

**Ethical frameworks, organisational practices and conduct: An analysis of
Christian Humanitarian Organisations (NGOs) in Germany**

by

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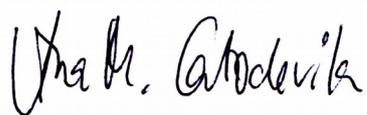
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Abstract

This interdisciplinary research study investigates the theory and practice of Christian humanitarian NGOs in Germany. Christian NGOs are generally unaware of the influence that secularism, relativism and the scientific world-view have had on their mind set and work life. Major consequences of this are, among other things, the separation of 'word' and 'deed', a weak Christian self-understanding and identity, a weak understanding of social ethics, as well as the dominance of a rational-secular view of business.

In this research study, the manner in which Christian organisations work in the midst of secular and pluralistic societies, how they relate to society, how Christian ethics is understood and lived out, and how organisational matters are dealt with are described. The findings of the research show that the relationship between secular society and Christian NGOs is controversial, since, on the one hand, there is a certain openness to religion from the side of national and supra-national institutions and governments, while, on the other hand, they restrict the religious activities of NGOs. Many Christian NGOs typically conform to the secular mind set and regulations in order to be able to function as organisations.

The findings suggest that Christian NGOs should strive to adopt a holistic world-view where faith, workplace and everyday life, as well as word and deed, belong together as a unity. Issues of character and character formation also need to be addressed and values need to be put into practice in a systematic way, e.g. by making them understandable for the staff and translating them into observable behavioural indicators.

Another recommendation is to strengthen the Christian profiles of the organisations in such a way that the internal and external information is coherent to ensure that the corporate image, corporate culture and corporate identity are perceived as credible and, at the same time, attractive to current and prospective donors and employees.

Key Terms

Business ethics, organisational ethics, theological ethics, ethical frameworks, non-governmental organisations, secularism, Christian faith, charity, human rights, emergency relief, development aid, corporate identity.

Opsomming

Hierdie interdisiplinêre studie ondersoek die teorie en praktyk van Christelike humanitêre nieregeringsorganisasies (NRO's) in Duitsland. Christelike humanitêre NRO's is in die algemeen onbewus van die invloed wat sekularisme, relativisme en 'n wetenskaplike wêreldbeskouing op hulle ingesteldheid en werkslewe gehad het. Die gevolg van hierdie invloede is onder meer 'n skeiding van "woord" en "daad", 'n swak Christelike selfbegrip en identiteit, 'n gebrekkige siening van maatskaplike etiek en 'n rasonale, sekulêre siening van die bedryfslewe.

In hierdie navorsing word ondersoek ingestel na die wyse waarop Christelike organisasies in sekulêre en pluralistiese samelewings funksioneer, hoe hulle by die samelewing aansluiting vind, hoe Christelike etiek verstaan en hoe daarvolgens gelewe word, en hoe hulle die organisasie se sake afhandel. Daar is bevind dat die verhouding tussen die sekulêre samelewing en NRO's stram is. Enersyds is nasionale en supranasionale instellings en regerings godsdiens gunstig gesind. Andersyds beperk hulle die godsdienstige werksaamhede van NRO's. Tallose Christelike NRO's pas hulle meestal by die sekulêre ingesteldheid en regulasies aan ten einde as organisasies te funksioneer.

Op grond van die bevindings word aanbeveel dat Christelike NRO's 'n holistiese wêreldbeskouing nahou waarvolgens geloof, werk en daaglikse lewe asook woord en daad 'n eenheid is. Aandag moet ook aan karakter en karaktervorming geskenk word, en waardes moet stelselmatig toegepas word deurdat dit byvoorbeeld aan die personeel verduidelik en sigbaar nageleef word as 'n voorbeeld van die gewenste gedrag.

Voorts word aanbeveel dat die Christelike karakter van die organisasies deur samehangende interne en eksterne inligting versterk word. Dit sal tot gevolg hê dat hulle korporatiewe beeld, kultuur en identiteit geloofwaardig is, en terselfdertyd huidige en voornemende skenkers en werknemers aantrek.

Sleutelterme

Besigheidsetiek, organisasieetiek, teologiese etiek, etiese raamwerke, nieregeringsorganisasies, sekularisme, Christelike geloof, liefdadigheid, menseregte, noodleniging, ontwikkelingshulp, korporatiewe identiteit.

Kafushane ngocwaningo

Lolu cwaningo olumkhakha-mningi lucubungula futhi luphenye ithiyori kanye nezinkambiso nezinqubo-kusebenza zezinhlango zesisa zamaKrestu ezingama-NGO kwelaseJalimane. Ngokuvamile, ama-NGO amaKrestu awanalo ulwazi ngomthelela namandla onawo umgomo othi inkolo akufanele ilawule noma ibe nomthelela phezu kwezinqumo zikahulumeni kanye nethiyori ethi iqiniso nokuziphatha kuncike kumuntu nomuntu kanye nendlela-kubuka umhlaba ngokwezesayensi, kwindlela-kucabanga yawo, ngokunjalo nesikhathi asichitha emsebenzini awenzayo. Imiphumela emikhulukazi yalokhu, phakathi kweminye, ukwehlukani kwezi 'kwezwi' kanye 'nezenzo', ukuziqonda kwamaKrestu okubuthakathaka kanye nesimo-bunjalo sawo esibuthakathaka, ubuthakathaka bokugondakala kwezinqubo-nkambiso zokuziphatha kanjalo futhi nobungqoshishilizi bombono webhizinisi ogxile ekutheni ukuziphatha kuya ngokomuntu kanye nothi inkolo akufanele ibe nomthelela phezu kwezinqumo zikahulumeni.

Kulolu cwaningo, kuchazwa indlela ezisebenza ngayo izinhlango zamaKrestu emiphakathini yabantu abanhlobonhlobo kubandakanya nalabo abangayilandelile inkolo, nendlela eziwuqonda ngayo umphakathi, nendlela okugondwa ngayo ukuziphatha nokuphila ngokobuKrestu kanye nendlela okubhekwana ngayo nezindaba zenhlango. Imiphumela etholakale kulolu cwaningo iyabonisa ukuthi ubudlelwano phakathi komphakathi ongayilandelile inkolo kanye nama-NGO amaKrestu wubudlelwano obunempikiswano ethile ngoba ngakolunye uhlangothi izikhungo kanye nohulumeni bazwelonke ngokunjalo nohulumeni abanamandla adlulela nasemazweni angaphandle banokuvuleleka okuthile uma kuza ngasodabeni lwenkolo, kanti futhi ngakolunye uhlangothi babe ka imikhawulo maqondana nemisebenzi yezenkolo yama-NGO. Izinhlango ezingama-NGO zivamise ukuthobela nokulandela indlela-kucabanga nemithethonqubo engaxilile kwezenkolo ukuze zikwazi ukusebenza njengezinhlango.

Imiphumela etholakale ocwaningweni ibonisa ukuthi izinhlango zamaKrestu ezingama-NGO kumele zishabashekele ukwamukela nokusebenzisa indlela-kubuka umhlaba ngokuphelele futhi ebandakanya konke, lapho ukholo, indawo yokusebenzela kanye nempilo yansukuzonke, kanjalo nezwi kanye nezenzo, kuyizinto ezimdibi munye futhi eziyimbumba. Izindaba eziphathelele nesimilo kanye nokwakheka kwesimilo nazo zidinga ukufakelwa izibuko futhi izimompilo kanye namagugu-mgomo nakho kumele kuqaliswe ngendlela ehlekile, isib. ngokwenza lokhu kuqondakale kubasebenzi futhi kuguqulwe kube yizinkomba-kuziphatha ezibonakalayo futhi eziphathekayo.

Esinye isincomo salolu cwaningo wukuqinisa izimo-bunjalo zobuKrestu zalezi zinhlango ngendlela ezokwenza ukuthi luhambelane ulwazi lwangaphakathi

nolwangaphandle ukuze kuqinisekiswa ukuthembakala kwesithombe senhlangano, usikompiko lwenhlangano kanye nesimo-bunjalo senhlangano, futhi kusenjalo, kuqinisekiswa ukuthi lokhu kuyabaheha abaxhasi nabasebenzi abakhona njengamanje kanye nalabo abangahle babe khona ngomuso.

Amagama asemqoka

Izinkambiso-kuziphatha zokuqhuba ibhizinisi, izinkambiso-kuziphatha zenhlangano, izinkambiso-kuziphatha zethiyoloji, izinhlaka zemithetho nemithethonqubo yokuziphatha, izinhlangano ezingekho ngaphansi kukahulumeni, ukholo lobuKrestu, Uhlelo lwabamele ezenkolo kuhulumeni, isisa, amalungelo obuntu, uhlelo olusheshayo lokuhlangula, usizo lwezentuthuko, usikompilo lwenhlangano.

Kurzdarstellung

Die vorliegende interdisziplinäre Forschungsarbeit untersucht Theorie und Praxis von christlichen humanitären NGOs in Deutschland. Christliche NGOs sind sich des Einflusses, den Säkularismus, Relativismus und wissenschaftliche Weltanschauung auf ihr Denken und Arbeitsleben haben, im Allgemeinen nicht bewusst. Wesentliche Folgen davon sind unter anderem die Trennung von "Wort" und "Tat", ein schwaches christliches Selbstverständnis, eine wenig ausgeprägte Identität, ein schwaches Verständnis von Sozialethik sowie eine stark rational-säkulare Sicht der Wirtschaft.

In dieser Studie wird beschrieben, wie christliche Organisationen inmitten einer säkularen und pluralistischen Gesellschaft arbeiten, wie sie mit der Gesellschaft interagieren, wie christliche Ethik verstanden und gelebt wird und wie mit organisatorischen Fragen umgegangen wird. Die Ergebnisse der Forschung zeigen, dass das Verhältnis zwischen säkularer Gesellschaft und christlichen NGOs kontrovers ist, da einerseits eine gewisse Offenheit gegenüber Religion von Seiten der nationalen und supranationalen Institutionen und Regierungen besteht, während andererseits die religiösen Aktivitäten von NGOs eingeschränkt werden. Viele christliche NGOs ordnen sich daher in der Regel den säkularen Denkweisen und Vorschriften unter, um als Organisationen funktionieren zu können.

Die Ergebnisse legen nahe, dass christliche NGOs danach streben sollten, sich eine ganzheitliche Weltanschauung anzueignen, in der Glaube, Arbeitsplatz und Alltag sowie Wort und Tat als Einheit zusammengehören. Auch Charakter- und Charakterbildungsfragen sollten angesprochen und Werte systematisch in die Praxis umgesetzt werden, z. B. indem sie für das Personal verständlich gemacht und in beobachtbare Verhaltensindikatoren umgesetzt werden.

Eine weitere Empfehlung besteht darin, die Profile der Organisationen so zu stärken, dass interne und externe Informationen kohärent zusammenwirken. Unternehmensimage, Unternehmenskultur und Unternehmensidentität soll dadurch als glaubwürdig und als attraktiv für aktuelle und zukünftige Spender und Mitarbeiter wahrgenommen werden.

Schlüsselbegriffe

Wirtschaftsethik, Organisationsethik, theologische Ethik, ethische Rahmenbedingungen, Nichtregierungsorganisationen, Säkularismus, christlicher Glaube, Nächstenliebe, Menschenrechte, Nothilfe, Entwicklungshilfe, Unternehmensidentität.

Curriculum Vitae

Ana Maria Cabodevila, a German-born Spanish citizen with residence in Germany and Spain, has more than 20 years of management experience in multinational corporations and NGOs. Her education includes university degrees in business management from the University of Applied Sciences in Frankfurt, in political science from the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich, and in inter-cultural studies from Columbia International University in South Carolina, USA. She has worked for multi-national corporations in a number of management positions, being responsible for international sales and marketing, as well as strategy. She left the corporate world to join a humanitarian organisation as CEO of the German affiliate office, and she worked with the Ruhr-University Bochum for a two-year project to implement a new Bachelor's programme for humanitarian action, which is part of the European Commission's NOHA (Network on Humanitarian Action) programme, head-quartered in Brussels. She lectures in management, organisation and business ethics at different management schools, and she is a consultant and trainer for business-related inter-cultural issues.

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Dedication

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List of Abbreviations

The following is an alphabetical list of abbreviations that are used.

ACK	Arbeitsgemeinschaft christlicher Kirchen (Council of Christian churches)
A.D.	Anno Domini
Art.	Article
BAM	Business as mission
B.C.	Before Christ
CAF	Charities Aid Foundation
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic church
CCEE	Catholic council of European bishops' conferences
CEC	Conference of European Churches
CEO	Chief executive officer
CHS	Core humanitarian standard
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
DEA	Deutsche evangelische Allianz (German evangelical alliance)
DIFÄM	Deutsches Institut für ärztliche Mission (German institute for medical mission)
DZI	Deutsches Zentralinstitut für soziale Fragen (German central association for social issues)
ECHO	The directorate-general for European civil protection and humanitarian aid operations
EKD	Evangelische Kirche Deutschlands (German evangelical church)
EZE	Evangelische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe (Protestant central office for development)
FSJ	Freiwilliges soziales Jahr (voluntary year of social service)
GDP	Gross domestic product
HR	Human resources
ICRC	International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
IEP	Internet encyclopaedia of philosophy
IFC	International finance corporation (World Bank)
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
KPI	Key performance indicators
KZE	Katholische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe (Catholic central office for development)
MAXQDA	Software for qualitative and mixed methods research
MDG	Millenium development goals
NE	Nicomachean Ethics
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPO	Non-profit organisation

OHCHR	Office of the UN high commissioner for human rights
PCID	Pontifical council for inter-religious dialogue
Pol.	Aristotle's Politics
Polit.	Plato's Politeia
RB	Regula Benedicti (Benedict's rules)
SDG	Sustainable development goals
TBL	Triple bottom line
UCD	University College Dublin
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations population fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VEEK	Versammlung eines ehrbaren Kaufmanns zu Hamburg (Assembly of an honourable merchant in Hamburg)
VENRO	Verband Entwicklungspolitik und humanitäre Hilfe (umbrella organisation of development and humanitarian aid non-governmental organisations)
viz.	videlicet
WCC	World council of Churches
WEA	World Evangelical Alliance
WW	World War
YMCA	Young Man's Christian Association

1. Introduction

“The way to the future leads back to Christian values” (Niemz 2009:16) – this is the conviction of Prof Norbert Walter as expressed in an interview with a Christian business magazine. In this interview, the late professor and former Chief Economist of Deutsche Bank, one of the biggest and most important German financial institutions, stated that business organisations needed more ethics, that the value of ethics should be stressed again, and that ethics is deeply Christian (:16). He also appealed to put a focus not only on personal role models to exemplify ethical living, but also on institutional regulations in organisations.

Walter is one of many business leaders who has taken part in discussion panels and interviews in the past years. Many business schools throughout the Western world started including ethical seminars and lectures in their curricula (Otte 2011:26)¹. In addition, books regarding ethical behaviour in business, ethical business making, etc. are being published. In the wake of many recent business scandals (e.g. Enron, Volkswagen, Siemens etc.) and the European-wide financial crisis, which was believed to be triggered by individual unethical behaviour, it seems that people are thinking increasingly about a return to adequate ethical performance in the business world.

For decades, political non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have drawn public attention to managerial misbehaviour in for-profit companies. Prominent examples are the company Shell with their oil platform *Brent-Spar*, facing pressure from the NGO Greenpeace because of their redundant oil platforms, and the Nike company because of their use of child labour. These rebukes by NGOs have led to a certain assumption that NGOs are clear of suspicion with regard to unethical behaviour. But NGOs have come into crossfire themselves, when reports have emerged that they have been suspected of considerable co-

1 In German public universities, a certain reluctance can be observed (see also the two theoretical schools in Germany discussed in 3.2.7). Some private universities in Germany consider offering lectures in limited parts of business ethics, for example CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility).

operation with the industry sector, contrary to their own idealistic values (Reuter 2014). Or there is the example of Brent-Spar, where Greenpeace forced the Shell-multinational to dispose of the oil platform on land by using incorrect figures about toxic substances, to prevent the oil platform being scuttled in the North Atlantic. Greenpeace later apologised for the incorrect figures (Schoon 1995), but the ethical damage had been done. Another more recent example is the humanitarian organisation Oxfam which has been accused of having sexually abused beneficiaries after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Oxfam itself belonged to the NGOs mentioned above that had claimed injustices by the world's rich against the world's poor (Booth 2018, n.p.). The journalist Mary Wakefield wrote in the *Spectator* in the aftermath of the Oxfam-coverage that, "the UN is in many ways a seedy closed shop" (Wakefield 2018), where millions are spent to promote something and then something completely different is done in practice (Wakefield 2018). Nobody, it seems, is able to obtain proper accountability from these organisations. Unsurprisingly, the critical voices, like the following, are many:

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), despite their size and power, are very seldom part of legislative activities which refer to transparency, duty of disclosure, untruthful advertising [...] Since NGOs are usually public charities, there are no ethical standards nor laws that apply to them, as is the case for profit companies. Whereas multinationals are under an obligation to disclose the salaries of the Boards or the internal businesses with members or supervisory boards to their stockholders and authorities, NGOs do not have to do this, even though their ethical current account often looks very different (Ebert 2017, own translation)².

2 Original quote: "Trotz ihrer Größe und Macht sind diese Nichtregierungsorganisationen (NGOs) selten Gegenstand von Gesetzen, die für Transparenz, Auskunftspflicht, wahrheitswidrige Werbung [...] gelten. Da NGOs in der Regel gemeinnützige Vereine sind, gelten für sie weder die ethischen Standards noch die Gesetze, nach denen sich gewinnorientierte Firmen zu richten haben. Während Konzerne verpflichtet sind, Informationen über Vorstandsgehälter, interne Geschäfte mit Mitgliedern oder des Aufsichtsrats ihren Aktionären und Behörden vorzulegen, müssen NGOs dies nicht tun. Und das, obwohl ihre ethische Leistungsbilanz oft ganz anders aussieht".

Christian humanitarian NGOs, the subject of this thesis, are also in some cases both big and powerful, but may be perceived to have a high level of ethical understanding and ethical practice. In addition to simply being an NGO, they do humanitarian work, and, on top of that, they call themselves *Christian*. It seems probable that society, churches, companies and private people may expect Christian NGOs to be more aware than others in terms of their ethical behaviour. But is this the case? Christian NGOs may be perceived to be more ethical, but here also it seems that nobody is really able to get an insight into the workings of the organisation.

This thesis investigates Christian NGOs working in a humanitarian context. What does ethics mean for Christian NGOs and from where do they draw their convictions? How do people working in a Christian NGO tackle the tension of working in the midst of a secular society? This thesis will try to shed some light on these questions. It will deal with Christian NGOs in Germany and their ethical approaches, and it will evaluate where they derive their business ethics from (for example, from the Christian theological tradition, Bible, philosophical approaches, etc.).

This introductory chapter provides background information about and definitions of Christian NGOs in Germany, and it presents research questions, discusses the study's significance, the methodology applied, its delineations and limitations, and it offers a brief chapter overview.

1.1 Motivation

For several years, I was part of a Christian international humanitarian organisation. On the one hand, I was employed, and, at the same time, I was responsible for leading an affiliate office as CEO in Germany. I was also busy lecturing in different universities about issues of humanitarian action and development issues, such as project management, ethics in humanitarian action and develop-

ment aid, and many others. During my time of working there, I observed three major conflicting issues that may be applicable for Christian NGOs in general.

The first observation is that Christian NGOs in the West must work rather quietly, in the midst of societies that are pluralistic and secular. Theological issues are not mentioned in public, except perhaps for terms like ‘neighbourly love’ or ‘Christian values’, – terms that seem to be innocuous and harmless and are also well-known in other groups of society. One example of this is that issues of spirituality in the working place, or prayer for the development workers, and many other religious issues are mostly passed from Christians to other Christians on the quiet. Stakeholders are separated into Christians and non-Christians, and the terminology and communication is adapted correspondingly.

The second observation is that Christian organisations must make decisions between professional and theological convictions, and they, thus, may have more pressure and greater dilemmas than other NGOs. Experts and technocrats have found their way into the humanitarian field, and this often forces Christian NGOs to have to choose between professional (technocratic) and theological aspirations, and this, understandably, cannot always be accomplished with satisfying results. An example that I have observed in several Christian organisations is that the position of CEO involves taking turns between being a management professional and being a theologian, and this juggling starts all over again after a certain time. Decision-making is, thus, difficult when business goals and Christian ethics are perceived to contradict each other. A decision I had to take, for instance, was when my NGO was offered a huge amount of money as a donation from a company that produces weapons or is severely involved in doing so. I was working on getting as many donations as possible as I had just started in Germany. In this case, however, this offer was turned down by me and my Board, for ethical reasons.

The third observation is that inside Christian NGOs there are challenges with regard to leadership and communication issues that do not fit well with

Christian behaviour, as I thought ought to be the case. For example, I observed in several organisations how people were dismissed in a cold-blooded way which frustrated not only the dismissed persons but also distressed the rest of the workforce. Mostly, these cases did not find their way into public awareness, but there are examples of unethical behaviour in Christian organisations that do find their way into the public domain. One incidence that happened in Germany in 2015 is the peculiar story about three deaconesses who were dismissed because they did “not play by the rules” (Keller 2015) of the deaconry. One deaconess, aged 51, was dismissed because she needed to receive medical care around the clock and so had to take off her religious attire and abstain from the communal life of the deaconesses. Another elderly deaconess was away caring for her sister in another part of the country, and this was deemed to be sufficient reason to dismiss her too. The third deaconess was engaged with the poor in a foreign country and did not want to come back to Berlin, Germany (Keller 2015). All three ladies had received original consent of their superiors for their specific situations years before. The Board, instead of dismissing the CEO for taking these sudden and harsh decisions, stepped down. On the one hand, the stepping down of the Board created a certain public interest; on the other, the three deaconesses were left alone (Keller 2015; Rösler, Sager & Günter 2015:22) with their dismissals unretracted. The tragedy was that the three ladies had lived all their lives in this deaconry on a monthly allowance. A dismissal in these houses is usually not envisaged and is not provided for. Employment in this kind of institution is supposed to be for life. Even worse, perhaps, was that this incident caused a massive reaction inside the Christian community in Germany, and did not leave a good impression on those who had supposed that Christian organisations would behave better morally than non-Christian ones.

These three observations are the motivation for what I intend trying to find out in this thesis: How do Christian NGOs work in terms of Christian faith and Christian ethics? Which are the ethical frameworks Christian NGOs are

drawing from, and how do these frameworks influence their organisational practices and conduct? These three observations are represented in the research question and the sub-questions, discussed in the next section. The value and the significance of the study will be explained in a later section (1.4).

