and ‘the issue of conversion and expression of faith’. A third one put the role of faith in its pluralistic context and also addressed to which extent Christian faith influences the development work (‘religious pluralism’).

The field notes, transcribed interviews and documents were compiled in a case study database on my computer and as the data was in written text I could code the data according to the themes above. Data from the different sources are used in all themes in order to include several perspectives in the analysis. However it was difficult to include data from all informants since they have different access to and understanding about.

During the analysis the concept of human values presented by Blennberger (2010) was also included as I found it promoting an enhancement of knowledge about the role of faith. This together with the flexibility towards the theoretical framework demonstrates the inductive approach of the study. Overall the methods of analysing data in this study can be compared with the process of ‘sensitizing concepts’, where concepts from a theoretical framework are used in an initial stage but modified throughout the study based on the empirical results (Blumers 1931, in Fangen 2005, p. 42).

**Ethical discussion**

In this section I present the ethical issues I considered during this study. I will start with a discussion about ethical dilemmas and then present how I approach the four guidelines provided by the Swedish Ethical Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet 2002) regarding humanistic and social science: the principles of information, consent, confidentiality and use.

**Ethical dilemmas**

When conducting social research the possible negative consequences of the study should be reduced and justified by the potential contribution of knowledge (Fangen 2005, pp. 203f). As the background describes this study addresses an important issue that influences the activities of a significant actor in international development: the role of faith in the development work of a church. In the end this concerns people living in vulnerable situations and the help they receive and this is why this knowledge is important.

Most of the ethical dilemmas I encountered during the study concerned structural inequalities and the possible consequences my study may have caused CCI and the individual informants. Since CCI get funds from Sida and other donors the information of the study
could affect and compromise this admission. Also the consequences for the informants, both staff and beneficiaries, are important to acknowledge since data presented in this study could affect their employment or access to the development initiatives of CCI. Throughout the study I have been in dialogue with my supervisor and other teachers about ethical considerations (see Fangen 2005, p. 204) and based on the results of the thesis, its limited dissemination and the ethical considerations presented below I consider the possible negative consequences of this study to be very limited.

Informed consent

The principle of information and consent are two guidelines that declare that the research should obtain consent from the participant of a study after informing about its aim, possible consequences and that participation is voluntary (Vetenskapsrådet 2002, p. 7). Fangen (2005, p. 206) argues that it is not feasible to attain informed consent from everyone to the same extent when doing participant observation and refers to Punch (1998, pp. 170f, in Fangen 2005, p. 206) who states that the concept of informed consent has to be flexible and therefore should not be too prominently implemented. In my study I treated the key-informants differently from other informants whom I primary studied as parts of groups. The key-informants, together with the moderator of CCI have taken part in and agreed on the paper of informed consent (see appendix 2). However when I visited the self-help group and attended the staff workshop it was not feasible to ask everybody for consent for practical reasons. Instead I presented myself as a researcher and described the study and the ethical considerations based on the paper of informed consent. Thereafter I invited everyone to contact me in person to ask questions or to ask me to leave any information out of the study.

In this study it was important to emphasise my role as a researcher and that participation was voluntary since I did not conceal that I am a member of the Swedish partner organisation affiliated with CCI. A possible problem could be that I would be fed information meant for someone representing the Swedish partner organization rather than a researcher.

Principle of confidentiality

The principle of confidentiality states that information obtained in the study is to be stored in a way that no one unauthorised can get access to it and be presented in a way that no one from the outside can identify any individual (Vetenskapsrådet 2002, p. 10f). In this thesis I interpret ‘outside’ as someone not part of the group being studied.
The written notes from the field studies were stored safely in a locked room together with my computer (which was protected with a password), holding documents, transcribed interviews and more detailed field notes. All data collected during the study will be erased when the thesis passes the examination.

To protect the integrity of the key-informants I used fictitious names and when referring to shorter conversations or observations involving other informants a more extensive effort to prevent identification were made by retaining details. This was especially important when beneficiaries were involved since they are in a more vulnerable situation.

When contacting Basavva, one of the key-informants and a beneficiary, to schedule an interview one of the staff got informed about the identity of the beneficiary. Before starting the interview I described this to the beneficiary who still approved to the interview although I underlined that participation was voluntary. I also informed Chandu and Drawpadi that their anonymity among the staff of CCI was difficult to ensure since some staff knew the location of my study and both of them approved to participate on these terms.

In this study I chose to use a pseudonym when referring to the church although the moderator of CCI approved of the use of the real name. However as Sida financed the study and the partner organisation of CCI introduced me they both have access to the real name of CCI. Based on the results of the study I do not consider this study to have any negative effects on the relation between CCI and their partner organisation or Sida. The use of a fiction name was primarily done to reduce the risk of affecting CCI’s relation with possible future donors as the thesis is published online and can be found by search engines.

**Principle of use**

As the principle of use states that the information about individual persons obtained in this study will exclusively be used to address the specific aim of this study and will not be used for any decisions that affect individuals. However I informed that the final report would be public and probably read by Sida and their Swedish partner organisation.

**Validity and reliability**

Validity concerns the consistency of a study and to what extent I as a researcher have studied what I intended to study (Fangen 2005, p. 256). Yin (2009, p. 116) argues that the use of multiple sources of data promotes the validity of a case study as it enables triangulation and to support facts using different methods and sources. Fangen (2005) argues participant observation is a method that promotes validity since the phenomena are studied in its natural
context and not in an arranged environment. (ibdi., p. 256). Also the use of previous research and theoretical framework on the role faith in development work, for example in the choice of interview questions, promotes that the actual issue was studied.

Reliability concerns the trustworthiness of a study and could be discussed by asking if another researcher repeated the study in the same field would have reached the same conclusions. This approach however Fangen (2005, p. 271) discusses as impossible to attain because of the complexity of the reality and the necessity of the researcher to be selective when observing and developing concepts. However if a study in the same field would be done the results should not explicitly be contradicted. One way to increase the reliability, which I have strived to do in this thesis, is to describe the field, the process of the study and how the conclusions were reached (ibdi., p. 272).