1.2 Research question, sub-questions and objectives

This thesis has one main research question: *Which ethical frameworks (consciously or unconsciously) influence the organisational practices and behaviour of Christian organisations?* In order to answer this question, three sub-questions need to be discussed:

Sub-question #1: *How do Christian NGOs relate to the society and world in which they live?* To answer this sub-question, it is necessary to discuss the sources of ethical thinking as well as the motivation for working in a Christian NGO, since the motivation for working in a Christian NGO often stems from a certain world-view and certain assumptions. It is also crucial to gain knowledge about the interaction between the NGOs and their secular society.

Sub-question #2: *How is ethics understood and lived out in a Christian organisation?* This sub-question deals with what ethical frameworks are adopted and how Christian ethics is evident in the organisations interviewed, how issues dealt with encompass the Christian identity inside the NGO, the importance of character and character formation as a prerequisite for ethical behaviour, and the conduct and actions, as well as the corporate culture, inside the NGO.

Sub-question #3: *How do Christian NGOs deal with ethical matters in their organisational structures and practices?* This sub-question deals with the theoretical and practical issues inside Christian NGOs and their employees. It includes ethical decision-making, the challenge of the need to balance ethical and business matters, as well as issues regarding management and leadership.

From these research questions and the three sub-questions, the following objectives follow. The first is to research the literature of classical philosophy

and theological ethics in order to find out the sources of ethical thinking and the motivations that drive people in Christian humanitarian organisations. In addition, this objective is important when discussing the interaction that takes place between the NGOs and the secular society outside. This first objective will be dealt with in chapter two.

Secondly, in order to understand how Christian ethics is understood and lived out in the organisation, it will be necessary to research the literature regarding organisations, organisational ethics, and ethical behaviour in the organisation. The literature research needs to focus on the development of organisational ethics in general and in Germany in particular. This second objective will be covered in chapter three.

The third objective is to find out what possible ethical issues arise in organisational environments, for example the ethical challenges faced by NGOs when dealing with society and government, the processes inside the organisation and issues dealing with matters on an individual level (e.g. leadership). This third objective will be dealt with in chapter four.

The fourth objective is to gather empirical information from the NGOs themselves and discover whether this information correlates with the theoretical data derived from chapters two, three and four. Key issues discussed are the design of the questionnaire and the way that the interviews were conducted. The development of the questionnaire and the conducting of the interviews will be discussed in detail in chapters five and six.

1.3 Definitions of key terms and disciplines

This thesis draws on different academic disciplines, such as philosophy, theology, business management and humanitarian³ studies. It, therefore, has a strongly interdisciplinary character, with an ethical perspective as the connective element amongst the disciplines. The key terms defined below are ethics,

3 The term *humanitarian* in this thesis always include relief *and* development activities. See the explanation on 1.3.5.3.

morality, values, theological (Christian) ethics, ethical framework, business or organisational ethics, and general views on organisations, including non-profit and non-governmental organisations⁴.

1.3.1 Ethics, morality, and values

James Fieser, a professor of philosophy at the University of Tennessee, states that ethics, or moral philosophy, is about “systematising, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behaviour” (Fieser n.d.). Louise Kretzschmar, professor of theological ethics at the University of South Africa, states that ethics critically reflects “on the moral norms, values and behaviour of individuals and societies to assess their validity. Ethics also considers what it means to be good or right” (Kretzschmar 2009:16). There are different classifications of ethics. In philosophy, ethical theories are usually divided into three general areas: meta-ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics (Fieser n.d.). Fieser defines these three in the Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (IEP), as follows:

Meta-ethics investigates where our ethical principles come from, and what they mean. Are they merely social inventions? Do they involve more than expressions of our individual emotions? Meta-ethical answers to these questions focus on the issues of universal truths, the will of God, the role of reason in ethical judgements, and the meaning of ethical terms themselves. *Normative ethics* takes on a more practical task, which is to arrive at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. This may involve articulating the good habits that we should acquire, the duties that we should follow, or the consequences of our behaviour on others. Finally, *applied ethics* involves examining specific controversial issues, such as abortion, infanticide, animal rights, environmental concerns, homosexuality, capital punishment, or nuclear war. [...] The lines of distinction between meta-ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics are often blurry. (Fieser n.d.)

4 Other terms are explained during the course of the thesis.

Normative ethics are prescriptive, which means that they give explicit moral direction in order that people know what is right or wrong, or at least desirable. Descriptive ethics, in contrast, does not make moral judgements, but only describes different ethical situations in all its facets.

In this thesis, normative and applied ethics will play important roles. Normative ethics encompasses virtue theories, duty theories and consequentialist theories, and applied ethics includes business ethical and social ethical theories.

In contrast to ethics, morality encompasses the specific behavioural norms that we deem to be correct, for example punctuality or honesty, to name but two. The problem with morality is that it reflects the time in which we live. What seems to be morally correct today is not necessarily seen as being morally correct the next day. Hence, there is a need for an ethical reflection and evaluation of what is regarded as morally right or wrong action or behaviour. Morality is also prone to the danger of becoming moralistic and pointing at people (Holthaus 2014:12). In addition, in this context it is important to point out the definition of values.

Values are fundamental principles of life that give us meaning, purpose, and orientation in life. They are ideals with a high amount of commitment, quality and long-term ethical convictions, and they are more robust than mere attitudes. Values are the basis for our action, they are the compass of our deeds⁵ (Holthaus 2014:11f, own translation).

The term ‘value’ was originally not theological, but rather economic. It was used in the sense of exchange value which becomes obvious in the writings of John Stuart Mill and Adam Smith (Oermann 2014:191) and was later adopted by Hermann Lotze, a German philosopher. The term ‘core values’ has been elaborated

5 Original quote: “Innere Werte sind so etwas wie grundlegende Lebensprinzipien des Menschen, die unserem Sein Sinn, Bedeutung und Richtung geben. Sie sind Ideale mit hoher Verbindlichkeit und Qualität, langfristige ethische Überzeugungen, die stabiler sind als bloße Einstellungen. Werte sind die Basis für unser Handeln, sie sind der Kompass unserer Taten”.

by Roman Catholic ethicists, such as Oswald von Nell-Breuning and Johannes Messner. Von Nell-Breuning used values as guidelines, e.g. for politics, and for Messner, an Austrian theologian and economist, it was important that values be at the heart of both individuals and cultures (:191f). He states that values are part of the teleological dimension of human behaviour, since they are subjectively perceived as the part of the purpose of an action (:193) According to his view, values are important for the orientation of human behaviour, but they do not necessarily bring about normatively based human behaviour (:193-194). Norms have more moral force because they are seen as obligations (e.g. ‘do not steal’). Norms and values often appear together, however, since both terms are closely connected (:194).

1.3.2 Theological Christian ethics

1.3.2.1 What ‘Christian’ means

Christians are people who have a Christian mind-set or attitude. Christians, from the very beginning, have been those who followed Jesus and have been called His disciples. This can be read for the first time in the Bible in Acts 11:26, when followers of Jesus were called Christians by their enemies in Syrian Antioch around 43 A.D. Only in two other places is the word ‘Christian’ mentioned in the New Testament, in Acts 26:28 and 1 Peter 4:16 (Rienecker & Maier 2006:312). Christians split into different groups in later centuries, for example after the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. when the Roman Catholic Church separated from the Eastern Orthodox Church in the 11th century.

In past centuries, Christians divided themselves into different church groups or traditions, a segmentation process called confessionalisation, triggered by the Reformation in the 16th century (Leonhardt 2004:318). They formed different church types with their own statements of confession, such as Anglicanism, Roman Catholicism, Lutheran and Reformed Protestantism, all of which claimed to be ‘Christian’ (:318; 13). The differences were found predomi-

antly in the discussions regarding the authority of the Bible, the doctrine of justification, ecclesiology and the sacraments (:15). The era of Enlightenment, with its emphasis on reason alone, challenged the Christian acceptance of revelation, faith, reason and experience as sources of knowledge (:48) and questioned the existence of God and the validity of faith.

In Germany, Christianity emerged in two main directions, Protestants and Roman Catholics. The Protestants, amongst whom I count myself, nowadays can be found between the so-called German Evangelical Church (*Evangelische Landeskirche*)⁶, which represents the unified Lutheran and Reformed Churches⁷, and the Free Churches (*Evangelische Freikirchen*). In this thesis, Christian humanitarian NGOs led or established by the German Evangelical Church, Free Churches and the Roman Catholic Church will be researched. Eastern Orthodox beliefs or convictions (Greek, Russian, Syrian Orthodox, etc.) are not included.

Christians believe that humanity has fallen from God's original intention, namely to have an intimate relationship with God (Dt 6:4-5; Mk 12:30). Instead of that, they are separated from God and are trapped in sin (Rm 1:18-32). Sin has penetrated every facet of their life, perverting and destroying relationships. The Christian answer to this desperate situation is to respond to God's invitation of salvation by the death of Jesus Christ. Jesus offered his life out of love for humanity (Jn 3:16). Since he has conquered sin by his death, people who follow Jesus as 'Christians', know that with the help of God they can resist and overcome sin and its consequences for their social lives in this life (Rm 8:37; 12:21; 13:12-

6 The German term *evangelisch* – which means 'of the Gospel' – more accurately corresponds to the broad English term Protestant rather than to the narrower term evangelical (in German called *evangelikal*), although other Protestant churches in the USA, Canada and the UK (e.g. the Evangelical Lutheran Churches) use the term in the same way as the German church does.

7 Lutheran and Reformed churches overcame their differences in 1973 with the signing of the Leuenberg Agreement, in Basle, Switzerland. In this agreement, 103 Lutheran, Reformed, United, Methodist and Hussite churches, as well as churches of the pre-Reformation Waldensian and the Bohemian Brethren, were united. Five South-American churches that were initiated by German immigrants were also included (Leonhardt 2004:61).

14). They also know that they have a hope of eternal life (Jn 3:16; 3:36) in a communion with their Creator, and they are to be witnesses in society and to the world.

Christians follow the two-fold law of love (Mk 12:29-31) stating that love has a vertical dimension (loving God) and a horizontal dimension (loving others) (Kessler 2012:6). The love-relationship of Christians with God enables them to love others, and this love is the foundation for their deeds.

1.3.2.2 Christian ethics

Theological ethics “encompasses the entire field of ethical concerns, but includes the important determinant of a theological framework of understanding” (Kretzschmar 2004:22). Patrick Nullens and Ronald T. Michener, two professors of systematic theology in Leuven, Belgium, state that Christian ethics today “must be about the business of charitable bridge building across cultures, races, languages, and continents; between the ancient world and contemporary life; and between philosophy and theology” (Nullens & Michener 2010:1). It also has to reflect the different “influences colouring everyday life” (:1), and it has to give answers to the question of what it means to be Christian in a pluralistic world, where there are so many competing world-views (:1). Both professors present a working definition in their book *The Matrix of Christian Ethics* (2010) in which they develop a quadrilateral matrix of values, norms, virtues, and purposes that they analyse further throughout their book:

Christian ethics is methodological reflection on the values, norms, virtues, and purposes of Christian life in one’s contemporary context, drawing on Scripture and the tradition of faith (Nullens & Michener 2010:12) [...] It is careful, hard thinking about what it means to be a follower of Jesus in daily decisions, with ultimate respect for God and others. (:20)

Two verses are especially important in this context; in one it says that faith must be accompanied by action (Ja 2:17), otherwise faith is dead. The other one

states, as mentioned previously, that there is a command to love one another, as God has loved us (Jn 13:34). Love is even made the distinctive feature in verse 35: “by this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Christians are, therefore, exhorted to make this distinctive feature evident for everyone in their behaviour. Their actions should “display grace, love and charity of Christ to others” (Nullens & Michener 2010:20). In the same vein, Steffen Fleßa, a professor at Greifswald University, states that there are three dimensions of Christian existence: ‘deacony’, ‘missions’ and ‘liturgy’, and that Christian life suffers if one dimension is neglected (Fleßa 2003:45). Diacony (or charity), being the loving service of one’s neighbour (:47), Missions, being the mission of Christians to the outside world as promoted by the Old and New Testament (:51), as well as liturgy and worship (and prayer and fellowship) that is at the heart of the relationship with God (:54). These three are inextricably linked and are the foundation of the work of Christian humanitarian organisations.

1.3.3 Ethical frameworks

Ethical frameworks are a set of codes that individuals, groups or organisations use to guide their behaviour. These theories of morality are based on different convictions or foundations of ethics and on different world-views. Ethical frameworks promote the common good and balance the benefits of an action to the society against the costs (and risks). A duty-led set of codes stresses the moral obligations in a specific situation and emphasises doing duties, tasks and obligations responsibly. This is also called deontological ethics. It is ‘theonomous’ when the moral acts are subjected to God’s laws of authority. Another ethical framework is the rights-defined approach where ethics are based on the fact that all humans are entitled to certain rights. Teleological ethics derives moral behaviour from what is desirable as an end to be achieved, and virtue-led frameworks answer the question of what a good person would do.

This thesis draws specifically on Christian ethics which constitutes another ethical framework. It incorporates many elements including moral obligations, rights, goals and virtues.

In this thesis, the different ethical frameworks will be discussed. The aim is to see the influences of these frameworks on the work, organisational practices and behaviour of Christian NGOs.

1.3.4 Business (organisational) ethics

In this section, different definitions and approaches regarding organisational ethics in organisations will be explained briefly.

1.3.4.1 Different definitions of business ethics

Business ethics encompasses three categories. Firstly, there is the macro-level which is the level of economic systems, politics, and society. Examples are ethical questions concerning the distribution of economic resources, justice, economic legislative processes, and economic policies. Secondly, there is the meso-level, the organisation's level. Here issues such as compliance and corporate governance, corruption, as well as value-driven, ethical, and sustainable management, corporate social responsibility, etc. are important. And, finally, there is the level of the individual. Here topics like consumerism, leadership, inter-personal relationships, virtue ethics, etc. form the micro-level.

A very typical phenomenon in the German-speaking business ethics literature is that it differentiates clearly between *Unternehmensethik* (the ethics of the business company which focuses on decision-making, management and leadership issues relating the company) and *Wirtschaftsethik* (ethics of the economic system). Sonja Grabner-Kräuter, a management professor in Klagenfurt, Austria, states that there is no joint word in German for both terms (Grabner-Kräuter 2003:26). In this thesis, *Unternehmensethik* encompasses the macro-level insofar as it touches on the relationship between company and society, the meso-level of the organisational entity, and the micro-level of the individual

person. This three-fold approach is dealt with by Thomas Maak who, together with Peter Ulrich, wrote the book *Integre Unternehmensführung* (2007) that will also help narrow down the issues which are important for researching Christian NGOs. Both authors have lectured in the renowned university of St Gallen, Switzerland and are well-known experts in business ethics in German-speaking Europe. The three-fold approach stands for Policies, Processes, and People or '3P' (Maak & Ulrich 2007:14) and this can be defined as follows. Policies stands for the macro-level, processes for the meso-level, and people for the individual, or the micro-level. In the following scheme, the different definitions are outlined and it is shown how the term 'business ethics' will be used in this thesis:

Table 1: Delineation of the term Business Ethics (own graphic based upon the idea of Götzelmann 2010:12).

Level	Subject of ethics	Topics include	English term/ German translation	'3P' by Maak and Ulrich	Terms used in this thesis
Macro-level	Economy and society	Economic systems, distribution of economic resources, justice, economic legislative processes, economic policies, civil society, etc.	Business ethics / Wirtschaftsethik	-	Macro ethics; Business ethics
		Corporate Citizenship, Corporate Stewardship, Stakeholder involvement, etc.	Business ethics / Unternehmensethik	Policies	Organisational ethics; Policies
Meso-level	Organisation, company, corporation, institution	Culture of integrity, compliance, corporate governance, etc.	Business ethics / Unternehmensethik	Processes	Organisational ethics; Processes
Micro-level	Individual	Leadership, human relations, ethical decision-making, character formation, etc.	Business ethics / Unternehmensethik	People	Organisational ethics; Individual ethics; People

Throughout this thesis, the term ‘business ethics’ will be used when speaking about all levels generally, and ‘organisational ethics’ when *Unternehmensethik* is meant. When referring to, or quoting from, Anglo-Saxon literature, the original wording will be used to avoid confusion.

1.3.4.2 Conceptual approaches

In the light of numerous scandals taking place in the business world, many of them owing to widespread unethical behaviour, the combination of both the term ‘business’ and the term ‘ethics’ do not seem to fit together and the combination provokes a certain uneasy feeling with many people. The terms seem to be perceived as being a great distance from each other. Even if they may not necessarily contradict each other, a tension will always be there.

In chapter three of this thesis, I will discuss important theories regarding the tension between business and ethics. Some authors argue that ethics should control business, and some consider that business goals ought to prevail over ethical reasoning. Some may see a balance between the two poles as the most promising way for corporate success. The question that will also be discussed is how this separation came about from a philosophic, historical view, and how the contribution of Christian thought can help to overcome this dualism.

1.3.4.3 Business ethics – scope of reflection

Business ethics prompts the question of whether the moral responsibility of an organisation can be reduced to the moral responsibility of individuals. If the organisation does not show moral integrity, how can the individuals working there be expected to work in a morally responsible manner? In the case of the three deaconesses mentioned above who were treated in an incorrect way by their superiors, the question arises as to whether only the individuals who deprived the ladies of their life-time jobs were to blame, or whether the ethical framework of the organisation was already faulty and was also accordingly to blame for this deviation from moral behaviour. In many cases, on closer exam-

ination, organisational failures may be one reason why individuals tend to fail. Examples could be a lack of personnel, bad working conditions, and other shortcomings. This does not exempt the individuals from their moral responsibility, but their behaviour might well be viewed in a different light.

Entrepreneurial decisions or actions, according to Grabner-Kräuter (2000:293), have a moral or ethical element when these decisions or actions imply consequences for people, creatures or the environment. This definition not only supports the idea that organisations have a moral responsibility, but it also states that almost all decisions in business have ethical dimensions of different degrees. The moral responsibility of both the organisation and the individual will, thus, be emphasised in this thesis.

1.3.5 Organisations

In this section, the terms ‘organisation’ in general and, specifically, ‘non-governmental’ and ‘non-profit organisations’ will be explained.

1.3.5.1 What is an organisation?

Organisation in companies or NGOs is necessary because of the simple fact that a division of labour exists and many tasks need to be performed. Organisation, therefore, has something to do both with establishing and maintaining order in an establishment and with reducing inefficiency (Wöhe & Döring 2013:100f). Still, there is a gap between perfect planning and any deficient performance of an organisation. The reason lies in its people who struggle to cope with insufficient information and insufficient motivation (:100). The bigger the organisation, the bigger this gap becomes. This also means that an organisation is and stays imperfect and must be adapted when essential elements of an organisation change.

Stefan Kühl, a German professor for organisation development, who draws inspiration from renowned German sociologist, Niklas Luhmann, presents three

characteristics of what an organisation is all about, membership, scope of business, and hierarchy (Kühl 2011:16ff.).

The first is membership, where a person who wishes to belong to an organisation needs to fulfil certain conditions. The second characteristic is the scope of business. Organisations work with objectives that need to be striven for by the whole organisation and by each employee. For example, the scope of business for a company that produces consumer goods is to make a profit from those goods and to provide a community with products. Or, the scope of business for a university is to produce knowledge by both teaching and research activities. The third characteristic, according to Kühl, is hierarchies. Although hierarchies lose their significance in the Western world in general, they do matter significantly in organisations. Kühl states, with some irony, that even the fondest advocate of democracy stops their enthusiasm when it comes to the internal structures of administrations of universities, agencies, or companies (Kühl 2011:20). The most important detail about these three characteristics is that organisations can themselves decide on membership, scope of business as well as their hierarchies, without restriction of any kind or influence from outside. Christian NGOs are independent (seen from the outside) with regards to all of these three characteristics. If the organisation, and not the individual alone, is a moral agent it can be argued that its membership scope and hierarchies may have an impact on the ethical behaviour or management inside an organisation.

Apart from these three characteristics, Kühl states there are routines, forms and rules which are typical for any organisation. They can be formal, informal or simply for keeping up a façade. He calls those routines 'artefacts', rituals or widely accepted behaviour patterns in an organisation. He states that organisations have rules (such as codes of conduct) and a corporate culture. This is affirmed by both Linda Klebe Treviño and Katherine A. Nelson, both from the Pennsylvania State University, when they say that every organisation

has formal and informal elements of ethical culture (Klebe Treviño & Nelson 1999:204 ff).

1.3.5.2 Non-Profit Organisations

This thesis deals with Non-Governmental Organisations which belong to the (larger grouping of) non-profit classification of organisations. Before dealing with the NGOs in the next subsection, a general overview on non-profit organisations in Germany will be given. Non-profit organisations are understood to be different from profit organisations, where the prioritised aim is to make profits to invest and grow. In contrast, NPOs do not aim for profits, and this means that financial gain, if any, is not distributed to any shareholder at the end of a fiscal year, but may stay in the organisation. There are no clear and comprehensive definitions on NPOs, but only different aspects which assist in creating, or omitting to create, an idea of what an NPO means (Meyer & Simsa 2013:5-7).

In all European countries NPOs have gained considerable influence in society, culture, and the economy. They are heterogeneous, which means they are very different from one another regarding tasks, self-conception, size, levels of organisation, legal structure and political orientation, and other features (Meyer & Simsa 2013:5).

In Germany, NPOs have a long history. They have their origin in the revolution of 1848 which erupted in Austria and Germany when the middle and working classes demanded an improvement in working and living conditions. The revolutionaries demonstrated their discontent with the traditional, largely autocratic political structure of their countries, and this served as a basis for the proliferation of socially-committed organisations. Organisations in German-speaking countries have, thus, evolved differently from those in other countries (Meyer & Simsa 2013:5). In addition, the relationships of the so-called 'Third Sector' (see figure 1 below) to the German government are much more collaborative and more institutionalised, and, for this reason, the organisations delivering

services have expanded enormously during the past years and have been established with state funding, especially since World War II (Brandsen 2013:405).

In Germany, the Third Sector manifests considerable religious and political diversity (Brandsen 2013:405). As a matter of fact, “the significant position of the Third Sector in Germany has been combined with emphasis upon the principle of subsidiarity, indicating that what communities themselves are able to achieve should not be taken up by governments” (:405). Non-profit organisations in Germany make up about 4 % of the total German GDP, and have an estimated 2,5 million people, working for them⁸. This means a ratio of 10 % of the total working places in Germany (Zimmer, Priller & Anheier 2013:23).