**Generalization**

The qualitative approach in this thesis limits the possibility to generalize the conclusions to a larger population, especially since I have not worked with statistic sampling of informants (see Yin 2009, p. 15). The results of this study do not even apply to all parts of CCI but are limited to the field I visited and the people I interviewed. The purpose of this study is not to present a case that will represent all churches in India. However Kvale (1997, p. 161, in Fangen 2005, p.276) presents the concept of ‘analytic generalization’ and illustrates how the results of this study still can enhance the knowledge about the role of Christian faith and be implemented also to other similar cases. By describing the context and methods of this study I enable the reader to analyse the differences and similarities to other situations and thereafter determine the possible generalisation and use of the results in this thesis (ibid.).
Methodological considerations

This case study addresses the development work of CCI and has used different methods when collecting data. An alternative and a more narrow approach would have been to focus on interviewing either staff or beneficiaries which then would have resulted in a more comprehensive study concerning their perspectives. Instead I included both the perspective of the beneficiaries, the staff and the official documents of CCI. In addition my own perspective has been present as my observations also was a source of data. Although the use of multiple sources has many advantages it also has its drawbacks. For example during the analyse it was challenging to corroborate large amount of data to identify patterns and also include the different perspectives.
Results and Analysis

The aim of this thesis is to expand the knowledge about the role of faith in the development work of a Christian church in a religious pluralistic society in India. In the analysis I identified three areas that address this aim that will be presented: ‘Motivation and inspiration’, ‘Religious pluralism’, ‘The issue of conversion and expression of faith’. My analysis will be supported by data from observations, interviews and written documents.

Motivation and inspiration

Christian faith serves as motivation and inspiration in the development work of CCI. It is explicitly expressed in all three data sources: in the interview with Drawpadi, in the Development Program and in the morning devotions at the staff workshop. Below I will present three concepts, that are expressed in more than one source and how they influence the development work: ‘Establish the kingdom of God’, ‘Love your neighbour through actions’ and ‘Inspired by role models’. The two latter of these concepts were presented at the devotions during the staff workshop and Bradley (2009, p. 108) argues that collective prayers or individual contemplation integrated in the daily structure of the work of a FBO shape the identity and practise of the organization. This underlines the importance of exploring the principles expressed during devotions.

Establish the kingdom of God

The concept of the kingdom of God is mentioned both in the Development Program and in the interview with Drawpadi. It presents a society where there is peace and justice and where equality prevails among all human beings. In the Development Program there is a vision statement that illustrates the vision of the work of CCI:

CCI draws its inspiration from the Bible towards establishment of God's kingdom and to witness His love by becoming salt and light to the suffering masses, visualizing a society where, peace, justice, and equality prevail and wherein all citizens irrespective of caste, creed, language and religion live in peace and communal harmony (CCI 2009, p. 38)

The vision statement describes the concept of the kingdom of God as inspired by the Bible. This corresponds to Bradley (2005, p. 341-342) who states that the root of motivation can be traced to the teaching and principles presented in the Bible. Drawpadi explains the concept of the kingdom of God and how it influences the development work of CCI:

You know, the kingdom of God is a very big term. Like the kingdom of God is a place where everything is good, there is peace, there is love, there is happiness, there is joy and everything. Church and Christians should work towards that. So we as church, as a small church or as Christian people... we are trying to make a small change in the peoples life and trying to bring
little joy and small happiness or we are trying to work in a small way. And so by doing small things we work to establish the kingdom of God in the days to come.

Drawpadi’s description of the kingdom of God correlates with the vision of the society in the Development Program. It describes a vision of a society where there is peace, justice, equality, happiness, love and joy. She also emphasizes that the church and individual work towards establishing this society by working and doing small things. This expresses an impulse for action or motivation, that Clark (2005, p. 32) presents as one way in which Christian faith plays a role in development work. In this example the idea of the kingdom of God is described as important and indicates that Christian faith plays an active role in motivating the development work of CCI (ibid.).

In addition Drawpadi argues that it may take some time to realize this vision: “still we are trying to start at the roots now so that sometimes later, maybe some decades later or centuries later there may be a change […] and when people are living a good life we can see the kingdom of God on earth”. According to her this means that the concept of the kingdom of God inspires a long-term commitment in the development work and corresponds to Bradley (2005, p. 340) who discusses how symbols in the Christian teachings and narratives generate a long-term commitment as it stresses a bond between the people in need and the people who have the resources to help.

It is evident that the vision of the just, equal society where everything is good does not correspond to the reality in India today. Throughout the Development Program there are descriptions of different target groups and their situations and to mention one example the situation of women is addressed:

The low status of women is deeply rooted in the religious and cultural life of the society at large. Lack of education, less access to economic and other resources, and dependency on men also contribute to the low status of women. These factors hinder women from availing opportunities for growth and development, education and health which add to their vulnerability (CCI 2009, p. 12).

The statement above also illustrates possible negative influences of faith in development context. This will not be further discussed in the analysis since the statement concerns the society at large but the issue will be addressed in the discussion at the end of the thesis. The development work of CCI resource centre in and around Shaher focuses on addressing the inequalities described in the statement above through their work with women empowerment, which is furthered described in the presentation of CCI. I ask Drawpadi in what way they work to establish the kingdom of God in their projects and she exemplifies by describing how they provide women with information about their rights:
And we help them to understand that they have to have access to the rights. So in that way we are acting as a facilitator in helping them to know their rights. So in this way we are trying to establish a society where there is equality and everybody gets their rights so the kingdom of God can be established on earth.

She presents the work with human rights as a way to establish an equal society and also the kingdom of God. The policy document on women empowerment also describes the importance of human rights in the work to empower women and to promote an equal society: “CCI endorses Millennium Declaration that promotes gender equality, empowerment of women and improving maternal health” (CCI 2010, p. 2).

Furthermore the vision of the kingdom of God articulated within CCI describes a society where people have an equal and high value, which Blennberger (2010, p 4) also portrays as central for the concept of human value. Blennberger (2005, p. 38) states that one way to argue for the human value is to recognize the response to its violation. The reality in India for instance, where women have a lower status and less opportunities does not correspond to this vision of the kingdom of God and therefore the church is inspired and motivated to work to fulfil the vision. One way of achieving this is for CCI to promote women’s rights expressed in United Nations Millennium declaration. Blennberger, in addition (2010, p. 5) points out that promoting human values is a consequence of recognizing the human value. The concept of the kingdom of God therefore argues for human value and promotes the work with human rights towards a just and equal society.

Love your neighbour through actions

The importance of love and the appeal to love your neighbour is another principle of Christian faith, which is identified as a motivation for the development work of CCI.

The Development Program illustrates that the vision of CCI is to “witness His love” (CCI 2009a, p. 38) in the work towards a just society. My results show that the appeal to love and to show love to others does not only involve a feeling or a notion within an individual person. Love is also described as something that is shown in action. As Drawpadi explains: “so we are showing love to the people, to our neighbours through our actions, and we are helping them to help themselves. Through all our activities and through this resource centre we are expressing our love of God with our fellow human beings”. The principle is observed in

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8 Millennium declaration are goals set by UNs member states to be achieved by 2015 (http://www.undp.org/mdg)
several places, for example in a brochure presenting the women empowerment work in Shaher where the text on the cover says, “God’s unconditional love in action”.

The importance of loving you neighbour is also addressed during the devotions at the staff workshop. The same Bible passage is used in two of the morning devotions and describes how a man asks Jesus what he must do to get eternal life. He finds out that he should “love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and Love your neighbour as you love yourself” (Good News Bible, Luke 10:27).

One of the women sharing some thoughts about this passage underlined that the ‘neighbour’ here could be the beneficiaries the development officer meets in his or her work. She stresses the importance of seeing and meeting the beneficiaries with love although she acknowledges the challenge in loving someone as yourself. She continues to emphasize that this love is shown in actions and that the development work of CCI is a way of loving your neighbour.

This encouragement of the development officers of CCI to love the beneficiaries as they love themselves expresses a connection and equality which is also central to the concept of human value. Blennberger (2005, p. 43) argues that the human value expresses the high and equal value of all humans who are thus worth attention, respect and care. In this way the promotion of human value motivates development work and the principle of loving someone as you love yourself then motivates the development officers to engage in development work. Blennberger (2005, pp. 36f) also states that the notion of love itself is universal and an important argument for human value as it does not solely refer to a superior norm system. The notion of love is portrayed as something important and should be transformed into actions (read development work). Bradley (2005, pp. 341f) illustrates in a case study how the Christian FBO ‘Rajastan for waters’ is motivated in the work based on a Christian notion of compassion. However, he continues, there is a risk that the notion simplifies the reality and creates a picture of the undeveloped Other who are not able to help themselves. This phenomenon can be compared with humanism which encourages a helper to take the responsibility and change the situation for people in need instead of involving them (Blennberger 2010, p.6). The encouragement to love your neighbour as yourself rather promotes a sense of unity between the giver and receiver which Blennberger (ibid., p 7) describes as solidarity.

The encouragement of love through actions may promote human value and solidarity and in this way serve as motivation for the development work. The explicit expression of this concept indicates that Christian faith is used in an active way in the development work of CCI as suggested by Clark (2005, p.32).
Inspired by role models

Drawpadi explains what her Christian faith means to her in her work:

I get inspiration of the life of Christ. He went into the community and served the people. So I get inspiration from these, how to say, aspects of Christian life. You know, Christians, we are born to serve, not to be served... so I always feel happy when I am able to help somebody (...) and like my faith always keep me going, like in times of difficulties and in times of, you know, problems and when I feel very much helpless. Then my belief in Christ and the Christian faith keeps me going. That is why I am able to do so many things at a single moment.

Here Drawpadi describes the Christian faith as a motivation in time of difficulties, keeping her going. She also describes Jesus as an inspiration as he “went out in the community” and her statement that Christians are born to serve shows how the life of Jesus can work as an impulse for action, motivating the staff to engage in development work (Clark 2005, p.32). The inspiration from Jesus also occurs in devotions during the staff workshop. After talking about the importance of loving your neighbour the person sharing some thoughts described a “Jesus-driven leadership” and encouraged the development officers to be inspired by Jesus in their leadership and development work.

Another person presented Mother Theresa as an inspiration and role model. One of the devotions is led by a development officer who talks about how God created people to do good. He tells a story about when Mother Theresa was asked why she was tending to the sick and helping the poor. She answered that she did this because she could see Jesus in all the lepers and poor people she would meet. The man leading the devotion then says that like Mother Theresa met Jesus in all the lepers and poor people so the CCI meets Jesus in the beneficiaries involved in the development projects. He then encouraged the development officers to follow the example of Mother Theresa.

Bradley (2005, 341-342) points out that stories of Jesus helping the poor awake a sense of duty among the believers to do the same, serving as a motivation in the development work of an FBO. Here both the life of Jesus and Mother Theresa are presented as role models of the life of Christians and serve as a motivation for action and as an inspiration in the development work. This, again, can be understood by referring to the human value. Blennberger (2005, p. 33) argues that religious beliefs are an argument for human value since they imply that all humans are created by God, have a ‘divine code’ and therefore are worth respect and care. The statement from Mother Theresa shows that she saw Jesus in the people she was helping which can be compared with the divine code described by Blennberger (ibid.) and which can serve as a motivation in the development work.
Religious pluralism

As I participate in the staff workshop and observe the development work in the city it becomes evident that the religious pluralism in the Indian society in some ways also is present within the development work of CCI, both among staff and in the interaction with the beneficiaries. As Patal and Hartman describe (2009, p. 26), pluralism is when people from different backgrounds seek mutual understanding and positive cooperation with one another. Below I will discuss how this pluralism is present among the staff and also in the development work in Shaher so that the role of Christian faith can be understood in its pluralistic context.