Both profit and non-profit organisations are part of different sectors in a nation’s structure. The non-profit sector is often called the private (or third) sector. The other two sectors are the state and the market. The three sectors are by no means isolated from one another. On the contrary, they frequently interrelate in juridical, personnel, financial or political issues (Meyer & Simsa 2013:10), which can be seen clearly in the next figure:

8 These figures do not include unpaid volunteers.

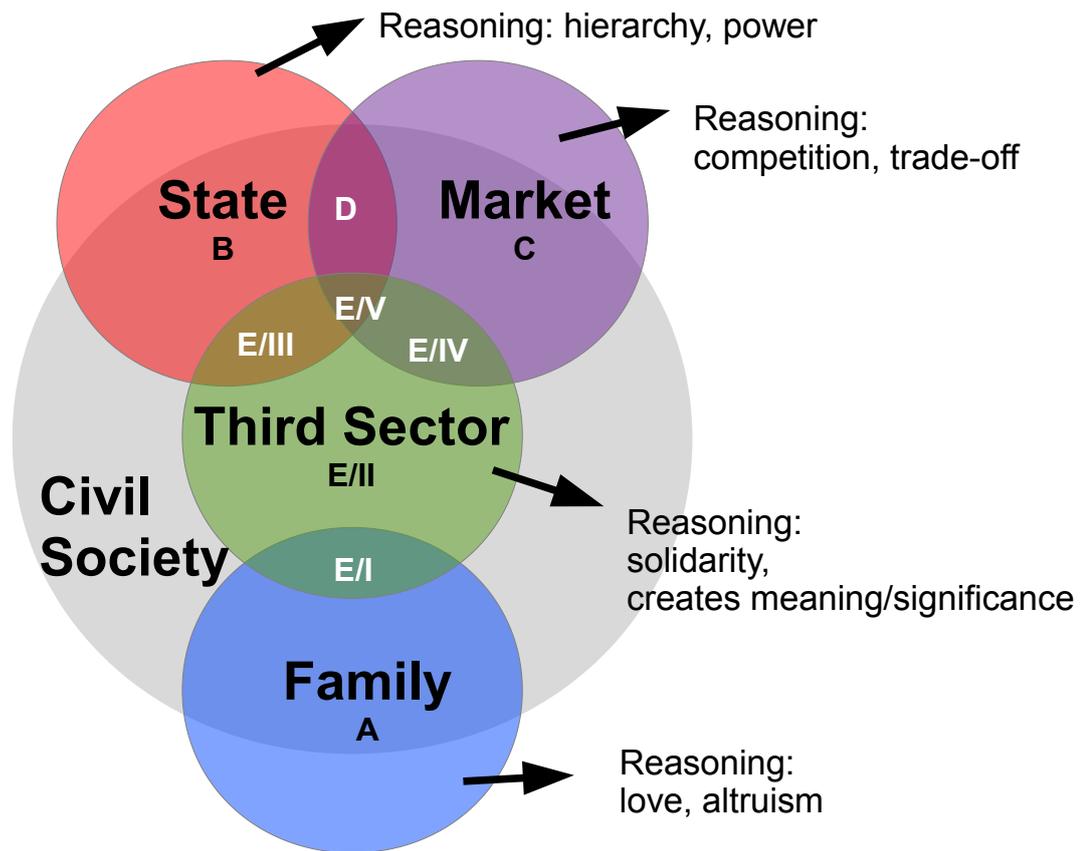


Figure 1: Delineation between the three sectors, civil society, and family

Sources: Meyer & Simsa (2013:10); Nährlich (2013:4).

Figure 1 shows the different sectors of a society and their intersections: D (the intersection between market and state) stands for examples such as state-run or urban enterprises or publicly owned undertakings. E/I may include self-help groups, E/II can be foundations or private clubs, E/III may include corporations under public law with local autonomy or chambers, whereas E/IV may be social business companies or alternative companies. Lastly, E/V may represent the social services of public welfare companies.

The figure also shows that there is no clear delineation between the sectors. Private organisations that belong to the Third Sector, for example NGOs, can be supported by the state and yet still be non-governmental. They can assume public tasks, interrelate with markets, and still not belong to the market and the state. The scheme also shows that the Third Sector does not equate to

what is known as civil society (which is defined as “a dense network of groups, communities, networks, and ties that stand between the individual and the modern state” [Kenny n.d.]), since sections of market and state can also be part of a nation's civil society.

The non-governmental organisations dealt with in this thesis – humanitarian organisations – can be classified mainly as E/II and, thus, a part of the Third Sector. In addition, they are influenced by, and interrelate with, the other sectors. For example, the sector ‘family’ is important for the recruitment of personnel in humanitarian organisations or when it comes to generating private donations. Inside families, moral formation takes place, since the families are the ones who are supposed to teach the basic foundations for neighbourly love and altruism. Christian organisations, thus, work in the midst of the societal sectors of state, market and family, and belong to the civil society.

1.3.5.3 Non-Governmental Organisations⁹

The term ‘Non-Governmental Organisations’ is relatively new. In 1910, when 132 international organisations decided to cooperate with one another, they were still called the ‘Union of International Associations’ (Willets 2006, n.p.). The term non-governmental organisations emerged in 1945, when the Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations was established in June of that year:

The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with **non-governmental organisations** which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned (UN Charter 1945: Art. 71, my emphasis).

9 Note for the whole thesis: I will use the acronyms NGO, NPO or FBO and will use the plural form with an attached ‘s’. This is widely accepted in the academic world and the use will be accompanied by the correct verb forms or possessive forms: ‘NGOs *are*’, ‘the *NGO*’s procedure’, or the plural possessive form such as ‘the *NGOs*’ procedures’ (Tetzner 2016, n.p.).

NGOs, unlike other non-profit organisations, are driven by an explicitly public mission, e.g. development organisations aim to “serve under-served or neglected populations, to expand the freedom of or to empower people, to engage in advocacy for social change, and to provide services” (McCarthy, Hodgkinson & Sumariwalla 1992:3 cited in Berger 2003:19). In addition, NGOs tend to show a high level of diversity which has, for instance, been observed by James A. Paul, former Executive Director of the Global Policy Forum:

NGOs, like nation states, are a very diverse lot. In addition to the great organizations dealing with human rights, environmental protection and humanitarian relief, there are NGOs representing industries like soap and chemicals, fundamentalist religious sects and flying saucer watchers. While some NGOs are fiercely independent, others are known as the creatures of corrupt governments, grasping businesses or other less-than-selfless interests. Some have tens of thousands of members around the world while others are no more than one or two people. Some have large central secretariats and some are very decentralized. Some lean to the left and some are definitely on the right. With such diversity, generalizations about NGOs can be dangerously misleading [...] (Paul 1996:2).

There are four characteristics determined by the United Nations for organisations to be recognised as NGOs. They must be independent from the direct control of any government, they will not be constituted as a political party, they will be non-profit-making, and they will be non-violent (Willetts 2006, n.p.). An NGO can, thus, be defined as “an independent voluntary association of people acting together on a continuous basis, for some common purpose, other than achieving government office, making money or illegal activities” (Willetts 2006, n.p.). Another definition would be, “NGOs are formal (professionalised) independent societal organisations whose primary aim is to promote common goals at the national or the international level” (Martens 2002:282). They are formal organisations since they have at least a minimal organisational structure, they are professionalised since their staff can be paid and are usually highly trained pro-

fessional workers, and the organisation is non-profit oriented. This means that they are independent since their funding comes mostly from donations and/or membership fees. NGOs are societal organisations since they originate from the private sphere, and not from governmental institutions (Martens 2002:282; Benedetti 2006:850-851).

To provide a clear and distinct definition for an NGO is, therefore, not possible. But it can be made clear that the terms NGO and NPO are not the same. They can be defined by looking at them from different perspectives. The term 'NPO' is used when looking at them from a business perspective (there, the emphasis is usually the non-profit element), and the term 'NGO' is used when looking at the organisation from the UN-perspective (there, the emphasis may rather be on the characteristic of being non-state-ruled). There is a huge overlap, since sometimes NGOs are NPOs or *vice versa*, but they do not mean the same. I will, thus, always refer to the organisations I am dealing with as NGOs, as an abbreviation for non-governmental organisations.

In this thesis, I am dealing with NGOs in development cooperation and relief (or humanitarian action), but, for reasons of comprehensiveness and easier reading, I will use the term 'humanitarian' for both, differentiating them more clearly only if necessary and relevant.

1.4 The significance of the study

Christian NGOs have made huge contributions in their work which has earned them incrementing acceptance throughout the humanitarian world. International and supranational organisations, such as the UN (Barnett & Stein 2012:4) and the World Economic Forum (Seiple 2016, n.p.), are beginning to recognise the importance of religion for humanitarian work. This thesis is significant because it shows the contributions and challenges, as well as the underlying ethical frameworks, of Christian NGOs. It also shows to what extent Christian NGOs experience tensions and insecurities because of the secular environment in

which they work and the consequences that this has for most of them. Light is, thus, shed on the way Christian NGOs tackle these tensions and challenges.

This thesis sheds light on the reality of the working situation of Christian organisations at the levels of policies, processes, and people. This study is significant in that it clarifies to what extent ethical issues are important and dealt with by the organisations.

My intention is that this research will have an impact on the reflection and practice of leaders of NGOs in their quest to understand developments and paradigm shifts, and that they will act in a recognisably Christian way. The research study, thus, has significance for the employees, the humanitarian agencies themselves, the donors, church and society.

The academic value of this thesis is that it has interdisciplinary links between theological ethics and other academic fields in relation to NGOs and, especially, Christian NGOs. It contributes to an understanding of the moral issues raised in social ethics (e.g. common good or human-rights approach) and business ethics (e.g. decision-making, issues of conflict, business/faith dilemmas). Furthermore, this thesis contributes to the overall critique on the increasing humanism, secularism and rationalism which have influenced people and societies in the Western world. It tries to help Christian NGOs be better equipped to defend their religious ideals inside the humanitarian industry and to live out their aims with self-assurance.

1.5 Research design and methodology

1.5.1 Theoretical research framework

It can be argued that Christian NGOs are influenced by the philosophical and theological ethics shaped by ancient Greek and other philosophers as well as a range of Christian theologians. It can also be assumed that business theorists have influenced them, as have their respective societies, composed of the market, state, civil societies, other NGOs and family, although exactly which influ-

ences are important in these cases is not easy to delineate. In my investigation, I have put a focus on ethical (philosophical and/or theological) frameworks that have an impact on the business life and practical performance of Christian NGOs. Christian NGOs are not isolated entities in society, and this means that the influences of market, state and family are always visible, while the society itself is influenced by philosophical and theological thought.

Three steps are necessary to find out how Christian NGOs and their behaviour are influenced by these ethical frameworks. Firstly, what kind of philosophical and theological thinking has shaped the thought of the Western world up to this day needs to be analysed. This will be done in a thorough literature review and discussion in chapter two.

As a second step, an analysis of business or organisational ethics literature will be dealt with. Organisational ethics in the long run are influenced by many philosophical and theological ideas. For example, the way business is done in Europe is connected to the idea of rationalism, which is a consequence of the Enlightenment. This is discussed in chapter three.

In a third step, in chapter four, humanitarian organisations will be discussed in depth, along with their history and classifications, and the key issues they are dealing with in their work. Moreover, some light will be shed on their organisation, the processes, and the ethical issues they face in their work. In this third step, my own experiences will be incorporated.

The three steps accrue from the four disciplines that this thesis deals with, namely philosophy, theology, business management, and humanitarian studies (the latter encompassing – depending on university – studies of development and/or disaster relief). Philosophy deals with “the rational, abstract, and methodical consideration of reality as a whole or of fundamental dimensions of human existence and experience” (Britannica n.d.). In the case of the thesis, ethical approaches as part of philosophical thought will be discussed. Theology is the study of God, religious faith, and the practice of this faith in day-to-day life.

It includes the study of God, the Bible and God's revelation to human beings through their experience of life in their journey of faith. Business management is a discipline that deals with activities associated with running a company. These include leadership, controlling, organising and planning. Humanitarian studies is a discipline that deals with disaster relief and/or development science, and it is, in many cases, offered as two separate studies and it includes the handling of political and sociological topics regarding a variety of professions, be they medical, managerial, organisational or other. In this thesis both will be dealt with together in view of their characteristic of being humanitarian. Whilst all four disciplines can be defined as separate from one another, they are linked strongly by their ethical considerations.

In essence, the theoretical part of the thesis will, thus, be divided into three parts: firstly, ethical philosophical and theological ethical theories dealt with in chapter two; followed by a detailed discussion about business ethical theories in chapter three; and, in a fourth chapter, the specifics and the challenges of Christian NGOs.

In the following pages, I will give a brief literature review, illustrate the research design that underlies this thesis, and I will then comment on the methodology for the empirical research.

1.5.2 The literature review

This thesis deals with a wide range of topics and, thus, requires reading in the disciplines of philosophy, theology, Christian ethics, business ethics, management and leadership, non-governmental organisations, and humanitarian studies. The research study has drawn substantially from the literature in these disciplines, where I have drawn on relevant German and English literature (mainly from the UK and the USA), but where I have focussed on the German context within which the Christian NGOs operate.

In order to study these frameworks, ethical ideas and paradigm-shifts in theological and philosophical thought needed to be scrutinised from the Classic Greek to modern thinkers. Some of the standard works of Aristotle and pre-17th century Christian ethicists, such as Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Calvin, were consulted. Influential thinkers of the Enlightenment era such as Kant (1783, 1998) with his focus on reason, as well as Bentham (1776) and Mill (1879) who complemented each other on their ideas of utilitarianism needed to be included as well. For Christian ethics, a number of theological ethicists are discussed, such as Gustafson (1986), McGrath (1997), Wells (1998) as well as Wogaman (2011) and Nullens and Michener (2010) who contributed to Christian ethics in a post-modern context. They have contributed to Christian ethics with regards to world-views, a rejection of the division between matter and spirit, the common good, natural law, virtues and other concepts. In addition, dealing with them has been essential since the activities of Christian NGOs should be genuinely Christian.

The research question also made it necessary to study business ethics and the developments of different ideas throughout the last decades. For this, several thinkers and business ethicists have contributed to the discussion, such as Adam Smith (1776) who is said to having invented the modern discipline of economics, Segbers (2002) who focussed on the Old Testament economics as well as other contemporary works from Kreikebaum *et al* (2001), Maak and Ulrich (2007), Ulrich (2008) and Wöhe and Döring (2013). Specific Christian solutions or ideas were offered by Childs (1995), Herms (2005) and Oermann (2014). Because of the long tradition of business ethics in the USA and its influence on German thinkers, ethicists from the USA have been also part of the discussion, e.g. Friedman (1982), Solomon (1992) and Goodpaster (2008).

Since the humanitarian sector has developed from relatively small charitable efforts of charity to a huge global industry in the past decades, the paradigm shifts involved in this development had to be scrutinised, especially

because faith-based NGOs could not elude this development. Myers' (1999) contribution of the world-views was helpful, as were Berger (2003), Sider and Unruh (2004), Ferris (2005, 2011), Thaut (2009), Barnett and Stein (2012) – just to name a few authors – who have been consulted to understand the current situation of faith-based or Christian NGOs, respectively, in a secular world. An interesting research study comes from Peirong Lin (2018) who studied faith-based organisations drifting away from their founding mission, purpose and identity. With respect to the policies, processes and people of the organisations, Maak and Ulrich (2007), Köhl (2011), von Rosenstiel (2014) as well as Stahlke and Loughlin (2003), have been the main authors who provided insights into organisation, corporate culture, management and leadership, and a few other relevant issues regarding Christian and other organisations.

1.5.3 Research design

The research design consists of an extended analysis of the relevant literature and of theological, ethical and practical reflection, as well as semi-structured, one-on-one interviews (Mayring 2002:67ff).

The subject of this study is the real-life phenomenon of Christian NGOs. The overall structure of this thesis is based on a model of reality that consists of three aspects: world-views (philosophy and theology); organisational ethics; and the praxis in humanitarian NGOs. These three aspects are interrelated with one another: Theory is not only applied to practice – in a deductive manner – but as in a circular process in which both theory and practice are interrelated. Praxis is the application of theory (deductive) and it invites critique and the reformulation of theoretical frameworks and ideas as a result of learning from the experience and insights that result from the actions and practices of NGOs (inductive). Both theory and practice can, thus, be amended or reformulated. This may result in minor or major amendments of the theory and practices of Christian NGOs, as will be explained later.



Figure 2: The three aspects of the research

The first aspect (**world-views – philosophical and theological ethics**) discusses selected philosophers and theologians from the ancient Greeks to contemporary thinkers as stated previously.

Since this philosophical and theological thought has influenced the Western world substantially, it has also influenced the way we do business as well as our daily professional life. The second aspect (**business and organisational ethics – also economics**) is, therefore, about the purpose and functioning of the economy and business management that in many ways is shaped by the influences explained in the first aspect of world-views, philosophical and theological thought. Selected thinkers, such as Smith, Ulrich, Friedman, Solomon and others, are discussed in this second aspect.

The third aspect (**praxis**) tries to shed light onto theoretical and practical questions regarding Christian NGOs. Questions relative to their ways of leadership and management, motivation, ways of dealing with society, Christian self-understanding, etc. will be discussed here. The reflection from this third aspect may result – as mentioned previously – to changes to the theory, so creating new knowledge or simply confirming what has already been said in the literature.

1.5.4 Empirical methodology

The theoretical part of this thesis will be followed up by empirical research. The empirical research is designed to complement, expand and modify the foundation laid through the theoretical chapters two, three and four. Jennifer Mason indicates the importance of reflecting on and determining how theory, data, and the analysis of the information can be put together in a cohesive way by indicating different possibilities of research philosophies (Mason 2002:180), namely:

- Theory comes first, before empirical research and analysis, and it is tested on or measured against data. The theory is not derived from the data, and there will be some kind of hypothesis in advance. This is closely allied with deductive reasoning moving from the general to the particular.
- Theory comes last and is developed from, or through, data generation and analysis. The process of analysis in this case begins whilst data generation is under way, and the data is scrutinised so that explanations can be developed. It is closely allied to inductive reasoning, moving from the particular to the general.
- Theory, data generation and data analysis are developed simultaneously in a dialectical process. In this model, the researcher needs to move between data analysis and the explanation (or construction) of the theory.

This research study will be conducted by employing a combination of the first and the third models. This helps to modify the theoretical research in a way that the empirical research is able to shape or modify the existing theory rather than developing new constructs and concepts as is usually done with a grounded theory (Merriam 1998:49). But at the same time, it adds to the knowledge and recommendations relevant to the research topic or it critiques the theoretical research by contrasting the results of the empirical research with the outcomes of

the theoretical chapters. In addition, the purpose of conducting a qualitative study is “to produce findings” (de Vos 2006:333). According to Mason, qualitative research can be defined as being broadly interpretivist “in the sense that it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted” (Mason 2002:3). It “celebrates richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity” (:1). Rather, it does not look at the general picture but is “intimately connecting context with explanation” (:1).

Qualitative interviewing is one of the most commonly recognised forms of the qualitative research method (Mason 2002:63). From an ontological view, this research study needs to understand that the knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, etc. of the interviewees are “meaningful properties of the social reality” (:63). From an epistemological view, the combination of theoretical and empirical research in this thesis has helped to find a meaningful way to generate data on these “ontological properties” (:64), which means that access is gained to the convictions, views and understandings of leaders in the NGO sector by discussing and listening to the interviewees.

This research study wants to find out how Christian NGOs, in their actions, decision-making, leading, etc., draw on philosophical ethics, theological ethics, and business ethics to accomplish their every-day tasks. These may have shaped their ethical frameworks, either by experience or understanding, either consciously or unconsciously. This makes it clear that a merely quantitative study would not have been sufficient to look into the complexity of the matter, and it would not have helped to answer the research question and its sub-questions fully. Choosing a combination of theoretical and qualitative empirical research was, therefore, the best means of tackling the complex challenge of this thesis.

The empirical research methodology, including the construction of the questionnaire and the conducting of the interviews, will be explained further in chapter five.

1.5.4.1 Ethical considerations

The material discussed in the interviews raises issues of confidentiality. This is not only because critical cases of ethical behaviour of an individual or an organisation may be discussed, but also because the low number of interviewed organisations could result in some findings being linked to an organisation. It is, therefore, vital that the research be conducted in an appropriate and ethical way.

For the sake of sound information, it is crucial that the interviewees are free to say what they believe and have experienced. This means that the interviewee must be assured that the identities of those interviewed and who provided information, are kept strictly confidential (Mason 2002:103).

The organisations and their interviewees are, therefore not specified, but are, rather, coded. Since sensitive issues may have emerged in the answers given, I have decided to apply the following restrictions for the use of the empirical data:

- The type of organisations and the organisations are coded, and, thus, not specifically named;
- The names of people involved in the interview and their position inside the organisation are coded so that there is no possibility of their being identified;
- The full text of the interview transcriptions is not published with the thesis; and
- Relevant and important quotations, which contribute directly to the research questions, will be included in the text of the thesis, but they will be coded, or else paraphrased, in such a way that individuals or organisations cannot be identified.

These restrictions aim to protect the interests of the NGOs, and, at the same time, make it possible to contribute substantially to answering the research questions based on the empirical data gathered and interpreted in this study.

In chapter five (5.4.2.4), more detail is given on the ethical considerations and on the consent form that was signed by the participants.

1.5.4.2 Limitations

The first limitation is that only one person was interviewed from each organisation. Some questions required the interviewee's personal opinion. Other people from the Board or other senior leaders might have answered some of the questions differently from the interviewee.

There are also limitations regarding the selection of the country. Since the focus is on German NGOs, only those with headquarters in Germany have been interviewed. This was for reasons of clarity, time and comprehensibility, since other German-speaking countries (such as Switzerland and Austria) differ very much from one another with regard to business culture. Those with international headquarters were more likely to have an international set of ethical standards provided for all affiliated offices. However, also English and North-American scholars have been included in the literature research. Other scholars, such as those from the African, Asian or Latin American continents (except for the liberation theology) have not been included in this research.

This study deals with Christian NGOs, and this means that NGOs with other religious affiliations have not been included, for example Buddhist or Islamic NGOs.

1.6 Thesis outline

Chapter one introduces the topic, explains the motivation for researching the topic and clarifies the research question and the methodology for this study. It outlines the research objectives, sub-questions, and provides initial definitions of the key terms used in the research as well as indicating the significance of the research.

Chapter two surveys the literature, specifically the philosophical and theological ethical literature, using key theoretical texts (books, articles, and other

written resources). In addition, it reviews different world-views and Christian sources of ethics (e.g. on society, business, character and community). This chapter reveals how rationalist and secular ethics from the Enlightenment onward increasingly disregarded theological perceptions of ethics.

Chapter three surveys the literature regarding business and ethics, in order to show the impact that the thinkers and theories described in chapter two have had on the management and ethical views of organisations today. The chapter will show that rationalist thought prevails after the Enlightenment and influences the concepts of business studies and business performance.

Chapter four surveys the literature regarding Christian NGOs and their prime development. Humanitarian NGOs that started mostly motivated by a Christian world-view have become predominantly secular organisations in the Western world today. This chapter will show how specific developments such as the shift in world-views, influenced Christian organisations in the way that they are led and managed today, and what specific issues and dilemmas they are faced with as a result.