Staff

During the staff workshop I observe that some, at least four, of the approximate 30 development officers have a red dot and/or a vertical red line on their foreheads. One of the staff describes the latter as a ‘tikala’ and it is only Hindus that wear any of these markings. And when interacting with the development officers I talk with one of the staff who describes himself as a Muslim. As I share my observation about the different religious belongings among the development officers with Drawpadi she estimates that around 30% of the development officers are Hindus. According to her she is the only Christian staff engaged in the development work in Shaher since both the community organizer Chandu and the volunteers working in the villages are all Hindu. These observations show that the CCI does not only employ staff that confess to Christian faith, which Clark (2005, p. 37) describes as typical for an FBO where faith plays a persuasive role.

The observations about the religious pluralism among the staff rise a question to what extent Christian faith plays a role as an inspiration and motivation, not least since there is staff of other faiths or possibly of no faith at all. This thesis does not elucidate what role Christian faith plays in the lives of non-Christian staff and this issue would be an interesting issue to address; especially since I observed them participating in the devotions. I did talk about motivation also with Hindu staff though, as in the following situation.

After visiting a self-help group outside the city Chandu, myself and a resource person head back to the resource centre in a rickshaw⁹. We talk about the work of CCI and what motivates them to engage in the development work. The resource person, who is Hindu, answers that when he is volunteering for CCI it may help him to get a better life after this. He explains the

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⁹ Rickshaw is a three-wheeled cart operating as a taxi.
Hindu notion of karma and that the deeds in this life affect how you are reborn in the next life. Chandu explains that he likes helping people who are in need and wants to do something about the poverty in the community. I also ask them how they experience working for a Christian church and Chandu says that the Christian faith is not important in their work and that the development work is separated from the rest of the activities of the church (this will be further discussed in the next chapter). The discussion in the rickshaw came to an end as we reached the resource centre.

I ask Drawpadi to comment on the diversity of faiths among the staff and she says:

Yeah… though they are not Christian we have human values which are same. So we just get united through the human values that we have. We do not talk about Christ or our Christian values or Christian principles… but you know, we come together through the values of… humanitarian values… and then we try to work… we forget about religions here. He (non-Christian staff, my addition) works as a human being, with human values and I work as a human being with human values.

She continues to describe the connection between Christian values and human values and says that concepts such as truth, honesty and love are both Christian and humanitarian values. And then she returns to the issue about the diversity of faith among the staff: "So, we forget about the reasons when we are working with the people, human beings helping other human beings. That is what God said: Help others as you help yourself”. These statements should be contrasted with the devotions during the staff workshop where Christian teachings overtly were presented and promoted. Drawpadi describes that they have devotions also in Shaher together with the students at the school but since the school are closed during the summer holiday this is not something I can observe. The church next to the resource centre has Sunday service but from the staff engaged in the development work only Drawpadi was present. The results indicate that Christian teachings are not necessary expressed in the same way within the development work of CCI.

In the statement above Drawpadi illustrates how Christian faith is tightly connected with human values and that it is easier to work with staff of other faiths when focusing on the values that are common and unite them. There are probably many different reasons why someone is engaged in development work, but Blennberger (2010, p. 4) explains that the human value is the fundament for ethics and for the engagement in social work. Blennberger (2005) states human values are motivated within all religions as well as by other arguments, such as the notion of love and the reaction to violation of human values (ibid., p. 35). The latter can be recognized in the statement of Chandu, wanting to do something about poverty in the community. There is coherence between Drawpadi’s statement and Blennberger’s
argument about the significance of human value. The fact that there are a number of ways to argue for human value makes it an important concept when understanding the development work in a religious pluralistic community where people are motivated by different beliefs or principles.

Beneficiaries
In the previous section I showed that the religious pluralism in the society of India in some ways is present among the staff of CCI. I also encountered this when visiting the development work in the villages and slum areas.

CCI does not have any churches or other facilities in the villages so the self-help groups meet in the homes of the members or, as in the case in two of the villages I visited, in a Hindu temple. One meeting I attend is about children’s rights and there is a resource person who shares her knowledge about the UN declaration of those rights. Attending the meeting are women from a self-help group and also other women living in the slum, some of them carrying a child. The location of the temple is central and the meeting is held outside, under a roof of sheet metal. Under a tree nearby men are sitting talking and some women get water from two taps next to the temple. One of the women in the self-help group explains that the temple is an important meeting point in the community and a place where they discuss and decide important issues. There are pictures of three Goddesses on the temple wall facing the platform. One of them is holding an urn with money pouring out on a plate. I observe this Goddess in all the homes I visit and in both the temples where the self-help groups meet. Basavva explains that her name is Lakshmi: “Lakshmi many consider as a finance Goddess, so we believe like if we keep her name, Lakshmi, that the finance will flow to us”. In the resource centre there is a chart of the self-help groups CCI work within and around Shaher. Out of 27 groups eight have the name of the Goddess Lakshmi, and many other also have name of Hindu Gods or Goddesses. This indicates that there is a religious pluralism in the development work also in the interaction with beneficiaries. Not pluralism in the meaning of a variety in religious belongings (the beneficiaries are primarily Hindus) but rather as Pater and Hartman (2009, p. 26) present pluralism: “when people from different backgrounds seek mutual understanding and positive cooperation with one another”.

When I visited the self-help groups programs in and around Shaher I could not identify more than four out of around fifty women who did not have a red marking on their foreheads identifying them as Hindu. Basavva says that there are no Christians in the self-help groups in her village and continues: “in most of the villages there are no Christians. There is a nearby
place called (…), there you can find Christians, but not in Shaher”. Drawpadi states that there are a few Christian families in the villages where they are present, “maybe one or two in some of the villages”.

Clark (2008, p 33) states that the faith of an FBO may play a role when identifying beneficiaries. An exclusive way of using faith would imply that people sharing the same religious beliefs as the FBO are helped while others are discriminated. The Development Program describes how CCI identifies beneficiaries in their development work: “Through surveys, informal and formal discussions and interaction with the self-help groups, local leaders, farmers and youth the community needs were identified at various levels” (CCI 2009a, p. 8). I ask Drawpadi how they identify the beneficiaries in Shaher and she tells me how they did a survey when they first established the resource centre: “and through this survey we came to know about different villages where there were many women who did not have access to information, who were not able to help themselves. And before starting any work, any intervention, we do a survey”. I ask her if faith in any way influences their decisions when identifying beneficiaries:

> It don’t have any impact on choosing the beneficiaries because we are looking at people as human beings, as Gods children, not as Hindus, Muslims or Christians. So we are going out in the community as people assigned by God to help so we don’t… there is no bias in selecting beneficiary. Whoever needs help we go and help them.

The predominance of Hindu beneficiaries and the importance of the needs of the people indicates that Christian faith does not play an exclusive role in the development work causing discrimination of people who are not Christian (Clark 2005, p. 32). Instead there is an expression of responsibility for all people in vulnerable situations and a sense of unity where Hindus, Muslims and Christians are not seen as separate but indentified as one group, God’s children. Also in the vision statement presented earlier the kingdom of God is described as a society where “equality prevails and wherein all citizens irrespective of caste, creed, language and religion live in peace and communal harmony” (CCI 2009a, p. 38). Based on Blennberger (2010, p. 7) this can be understood as an expression of solidarity and a consequence of the acknowledging the human value which implies that Christian faith plays a role in promoting human values and solidarity when identifying beneficiaries. Comparing the result with Clark (2008, pp. 32f) there are indications that Christian faith has a passive role since it is secondary to humanitarian considerations, such as the need of people. There are also indications of a more active approach where Christian principles, such as the concept of Gods children, have
direct influence when identifying beneficiaries “although there is no overt discrimination against non-believers” (ibid.).

The result indicates that principles of Christian faith promotes human values when CCI identify beneficiaries but also that a religious pluralism is present both among the staff and in the interactions with beneficiaries as other faiths also are expressed.

The issue of conversion and expressions of faith

When collecting and analyzing data I recognized that the fear of conversion influenced the development work as it may hinder CCI when initiating a project in a village. The fear of conversion is connected to how CCI is introduced and in what way Christian faith is expressed in the development work. This section will address these three issues.

Fear of conversion

In the Development Program there is an assessment of risks related to the overall implementation of the program. Out of the twenty risks presented one is associated with Christian faith: “CCIs involvement in spiritual work may cause fears of religious conversion in the community” (CCI 2009a, p. 31). The assessment also presents measures to reduce the risks and continues: “Project staff respect sentiments and culture of the community and will be conscious of communities’ religious and social affiliations when interacting with them” (ibid.). This statement indicates that CCI recognizes that people in the community express a tension similar to the one described by Thaut (2009, p. 325) when a Christian humanitarian organisation is involved in both development and evangelistic work. The ‘respect’ which is presented as a way to reduce the risk of causing fear because this tension can be connected with the awareness of religious pluralism discussed in the previous section. Beneficiaries can express their faith within the development work of CCI, for example by naming the self-help groups after a Hindu goddess or when they meet in temples.

I ask Drawpadi if she encounters any difficulties when working in a Christian church with beneficiaries of other faiths and she explains that because the church is a religious institution there can be some difficulties reaching the community and continues: “so you do not have to talk about religion when you are in the community (…) it can hinder the work. People start getting doubtful, like they think that you are… we as a church are going there to convert”. She gives an example how they, some years ago, used to start meetings with self-help groups or awareness programs with a short prayer but that they stopped doing that since it contributed to suspicions in the community.
I also ask Basavva if there are any problems associated with CCI being a Christian church and she respond:

there is no problem as such (...) when they go and visit people they will tell them, they are not here to convert into Christianity but for our sake and for our benefit. They are coming out and they are helping us and they will go out and explain this.

Both of the interviewees mention conversion when I ask an open question. This indicates that it is an important issue even though their answers differ slightly. However, also Basavva acknowledges that people in the village were suspicious when CCI established their work four years ago:

Like earlier, before they could start the work, the people in the village, they say to me: this is Church community. In the days to come they might convert the people, so why you are mingling with those people’. Then I said that those people are doing it for our benefit. So, we have to go to them to get those benefits for ourselves. So, I am going, there is nothing wrong as such. And there is no conversion as such, they have come here to help us, and so, we should respond to their work. (...) Then all these people they were together and they said that they (CCI) are helping us to become strong ‘Stree shakti’ ‘woman's power’.

Basavva tells how women in the village eventually accepted CCI and that thereafter some time were seven self-help groups. However the husbands were more difficult to convince according to Basavva:

Their husbands, earlier, they used to, like, tell them not to go and interfere ok? “Do not go and participate”. Earlier they used to tell them. Now what has happened, these all when they go and attend any seminars, they are coming and telling their husbands, that they are doing these things, if at all we are doing anything wrong you can come and correct us. But unless and until we are not doing right things do not stop us. You have no right to speak to us. They have become strong. They are making their husbands understand that they are doing something good and not wrong.