Chapter five outlines the research approach and the details of the empirical research design. It explains the methodology in detail and the choice of organisations to be researched as well as the process of data collection and analysis that was followed. It identifies ethical considerations related to the empirical study, and it acknowledges certain limitations.

Chapter six describes and analyses the findings of the empirical research from the eleven Christian humanitarian organisations in Germany selected for this research. The analysis emerges from the data collected at the different organisations interviewed.

Chapter seven concludes the research with a summary of the chapters, drawing out the implications for the Christian NGOs in Germany. It stresses the importance of understanding the different paradigm shifts that have resulted in the development of Christian humanitarian NGOs in Germany. It raises ques-

tions relative to how to overcome dualistic thought between the sacred and the secular, as well as ensuring a Christian identity and a Christian culture inside the organisations. Finally, it suggests some areas for further research.

2. A brief outline of ethical frameworks

2.1 Introducing the chapter

In this chapter, the first of the three aspects described in the introductory chapter will be dealt with (“world-views, philosophical and theological ethics”, see p. 30). Here, basic aspects of world-views and the sources of ethics will be discussed first of all. Then selected philosophers and theologians and other thinkers regarding relevant issues will be discussed in order to answer the research question, which is, Which ethical frameworks (consciously or unconsciously) influence the organisational practices and behaviour of Christian organisations? The Greek philosophers will be drawn on, since they laid the foundation for Western ethical thought. Plato and Aristotle brought about a direction of thought that construed the world in dualistic terms. Their thought is fundamental when researching the different dichotomies Christian NGOs have to endure. They also established an important foundation in virtue ethics.

The views of Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Calvin will also be outlined. Aquinas, in particular, drew on Aristotle’s thoughts regarding the goals of life as well as virtues. Luther and Calvin contributed to the way individuals can live their faith in society and economics, and they are, thus, also important for this research.

In addition, modern philosophers and theologians who were influenced by the Enlightenment will be discussed. The Enlightenment era and its consequences for Western humanity, dealing with reason, human autonomy from religious faith and rationalism, are crucial when it comes to understanding the challenges facing Christian NGOs. Thinkers like Kant and the Utilitarian philosophers Bentham and Mill, need, thus, to be considered.

Later, Catholic and Protestant social ethics will be outlined to explain the different traditions and origins of social ethics. Both Barth and Niebuhr contribute to the understanding of the Social Gospel in the USA and the continuation of

it in Europe. This is important when discussing Christian NGOs whose work is, to a certain extent, a continuation of this tradition. Nigel Biggar's Barthian-Thomism, in which Biggar tries to bridge the divide between Barth's conservative theological and Aquinas' natural theology, will be outlined as well. As a consequence of Enlightenment thought, Paul Kurtz developed a comprehensive secular ethics. He will be looked at briefly, owing to the fact that Germany is a strongly secularised country. In addition, Weber, Bonhoeffer, and Jonas will be discussed because of their important work on responsibility ethics from the view of technology, experts, and sustainability. To work responsibly and soundly ethically in a world that is driven by technology and experts, as is the case with humanitarian NGOs, seems to be a continuous challenge. Three thinkers who contributed to virtue ethics and moral formation in a helpful way for the work of Christian NGOs (MacIntyre, Hauerwas, and Wright) will also be discussed in this chapter.

The impact that these different thinkers have on Christian NGOs will be explained in each sub-section, and key issues for Christian NGOs will be pointed out in the conclusion. This will serve as an orientation and structural points for the empirical research.

2.2 Sources of ethics

In this thesis, I will investigate Christian NGOs working in the midst of secular environments and societies. It will, therefore, be necessary firstly to discuss different world-views, religions as sources of ethics, and the specific sources of Christian ethics. Mats Tunehag, a Swedish consultant and initiator of various global think tanks on Business as Mission (BAM), wrote in his blog in 2013:

Ideas have consequences. Our world-view affects our behaviour. Our beliefs shape our actions. This also applies to the way we see business, treat staff and customers, and care for the environment (Tunehag 2013).

The way we live and decide things is obviously influenced by the way we see reality, and reality is always seen through the glasses of specific world-views. Tunehag applies the impact of world-views not only to personal behaviour but also to the way business is performed and how people, including employees, are treated. We will, thus, have to clarify what religious and secular world-views are and what they mean for Christians and Christian NGOs.

2.2.1 Religious and secular world-views

World-views are deeply-held beliefs of which humans are not necessarily aware. Nullens and Michener identify at least three elements that need to be considered when researching world-views, God, humanity and nature (Nullens & Michener 2010:56f). The first element deals with God. Do people believe in God, or does God exist at all? Regarding humanity, how people value the human person and how they interact within their contexts makes a difference to how they interrelate with one another. The third element is the way people perceive nature. Nullens and Michener state that the way people interpret the relationship between these three will inform their ethics (:57). World-views, thus, form the basis of how reality is perceived.

World-views can have different origins; they can be secular or religiously motivated. Max L. Stackhouse, an emeritus professor in theological ethics and the ethics of world religions at Princeton Theological Seminary, states that secularisation is never to be understood independently, but rather as an anti-movement, against the predominant religion in a society:

Today, as several of our authors emphasize, the world's religions, including Christianity, are in resurgence in one form or another after some years of eclipse by post-religious and often anti-theological perspectives and the development of various efforts to achieve viable theories of secularization – each one, ironically, a by-product of the kind of religion against which it reacted. So far as we can see into the future, both the great religions and the various forms of secularism dependent on them will continue to influence the conscious-

ness and behaviour of millions and the ways in which a global society develops. (Stackhouse & Obenchain 2002:17)

Stackhouse also differentiates between religion as being functional and being substantive. Substantive describes religions in terms of what they are, while functional considers the effects religions have on societies. Stackhouse argues that, on a functional level, ideologies like secularism and traditional religions belong to the same category, although their content may be contradictory (Stackhouse & Obenchain 2002:100). This means that a secular world-view ultimately functions exactly as a religion. According to this functional idea, for him, religion is at the centre of life as well as the society and shapes it, no matter whether it has a traditional religious origin or an ideological one:

It moulds civilizations. By this definition, world-views such as a philosophical ethical Confucianism, an atheistic spirituality, such as Buddhism, or a secular-humanist ideology such as Marxism, whenever they form a creed, a code and a cult, and are used to interpret and guide the formation of an ethos, can properly be seen as faiths. They function as “religions”, shaping an ethos, even if they are opposed to theistic traditions or do not recognize themselves as religious. They are subject to theological analysis, for they inevitably contain a “metaphysical-moral vision” – an ontology, a theory of history and ethic – that involves some view of transcendence. (Stackhouse 2007:8)

Seen from this functional point of view, the Western secular world-view can be seen as a form of faith. It also seems that different world-views compete with one another, and that Christians socialised in the West do not only live in the midst of a globalised world of competing beliefs, but are also being influenced by all or some of them, as different surveys confirm (Barna 2017, Pew Forum 2009:1). In Germany, as in many other Western countries, therefore, a predominant secular world-view may be strongly influenced by other competing views and faiths.

If ethical thinking and practical behaviour always stem from a certain world-view, and if Christians are influenced by a mixture of world-views, be-

liefs and thoughts (such as secular and pluralistic ideas), it can be argued that Christian organisations may find some difficulty in defining their Christian identity. It can also be argued that not only the organisations, but also the employees themselves, may be – consciously or unconsciously – influenced by world-views other than Christian, even when working in a Christian NGO.

2.2.2 Religions as sources of ethics

Religions are sources of ethics. According to the US-American moral philosopher William K. Frankena, religion typically involves three things. The first is a religious world-view that explains how important God is / the gods are regarding the affairs of the world and what conduct they desire on the part of the humans. Secondly, religion implies a religious value system or ethics, which is “an associated way of behaving and feeling that is regarded as right or good for us”, and, thirdly, religion includes an associated institution, such as a church (Frankena 1986:399). For him, a moral value system and a religious value system must always be distinguished, because ethics and religion might not call for the same conduct at all and might even be conflicting (:400).

Kretzschmar defines religion as “a system of beliefs and practices about God and/or the nature of reality, which includes moral teachings, traditions, rituals and customs” (Kretzschmar 2013:30). Paul Tillich, a philosophical theologian of the Christian faith in the twentieth century, puts forth a broader definition, namely the question of the *ultimate concern*. For Tillich, the so-called ultimate concern is the term that best captures the meaning of faith and, in the broadest sense, of religion. Whatever is of *ultimate concern* will motivate the action (Smith 2003). Examples can be a life dedicated to the care of others, or the pursuit of pleasure or power (Kretzschmar 2013:30).

It seems obvious that world-views, religion and ethics interrelate in many ways. In some religions, the understanding of right or wrong is strongly interconnected with the will of God / the gods; what is contrary to God's will is

wrong. But most secular philosophers strictly reject the view that ‘wrong’ means ‘contrary to God's will’ (Hare 1986:206).

For Christian NGOs, it can be argued that morality and religion, and thus the *ultimate concern*, belong together. In terms of understanding the professional work of Christian NGOs, it is important to acknowledge that humanitarian work exists primarily in an environment within multiple religions and cultures, world-views and global issues. But it would go beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the ethical characteristics of world religions, especially when it comes to discussing sub-topics such as ethical parameters in other monotheistic or polytheistic beliefs or even socio-economic issues in the different religions. Although religious ethics in all its facets would be too extensive a topic for this thesis, it seems necessary to establish a clear idea about Christian ethics, since this thesis deals with Christian NGOs and their understanding of ethics and moral behaviour.

2.2.3 Sources of Christian ethics

Christianity can be understood only by considering its Jewish roots. Jewish ethics is derived from the Hebrew Bible (*Tanakh*). In Jewish ethics, there is a strong focus on social relationships, not only with one's family but also with the community and the nation. Judaism even addresses “the community and society as much as the individuals who constitute them” (Borowitz 1986:321). This may have to do with the fact that Jews base their ethics on their collective memory having been slaves in Egypt for a long period of time (Kretzschmar 2013:37). As a matter of fact, Jewish ethics is grounded not only on the love of God but also on the love and care to strangers, because they themselves were strangers in a foreign land (:37). The Judaeo-Christian world-view has been a fundamental element of the way of thinking in the Western world up until today¹⁰.

10 Islamic ethics, as the third monotheistic religion, has also been influenced by Jewish and early Christian ethics (Kretzschmar & van Niekerk 2009:65), but has evolved very differently in world-view and practical life from the other two.

According to James M. Gustafson, a theological ethicist in the USA, to understand and apply Christian ethics it is necessary to distinguish four ways of interpreting life. Firstly, there is the understanding and interpretation of God, i.e. how God relates to the world or God's purposes in general. Secondly, there is the interpretation of the meaning of human experience and history, and of events and circumstances, and the meaning of nature. Thirdly, there is the interpretation of how people or communities act morally, and, fourthly, the interpretation of how moral choices and judgements of actions should be made (Gustafson 1986:87). Gustafson by this not only explains how to understand but also how to apply Christian ethics, which is crucial, since many Christian traditions have emerged in the past centuries.

Many Christians, especially those who accept evangelical thought and practice, claim that the Bible, since it is assumed to be the Word of God, is their main foundation. But the sources of Christian ethics can vary greatly. According to Gustafson, they can be the following: a) the Bible and the Christian tradition; b) philosophical principles and methods; c) science and other sources of knowledge; and d) human experience. It is crucial for the results of moral judgement to decide "which sources are relevant and why; which sources are decisive when they conflict, and why; what specific content is to be used from these sources and what is to be ignored or rejected, and why; and how this content is to be interpreted and why it is to be so interpreted" (Gustafson 1986:88). Eventually, according to Gustafson, it makes sense not only to investigate the religious elements, but also the logical and social elements in moral decision making.

Alister McGrath, a British theologian and Professor in Oxford, discusses the sources of Christian ethics in his book *Christian theology – an introduction* (1996), where he states that the Bible is only one of many sources of Christian tradition. The others are rationality, traditions, experience, and culture (McGrath 1997:189). This may explain why Christians differ in their opinions of

what is right or wrong regarding specific moral issues, such as abortion or capital punishment. This phenomenon is confirmed by J. Philip Wogaman, a former Professor of Christian Ethics at Wesley Theological Seminary Washington, D.C., when he states in his book *Christian Ethics* that the Christian moral tradition is rich and diverse (2011:333). This diversity, brought about by different periods of history, different social settings, and different genres of the biblical writings themselves (:4), is what makes ethical convictions based on the Bible seem to be perceived as being ambiguous. Even if these arguments are discussed on an academic level, it can be argued that, for a Christian person no matter what denomination they belong to, the words and life of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Bible play a significant role when it comes to arguing ethical issues. For most Christians, therefore, it is the biblical teachings that have the highest authority and set the benchmark for their lives (Schirrmacher 2008:48).

In this context, it is important to discuss the way that conscience can also be a source of ethics. For David F. Wells, a theology professor in the USA, “it is one’s interior moral reality to which conscience is attuned” (Wells 1998:170), and he adds that it is “in the conscience that premonitions of a judgement to come are felt, for the conscience is tuned to the moral universe that we inhabit. Our supposed emancipation from God, then, is illusory” (:192). He is convinced that God reveals himself through the conscience, and that humans “are without excuse” (Rm 1:20) should they ignore God’s voice (Wells 1998:194). In addition, in Romans 9:1, Paul states that his conscience bears witness in the Holy Spirit that he did not lie to the Roman Christians.

Nullens and Michener state that Christian ethics is not as simple as many believe it to be. There is no direct connection between the values of a Christian and the values of the Bible, but rather there is a “hermeneutical distance between us and the text of the Bible, combined with the complexities of today’s multicultural, post-modern world” (Nullens & Michener 2010:1). Many Christi-

ans, by drawing their arguments from the same Bible, can disagree either completely or in part with other Christians.

Discussing world-views, religions and the sources of Christian ethics sheds some light to how Christian NGOs relate to the society and world in which they live. The plurality of world-views, the conscious or unconscious mix of beliefs that Christians embrace in the Western world today may uncover challenges in the way Christian NGOs perform in their work place.

2.2.4 Summary of 2.2

In this sub-section, the world-views and sources of ethics had to be discussed in order to answer the question of how Christian NGOs work and live amid secular environments. It was found that world-views can be religious or secular, and that a secular world-view may function in the same way as a religion. Different world-views also compete with one another in the Western countries.

Regarding religions as sources of ethics we found that religions are systems of beliefs, moral values and practices and that it is the *ultimate concern* of individuals and communities that need to be identified.

Regarding sources of Christian ethics we found that Christianity can be understood only in terms of its Jewish roots, where the love of God and the love and care of strangers play an important role. In addition, the conscience, the Bible, Christian tradition, as well as human experience are the main sources of Christian ethics.

By way of summary, for Christian NGOs it is important to understand their own world-view as organisations and also as employees and leaders of their organisation. They need to know what their *ultimate concern* is in midst of the multiple religions and cultures in which they work.

2.3 Western philosophical and theological ethical views

In this section, important philosophers, theologians, sociologists and other important thinkers who have influenced Western thought significantly will be dealt with.

As was mentioned in the introductory section, these thinkers needed to be selected in order to be able to answer the research question. For this reason, the Greek philosophers will be drawn on since they laid the foundation for Western ethical thought. Furthermore, important pre-17th century Christian ethicists, such as Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Calvin as well as modern philosophers and theologians who were influenced by the Enlightenment, will be outlined.

Throughout this thesis, the term ‘dualism’ is used in different ways, and so a short explanation may be helpful at this early stage. ‘Dualism’, according to Merriam Webster’s Learner’s Dictionary is “the quality or state of being dual or of having two different or opposite parts or elements” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). As Neville Richardson, a South African researcher and Methodist minister, acknowledges, a “thoroughly dualistic thought” (Richardson 2009:44) belongs to the Western mind. According to him, Westerners:

look instinctively for pairs of opposites – above and below, human and divine, physical and spiritual, sacred and profane, before and after, inner and outer, thesis and anti-thesis. The list could go on [...] The tendency arises [...] to group objects into categories in order to set them apart from and in opposition to items in other categories. (Richardson 2009:44)

Another form of dualism goes back to the Greek philosophers, especially Plato and Pythagoras (Richardson 2009:44), and operates on different levels (e.g. mind and body, metaphysical and physical or reason and faith). We will need to discuss some of these levels in this thesis owing to the fact that Christian NGOs work in the midst of secular environments. Philosophical and theological issues dealing with the division between matter and spirit and between reason and faith and other dualisms will, thus, be discussed.

The discussion in this section will also include topics such as the common good, natural law, conscience and other relevant issues as well as the concepts of social theory for Catholics and Protestants. In addition, virtue and character issues will be outlined.

2.3.1 Plato and Aristotle

Plato (427-347 BC), a Greek philosopher, was convinced that truth was universal and eternal, and he had great confidence in the capacity of the human mind to discover truth through reason (Wogaman 2011:19, *Politeia* 518e, 532b¹¹). He explains, by the way of several allegories, that the physical world is just an illusion and that knowledge partakes of something divine (*Polit.* 518e). Thus, philosophers in Plato's thinking are those who do not live in an illusion. In this way Plato created a dualism between the mind and the body (Robinson 2017, n.d.). The state should, thus, be governed by reason (Wogaman 2011:20). In addition, by his Theory of Forms, the form (or idea), and not the matter, is the reality; the objects are only imitations of it. This means that the physical world is not as real as are eternal and unchangeable ideas (Kunzmann, Burkard & Wiedmann 2001:39). Plato mentions four virtues (wisdom, courage, justice, and temperance) which formed a first set of cardinal virtues. They were later adopted by Aristotle who provided a foundation of philosophical virtue ethics in his *Nicomachean Ethics (NE)*.

Aristotle (384-322 BC), a Greek philosopher and scientist, was Plato's student as well as the teacher of Alexander the Great. Aristotle states that the goal of life is the good that is striven for by good people (*NE* 1094a 1-21). For him, the highest of all goods that can be reached by doing good is *eudaemonia*¹², and this,

11 The Greek philosophers in this thesis are quoted from the official German or English translations of the Greek originals. The quotes, thus, refer to page, column (and lines in *NE*) of the original Greek versions.

12 *Eudaemonia* (Greek: εὐδαιμονία) is poorly translated as “happiness” or the “happy life”. It should rather be translated: a good life, or felicitousness. Throughout this thesis I will use the original Greek term.

in Aristotle's opinion, can be reached only by study, exercise and experience (Kunzmann *et al* 2001:51), for which every person is responsible on their own. *Eudaemonia* can thus be reached in the physical world. It is not an illusion, but is real and important. For Aristotle, then, the metaphysical world ceases to be as important as it is for Plato. This dualism between the physical and the metaphysical world has been accepted by many thinkers since the Greek philosophers, and it is part of the discussion in this thesis.

In Aristotle's anthropology, human fallibility or even the concept of sin is absent. Aristotle agrees with Socrates' optimistic view regarding the natural goodness of humankind (Kretzschmar & van Niekerk 2009:65), but his ideas are different from a Christian understanding of being accountable to God and dependent on the grace of God to be able to reach personal goals.

Aristotle drew on Plato's four virtues, but he emphasised the attainable wisdom for practical living, which is practical wisdom (*phronesis*). Virtue means to accomplish the mean between two extremes, between deficiency and excess. For example, courage is the mean between fear and over-confidence. He was convinced that the complete and real unfolding of virtues was possible only in the *polis* (MacIntyre 1995:199, 235), in the political realm.

The forming of character takes up a significant part of Aristotle's teachings (*NE* 1103a 14-33 ff), and it has been dealt with by many philosophers and theologians ever since. Some contemporary philosophers and psychologists, such as Nicolai Hartmann, Paul Helwig and Friedemann Schulz von Thun, have developed and adopted portions of Aristotelean virtue ethics (Schulz von Thun n.d.), as well as MacIntyre who will be discussed in 2.3.4.5.

2.3.2 Pre-17th century Christian ethics

In this section, I will discuss predominant ethical thinking until after the Reformation and before the growth of Rationalism and the era of 'Enlightenment'. As mentioned in the introductory section, the church patriarchs, Augustine and

Aquinas, drew on the thoughts of Plato and Aristotle and they influenced philosophical and theological thought up to the present. Luther and Calvin contributed to the way individuals can live their faith in society and economics, and are, thus, also important for this research.

2.3.2.1 Augustine

Aurelius Augustinus, also known as Augustine of Hippo (354-430), was one of the important theologians and philosophers of Christian history (Wogaman 2011:53). He explains, in one of his major works called *City of God*, that love is central to *eudaemonia*. Augustine understands *eudaemonia* as being the aim of human behaviour. It is, however, not achieved only because of the pursuit of a good life, but, rather, it is achieved as a result of first loving God (Kretzschmar & van Niekerk 2009:68, Ogletree 2005:37), which is called the *Ordo Amoris* (“Rule of Love”).

Augustine also formed a Christian theory of virtues where he combined Stoic, Neoplatonic¹³ and New Testament thought (Nullens & Michener 2010:123). The four cardinal virtues mentioned above that stemmed from the Greek philosophers, can, according to Augustine, be understood only as being summed up in the primary virtue of love. This love is the love of God that directs the human will towards what is right. The issue of moral motivation is, therefore, very important for Augustine. For this reason, the question is not only *what* humans do but also *why* they do it (Kretzschmar & van Niekerk 2009:68). For Christian NGOs, the topic of love should be central and the primary motivation for their work. This central issue of love is discussed again in the specifics of Christian leadership in chapter four (4.3.3.1).

13 Augustine supported Plato's *menschenbild* in a way that the soul is immortal and individual, created in God's image and divine in itself. The human being is thus essentially soul. Augustine's neoplatonic approach turns to be the groundwork for Christian theology, especially the Protestant one (Geldsetzer 2000:13f.). The philosophical term *menschenbild* means the conception of the human being. There is no proper English term for it.

2.3.2.2 Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) was one of the most important and influential Christian thinkers of the Middle Ages because he connected Aristotle's philosophy with the Christian scholastic philosophy (Philipp 1997:491). Aquinas agrees with Aristotle with regard to the idea that the goal of life is goodness (*eudaemonia*). For Aquinas, however, this would apply only with an eternal character, the ulterior, otherworldly *eudaemonia*. The *ultimate goal* for Aquinas lies in the fact that our human lives are oriented to God, and so this life needs to be lived in accordance with God's will, with "the ultimate goal of human existence [as] being to manifest God's glory" (Nullens & Michener 2010:94).

For Aquinas, just as for Aristotle, nature was not inferior to divine things. Aquinas was convinced that the divine and the natural, faith and reason do not contradict each other and cannot be separated. Thus, as a consequence, Aquinas' thought reflected a high degree of realism and social engagement (Nullens & Michener 2010:94).

Aquinas even saw faith as complementing reason. They constituted a unity for him, as God was the source of all reason, faith could therefore not be unreasonable. His natural law doctrine¹⁴, thus, includes both faith (in the form of God's revelation) and reason. Theology and philosophy cannot, therefore, come to different conclusions regarding the truth. In Aquinas's opinion, theology and philosophy are differentiated only by their having two different methods, philosophy takes existent things for granted and finds a way to God, whereas theology takes for granted God's existence from the very start (Kunzmann *et al* 2001:81).

Aquinas also saw the law as being a manifestation of God's government. He believed that humans are by nature inclined to follow God's law and to follow

14 Natural law means that the standards that govern human behaviour are derived from the nature of human beings and the nature of the world (Himma n.d.).

general natural principles, with free will¹⁵, and not as a matter of blind obedience. Living according the law for him means moving closer to God (Nullens & Michener 2010:97).

Aquinas's thoughts influenced Roman Catholic theology greatly insofar as Leo XIII declared Thomas Aquinas to be the patron of Catholic theology and philosophy and, thus, put an emphasis on natural law¹⁶. Apart from this contribution to natural law, the law of God (eternal law) and virtue ethics, Aquinas also contributed to the understanding of the common good. He agreed with Aristotle that humans are by nature social or political (*Zoon Politicon*, see also *NE* 1097a24-b12 and Miethke 2001:84), and he, thus, affirms that it is natural for people to live in a society. The aim of human society, however, is not merely to ensure the private good of individual citizens, but its aim is to seek the common good, which is superior to the good of an individual (Miethke 2001:85). In the end, for Aquinas it does not matter what kind of societal structures are formed and why or whether hierarchies are meaningful for the society, as long as the rulers pursue the *bonum commune*, the common good, and not for the *bonum privatum*, the following of their own interest (Miethke 2001:87, Wogaman 2011:94).

Many years later, the Catholic pastoral constitution on the Church in the Modern World at the Second Vatican Council 1965 affirmed this idea in this way:

Profound and rapid changes make it more necessary that no one ignoring the trend of events [...], content himself with a merely **individualistic morality**. It grows increasingly true that the obligations of justice and love are fulfilled only if each person, contributing to the **common good**, according to his own abilities and the **needs of others**, also promotes and assists the public and private institutions dedicated to

15 Will and reason, according to Aquinas, are both part of being made in the image of God. A free will means choosing out of one's own initiative, and not by force – but guided by reason.

16 See also the encyclical issued by Leo XIII in August 1879 *Aeterni Patris* (English: Of the Eternal Father).

bettering the conditions of human life. Yet there are those who [...] live always as if they cared nothing for the **needs of society.** [...] Others think little of certain **norms of social life,** for example those designed for the protection of health [...]; they do not even avert to the fact that by such indifference they imperil their own life and that of others.

Let everyone consider it his sacred obligation to esteem and observe **social necessities** as belonging to the primary duties of modern man. [...] But this development cannot occur unless individual men and their associations cultivate in themselves the **moral and social virtues,** and promote them **in society;** [...]. (*Gaudium et Spes* part 1, chapter 2, no. 30; my emphasis).

Aquinas, apart from his theonomous ethics, also contributed to virtue ethics, but the latter appeared to have given a kind of a supplementary role (Nullens & Michener 2010:122). Aquinas distinguished between theological, moral and intellectual virtues. He endorsed the cardinal virtues described by the Greek philosophers. But he added three theological virtues, namely faith, hope, and love (MacIntyre 1995:236) that stem from the New Testament (1 Cor 13:13). Like Aristotle, Aquinas is convinced that the repetition of moral actions and the cultivation of virtues lead to *eudaemonia* (Kretzschmar & van Niekerk 2009:70). All virtues need to be subsumed under the supernatural virtue of *caritas*, the “mother of virtues” (Vorster 2014:2). This consists of a love for God and fellow human beings. These virtues direct the human being to God and to *eudaemonia*. (:2). Aquinas was convinced that virtues resulted from God's grace and that people had to cultivate them to find *eudaemonia*.

Aquinas's theology set the foundation for Catholic social teaching, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

2.3.2.3 Luther and Calvin

The German theologian Martin Luther (1483-1546) initiated the Reformation era by posting the ninety-five theses as a “public invitation to debate abuses in the system of papal indulgences” (Wogaman 2011:116). The time was simply “ripe

for revolutionary change” (:116). Luther’s thoughts became known as the three *Sola* “*sola gratia, sola fide, sola scriptura*” (Schorn-Schütte 2013:30)¹⁷ as a reply to the overarching and all-pervasive traditions prescribed by the Catholic Church during that time. Luther dealt with the issue of Christian liberty, where he stated that the Christian is free, meaning that “the person needs no works in order to be justified and saved, but receives these gifts in abundance from faith alone” (Luther 1520:129). Luther’s ethics thus emphasise motivation more than the action, since the Christian has been freed from the “objective constraints of life based upon external works” (Wogaman 2011:116). In contrast to Aquinas, whose understanding of the *common good* is seeking the good of a society as being superior to the good of an individual, Luther sees the individual as the one accountable to God. The focus on the individual person is well illustrated in the doctrine of justification. Since Luther, the statement that it is the church “that understands itself as the primary practitioner of Christian ethics” (Fourie 2013:48) has become questionable. In addition, this emphasis on the individual before God later would become individualism without God.

Luther’s teaching about the ‘two kingdoms’ has often been misunderstood. He sought to stress that the rule of God (*regnum Dei*) was often rejected by the fallen world (*regnum diaboli*). He argued that the Church should not emulate, or be subject to, the fallen world. The Church, however as the people of God, has a role to play in the world, because of God’s rule over the earth (*regnum terrena*) and as was made clear in the Old and New Testaments. Tragically, this doctrine was later misunderstood by many to mean that the two kingdoms are entirely separate, and Christians must not involve themselves in social, economic or political matters.

Luther believed that the state was ordained by God to restrain evil and maintain order and peace. Theoretically, Christians are not in need of the gov-

17 Those three were typically specified in most of the earliest descriptions: scripture over tradition, faith over works, and grace over merit. In the 20th century, two other were added (*Solus Christus* – Christ alone, and *Soli Deo gloria* – Glory to God alone).

ernment of this world, because they belong to the kingdom of God. Luther, however, holds that Christians should not withdraw from the state but participate in the affairs of the world (Amos 2007:219-220).

The distinction of the two kingdoms supported the idea that the state is autonomous and may act independently of God's law. But Luther's political statements:

must be interpreted against the background and setting in which they developed. He grew up in a peasant mining village where princely power was exercised on behalf of the community; [...] His deep fears of disorder and chaos, common in his time, especially after peasant revolts in the 1500s and 1510s, shaped his desire for strong government. Nonetheless, from the beginning of his career to its end he supported passive resistance to anti-Christian and unethical decisions by secular governments, in accordance with the biblical word "we must obey God rather than any human authority" (Ac 5:29) (Kolb, n.d.).

Luther argued that the two governments should not work against each other but cooperate with each other: "The church preached obedience to the state, and the state protected the church and enabled it to conduct its work" (Amos 2007:221). In practice, though, Luther's concept was interpreted as two completely different governments which had the effect that Christians were encouraged to be passive within society and in relation to the institutions of the government (:221).

In the end, the doctrine of the two kingdoms led to the misunderstanding of a complete separation between the world and the church. This added to the secularisation that has taken place in Germany since the Enlightenment and to the privatisation of Christian faith, which means that faith is being pushed back into the private realm.

Whereas Aquinas was convinced that virtues resulted from God's grace, Luther criticised this sharply. He, as the theological founder of the Reformation movement, rejected the idea that grace was a means by which God enabled

people to do good works. Luther differentiated between salvation and sanctification, where the good works were an evidence of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, namely the virtues (Nullens & Michener 2010:126), but where salvation was based on “justification by faith” and not by works, which eventually has become the fundamental conviction of the Reformation. Later, this strong emphasis on faith alone led to a situation where the works that ought to follow faith were downplayed. As a result, Christians withdrew from social involvement in some theological traditions and churches. We return to this point when discussing the behaviour of Christian NGOs within the humanitarian sector.

John Calvin (1509-1564), a French Reformer, focused his thoughts on the personal experience of God’s grace and salvation. His understanding of the Gospel is explained in the seminal work *Institutes of the Christian Religion* that was published in 1536. In it, he built on the typical essences of the Reformation, including the three *Sola* as explained above. His and Luther’s theologies are, thus, strongly linked to each other. For Calvin, the impact of sin was serious for the lives of human beings. He wrote, “For our nature is not only utterly devoid of goodness, but so prolific in all kinds of evil, that it can never be idle” (Calvin 1845:II.1.8). Unfortunately, later supporters of the Calvinist thought stressed human sinfulness in such a way that they saw the total depravity of humankind, instead of also considering a positive view of humans and accepting a balance of both views, sinfulness, but also seeing human beings as being wonderful creatures with God-given possibilities (Kretzschmar & van Niekerk 2009:71). As noted below, this emphasis on sin was later rejected by humanist and secular thinkers.

Kretzschmar states that, “Luther and Calvin’s perceptions of the inwardness of religion, the importance of a personal experience of God’s grace, the authority of the Bible, and the priesthood of believers” (Kretzschmar 1998:103), on the one hand, were essential elements of the Reformation. On the other hand, this emphasis may have led to a misinterpretation that this inwardness meant

that Christians must not participate in society (:103). Some (Gregory 2012; Vorster 2014) even argue that the Reformation contributed to the secularisation of society.

2.3.3 Rationalism and the Enlightenment

2.3.3.1 Kant

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is one of the most important Western philosophers within the Western tradition. He was one of the important protagonists of the Enlightenment, a European movement that originated in the 17th and 18th century. During the Enlightenment, many traditional and mostly Christian convictions and values were slowly replaced by human reason. In France, Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau were important protagonists of the Enlightenment of that region; in Great Britain it was primarily John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and David Hume. In the USA, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison contributed to this thought, and in Germany it was Immanuel Kant (Nietsch-Hach 2014:36f).

In 1783, Kant gave a definition of what Enlightenment means in his essay *An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?:*

Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. [...] The motto of enlightenment is therefore: Sapere aude! Have courage to use your own understanding!" (Kant 1783:1).

With this definition, Kant shows a high confidence in the human mind to discover truth through reason, just as Plato did (see p. 47).

Kant developed a different approach to Aristotle's concept of *eudaemonia* and its stress on ethical consequences. Ethics in his eyes should never be made dependent on needs and pleasure (Nullens & Michener 2010:105). Inspired by the natural sciences, he went in search of the universal laws of the moral life, where the laws of reason constitute the subject of humanity's duty (:105). Kant,

in this deontological normative theory, established the so-called categorical imperative where he sets up the formula that one should act in conformity with the maxim which can be defined as universal law. This maxim says that humans should reflect before doing any action, whether the action can be universalised as a rule for the rest of the world (Kant 1998:53). Since, for Kant, humans have both a rational nature and an inner sense of moral duty, they are given the ability to reflect on this. Eventually, every rational being is their own moral authority. This results in what Kant calls the autonomy of the moral agent, where there is no external authority (not even the Divine) that can provide criteria for morality (MacIntyre 1980:195). For Kant, therefore, morality and religion can be separated.

But Kant does not make God completely superfluous. On the contrary, he ascribes to him the necessity to act as an ultimate judge. For Kant, in order to do the right thing, this may require believing in a God. This makes God a “guarantor of morality” (Nullens & Michener 2010:107, see also Schallenberg 2014:30), whether he exists or not.

Consequently, Kant did not see God as the foundation and goal of ethics in contrast to Aquinas who saw God as the very foundation of ethics. (Kant’s views are in contrast to Luther and Calvin who stated that our reason is diminished by the Fall). Kant also speaks of the highest good (*summum bonum*), being the ultimate goal of moral action. It can be achieved by virtue and duty and is determined by reason.

Kant earned much respect among philosophers up to the present day, but there are some, of course, who do not share Kant’s view, such as Alisdair MacIntyre (1929-), a Scottish-American philosopher. MacIntyre argues that reason cannot supply us with the answers we need about moral matters, since nobody can really answer why a specific moral judgement is right or wrong (MacIntyre 1995:86). Ruling out God and faith leads to questions without answers. MacIntyre states that the Enlightenment scholars primarily had a Chris-

tian moral background, and this is why they agreed on many issues, e.g. their judgement about whether a moral action was good or bad (:75-76). But now, according to MacIntyre, the Enlightenment project has failed and moral agreement is limited, even absent.

In addition to the critique by MacIntyre, there are some weaknesses in Kant's deontological concept. Since discussions or feelings are not part of it, duty ethics seems to be stern and sterile. It does not consider the consequences of one's actions or of acting responsibly. In addition, duty ethics does not take into account the evolution of good and bad habits and experiences during the span of a person's life. There may also be conflicting duties at the same time, where it becomes difficult to prioritise what to do. Another weakness is that "with some ingenuity, almost every precept can be consistently universalised" (MacIntyre 1980:197). Ingenuity (or manipulation) would be needed in a way that the maxim will permit me to do what I want. Since Kant does not provide the necessary information on how moral action can be tested with regard to its universality, and from where the maxims can be derived, Kant's ethic is called "parasitic upon some already existing morality" (:197). Given the fact that morality was very much influenced by Christian ethical thinking before and during Kant's time, it could be argued that Kant's thoughts have been 'parasitic' on Christian ethics.

Kant acknowledged certain teleological elements in his later books (MacIntyre 1995:81), and so he changed some of his very characteristic positions. Regarding the idea of character formation of young people, Kant was convinced, just as Plato and Aristotle were, that the education of the youth was a very important element in generating moral subjects in a society (Göbel 2010:16). For him, true virtue is simply the ability to do one's duty. This is accomplished by "exalting the moral law and consistently doing my duty" (Ogle-tree 2005:39).

2.3.3.2 Bentham and Mill

In 19th century England, utilitarian ethics evolved as a result of the social and political situation where the majority of people were excluded from full access to the benefits of the social system. Among others, two names are specifically associated with utilitarianism, namely Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) who were, as was Immanuel Kant, contemporaries of the Enlightenment era. 'Utilitarianism' is a term that derives from utility which means that something is regarded as being ethical if it achieves good ends. For Jeremy Bentham an action is morally good if it has consequences that are not only useful but also useful for the greatest number of people. Bentham, a British philosopher, jurist, and social reformer, states, in the preface of his book *A Fragment on Government* (1776), this fundamental axiom, "It is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong" (Bentham 1776). Bentham was convinced that there is a guiding anthropological principle of all human action, the augmentation of pleasure and the prevention of pain, and that a fundamental improvement was connected with the above-mentioned maxim in regard to human matters (Hofmann 1997:58).

John Stuart Mill, a British philosopher of the 19th century, who was the head of the so-called 'Philosophic Radicals' played an important role in the political thinking of his country (Waas 2001:159). He later refined Bentham's ideas in order to avoid abuse, possible excesses or their unjust usage by powerful groups. Mill was convinced that "there is also in the world at large an increasing inclination to stretch unduly the powers of society over the individual", not only by public opinion, but also by the legislative process itself (Mill 2001:22). The only way to avoid the danger of totalitarian regimes and leaders who draw off freedom from the society in order to follow their own 'happiness' is to include the principle of justice or equality. Mill wanted to make sure that "everyone should be treated in an equal fashion in order to achieve the greatest happiness for the greatest number – on a just basis" (Kretzschmar & van Niekerk

2009:80). Mill takes care to be aware not only of quantity (*greatest number*) but to add the quality to the calculation of happiness (Kreikebaum *et al* 2001:17).

Obviously, many positive intentions can be linked to utilitarianism. It seems difficult, however, to predict whether happiness comes as a result of a certain action. In addition, stressing goals and consequences ignores the fact that societies may need moral norms and values for their survival, for example justice, generosity, kindness and hope (Kretzschmar & van Niekerk 2009:80)¹⁸.

Bentham's assumption that people strive for pleasure-augmentation and pain-prevention stands in direct contrast to Kant's duty ethics. Apart from this there is the fact that Bentham does not provide any definition of pain and pleasure, or how intense they need to be, and thus the two terms are left for subjective interpretation (Nullens & Michener 2010:84). This assumption certainly does not apply to the hard and self-sacrificing work of many Christians, and even less to humanitarian workers, and shows that there is more to life (and business life) than pursuing utilitarian goals, but that norms, values and the motivation of each individual are also necessary elements in the ethical discussion regarding Christian NGOs.

Bentham and Mill draw their ideas from their Christian context without referring explicitly to the Christian faith. This assumption is visible in Mill's views regarding the moral conscience where he relates to a Ruler of the Universe, and in this way regards God as a source of ethics¹⁹.

18 The theory of justice of John Rawls' (1921-2002) criticises utilitarian ideas in the field of political ethics. According to this theory, there are two principles of justice as fairness that have to be followed no matter what the consequences are (Andersen 2005:253,337): a) Each person has equal basic liberties; and b) Social and economic inequalities are acceptable if they are to be attached to offices and positions open to all and if they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society (Wenar 2013). For further reading see also Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (1971).

19 In Mill's book *Utilitarianism* (Mill 1879), in chapter five, he notes that there are external and internal sanctioning elements to be considered when exercising moral actions. As to the external sanctions, he sees them as "the hope of favour and the fear of displeasure from our fellow creatures or from the Ruler of the Universe", and is convinced that the force of "external reward and punishment, whether physical or moral, and whether proceeding from God or from our fellow men [...] become available to enforce the utilitarian [...] purpose" (Mill 1879, n.p.). To include the idea of a 'Ruler of the

2.3.4 *Some twentieth century ethical thinkers*

2.3.4.1 **Catholic and Protestant social ethics**

Social ethics is concerned with the norms of institutions, systems and processes (Fourie 2013:2), but also with communities that are “large and complex, such as government, economic life, or international politics” (Allen 1986:592). In contrast to individual ethics, therefore, social ethics deals with the societal dimensions of human action (Ockenfels 1992:34). This is so because “if one wishes to help the poor and the hungry, the economic behaviour of large institutions is far more likely to affect them for good or ill than the uncoordinated efforts of individuals acting on their own” (Allen 198:592). Consequently, an institution's proper purpose in society, how to decide on the right means in the pursuit of them, and the nature of common good have come to be of special significance in social ethics (:592).

The official teaching relative to **Catholic social issues** arose with Leo XIII (1810-1903) via an encyclical addressed to the Church members (Curran 1986:429). The letters emerged during the time of the social gospel movement of Protestant USA and Europe. In 1891, Leo XIII wrote the first ground-breaking letter regarding social issues, the *Rerum Novarum*. In this first social encyclical, he researched the responsibility of the factory owners for their labourers and the power-imbalance between labourer and factory owner. *Quadregesimo anno* was written in 1931 with similar issues, and, later, *Gaudium et spes* (1965) with teachings about humanity's relationship to society, especially with reference to economics, poverty, social justice, culture, science, technology and ecumenism. In 2009, *Caritas in veritate* was written, concerned with the problems of global development and progress towards the common good, among other matters.

Universe’ shows that Mill was not convinced of human reason alone, although he is known for not having obtained religious instruction as a child and for having grown up an atheist (West 2004:22).

There are three significant aspects of Catholic social teaching: a) ethical methodology; b) the content; and c) the binding force of the authoritative teaching.

a) Regarding ethical methodology, Leo XIII declared Thomas Aquinas to be the patron of Catholic theology and philosophy and he, thus, put an emphasis on natural law. For Leo XIII, natural law was “the plan of God as mediated in human nature and human reason created by God” (Curran 1986:430). As Curran put it,

the natural law maintains that the Christian finds ethical wisdom and knowledge not only in Scripture and in Jesus Christ, but also in human nature as understood by human reason. The early papal encyclicals on labour and social justice appealed almost exclusively to natural law and did not employ distinctively Christian sources of ethical wisdom. The nature of human beings and the nature of the state are the basis for the teaching on the rights of workers and the various roles of labour, capital, and the state in society. (Curran 1986:430)

During the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Catholic Church called for a renewal of all theology, and re-emphasised the role of the Scriptures to be the heart of the theological endeavour. There was also critique from inside the church that the gospel, faith, grace and Jesus Christ should be more directly related to the lives of the believers (Curran 1986:430). This was not a denial of natural law and human reason, but rather an integration of both “into a broader Christian perspective” (:430).

b) Regarding the content, the most important element of Catholic social teaching is the dignity and social reality of the individual human being, and, thus, the inalienable rights of the person. The social aspect of human beings is the basis for the conviction that the state is a natural society, where the state is not perceived as being coercive, but as being positive with the “goal of striving for the common good” (Curran 1986:431), “the primary virtues guiding life in political and economic society are social charity and especially justice” (:432).

During the last century, new topics, such as human rights, freedom, religious liberty, equality, and participation of all life in society were added (:432).

The concern for social justice was prominent in the liberation theology in Latin America (Curran 1986:433), which called for faith plus social responsibility, and especially emphasised the concerns of the poor. In his book *A theology of liberation* (1973), Gustavo Gutiérrez, a Dominican priest and professor, critiqued the gap between the rich and the poor and the unjust social structures in Latin American countries. He also stated that the world is not just a proving ground for the afterlife, but that all the oppressing and enslaving structures of humanity would be an impediment to God's Kingdom of love and justice (Wogaman 2011:283). In an interview with Daniel Hartnett, a professor of philosophy at Loyola University Chicago, Gutiérrez stated that poverty is more than just a social issue, but that it "poses a major challenge to every Christian conscience and therefore to theology as well" (Hartnett 2003, n.p.). "[...] Poverty is not simply a misfortune; it is an injustice" (Hartnett 2003, n.p.). Other theologians who contributed to liberation theology are Paulo Freire, Jon Sobrino, Ernesto Cardenal and others. Paulo Freire's blending of a participatory approach and conscientisation²⁰ relies heavily on Marxist ideology, and it is said to be the foundation of secular holistic development (Matthews 1999:291) which is further discussed in chapter four in 4.2.1.

c) Finally, the binding force is the written and the unwritten, infallible hierarchical church teaching (Curran 1986:433). This rule goes back to the synod of Lateran 649 AD under the leader of the Catholic Church, Martin I, and was reaffirmed at the second Vatican council in 1964.

Protestant social ethics gained ground in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when "the work of theology and ethics gained creative new

20 Conscientisation is a "process of making others aware of political and social conditions, especially as a precursor to challenging inequalities of treatment or opportunity" (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.). It is a "social concept, grounded in Marxist critical theory" (Definitions & Translations, n.d.) and is widely used in the writings of liberation theologians.

focus in the thought of a number of theologians and Christian ethicists” (Wogaman 2011:205). Many thinkers contributed to the ethical analysis of issues such as slavery, oppression, and other social issues. The emphasis was placed among North American and European Christians (:207) where the idea of the Kingdom of God became important. Rienecker and Maier define it as:

the reign of God to which one subordinates oneself and under which one serves God willingly and with joy. Jesus teaches us in Matthew 6:10 to ask for the coming of the kingdom, and the reign of God. This kingdom of God is always at the same time a present and future one; It is therefore neither a purely earthly nor a purely unearthly or a purely spiritual factor (1 Chr 29:11); a one-sided view would narrow and shorten the term in an unbiblical way. (Rienecker & Maier 2006:1301, own translation)²¹

The social movements have tended to have different aims, e.g. Europeans fought against clericalism and atheism, whereas in the USA the so-called Social Gospel emerged (White 1992:282).