Drawpadi also explains that the fear of conversion is more of a problem when they initiate development work in a village. She says that it is easier working with the projects in the city of Shaher as people there have met the church and they know that CCI does good work:

...but when I go around to the villages then there comes a problem I think. Unless they know, actually see us in action they won’t believe us and they wont know that the Christian people are good, unless they experience. So in the initial stages we may have some problems (...) and once they come to know about what the church are doing they feel like the church are doing a good work. And so, I am not having a problem later on.

It is evident that the Christian faith matters in the development work as it can cause suspicion and fear of conversion and therefore hinder the development work, primarily in the initial stage of the work. A way to understand this is to use Clark’s (2005) framework. The beneficiaries anticipate that the development work of CCI “aims to bring new converts to their faith” (ibid., p. 33) which would imply a persuasive role of Christian faith in the development work. CCI responds to this by showing that the development work, or social
services, are separated from the rest of the church work and by expressing Christian faith in actions rather than in words. These two responses will be discussed in the following two sections.

**Church work or social service**

The development work of CCI is done by the same church which also conducts the evangelistic work presented in the introduction. However they make an effort to separate the development work from the other activities of the church. In Shaher, the resource centre is close to the church, but is a separate building. Drawpadi also says that the involvement of the pastor and the congregation in the development work is very limited. Moreover the development work is primarily done in the communities and not in the resource centre itself, situated next to the church-building. Chandu explains that they earlier had more activities in the resource centre but that they now have a more community based development work. It brings the work closer to the beneficiaries. Another indication that they separate the development work from the rest of the church work is the use of the name ‘Social Service Organisation’ (SSO below) that CCI started using in 2009 when referring to their development work.

One evening I visit a self-help group during a capacity building seminar about leadership outside one of the members’ home. Behind the resource person who is leading the seminar Chandu had placed a banderol saying: ‘Social Service Organisation– Shaher’. Drawpadi explains how the banderols earlier had the name of the church, CCI, printed on it but that they just started using the name SSO when referring to the development in the villages. When talking with staff during the workshop I understand that it is the same organisation but with a different name. Drawpadi confirms that and states “but the name of the church does not come there, like we say social services organisation, it is just secular, it is not indicating that it is a church or something”. She explains how this affects the development work in the communities:

We don’t go there as a church. Previously, when the work started here, me and my staff we went out as people coming from the Christian Church in India. Then that time it was a lot of problems that we faced and only Christian people they would come forward and they like to, how to say, connect to us. And when we only went there as Social Services Organisation, no identification we had as a church or a Christian organisation then people just come together and connect to us and there is not problem. We are just going there as social workers.

The problems when initiating the development work in Shaher are probably connected with suspiciousness and anticipation from beneficiaries that the church has a persuasive role of
faith, discussed above. Another development officer I talk to during the staff workshop tells me that using the name of SSO instead of the church also made it easier in the contact with the local authorities, since they are suspicious of Christian organisations being involved in development work with the aim of converting people. By separating the development work from the evangelistic work CCI reduces the risk that the development work is hindered by the suspicion from people in the village and from the authorities.

The separation between the development work and the rest of the church work is not clear or evident. The development plan describes the work as done by CCI and does not mention SSO, probably because the new name was initiated after the program was published. During the staff workshop both CCI and SSO were used when referring to the development work. Although CCI tries to separate the evangelistic work from the development work this does not mean that Christian faith is not expressed in the development work. I ask Drawpadi to comment on the relation between the evangelistic work and the development work of CCI she explains:

Yeah, evangelistic, like spreading the gospel is spreading the word of God and this social work is God work in action. So we are doing it in action... We are not saying it or we are not spreading the word of God by our word, through our words... we are doing it in action. So the church is doing this, the work of spreading the gospel, evangelism, and the social work wing of the church is doing it in action, the word of God in action.

This statement once again shows that the development work is separated from the evangelistic part of the church work but also that they are connected, the development work being a wing of the church. The title of this section ‘Church work or social work’ indicates a separation. However there is also a connection as both are parts of the development work and engaged in spreading the word of God. However, as discussed in the next section, when the church interacts with people through the development work Christian faith is expressed through actions and not words.

Expressing faith in action

When I visit the development work of CCI in and around Shaher the members of staff do not express Christian faith in words by for example reading Bible verses or praying when they meet with the beneficiaries. This is probably because Chandu, the community organizer, is Hindu and that Drawpadi, who is Christian, argues that it may hinder the development work. That this approach is common in Shaher is confirmed by members of a self-help group. I ask some of the women if and how the Christian faith is expressed in the work of CCI. I give examples of Bible readings or prayers. All the answers to my questions imply that there is no
explicit expression of Christian faith from the staff of CCI through words. When I ask Drawpadi if they talk about Christian teachings when they meet the women in the self-help group she answers:

No, cause we do not convert just like that, looking at the good things and looking at the goodness of the church people may voluntary come for conversion. Neither the church nor the social work have any time expressed views of making people become Christians. Looking at the good things there are in the church and the people working, people come and accept Christ (…) Here in this church, once a year, one or two families come and accept Christianity

Drawpadi explains that CCI does not work to make people become Christian through the development work. Using the framework of Clark (2005) indicates that faith is not used in a persuasive way as the development work does not “aim to bring new converts to their faith” (ibid., p. 33). The Development Program states that the goal of the development work does not include converting people but “empowering the communities and addressing the poverty and poverty related issues such as education, health, environment, ecology and human rights” (CCI 2009a, p. 23).

Drawpadi makes a distinction between converting in the meaning of making people become Christians and converting as accepting Christianity after experiencing the development work of CCI. Also the latter notion can be questioned referring to Bradley (2005) who has a critical perspective on faith and development work. He argues that it is ethically problematic for a FBO to give aid since it can cause dominance over the receiver. The giver does not want anything material in return so the receiver is placed in debt and therefore becomes pliable to the giver and convert to the values of the giver, for example Christianity (ibid., p. 342). Although the relationship between the beneficiaries and CCI is not equal, the observations indicate that the development work conducted in Shaher does not focus on giving aid but to empower the women. This empower approach is also described by Oxfam as an key-issue in development work over all (Eade and Willismas 1995, p. 9).In Shaher the women themselves save their own money and take loans from the bank, which they have to pay back. Basavva, for example, describes how she borrowed money to build up her business which now supports her family and how she paid back using the money she earned. Drawpadi explains that empowerment work is “enabling people to help themselves and to stand on their own feet”. This concept is also described by Chandu who emphasizes that the actual development work is done by the women themselves and that CCI only provides facilities, information and motivation.