The Social Gospel Movement emerged from the Puritan movement which strongly emphasised the Reformation principles, such as the fact of sin, the need to be saved by grace, but also philanthropic and social responsibility, while Evangelical piety was sometimes characterised by its neglect of social problems (White 1992:266). The US-American social gospel movement began at the end of the Civil War, and continued until the beginning of World War I. Its intensity derived from the earlier anti-slavery movement, but the major focus was upon social problems that grew out of industrialisation (Wogaman 2011:207). For this movement, the proof of the gospel was to be seen in its practical outcome (White 1992:268). A prominent exponent of this time is Walter Rauschenbusch, a German-American who, in his various books, emphasised the Kingdom of God

21 Original quote: “[...] nämlich jene Gottesherrschaft, der man sich unterordnet und unter der man Gott willig und mit Freuden dient. Um das Kommen dieses Reiches, dieser Königsherrschaft Gottes lehrt uns Jesus bitten (Mt 6:10). Dieses Reich Gottes ist immer zugleich ein gegenwärtiges und zukünftiges; es ist also weder eine rein irdische noch eine rein überirdische noch eine rein geistige Größe (1 Chr 29:11); eine einseitige Auffassung würde den Begriff in unbiblischer Weise einengen und verkürzen”.

and Jesus' teachings (Wogaman 2011:211). For him, Jesus' personality "became a new type in humanity [...]. It became the primal cell of a new social organisation" (Rauschenbusch 1917:152).

In Europe, inspired by Rauschenbusch and his teachings, there was a parallel movement on a smaller scale with leading figures such as the Germans, Johann Christoph Blumhardt (1805-1880), and his son Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt (1842-1919), and the Swiss Leonhard Ragaz (1868-1945). Both Blumhardts emphasised God's Kingdom expressed in a socio-political way, and they advocated socialist economic justice (Wogaman 2011:218f).²²

2.3.4.2 The church and society: Barth, Niebuhr and Biggar

Karl Barth (1886-1968), a Swiss Reformed theologian, pointed out the need to take seriously the self-revelation of God in Christ through Scripture. For Barth, the Word of God, God's self-disclosure in Jesus Christ, is the starting point of Christian faith, theology and ethics (Andersen 2005:282f). Barth's theology influenced Bonhoeffer, amongst others. Contrary to the views of Kurtz (discussed below), Barth stated that to accept a Christian perspective of the reality is to reject the secular notion that the self and the world are ultimate realities.

He emphasised the role of faith as the point of departure for assuming a Christian perspective: The source of theology can be Christ himself alone, not the "thinking, acting, or feeling self" (Nullens & Michener 2010:110). He, therefore, disagreed with Aquinas who gave ethics "too much of an independent position within natural reality" (:110). For Barth, God rules over humanity, not the other way around, and, therefore, the focus must be on God himself and his Word, before anything else. The Word, according to him, existed in three forms: The Word of God revealed (= Jesus Christ); the Word of God written (= Bible); and the Word of God proclaimed (= Preaching), Jesus Christ himself being the

22 For further discussion on views of the Kingdom of God see also Afflerbach, Ebeling and Meier (2014) in which the current discussion is summed up. In addition, Bentley's article on post-secular democracy and the reign of God (Bentley 2015) provides a specific application in a South African context.

only one infallible (:110). Barth, therefore, sees the human task as being listening to and obeying the Word of God. God's dealing with human beings is an act of grace. God's commands are a way of his demonstrating his love to humanity (:112).

Barth's convictions, as well as the different positions between Barth and Aquinas, are valuable for this thesis. They help us to understand what Christian NGOs encounter in their daily business life; they may be torn between the influence of their Christian faith and their interaction with the secular world.

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971), a US-American theologian, philosopher and political scientist, was influenced greatly by the social gospel movement. In his book *Moral man and immoral society* (1932), Niebuhr combines the idealism of the social gospel with the thought of realism. This realism is based on different issues, firstly, there is his *menschenbild*, the basic problem of the underlying original sin and the consequent responsibility of the deeds of human beings. In his book *The nature and destiny of man* (1941), he explains the problem of sin like this:

The temptation to sin lies [...] in the human situation itself. This situation is that man as spirit transcends the temporal and natural process in which he is involved and also transcends himself. Thus, his freedom is the basis of his creativity but it is also his temptation (Niebuhr 1941:251).

He was also realistic about society, where individual moral approaches and solutions were difficult to apply to societies (White 1992:297, Wogaman 2011:232), since the moral behaviour of individuals differs greatly from the behaviour of social groups. Niebuhr was also realistic about possible cures of the ills of societies. He emphasised “proximate solutions” (White 1992:298) that accepted “justice as the best possible expression of love” (:298). He sees love as an impossible ideal for society, but still as a goal. Christians, according to him, should always strive for maximum social justice (:298), or, as Wogaman puts it:

Niebuhr also contrasted love and justice. Love, defined in his various writings as selfless regard for the other, is the

purest expression of the Christian ethic. But to Niebuhr the claims of justice precede those of love and must be satisfied before it is possible to talk about love (Wogaman 2011:232).

Finally, Niebuhr was realistic about Christianity itself, in which love would be the “Christian law of life, but not a programme for achieving an ideal social order” (White 1992:298). Niebuhr is convinced that people have the intellectual freedom to achieve what is good and what is bad. Sin is part of the human being; and so human beings tend to be limited in their behaviour. Even given that sin is a realistic element in people’s lives, the world is not “to be abandoned [...], the Social Gospel remains the crown of Christian ethics [...] The Kingdom of God on earth remains the ideal” (:299), even if impossible of achievement.

For Christian NGOs, Niebuhr is important because – as discussed previously (on p. 64) – the credibility of the gospel is seen in the practical outcome in the Social Gospel Movement. Niebuhr defends the idea that the Kingdom of God can be achieved partly on this earth, but he is realistic about the negative power of sin.

Nigel Biggar (1955-), Director and Regius Professor of Moral & Pastoral Theology at the McDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics & Public Life at the University of Oxford, discusses the possibility of a middle course between Aquinas and Barth, a way that unites the two sets of thinking in his book *Behaving in Public*. Biggar sees the two views as being “either a 'conservative' biblical and theological seriousness, which is shy of attending too closely to public policy; or 'liberal' engagement with public policy, which is theologically thin and bland” (Biggar 2011:pos. 66). Biggar argues that integrity is necessary, not distinction: “Since the good of that world is not only individual but also common, Christians should care to shape public life” (:pos.1138). He explains further:

Impelled by their own theological convictions, Christians will recognise their non-Christian interlocutors to be not just sinners, but fellow sinners, who may also be in the process of being drawn ever more closely to the one God who wears the face of Jesus. Accordingly, Christians will lay aside

stereotypes and caricatures [...], keeping their evangelical talk from mere rhetoric [...], adopting humility, docility, patience, forbearance, forgiveness – as well as candid truthfulness – they will learn to love in conversation and thus to behave in public deliberation (Biggar 2011:pos.1148).

Biggar argues that Christians who engage in a dialogue with those outside the church are backed by the thought of both Barth and Aquinas. Barth was convinced that Christians needed to maintain their ‘theological integrity’, and that they could “contribute their insights on creation, human nature, Christology, salvation, eschatology and the like to the wider discourse because these are essential to their convictions about reality and morality” (Kretzschmar 2018:116).

In the same vein, Aquinas:

incorporated a concept of ‘natural law’ into his theological ethic, according to which the grounds and norms of moral obligation are built into human nature, where they are objectively available to human intellectual grasp – in principle. In fact, however, human understanding is more or less corrupted by sin, and it therefore needs the therapeutic aid of what is revealed in Scripture in order to see straight. [...] for Aquinas, human reason unaided by special revelation is still capable of grasping accurately some important ethical things, as is implied by his own heavy borrowing from the ethical thought of the pre-Christian Aristotle (Biggar 2011: pos. 363).

Biggar’s approach is interesting for humanitarian workers since they must engage in a dialogue with those outside their NGO, predominantly in the field work where they often have to build teams that complement one another professionally. The dialogue must be based on considering and not denigrating the positions of others. But Christian humanitarian workers are also aware that individuals do not only have material, but also spiritual, needs. Natural theology (or natural law) and revelation, thus, both belong together and are needed in dealing with the complex challenges of humanitarian work and its needs.

2.3.4.3 Secularism and the views of Kurtz

Secularism is, as Merriam-Webster's dictionary puts it, the "indifference to, or rejection or exclusion of, religion and religious considerations" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Secularism seeks to interpret life on principles taken solely from the material world without drawing on religion, and it embraces different spheres, such as the history of ideas, art, morality, law, politics, and economics (Jaeschke, n.d.). Secularists, thus, reduce the nature and sources of knowledge to that of human reason and often hold that the view of Christians is antiquated and contrary to reason (Kretzschmar 2018:120).

Paul Kurtz (1925-2012), who has been called "the father of secular humanist movement" (Grothe 2007), was a Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He was a representative of secular ethics and founded different organisations, such as the *Committee for Skeptical Inquiry*, the *Council for Secular Humanism*, and the *Center for Inquiry*, whose missions focus on spreading scepticism, reason, and humanism. His conviction can be summarised as follows:

The meaning of life is not to be discovered only after death in some hidden, mysterious realm; on the contrary, it can be found by eating the succulent fruit of the Tree of Life and by living in the here and now as fully and creatively as we can. (Mehta 2012)

Kurtz "devoted his career to outlining a naturalistic and optimistic philosophy of life" (Cooke 2008:193) and was a defender of naturalistic humanism. What he means by this is reflected in his book *Moral Problems in Contemporary Society* (1969):

Although humanists share many principles, there are two basic and minimal principles which especially seem to characterise humanism. First, there is a rejection of any supernatural conception of the universe and a denial that man has a privileged place within nature. Second, there is an affirmation that ethical values are human and have no meaning independent of human experience; thus, humanism is

an ethical philosophy in which man is central. (Kurtz 1969:2)

This definition shows an ambivalence in his thoughts: on the one hand, humans are not privileged in nature; and, on the other, humanism is a philosophy in which man is central (Cooke 2008:197). It becomes clear that Kurtz does not believe in God as a loving creator who formed humans in His own image. His approach is to argue for a cosmic world-view, based on astronomical and scientific knowledge “and a range of ethical, political, and social views arrived at through consistent application of a sceptical, reasoning method of inquiry [...]” (:198), and, eventually, a “set of ethical recommendations for the individual’s life stance” (:198). For example, he formulated the *ethics of personal excellence* that includes joyful living (in this present life). In his book, Kurtz’s four-point statement of the ‘common moral decencies’ shows the core humanist values:

- *Integrity*, which includes truthfulness, promise-keeping, sincerity and honesty;
- *Trustworthiness*, which includes fidelity and dependability;
- *Benevolence*, which involves good will, non-maleficence as applied to persons, to private and public property, sexual consent and beneficence; and
- *Fairness*, which involves gratitude, accountability, justice, tolerance and cooperation (Kurtz 2008:113-131).

Kretzschmar states that these values are endorsed by most religions (Kretzschmar 2013:57). Since secular humanists do not believe in God, they draw on the source that is available to them which is the human nature. This source can be studied “by means of open, critical enquiry” (:57) and by experience and can thus be adapted to changing realities (:57). Kurtz did not draw on Christian ethics, as other Enlightenment philosophers, such as Kant, Bentham and Mill, did, and he has no concept of sin or moral incapacity.

Secularism is the dominant ideology of humanitarian business (Arumugam 2014:33). Secular humanism dismisses God and discards faith as a basis (or a motive) for social action. For Christian NGOs, therefore, it is important to understand this background. In chapter four, when dealing with the organisations and their challenges, this topic will be discussed further.

2.3.4.4 Responsibility ethics: Weber, Bonhoeffer and Jonas

Max Weber (1864-1920), a German sociologist, philosopher, jurist, and political economist who influenced social theory and social research (not only in Germany), touches on the ethics of responsibility (*Verantwortungsethik*) for politicians. Weber offers criticism of Kant's rationalism and intellectualism, when he states that the vocation of politics demands a "calm attention to the facts of the situation and the consequences of actions – and not to lofty or abstract principles" (Williams n.d.). Weber sees a clear difference between an ethic of responsibility and an ethics that are based on moral norms or convictions. In one of his lectures he gave around 1919 he stated that a responsible person will always be ready to answer for the consequences of their actions (Weber 1999:70f.). Weber describes the ethics of norms and convictions as being something like a God-believer who "does good and then refers to God when it comes to the consequences" (:70). For him, a responsible person should always anticipate the consequences of, and compensate for, their deeds. Weber, however, sees a mere consequentialism as highly problematic, since it bears the danger that the end, even done with good intentions, may justify the means (:71).

For Christian NGOs, Weber's pragmatic evaluation about responsibility is interesting, since it critiques Kant's rationalism and intellectualism and shows that it is responsible to use a mix of different ethical frameworks, and not only emphasise intentions or the consequences or only principles and values. A responsible person knows what to do and is ready to answer the why of their decisions and behaviour.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), a Lutheran theologian, shaped the term 'responsibility' even further. For him, responsibility meant assuming it for the nature of the moral action, enduring at the same time the dialectic relationship between binding commitment and freedom (Bonhoeffer 2013:274f). Bonhoeffer explains that, on the one hand, there is a commitment towards fellow humans and towards God, and, on the other, there is a God-given freedom to act. Bonhoeffer sees a connection with God's leadership in responsible action done out of freedom (:283). He also states that there may be situations in life where responsibility means more than merely fulfilling one's duty. Exceptional situations may call for more, namely for public resistance (:283ff.). By his participation in the German resistance movement (with the aim of preventing more damage for the nation), Bonhoeffer believed that, in his context, he needed to go beyond mere duty (such as obeying laws) to active resistance, and, thus, goes beyond Kant's understanding of duty.

Bonhoeffer also contributed to responsibility ethics by his doctrine of the four mandates. According to this doctrine, the Christian leader is governed by four areas of their life: work, family, state, and the church. Following this structure, Bonhoeffer elaborates on the four mandates. He sees the close ties to these four areas as an analogy to the covenants God makes with his people in the Scriptures.

The first mandate, work, is described in Genesis 2:15. It is, like the other mandates, a God-given one and includes all kinds of work connected to human life. Secondly, there is marriage (family), thirdly government and fourthly the church. The last of these is concerned with the salvation of the whole world (Bonhoeffer 1986:211) and influences all other mandates but has no superior position. All four mandates are divine, because they are God-given (Bonhoeffer 1986:207ff, 287ff). Each of these different mandates is based on a different contract and, thus, needs to be separated clearly from the others when making decisions (Kessler 2016:62).

An important finding is that the four mandates are not able to be divided into secular and divine mandates but they follow a holistic approach. These four mandates, thus, make a withdrawal from the secular into a private, spiritual life virtually impossible (Bonhoeffer 2013:392ff.). The division into secular and divine things is something that Bonhoeffer abhors. He rejects the idea that work is purely a matter of earthly duty that humans should deal with faithfully. Work is a way of living a responsible life and following God's call. He also rejects the idea that God's call can be followed only in a monastery and he demands that Christians do not look for isolated locations but must serve God in all areas of life. Bonhoeffer's four mandates will be discussed briefly again in chapter four when decision-making is being dealt with (see p. 179).

Bonhoeffer's responsibility ethics is important for this thesis because he combines responsibility with the freedom to act, and he adds that God leads the responsible person in these processes. He also combines responsibility with a holistic way of living and working. Christian humanitarian workers, thus, need to understand that their work is not 'divine' when they, for example, work in a Christian organisation, nor is it 'secular' when the work is fulfilled in other ways than being connected to church activities. In addition, the ideas of the four mandates give helpful practical advice for Christians.

Thirty years after Bonhoeffer, in his book regarding the imperative of responsibility²³, **Hans Jonas** (1903-1993), a German philosopher who lectured in Germany and in the USA, discusses the idea of responsibility. His main finding is that responsibility is even harder to deal with in contemporary times than it was before because the consequences, risks and outcomes are more difficult to anticipate and are less predictable owing to the rapid development of technology (Werner 2003). By proving that consequences cannot be calculated and extrapolated any more in modern times, he critiques and even disproves the op-

23 Original title is called *Das Prinzip Verantwortung: Versuch einer Ethik für die technologische Zivilisation* (Frankfurt: Insel 1979).

timistic utilitarian views of the nineteenth century (Nullens & Michener 2010:87f.).

Jonas is convinced that responsibility has nothing to do with religious feelings or with philosophical concepts, since God would not need the human beings for his purposes (Nullens & Michener 2010:89). Jonas would prefer to use technological experts to direct the collective and, thus, answer the call of being responsible for the future generations (:90).

Jonas's view is important for the discussion in this thesis since his thoughts are new in philosophical and theological discussions, where modern challenges, such as rapidly-changing technological development, are not always sufficiently considered. For humanitarian NGOs in general, and even more for Christian NGOs, the question of how to deal with the ethical challenges of technological and medical innovations is an important one, since modern technology often has unintended, long-term, and negative consequences that may imply serious risks for future generations (De Villiers 2013:143).

Jonas is also important with regards to his view on experts. There is a tendency in humanitarian NGOs to provide technological, medical, and logistical experts so that responsibility is increasingly given to experts and not to the average NGO worker. Experts can, however, be wrong, and so their contribution needs to be considered in the light of Christian ethics.

The discussion regarding responsibility ethics makes it obvious that this topic is extremely relevant owing to the inherent complexity and the risks involved in humanitarian work. Christian humanitarian workers are responsible not only towards their fellow human beings but also to God. They need to know how to handle their tasks in a responsible way, and that responsibility can definitely not be handed over to experts alone.

2.3.4.5 Virtue ethics: MacIntyre, Hauerwas and Wright

Alasdair MacIntyre, focused on Aristotelian moral and political thought in his book *After Virtue* (1980). He showed that the moral discourse in modern societ-

ies was inconsistent owing to the different ethical systems born out of the Enlightenment (UCD University College Dublin 2009), and he pointed to a moral disintegration of society (Nullens & Michener 2010:9). As mentioned previously (on p. 58), he criticised the Enlightenment, because reason alone is not enough as it is not able to provide us with the necessary answers to moral questions.

MacIntyre finds it a mistake when people ask, “what is it to be a good manager, teacher, or parent [...]” (UCD 2009), but fail to ask the most basic of all questions, namely “what is it to be a good human being?” (UCD 2009). MacIntyre argues that, in a functional way and in society, people are “not morally disengaged, adrift, and alienated”, but rather “morally obliterated” (Wells 1998:13) and in practice, “not only *illiterate*; we have become morally vacant” (:13). This is a harsh judgement on the moral situation of our societies. He thus proposes a way of rediscovering Aristotle’s virtue ethical thought where morality is a consequence of habits and knowledge concerning how to live a good life, so that good judgement emanates from a good character. He also stresses the role of moral communities and their moral narratives. Although this still raises the question about how to become a good person, it is clear that morality is not simply about moral reasoning and seeking to follow formal rules.

Stanley Hauerwas (1940-), a US-American theologian and Professor for Theological Ethics, has sought to recover the significance of virtues for the Christian life. He emphasises the importance of the Church and narratives for understanding Christian existence. His position involves the rejection of the Enlightenment idea of a universal set of moral norms and values, as promoted by Kant. He is convinced – just like MacIntyre – that the Christian ethic must return to *narrative*, (Nullens & Michener 2010:127), by stating that the essence of the Christian faith is not found in doctrines but in narrative. This means the stories of Israel and the stories about Jesus Christ. To “live ‘in Christ’ is to base our lives on the story of Jesus” (:128). In addition, according to Hauerwas, the church takes on a unique role as the context for our moral education. It is the morality

of the church that enables us to understand the biblical narratives (:130). This emphasis on narrative is relevant to both the mind and relationships because “stories have pre-eminently to do with people, daily life and interaction with others” (Kretzschmar 2007:34). It can, however, be questioned whether Christian narrative and doctrine could be separated, as suggested by Hauerwas.

Hauerwas’ approach includes the idea that ethics should not concern itself primarily with the specific decisions people make in a certain situation. The limitation of ethics to considering only concrete decisions is to “reduce and impoverish ethics beyond recognition” (Nullens & Michener 2010:127). Its primary concern should be to answer the question, ‘Who am I?’ What matters most is not the deed but the doer (who is the moral agent). Moral decisions for Hauerwas are consequences of character, which means that the character of a person always precedes the intellect. Hauerwas offers an alternative to a rationalistic ethical decision-making, and he objects to those thinkers that offer formally developed ethical decision-making rules that miss out on the intuitive way of making moral judgements (De Villiers 2013:140). Ethical decision-making will be discussed further in chapter four (4.3.3.3).

An interesting and very practical insight into virtue ethics comes from **Nicholas Thomas Wright** (1948-), an Anglican Bishop in Durham and a Professor for New Testament and Early Christianity. In his book *After you believe: Why Christian character matters* (2010)²⁴, he emphasises the virtues of faith, love and hope and suggests practising these virtues continuously. On the question of how this can be accomplished, he provides an illustration with five essential elements (Wright 2011:221f):

- Reading the Bible (makes adopting good habits possible);
- Looking for stories, inside and outside the Bible (dealing with stories forms the character because we are exposed to the story and discuss it inwardly);

24 The German edition from 2011 has been used for this thesis.

- Looking for role models (such as given in the example of Hebrews 12);
- Having community with other Christians (in the local church or home-group); and
- Doing exercises (such as praying and worshipping God on a regular basis).

His ideas are based on a variety of biblical statements that teach Christians to work on their character with the aim of being “transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rm 12:2; Eph 4:22-24). Wright’s illustration of the five elements may help Christian NGOs think about character formation. All five elements are easy to realise in the context of the organisation. For leaders, this would imply being good role models, but also looking for role models in the Bible or in the humanitarian context. They could offer theological reflections and discussions as well as prayer opportunities for their Christian staff members.