The data above indicates that Christian faith does not have a persuasive role in the development work and this enables CCI to work together with people of other faiths. In
previous chapters on motivation and inspiration and religious pluralism the analysis has shown that Christian faith has an active role as it both motivates staff and identifies beneficiaries by referring to Christian principles expressing human value. Clark (2005, p. 36) states that an FBO where faith is used in an active way is overt with principles of faith both within the organisation and in the interaction with others. Principles of Christian faith, such as the kingdom of God, are overt inside the organisation, especially at devotions during staff workshop, in the vision statement and in the interview with Drawpadi who is Christian. However, to what extent CCI is overt with the Christian faith in the interaction with beneficiaries is less obvious. The members of self-help groups I talk to all seem to know that it is a Christian church organizing their groups, which also Basavva confirms. How this will turn out in the future after using the name of SSO some time is more difficult to anticipate. Although there may be no overt expression of Christian faith in words both Drawpadi, the devotions and to some extent the vision statement describe that the action, the development work itself, is an expression of principles of Christian faith.

**Summary**

The aim of this thesis is to enhance the knowledge about the role of Christian faith in the development work of a Christian church in a religious pluralistic community in India. I have studied the development work of CCI and asked the following questions: how is the Christian faith expressed in the development work of CCI? In what way and to what extent does the Christian faith influence the development work of CCI? I have discussed three themes which will be summarized below.

Christian faith plays a role as motivation and inspiration in the development work of CCI. One way to understand this is that Christian faith expresses and promotes a high and equal human value which encourages an engagement in development work. The vision of the kingdom of God describes a just and equal society where the human value is respected. This implies a challenge to the church and the Christians to establish this kind of society. Since the society of India today, especially for women, violates this vision it serves as an impulse for action, motivating the development work of the church. Furthermore the concept of loving your neighbour promotes the equal human value as it declares that the staff should love beneficiaries as they love themselves. The fact that this love should be expressed in actions (read development work) also supports the role of faith as motivation. Stories about Jesus and Mother Theresa serve as inspiration and motivation since they are presented as role models for the staff.
The religious pluralism of the society in India is in some ways also present within the development work of CCI, both among staff and in the interaction with the beneficiaries. This concerns in what way Christian faith is expressed and to what extent it influences its surroundings. Some of the staff are not Christians and there are different expressions of motivations within CCI, including both religious and non-religious motives. The results indicate that when staff of different faiths work together shared human values are important as they can be argued for in a number of ways, based on both religious and non-religious ideas. There is also a variety in the expressions of Christian faith in different parts of the development work of CCI. Some data shows that when working with staff of different faiths, Christian principles are not discussed and are secondary to human values. Other observations indicate that teachings of Christian faith are overtly expressed in words in the form of Bible reading, preaching or prayer during devotions also among non-Christian staff. In the interaction with beneficiaries Christian principles are not expressed in words but in the development work itself, manifesting the faith in action. The difference of expression can be connected with the issue of conversion that affects the preconditions of the development work of CCI.

As a Christian church CCI encounters some difficulties when working in communities of other faiths, primarily in an initial stage. There can be an anticipation in the community that CCI uses the Christian faith in a persuasive way and that the aim of the development work is to convert the beneficiaries. The religious pluralism among the staff and the beneficiaries indicates that faith is not used in a persuasive or exclusive way, only helping those who are Christians. Instead the aim of the development work in Shaher is to empower women and to address poverty related issues. However the faith may play a role when identifying beneficiaries motivated by Christian principles to help the needy and not treat people differently, promoting both human values and solidarity. CCI encounters the people in the community by separating the development work from the activities with a more evangelical approach. This is also manifested in the use of the name ‘Social Service Organisation’ when referring to the development work. Hereby they can introduce themselves through their actions although it may be less obvious to what extent they are overt with their Christian faith in the development work.
Discussion

The title of this thesis is ‘Having faith in development work?’ and the question can be understood in at least two ways. One concerns whether or not CCI has faith in the sense that they believe that their efforts make a difference. Another way of understanding the question is whether faith plays a role and influences the development work or not. The thesis primarily addresses the latter and uses the framework of Clark (2008, p. 32f) who discusses how faith plays a role in different ways. In a passive way faith plays a secondary role to broader humanitarian principles both when motivating and mobilizing staff. Also when identifying beneficiaries “faith plays a secondary role to broader humanitarian reasons” (ibid.). In the chapter Clark (ibid.) does not develop the meaning of “broader humanitarian principles” or mention it further which may provoke the following question: Are principles of faith essentially different from broader humanitarian principles and if so, which of these are secondary if faith is used in an active way? This study illustrates how Christian principles play a role in an active way by using expressions such as ‘the kingdom of God’, ‘love your neighbour’, ‘children of God’ and by presenting role models such as Jesus and Mother Theresa. Comparing with the concept of high and equal human value described by Blennberger (2010, pp. 4f) it can be argued that broader humanitarian principles and principles of faith are not necessarily essentially different and can both be expressions of the high and equal human value.