Virtue ethics is important for Christian NGOs, because, on the one hand, the literature regarding ethics mostly considers only duty ethics and teleological ethics (Afflerbach & Kessler 2014:131), and virtue ethics is poorly considered. On the other hand, if a Christian NGO wants to work in an ethically sound manner, virtues cannot be ignored. They need to be taken into consideration and be the basis of formation in the organisation. For Christian workers, especially for Christian leaders, it is simply not enough to be competent and effective and to focus only on organisational methods and procedures. Kretzschmar states:

For Christians, who claim to live according to the moral norms and values derived from the Bible and are followers of Jesus Christ, the formation of all believers, especially leaders, is an inescapable task [...] Hence, the emphasis on the moral character and integrity of leaders is a vital aspect of the credibility of the Gospel. (Kretzschmar 2007:24)

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter illustrates the way philosophical and theological thought shaped people and societies throughout the centuries. It discusses a selection of philo-

sophers and theologians, trying to find answers to sub-question #1: *How do Christian NGOs relate to the society and world in which they live?*

World-views and the sources that are used to arrive at these are the basis of how reality is perceived. World-views are deeply-held beliefs that include convictions about God, humanity and nature. They show elements of faith, no matter whether they are religious or secular. Since, in Western countries, a mix of world-views can be observed, and since, in Germany, there is a strong emphasis on secular convictions, it could be argued that German Christian NGOs are significantly influenced by those different views, and that they may also encounter difficulties in expressing their Christian faith within a highly secular society. Jewish ethics are an important source for Christian ethics. They are grounded on the love of God, but also on the love and care to strangers. Even if Christian sources build on other sources, such as theology, tradition and experience, as well, for most Christians biblical teachings have the highest authority in their personal life.

Plato's 'theory of ideas' set the path for a division between the spiritual and the physical. Plato also proposed a comprehensive virtue ethics. Aristotle, in contrast, saw the goal of life as *eudaemonia*, which could be reached only by study, exercise and experience. The forming of a character was, thus, crucial for him. Aristotle and Plato separated matter and spirit in such a way that they were "regarded as being in irreconcilable opposition to each other" (Richardson 2005:552).

The virtues emphasised by the Greek philosophers were drawn on by Augustine centuries later. For him *eudaemonia* was the goal of human behaviour, but with love of God and others as a basic element. For Aquinas, *eudaemonia* can be achieved when human beings live in accordance with natural law principles. Aquinas's understanding of the *common good* is seeking the good of all, which includes individuals and society, according to God's justice.

In contrast to Aquinas' *common good*, Luther sees the individual as the one who is accountable to God, but the focus on the individualistic notion of selfhood which was prominent during and after the Reformation may have paved the way for modernism and secular ethics (Vorster 2014:1). The Reformers also opened the way for lay persons to live out their faith in society.

Kant, as a main representative of the Enlightenment in Germany, had a great impact on German society, and he laid a great emphasis on human reason, human autonomy and science which substituted Christian faith for many. His idea of rational human autonomy replaced what had been established by Aquinas, namely the balance between faith and reason.

Other thinkers from the Enlightenment era, Bentham and Mill, influenced secular thought with the Utilitarian maxim of the *benefit of the greatest number*. An action in Bentham's view was morally good if it had consequences that were not only useful, but beneficial for the greatest number of people. Mill added the principle of justice or equality to this maxim.

In their social ethics, both Protestants and Catholics base their social action on values such as love, responsibility and human dignity. Both stress the impact of God's love on individual lives but also on the design of their societies. They both developed an emphasis on the Kingdom of God, where socio-political goals are put into practice to make the world a better place, while also anticipating God's later consummation of this kingdom.

Niebuhr held fast to the idea of the present Kingdom of God and encouraged Christians to strive for the maximum of social justice, and, thus, for good, practical outcomes in society. For Barth, the focus must be on God himself and his Word, above anything else, and the task for humans is to listen to and to obey God's commands. Biggar encourages Christians to engage in dialogue with those outside the church. He sees the possibility of a middle course between Aquinas and Barth.

Kurtz focussed on scepticism, as well as reason and humanism. His attitude is similar to that of most people within German society today, and it can be argued that some secular influences may be found in some Christian NGOs as well.

Weber, Bonhoeffer and Jonas emphasise taking personal responsibility for one's actions. Weber's thought shows that consequential and principle-based ethics are not helpful if they compete with one another, but they need wise balancing. Bonhoeffer contributed to responsibility ethics with his doctrine of the four mandates, where the Christian leader is not able to separate secular from spiritual issues but has to acknowledge that all mandates are God-given. Bonhoeffer, thus, stands clearly against a dualism of the material versus the spiritual. Jonas disregards religion in his ideas about responsibility, but he considers the consequences future generations may face. He is convinced that consequences, risks and outcomes are more difficult to anticipate and less predictable than they were owing to the rapid development of technology.

The classical virtues came under attack during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Wells 1998:15), and, for a long time, ethics was very much focused on the "formulation of principles of right and wrong and their application to specific ethical problems" (Childs 1995:72). During the past century, however, new thoughts, e.g. the ideas of MacIntyre, Hauerwas and Wright, have emerged, and they re-emphasise on the importance of virtue ethics.

In conclusion, there was an historical sweep in Europe from a religious-based ethic to a secular ethic, with some theologians and thinkers still retaining an emphasis on a faith-based ethic during this time. Before the Enlightenment, the "concept of unity among thought, faith, and ethics was widely accepted" (Nullens & Michener 2010:109). This was no longer the case when the Christian world-view was discarded by many, when religion started to become a private matter, and when "knowing and believing became two completely different worlds" (:109). This development started with the ancient Greek philosophers

and culminated in the Enlightenment, where faith and spirituality were excluded and replaced by reason alone. It all ended in a great divorce between the spiritual and physical realms, a dichotomy of the modern world-view that endures to this day and shapes private lives as well as the understanding of communities and business contexts.

The conclusions from this chapter for Christian NGOs are: first of all, Christian NGOs need to understand their own world-views and scrutinise their *ultimate concern* in the wake of competitive world-views and pluralistic societies; and, secondly, Christian NGOs need to be aware that the widespread thought of the separation of faith and reason is deeply humanistic and based on the conviction that human beings can rely on themselves and their strength and intellect alone. In the light of a God to whom human beings are accountable, Christians must reject this view of reality. Thirdly, Christian leaders need to know about Christian ethics, especially social ethics, because here they can find the link between their work and their faith in more concrete ways, both individually and as far as the organisation is concerned. Fourthly, for Christian NGOs, the issue of virtue ethics is very important because it is simply not enough to be competent and effective, especially for Christian leaders. The formation of character, thus, needs to be emphasised in a Christian organisation (and it will be discussed again in chapter four). Finally, it can be argued that the described frameworks on ethical thought need to be evaluated conjointly, asking for morally right or wrong actions out of a sense of duty (deontological ethics), but also asking for the goals and taking responsibility for the consequences of an action (teleological ethics). In addition, the question of what a good person would do in a specific situation (virtue ethics) is likewise necessary. From this, Christians derive their norms, values and also their understanding of virtue, decision-making and their view of leadership from the different ethical frameworks. They are all important and valuable and should not be played off one against one another.

After having discussed the different key topics of this chapter (sources of ethical thinking, motivations, character issues, as well as the interaction with the secular world), in the next chapter we will see how these effects can be seen in the way business is understood and performed in the Western world, especially in Germany.

3. Business and organisational ethics and their implications for Christian NGOs

3.1 Introducing the chapter

Chapter two has shown that Christian theologians have argued that faith cannot be separated from the day-to-day concerns of humanity, including those of social life and economics. In addition, chapter two has discussed the fact that the increased separation of Christian faith from reason, earthly life, morality and socio-economic concerns was a result of the Enlightenment and rationalism.

In this chapter, we will deal with the second of the three aspects described in the introductory chapter, namely a discussion about business and organisational ethics and economics (1.5.3). The idea in this chapter is to clarify the purpose and functioning of the economy and business management that in many ways is shaped by the influences and theories that have been discussed in the second chapter dealing with ethical frameworks, social ethics and also theological and philosophical thought.

In business, the relationship between ethical theory and a practical work-life is challenging, since there is a strong ethics-practice contrast, work as the practical dimension and ethics as the theoretical dimension. There is, thus, a gap between theory and practice, and the imbalance is obvious in a majority of organisations, be they non-profit, profit or governmental organisations, or any others.

How do organisations respond to ethical theories of business? On the one hand, ethical convictions and practices may be understood as being merely subsets of national culture, and so are thus not, or only partially, considered in the work-place. On the other hand, organisations may perceive business ethics as being rather limiting with regard to practice owing to an abstract understanding of ethics (Brügger & Kretschmar 2015:3). Business ethics theory is, thus, often perceived as being difficult to put into practice.

It is necessary to examine the views and theories of selected philosophers, theologians and business practitioners regarding the separation of business (as practice) and ethics (as theory), and how this has influenced Christian NGOs, specifically in Germany.

To answer the question of how organisational ethics are dealt with in Christian NGOs, we will start in this chapter with the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, who wrote in times when ethics, politics and economics belonged together²⁵. Representative of medieval times, the monk Benedict of Nursia is dealt with as for him the work-place, faith and everyday life belonged together in his monastery. Aquinas is discussed because of the issue of the *common good* and the influence that his ideas had on Catholic social teaching. The Reformers with their understanding of work ethics, as well as the concept of the *honourable merchant* will be outlined as these still have a lot that is valuable to say and could even be a model for Christian NGOs. During the time of classical liberalism (Smith, Ricardo, and Say), concepts within business and ethics started to separate, culminating with the idea of the rational *homo oeconomicus* whose key protagonists will also be discussed.

Another question to be answered in this chapter is the priority issue that arose from the separation of business and ethics, where scholars with their different views, such as Göbel, Koslowski, Friedman, Homann, Ulrich, Herms and Childs, will be discussed. All of them have different viewpoints and contribute to which of ethical or rational business decisions have more weight and why they do. In the end, Christian NGOs will have to find a way to answer this question for themselves. The last issue will be to clarify who the moral agent is, the organisations or the individuals working in the organisations? To clarify this matter, the contributions of Solomon, Goodpaster as well as Maak and Ulrich will be discussed.

25 Owing to their different contributions, some of the thinkers discussed in chapter two are mentioned again in this chapter.

It is important to discuss business and organisational ethics and economics concerning Christian NGOs. Despite the fact that such organisations are usually non-profit, they deal with the raising and spending of funds. In addition, they are organisations with structures and strategies, they recruit people and they have employees. In addition, they need accreditation from the public and they operate in a regulated business environment. Hence, apart from the way they deal with the incoming money (funds), they act and behave in a very similar manner to any other organisation. Business and organisational ethics, thus, concern them, too, and this needs to be discussed.

3.2 Business and ethics: Linked or separated?

3.2.1 Aristotle: *Eudaimonia* and *oikonomia*

Ethics and economics once belonged together under the umbrella of Aristotle's practical philosophy. For Aristotle, economics encompassed three different fields, namely ethics, politics, and economics. The word 'economics' originates from Greek *oikos* (the household) and *nomos* (the law). Elisabeth Göbel, a German professor of business ethics, states, in her book *Unternehmensethik* (2010:54), that the relationship amongst these three fields has always been contested. For Aristotle (see also 2.3.1), however, the quest for *eudaimonia* unites the three:

Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason, the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim (*NE* 1094a)²⁶.

This means that all three fields, namely ethics, politics and economics enable human beings to live a felicitous life and give them a sense of meaning. Aristotle added that, in order to be able to live such a life, the provision of goods for basic

26 For the English version I used the translation of W.D. Ross, Kitchener, Batoche Books 1999, online at <http://socserv.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/aristotle/Ethics.pdf>, accessed on 20 March, 2016.

needs was also necessary (*NE* 1099b). In his book *Politics*, Aristotle explains that the ethical aim of the economy is both the provision of basic goods and the protection of wealth (*Pol.* 1258a,b). Aristotle makes it clear that wealth is not meant to be an end in itself, but merely a means to an end (*Pol.* 1257a,b), and he criticises those whose only aim in life is to make money, providing anything beyond the mere necessities. For Aristotle, both making money as an end in itself and accumulating wealth would not even classify belonging to the field of economy (Göbel 2010:59).

The fact that the origin of the term economy can be seen in the image of the stewardship of a household is an important insight for Christian NGOs who can also find this image in the Bible, for example in Matthew 25:14-30 and Luke 19:11-26, where God entrusts people with responsible tasks, money, gifts or wealth²⁷. Early in Western European history, thus, politics, ethics and economy belonged closely together. Aristotle's conviction (that money is only to be used to gain necessities) is also compatible with Christian moral thought. The term 'stewardship' will be taken up again in chapter four (4.3.1.3), when we look at the organisations in more detail.

3.2.2 Benedict of Nursia: An example of medieval economics

Benedict of Nursia, who lived between 480 and 550 A.D., tried to renew his own and affiliate monasteries with monastic rules, the *Regula Benedicti* (RB), in order to improve the monks' everyday life. In these rules, he emphasises the importance of good works, ensuring, at the same time, that the end never justifies the means. Apart from topics, such as living in the community, virtues, the procedure for filling leading positions, and the interaction among the monks, in the last chapter (RB 73:2.9²⁸) the ultimate goal is mentioned and it is the reaching

27 This vision of the household has been taken up by Franz Segbers in his book *Die Hausordnung der Tora: Biblische Impulse für eine theologische Wirtschaftsethik* (2002:114ff) where he has referred to principles of the Torah that can be used for the different economic systems.

28 The RB is quoted by chapter and verse, i.e. RB 73:4 means verse four of chapter 73.

for perfection. Just as Aristotle does, Benedict, thus, uses a teleological approach. But whereas Aristotle aims for *eudaemonia* by a virtuous life, Benedict aims for perfection as a goal of life by putting a strong focus on the way to reach that goal and by the deeds done out of love. God's love was the basic behavioural commitment among the monks (Puzicha 2002:85) who, in fact, adhered to the fundamental monastic concept of living completely separated from the world (Tschudy & Renner 1979:229), but interacting with the outside world through their ministries, such as education and health services.

For Benedict, work-place, faith and everyday life belonged together. This integrative concept of business ethics in the monastery is in contrast to the later separation of theory and practice, as well as of business and faith.

Regarding leadership in the monastery, the abbot was supposed to lead the monks under his order like a father, shepherd, role model and teacher (RB 2:1-40). Being a role model was important for Benedict and it was the concern and responsibility of the leader (Grün 2006:33). This included having an 'error culture'²⁹ as well as a sanctioning system in the monastery. The abbot alone decided about the severity and means of punishment, which could lead to draconian methods of punishment.

Compared to the *Regula Magistri*³⁰, there was a stress on community life in the *Regula Benedicti*: the personal relationships among the monks were mentioned, but also the integration of priests into the monks' community and the principle of seniority were new concepts. Furthermore, electing the abbot (instead of appointment by the dying predecessor) is a further break with traditions from the *Regula Magistri* (Frank 1999:977). The historical significance of the *Regula Benedicti* becomes recognisable in these features (de Vogüé

29 An organisational culture where it is allowed to make errors, and where it is clarified how errors are dealt with.

30 Lat. = Rules of the Master. A body of regulations for monastery life from the 6th century, of which the author is unknown, and where the abbot functions as a teacher (magister). The idea was salvation as the goal of education. *The Regula Magistri* is written as a dialogue between teacher and student, and was not much known until after the 6th century. Compare also Frank (1999:977).

1993:547f) as well as the contribution of a concept of prayer and work ('ora et labora'). Benedict's rules can, thus, be seen as a way of thinking about the economy in very early times and, thus, may be referred to when discussing Christian organisations. Apart from this, the rules also have significance for the humanitarian idea; Benedict determined that nursing care was the most important task of the monastic community: "Before all things and above all things care is to be taken of the sick, so that they may be served in very deed as Christ Himself [...]" (RB 36:1). Benedict's monastery, thus, seems to have been an early form of a Christian NGO, as care was extended to many inside and outside the monastery.

3.2.3 Aquinas: The *common good*

Thomas Aquinas and his idea of the *common good* has already been mentioned in chapter two (2.3.2.2) where it was stated that the aim of human society is not to ensure the private good of individual citizens, but rather to seek the *common good*, the *bonum commune*. Aquinas argues that the *common good* is not an aggregate of individual interests, nor is it a balance between self- and shared interest (Taylor 2010). Instead, Aquinas interpreted Aristotle in such a way that the *common good*, enshrined in natural law, is subordinate to individual well-being (Oermann 2014:92).

The Dominican priest Barrera states that, "[...] it is imperative to have a well-formulated vision of the *common good*" (Barrera 2001:287), and he names five specific characteristics expected from it. These are (1) the orientation of the human person toward the transcendent; (2) the orientation of the human person toward other human persons; (3) the fundamental equality of all human persons; (4) the end of the community as the perfection of its individual members; and (5) the human person as a steward of the goods of the earth (:292).

The orientation of the human person toward the transcendent and towards other human persons seems strongly connected to the two-fold law of

love in Mark 12:29-31 (see 4.3.3.1). It is significant that the fundamental equality of all humans later found its way into the non-discrimination laws of the European labour laws. In addition, the fact that human persons are named stewards is a principle that found its way into Corporate Stewardship (see 4.3.1.3). The above mentioned characteristic, that the end of the community is the perfection of its individual members, would certainly not be shared by the Reformers and others. The idea of the *common good* is also important in this chapter, since there are narrow self-interest concepts observable in some of the thinkers in the field of economics and business. These will be discussed partly in the next pages. The idea of the *common good* helps to critique these narrow understandings of economics.

3.2.4 Luther, Calvin: The foundation of Protestant work ethics

One of Luther's contributions to economic thought was his understanding of the term 'profession'. For him, humans are called by grace, through faith, to do work and to have a profession. The profession, thus, has a divine purpose, namely to glorify God. Luther follows this idea so consistently that he even sees everyday life under the view of a continuous worship service (Hein 2014:115). This gives a new and interesting understanding to an ethos of vocation. The justification through faith gives humans the freedom to pursue a profession without having to be an ordained priest, nun or monk (Oermann 2014:111f). This meant that faith and daily work could be closely linked. However, later, success in business life was rather an expression of one's own merit, and not of God's graceful giving (:112). In addition, Luther has a theory of the just price which he defines as being the consequence of three factors, expense, costs, and the risk of the merchant (WA 15, 295 f.). His approach differs from that of liberal thinkers 200 years later who stressed that markets operated on the basis of supply and demand as will be discussed later (3.2.6).

Luther commented on specific economic issues, but he did not develop a comprehensive economic theory. It is important to understand that Luther's point of reference is not society but rather Christ and the individual before God, and business matters were not an end in themselves but only a means for human beings to meet their material needs (Oermann 2014:115).

Calvin's theology of calling (or *vocatio*) has, as with Luther, the intention that people take responsibility for their own lives and the future of the world. People should be encouraged to take an active part in the world and in their societies because of gratitude for the salvation they have freely received (Kretschmar & van Niekerk 2009:72). As with Luther, Calvin sees the idea of calling not being limited to the conception of priestly or monastic vocation, but, on the contrary, being able to be expressed in a secular context as well (Wogaman 2011:122).

Calvin did not emphasise a just social order, but he showed how an individual can live a sanctified life (Oermann 2014:120). He was also not much interested in markets or business efficiency, but rather in the relationship between God and the individuals which, in his opinion, always has economic consequences (:117).

Some of Calvin's ideas about business and economy resemble those of Luther, e.g. they see work and business as places to glorify God. For him, "business and commerce are a field of moral probation as an integral part of human action and thus an integral part of God's creation"³¹ (Oermann 2014:116). He addresses the classical business ethical issues of professional and work ethics, property, interest and extortion and just pricing (:116). The reception of Calvin's thinking into English Methodism and American Puritanism is noteworthy. For example, John Wesley (1703-1791), Anglican minister and co-founder of the Methodist church, focussed in his sermon *The use of money* on both the theolo-

31 Original quote: "Wirtschaft und Handel sind [...] ein Feld der sittlichen Bewährung als integraler Teil menschlichen Handelns und damit integraler Teil von Gottes Schöpfung".

gical and economic importance of church finances. His *three plain rules* “Gain all you can [...] save all you can [...] give all you can” (Wesley n.d.) shows Calvin’s influence.

Luther and Calvin are important for this thesis for two reasons. The first, for both reformers, is that by justification through faith, individuals are accountable before God, which means that individuals can choose their profession in a secular environment³². For Christian members of humanitarian NGOs this means a satisfying possibility of personal fulfilment and the ability to combine this with mandated neighbourly love. Secondly, because of the reformers’ emphasis on individual responsibility before God, sanctification and personal accountability before God have a great importance in the life of an individual. Later, we will examine to what extent this influences the individuals working in a Christian NGO today.

3.2.5 The *honourable merchant*: Guiding principles in business

The idea of the so-called *honourable merchant* emerged at a time where business was done by single merchants. This can be traced back to the year 1517 (VEEK n.d.), and it is part of the business ethics discussion in Germany time and again. In the Northern part of the country, especially the Hanseatic cities³³, the *honourable merchant* had a significant impact on the business behaviour at that time. The policies of the honourable merchant, as constituted by the VEEK³⁴, are three-fold (VEEK n.d.). Firstly, the honourable merchant *as a person* commits themselves to an adherence of values, such as reliability, open-mindedness, and the ability of good judgement. Secondly, the honourable merchant *in their organisation* create conditions that enable honourable actions, e.g. by being a role

32 The secularisation of professional life in the end paved the way for capitalistic working structures.

33 Hamburg, Bremen and Lübeck, three Northern German cities, are still called Hansestadt (Hanseatic cities).

34 VEEK is the “Versammlung eines ehrbaren Kaufmanns zu Hamburg e.V”, the Assembly of an honourable merchant in Hamburg, a registered society that keeps the principles alive in Hamburg, Germany.

model, laying the foundation for an ethical culture, and investing in the sustainable and long-term effects of their actions. Thirdly, the honourable merchant *in their society* designs the framework for honourable action, e.g. by sticking to the principle of good faith and trust, taking over responsibility for the society and the economic system, as well as advocating their values in international affairs.

As such, the policies give a clear picture of individual ethics (the micro-level of an organisation) with great emphasis on character traits, but, at the same time, the sphere of activity of the honourable merchant includes views of the other two levels, namely the level of their own organisations (meso-level) and those of the societies (macro-level) in which they are active.

Daniel Klink, a researcher from the Humboldt University in Berlin, has studied the impact of the *honourable merchant* on young managers. He states that the contemporary term Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was obviously discussed hundreds of years ago at an individual level (Klink 2008:79). Since CSR nowadays is discussed only at the meso-level of corporations, excluding the character traits in business, he calls for an enhancement of the discussions to all levels in order to give a sound foundation and valuable guidelines for young entrepreneurs and managers for responsible and sustainable business-making. In an English summary of his article, Klink states that:

Business people do not need separate ethics or ethical codes. They act ethically, when following the original guiding principles of business administration: the guiding principles of the honourable merchant. These guiding principles were taught in merchants' manuals since the 12th century. The honourable merchant operates in a sustainable manner. He uses both technical knowledge about business and a bundle of virtues, which aims at securing his long-term economic success. His decisions are made responsibly with regard to society and social peace (Klink 2008:79).