Another question that may arise is whether faith provides the development work of the church with something unique that other secular development organisations do not have. This is not easy to address and this study has no intention of being a comparative study. However the concept of human value, which the analysis shows is promoted by Christian faith, is not unique. On the contrary it is universal and probably the ideological foundation of many organisations. Therefore it would be interesting to explore the values of development organisations which are not explicitly faith-based and to see how these are expressed and influence their activities. Marie Connaly (2009), chief social worker at the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development, argues in her book Social work: Contexts and practice that values are important to acknowledge within all organisations “because personal, societal, professional and organisational values are so critical to the development of our social work expertise, it is important that we understand, at a deep level, how they can be helpful or unhelpful for the people we work with” (ibid. p. 56).
As with values in all organisations faith may be used in a way that is unhelpful for the beneficiaries and may obstruct the equal and high human value. One expression of this concerns the context of the study and is described in the Development Program: “the low status of women is deeply rooted in the religious and cultural life of the society at large” (CCI, p. 12). Another use of faith that may be inconsistent with human value is described by Clark (2008, p. 33) as an exclusive way when only people sharing the faith are supported. As the study has discussed there are no indications that this is the case for CCI. Nor does CCI use a persuasive use of faith although this can be anticipated in the communities in which they initiate projects. This tension may rise a question in what way churches engaged in development work should express Christian faith when working with beneficiaries of other or no faith. Here different approaches are possible and may include both words and actions. Whichever approach a persuasive use of faith can easily be recognized as problematic since the aim of the development work then is converting rather than “strengthening people’s capacity to determine their own values and priorities” (Eade and Willimas 1995, p. 9). When there is another focus than meeting the needs and rights of people the motive and prospect of development work initiatives may be questioned. Another approach to a discussion about the expression of faith regards the possible positive aspects of sharing Christian teachings. This is a complex and difficult question but important to address since churches engaged in development work probably also are engaged in spreading their faith. In the background presented in this thesis hope is mentioned as a possible contribution of religions. This notion, which I consider not so dogmatic, would be interesting to explore further in future research and could be addressed both from the perspective of the beneficiaries and the church.

In the thesis I mention how staff and resource persons from different religions are engaged in the development work of CCI. Moreover CCI also work together with other actors in the communities, both secular and based on different faiths. In the introduction Katherine Marshall (2001, p. 344) from the World Bank illustrates how faith institutions from every religion play a role in helping those in need. In India I saw many temples and mosques and it would be interesting to further explore the collaboration between organisations of different faiths engaged in development work. Such a collaboration could compose a powerful voice promoting the high and equal human value. Also this is of great significance in a society where the harmony of religious pluralism is promoted when different religious communities meet in local networks of civic engagement (see Ashutosh Varshney 2002, in Patel and Hartman 2009, p. 26).
Another issue addressed in this study is the separation between the development work and the evangelical activities of the church. It is primary discussed as connected to the interaction with people of other faiths however also other factors affect the role of faith in development work. One such is the relation with partner organisations and donors who also influence the development work itself. As the results indicates, human rights and the human value are motivated and promoted by Christian faith but are also important to donors, such as Sida. Cornwall and Brock (2005), researchers at the University of Sussex, discuss how certain concepts, like empowerment, have become mainstream in all development work since donors require this in order to provide financial support (ibid. pp. 1044, 1058). Here I believe the second understanding of the question in the title is relevant. A church is part of an international network fighting poverty and must balance its activities to meet both the requirement set by foreign donors and to do what they believe makes a difference in their community. The universal concept of human values must be understood and used in a way that corresponds to the local needs and context.

This thesis has addressed a church situated in the context of India and at the end I would like to turn the title of the thesis into a question to all of us: do we have faith in development work?
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Appendix 1: Interview guides

**Drawpadi**

- Introduction and ethical issues
- Can you describe what it is being a church?
- Can you describe your assignment as a development officer?
- What is women empowerment?
- Who else is involved in the development work?
- How do you identify which groups to work with here in ____?
  - Do you think faith may influence this in any way? How?
- What role do Christian faith have in your work with development issues?
- How do you experience working with beneficiaries of different faiths?
  - Difficulties?
  - Opportunities?
- How would you describe the relation between the development work and the evangelical work of ____?
- Conclude and end

**Basavva**

- Introduction and ethical issues
- What kind of support do you get from ____?
- How does the work with SHG help the people in the village?
- How often do the SHG meet people from ____?
- How is it decided who can be a member of a self-help group?
- ____ is a Christian church. In what way do you notice their faith?
- How would you describe the opinions about ____ among the people in the village?
  - Are there any other opinions?
- Are there any problems connected with ____ being a Christian church?
- Why do you think a church are engaged in social work?
- Conclude and end
Appendix 2: Informed consent

The purpose of the study is to explore the social work of ___ and its connection to their faith. It aims to gain knowledge about how a faith-based organisation can empower poor and socially excluded people. The study is part of a bachelor thesis done by Stefan Ershammar at Ersta Sköndal University College in Sweden, www.esh.se/eng.html.

The sources of data during the study will be participant observation, interviews and documents. The participant observation will last from the 15th of March to the 7th of May.

Consent

Participation in the study is voluntary and everyone will participate on his or her terms. That includes denying participation at any time and opposing that information regarding him or her may be used in the study.

Not participating in the study has no negative consequence for any individual or ____.

When doing interviews or when gaining information regarding personal or ethical complicated issues, a personal consent is required to use the acquired information in the study.

When participating in larger groups, such as services or projects, an individual consent will not be gathered from everyone present. If appropriate, a short presentation about the researcher and the study can be done as well as an invitation to, in personal, ask questions or deny any participation in the study.

Consent posterior to observation can be done if one was not obtained before.

Confidentiality

Information gained during the study will be treated confidentially and presented in such a way that people not being part of the group studied cannot identify individuals. Fictitious names for individual will be used and can be used also when referring to ___.

Use of information

Information gained during the study will exclusively be used for answering the presented research question and will not be communicated for any other purpose, although the final report will be public.

If you have any questions, comments or want to withdraw any information, please feel free to contact me at stefan@_____.com or 9934342105.

By signing I have agreed to the terms above

Thank you for participating!