The Director of the Institute for Business Ethics of St Gallen, Professor Thomas Beschorner, together with his researcher Thomas Hajduk, states that the “metaphor” of the *honourable merchant* is too easy as a “therapy suggestion” for mod-

ern companies, since the manager of today's world is not comparable with the single merchant of medieval Italy or Northern Europe, and it takes more to accomplish business responsibility (Beschoner & Hajduk 2012:4). In the wake of the many business scandals, it may seem logical that there are voices calling for a renaissance of the concept of the *honourable merchant*, or alternatively an 'honourable manager', with an emphasis on the formation of virtues (:3), but for many of these this is not adequate for today's problems. Beschoner and Hajduk, thus, criticise the argument of some advocates, such as Klink, that the honourable merchant is *per se* in possession of virtue and honour and would not, therefore, need an ethical code (:5). They state instead that the *honourable merchant* is a lonely person (they even use the term 'autism') who submits to norms and expectations of other merchants, but their contention is that, in a global business community with inter-cultural cooperation, this would not be of any help with regard to accomplishing business responsibility (:5).

It is interesting to discuss the idea of the *honourable merchant* for this thesis for two reasons. Firstly, the discussion reveals the rift between individual and institutional necessities for a functioning business ethics in an organisation. Should character be promoted over rules, or the other way around, or as an integrated necessity? In addition, the question of whether and why a merchant (or manager) with a strong character should not need a code of ethics is important. Has a code become completely superfluous simply because a manager has a strong character? Here, Klink refers to a positive anthropology of 'human goodness'. Whereas Beschoner and Hajduk point out the cultural challenges of a global world (thus rejecting the character's traits as being sufficient for globally oriented companies), Klink is convinced that the young managers – with little experience and often over-challenged with their tasks (Klink 2007) – would benefit from this historical role model. For him, this model includes both global and societal challenges and constitutes an adequate answer to the *laissez-faire*

behaviour of the Anglo-Saxon business world, where young managers are isolated, unsupported and pressured in the corporate world (Klink 2007).

The model of the *honourable merchant* has been largely eliminated since the times of industrialisation. The marginalisation of God and religion, the increasing anonymity of business entities, and an increasing concentration of population in the cities has essentially caused the concept of the honourable merchant to seem to disappear (Klink 2007). Obviously, there are voices (like those of Klink, but also the organisation of VEEK) who would welcome a re-instating of the term and the concept of the *honourable merchant*. It might not, therefore, be vanishing entirely from business ethical discussions.

The value of this model is that it combines business activity with Christian values and character traits such as honesty and reliability. Christian NGOs may, thus, be familiar with this model and adapt it into their context, taking into consideration Beschorner's and Hajduk's critique of the missing global aspects for today's problems. It is doubtful, however, whether Klink's view that an ethical code is unnecessary, is valid. Indeed, the ethical values, or self-commitments, of Christians may be included in an ethical code. The model of the honourable merchant (or manager) should not vanish as a discussion point for Christian NGOs, who may update it and use it to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

3.2.6 Smith, Ricardo and Say: Classical liberalism

Adam Smith (1723-1790), who is associated with the emergence of the modern discipline of economics, was a moral philosopher and a key figure during the Scottish Enlightenment era. For him, ethics and economic dimensions are intertwined and, thus, belong closely together. His assertion about human self-interest has been misunderstood by some, since his statement that people's individual self-interest would bring advantages for the whole nation (e.g. Smith [1776] 2001:17) has been isolated from other statements (such as the moral ap-

proaches of his other book *Theory of moral sentiments* (1759), where he discussed self-interest connected with virtues). His idea of self-interest has been misunderstood as self-love in the sense of ruthless selfishness. As a result, Smith is wrongfully seen as being the vanguard of economic individualism and egoism (Oermann 2014:228ff). In his political economy, the individual is completely integrated into the society (:228) and, ultimately, into the world: He speaks about global labour by demanding that the division of labour should be done between the nations in order to enhance wealth in the participating nations (Smith [1776] 2001:14ff.).

Smith's world-view has clear religious elements which are based on a belief of godly providence. Anthropology is the key for understanding his economic thoughts. It is the individual who stands before God who can freely design their working life. The statement "Men's self-interest is God's providence" has become well-known in this context (Oermann 2014:229). Smith also states that, if the free market functions, it promotes virtues such as responsibility, honesty, frugality, ability, and self-control, and these would be important virtues to be able to succeed. But he also points to the virtue-bolstering institutions, such as the church and the society. Religion, for Smith, is an expression of the need for justice and benevolence. With this statement, he makes it clear that religion and ethics should not be separated (in contrast to the Enlightenment thinkers, such as Kant, see also 2.3.3.1). He encouraged people to choose to affiliate with other good people, and then good results would occur (Dunn 1997:3).

The market, for Smith, is a natural system of liberty, held together by an *invisible hand*. The invisible hand is not the result of a centrally-planned economy but is based on individual self-interest and on the division of labour. Smith, however, knows about the human deficits and holds that the government has to set up a framework of rules for all individuals in order to generate a prosperous society. This means that Smith, although a liberal, concedes that the state needs to take care of: a) the defence of the nation; b) the creation of a functioning law

system; and c) the infrastructure of the nation (Smith [1776] 2001:582) in order to serve economic and social justice (Götzelmann 2010:54)³⁵.

David Ricardo (1772-1823), one of those who built on Smith's theory, discussed Smith's thought of division of labour, and he developed the theory of the comparative costs. He said that each nation should concentrate on production in the field in which they are the most efficient and the best. This would enhance productivity and bring about the greatest income (Ricardo 1994:144ff). Because he demanded the total abolition of protective tariffs, he became a significant pioneer of globalisation (:121;267). He saw the *invisible hand* as being driven by prices, and so led economic thinking to mathematical processes. With David Ricardo, ethics and theology were put aside and pure economic reasoning became prevalent.

Jean-Baptiste Say (1767-1832) was a French liberal who refined Smith's idea of the providence of the *invisible hand* by pronouncing the formula of "each demand creates its own supply" (Baumol 1986:26). For example, he meant that an imbalance, even a monetary one, would be temporary only and, by the mechanisms of market and prices, would be removed quickly (:33). This theorem reinforced the idea of the invisible market mechanisms and, thus, the disjunction of economics from philosophy, and it had an impact on what is known as modern economics.

For this thesis, these three thinkers are significant, since they show the regression of economic views from a Christian anthropology (Smith) to a rationalistic approach (Ricardo, Say). This shows to a certain extent that the secularising process, observed in chapter two, where theological-ethical issues play a decreasing role, can also be observed in the development of economics.

35 Smith's demand for the intervention of the state in very strictly defined roles influenced the social market economy (*Soziale Marktwirtschaft*) in Germany after World War II, where liberals from the *Freiburger Schule* under Walter Eucken, Franz Böhm and others tried to set up a 'third way' – a line between purely liberal markets and purely state-directed economy, a path between liberalism and interventionism. They set up a regulation framework for economic activities of the state which is well known within the term *Ordoliberalism*.

3.2.7 The *homo oeconomicus*: A theoretical construct

The ethics-practice gap described above becomes visible in the *homo oeconomicus*, where economy is understood as being a purely ‘rational’ issue. Wöhe and Döring (whose standard work *Einführung in die Allgemeine Betriebswirtschaftslehre* is used by literally all business students in Germany) define the *homo oeconomicus* as an artificial model that helps explain and anticipate the economic behaviour of people in business. It acts purely rationally and is, only and exclusively, interested in one's own advantage (Wöhe & Döring 2013:3)³⁶. Maximising earnings is a goal that businesses seek to achieve. Göbel critiques the view that studying business management implies simply learning about how this aim can be achieved (Göbel 2010:59); she is critical of an ethics-practice gap. For her, self-interest is not bad in itself, unless it is not directed by a complete egoism. In order to overcome this ethics-practice gap, institutions need to filter out egoistic self-interest and, at the same time, reconcile self-interest and moral virtue (:65f).

In Germany, until the end of the 1960s, there were no noteworthy disagreements regarding the definition of the term ‘economics’. It was based on the assumption of the artificial model of the *homo oeconomicus*, a term that first appeared in Vilfredo Pareto's *Manuale d'economia politica*, 1906 (Götzelmann 2010:54). Erich Gutenberg (1897-1984) was the most highly regarded representative of this model, the so-called classical economic theory³⁷. Obviously, there

36 The *homo oeconomicus* is guided by a striving for the maximisation of benefit as a consumer, or for the maximisation of earning as a producer. In both cases, it is always the maximisation of financial dimensions (Gabler Wirtschaftslexikon, online at <http://wirtschaftslexikon.gabler.de/Archiv/8004/homo-oeconomicus-v12.html>, accessed on 20 March 2016). Others, such as Friedhelm Schwarz, an economic journalist and a publisher, reject this model as absolutely non-existent (Schwarz 2004:8), because economic decisions are made “out of many reasons, but extremely seldom out of rationality” (:8,42f).

37 Gutenberg rejected the influence of people in economic thought and based his theory solely on the factors of production, which, as a result, put a strong focus on productiveness and efficiency (Wöhe & Döring 2013:16). The majority of business management and economic students in Germany, including myself, have been confronted by this approach.

are two key ideas that underpin the model of the *homo oeconomicus*, on the one hand there is Adam Smith's misinterpreted self-interest and, on the other, the idea of rational human beings that emerged during the Enlightenment.

In the beginning of the 1970s, Gutenberg was challenged by social scientists and economists who sought to find the influence of human behaviour in economics. Heinrich Nicklisch (1876-1946) and Edmund Heinen (1919-1996) were the best-known representatives of this approach. They claimed that economics was not an independent discipline but was rather part of the (behavioural) social sciences (Wöhe & Döring 2013:3), where business subjects follow a common interest (in contrast to the self-interest of the *homo oeconomicus*). Discussion about this view has not been concluded to this day, and this is demonstrated in the following overview:

Table 2: Economic approaches in Germany (Wöhe & Döring 2013:4, own translation)

Nature	<i>Homo oeconomicus</i>	Behavioural approach
Motive of action	Self-interest	Common interest
Procedure of action	Rational	Emotional
Coordination of managerial decisions	Shareholder Approach	Stakeholder Approach
Business objectives	Long-term maximisation of earnings	Compromises between stakeholders

Probably a large number of organisations and corporations are not aware in detail of the tough academic discussion about definitions going on in Germany, which, according to Wöhe & Döring (2013:17), has lasted until today³⁸.

In very recent times, as a result of psychological, as well as empirical and interdisciplinary economic research, the classic *homo oeconomicus* has en-

38 Another challenge in Germany is that economics is separated generally (economics and business management), and additionally these two are divided into independent studies, such as marketing, logistics, etc. Companies urgently need graduates who are able to have a holistic view of a corporation, but this is often not provided for by the educational system (Wöhe & Döring 2013:17), which may in turn also be a problem for NGOs.

countered a more human touch, and he is now called *homo oeconomicus humanus* (Götzelmann 2010:55). Specificities of the new *humanus* model show that they are more informed, more cooperative, and know how to connect self-interest and common welfare in contrast to the former ego-centric, rational and competitive model, and, most importantly, they include the handling of values (:55).

Enlightenment and the focus on rationality and science has obviously found a limit in the current economic discussions. Today, it is far easier to deal with a more emotional and behaviour-driven economic thinking person. Christian NGOs, which supposedly reject the cold-hearted and egoist *homo oeconomicus* out of incompatibility with their world-view, will have some trouble in discerning the differences between a behaviour-driven approach and a Christian-perceived approach, since there seems to be some overlapping. It cannot, however, be ignored that even if the *homo oeconomicus humanus* may be value-oriented, emotional and cooperative, it is a model that rules out both religious thought and a morality based on God's character and will.

3.2.8 Summary of 3.2

As early as the Greek philosophers, business ethics and business practice and the everyday life belonged together and were perceived as being a unity. Aristotle used the image of the household as the beginning of an economic system as a whole. For him, people needed to be morally prudent and far-sighted in this household. Self-interest, if led by egoism, was rejected.

Benedict of Nursia, as early as 500 A.D., had established monastic rules that included a comprehensive code of ethics. Economic production, faith and everyday life belonged together in Benedictine monasteries. In addition, Benedict stressed that goals needed to be reached in an ethical manner. He also emphasised the community with God's love as basic behavioural commitment for all monks, and the care of the sick as a divine deed. In the same vein, Aquinas pro-

moted the *common good* in a society. He was convinced that the common good had priority over individual well-being, a view that later influenced the Catholic social teaching.

The Reformers emphasised the role of the individual before God and society by emphasising that every human is accountable before God. In addition, human beings are able to choose their profession freely outside of a monastic context.

In addition, the concept of the *honourable merchant* that existed in Europe and significantly in Northern Europe emphasised elements such as virtues and ethical cultures in the organisations, and, thus, tied together elements of faith and business. The *honourable merchant* has not been stressed any more since the times of industrialisation, but the concept seems to be re-emerging in public in the wake of the many recent business scandals, and it could be an interesting concept for Christian NGOs to look at.

Adam Smith saw ethics and business as a unity, and the market as a part of society. His theory was based on a Christian anthropology, in which virtues played an important role, and the church played a significant role in the well-being of the state. His idea of self-interest was, however, widely misunderstood. Ricardo did not build on a Christian anthropology. He referred to the misunderstood 'self-interest' of Smith, and, with his calculations of efficiency, productivity and comparative costs, he contributed to the primacy of economy. Say took the same line when reaffirming that the 'invisible hand', namely the mechanism of market and prices, would take care of economic balance. While Smith still included ethical elements in his theory, Ricardo and Say introduced economics as a quantifiable science with mathematical rules (Oermann 2014:237) which paved the way for the artificial model of the *homo oeconomicus*. This model depends on the maximisation of profits and efficiency, excluding emotions, ethical pondering and religious convictions.

In this rationalistic and mathematical approach to the economy, human behaviour and ethical convictions lost importance in Western economic theory. With this, ethics and business became separated entities. Friedman (in the USA) and Homann (in Germany) defended the idea of the rational *homo oeconomicus*. For them, efficiency became the highest ethical value. In Germany, this prevalence of the rational economic model was disturbed in the 1970s when psychologists and sociologists tried to counterbalance this rationalistic view by saying that all behaviours are influenced by environment factors.

3.3 The priority issue: Which is more important?

In the last two decades in German-speaking countries, there has been a discussion between economic theory and ethics (Küpper 2007:253) that entailed a debate on basic principles, where different schools of thought emerged. Very generally, convictions ranged from an almost complete disapproval of ethics in economics to the suggestion that economics must be controlled by ethics. Whereas US-American business ethical thinkers are known primarily for placing a great emphasis on pragmatism and applicability (Kreikebaum et al 2001:19)³⁹, German thinkers tended to discuss issues on a theoretical and academic level. This has changed in the past years; an enhanced application orientation regarding business ethics is now observable in Germany⁴⁰. In any case, many forms of business ethics largely rule out religious moral thought, and this reduces business to a mere practical plane.

39 Both Palazzo and Kreikebaum (both German-speaking ethicists) state that business ethics in the USA is so broad that all the theories and thoughts are literally unmanageable (Kreikebaum *et al* 2001:19; Palazzo 2000:57). In US-American theories, though, a predominance of mostly teleological (utilitarian) approaches can be observed (Kreikebaum *et al* 2001:16).

40 The consequences of an application orientation is that the discourse fails with regard to fundamental reflection and justification of the points at issue. This is what Holthaus calls an 'Americanisation' of business ethics (Holthaus 2010:15f.). US-American researched business ethics is largely case study oriented, and impact assessment is often the aim. But to put a focus on practice may result in superficial and biased ethical behaviour.

For Christian NGOs, the dichotomy of business practice and ethics is not easy to tackle. It can be argued that, in any practical manifestation, Christian NGOs, out of necessity or pressure, may have a similar approach to that of profit companies and may adopt a ‘business comes first’ mentality. The main German and Anglo-Saxon thinkers who tend to one or the other side, or try to find to bridge the different poles, will be discussed in the following pages. They have been selected according to the contribution they have made to the discussion on the relative value of ethics and business.

3.3.1 Göbel, Koslowski: Ethics needs to watch over business

Some standard business ethics literature holds that business ethics is one possible specification of applied ethics⁴¹. It includes the application of ethics to different fields, such as medical ethics, environmental ethics, and so on. Elisabeth Göbel, for example, defends this approach. She holds that ethics, coming from philosophy or theology, has to watch over and evaluate economics from its original perspective (Göbel 2010:68f.)⁴².

Similarly, Peter Koslowski (1952-2012), a German economist and philosopher, provides an idea of the ethical and cultural base of economic activity in his work *Prinzipien der Ethischen Ökonomie* (1988) in which he states that ethics, by “wanting the best” and “wanting good action”, promotes the economic good (Koslowski 1988:25)⁴³. He explains this by showing that unethical behaviour hampers market mechanisms, whereas ethical action can correct them. He takes contract transactions as an example that are usually strained by a certain insecurity because neither contract partner can be sure of whether the

41 I follow the approach of business ethics being a part of “applied ethics” for this thesis. See also 1.3.1.

42 Robert C. Solomon who will be dealt with later (section 3.4.1), is also convinced that good ethics means good business (Solomon 1994:36f) without giving a guarantee that “ethics pays” in a monetary sense. Economics is part of culture and society, and this is why he stresses cooperation instead of competition.

43 Original quote: “Ethik als Wollen und Tun des Guten fördert [...] auch im Markt das ökonomisch Gute”.

other will stick to their commitments. This insecurity creates costs of control and sanctioning, namely transaction costs. These costs would be obsolete if mutual trust existed. This means that voluntary ethical behaviour would drop transaction costs and increase a state's welfare (:28f). This voluntary ethical behaviour has admittedly a low stimulus and religion may be needed as a corrective (:37). The question of motivation, i.e. why someone should want to act morally, is significant at this point.

Koslowski stresses the importance of morally relevant behaviour, such as reliability and trust, for the creation and functioning of a capitalist system (Neck 2012:216). He demands values that could be religious, based on natural law or other ethical frameworks in order to be capable of making reasonable and fair economic decisions, and this is even more important in post-modern cultures (:216). Koslowski's business ethics is, therefore, based on both obligations and virtues.

The critique of these approaches is that ethics can autocratically intervene into business matters and hold the primacy over business (Götzelmann 2010:34f). In this case, the practical constraints and specific aspects of economics would not be sufficiently considered. In the eyes of the critical voices, ethics is not able to correct the rationality of economics. A two-world dichotomy would be built up: on the one hand, an ethical world; and, on the other hand, a moral-free world, both being completely incompatible with each other (:35). These critical voices fear a dichotomy, not realising that they are probably already promoting dualistic thinking by separating ethics from business and being convinced that economics is a purely rational matter. Christian NGOs are caught in the middle of this struggle. It is important that they are aware of this discussion in order to be able to react accordingly.

3.3.2 Friedman, Homann: Ethics means rules for the game

Regarding the social responsibility of business leaders, Milton Friedman (1912-2006), a Professor of the Chicago School of Economics and Nobel prize winner, wrote in his book *Capitalism and Freedom* (1982:133) the following conviction:

The view has been gaining widespread acceptance that corporate officials and labour leaders have a “social responsibility” that goes beyond serving the interest of their stockholders or their members. This view shows a fundamental misconception of the character and nature of a free economy. In such an economy, there is **one and only one social responsibility of business** – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to **increase its profits** so long as it stays **within the rules of the game**, which is to say, engages in open and free competition, without deception or fraud (own emphasis).

Friedman denied that business companies have a social responsibility, but, in the last part of the quotation, he admits that there are ‘rules of the game’ and that enterprises should stay within those. These are rules for ethical behaviour: open and free competition; no deception; and no fraud. Ethics for Friedman thus exist as laying down the rules in which one needs to behave accordingly.

Friedman's statement influenced German economists⁴⁴, and, especially, some prominent German representatives of business administration as an academic discipline, who, owing to this influence, rejected business ethics as an integral part of research and education in business administration (Küpper 2007:253). Dieter Schneider and Herbert Hax are names that can be mentioned in this context.

For Friedman, business ethics is a normative discipline which recommends norms and principles that may conflict with economic criteria of a free market system. Other thinkers criticise this by claiming that this view is much too narrow, since ethics is not limited to normative reasoning (Küpper 2007:253). The

44 Together with other thinkers, such as the neo-liberalist views of Friedrich August von Hayek, an Austrian economist and Nobel prize winner, and others.

last half-sentence of Friedman's quotation shows that there is a limit to a business-at-all-costs; significantly, the first part of the above quotation has become the basis of a normative economic theory where business has a higher value and preference than ethical reasoning.

Karl Homann (1943-), a professor Emeritus for business ethics in different private and public German universities⁴⁵, who adapted the views of Friedman and von Hayek, defends the *homo oeconomicus*. He rejects the critique that the *homo oeconomicus* reduces human beings to mere economic-driven subjects. The reason is that the artificial construct of the *homo oeconomicus* can be abstracted on a methodological level – just as with natural sciences – and this helps to evaluate dilemma structures in business (Homann & Lütge 2005:77). In dilemma structures, according to Homann, people have to reclaim self-interest and self-advantage, or else there is a danger of being exploited by others (:77). Homann promotes a two-fold approach utilising the idea of sports activities; there are moves (*Spielzüge*) and rules (*Spielregeln*). The moves are single actions to be controlled by the individual person, whereas the rules are the overall conditions under which the moves can take place (:27). Moves can be motives, interests, but also purchases, contracts, marketing measures, prices, etc. Rules are given conditions such as natural laws as well as conditions of culture and society, e.g. education levels. In addition, rules could be the constitution of a country, laws of competition, or laws of trade, etc. (:27).

In Homann's opinion, moral concepts must be analysed and calculated economically. He thus embraces the attitude that ethics always has to pay off economically (Götzelmann 2010:35). This means that with ethically desirable behaviour a multiple-win situation can be achieved by the organisations, within social, economic, and ethical dimensions. In his eyes, if ethics wants to be relevant in business, it has to be approached in the same way as a business issue. Ethical

45 Among them high-profile elite universities such as Munich and Witten-Herdecke.

reflection is, thus, reduced to cost-effectiveness. In addition, to make employees comply, ethical behaviour needs incentives (Homann & Lütge 2005:96).

Summing up, profit-driven economics seems to be an inviolable principle currently employed in Germany where the market system forms the basis of thought. Friedman, together with other neo-liberalist economists, has had a great impact on German economists and professors⁴⁶, forming the opinion-making in German's university courses. Homann-influenced scholars, in particular Christoph Lütge, Ingo Pies, and Andreas Suchanek, took over his narrow view of ethics at their different universities. They all refer to Adam Smith and his promotion of self-interest that enhances public welfare.

In an article, the US-American professor Georges Enderle states the following regarding the perception of ethics in a number of countries:

In many academic circles, ethics still is a mere matter of feelings, a private matter or just a social-cultural construct that cannot be evaluated rationally. For these circles, scientific legitimacy for ethics simply does not exist. This also shows itself in the fierce resistance of some universities to establishing ethics in their research institutes, curricula or teaching plans. In addition, candidates to professorships do not necessarily have to know anything about ethics, a situation that happens very often. (Enderle 2010:56, own translation)⁴⁷

Enderle refers to the relegation of theology and ethics to the personal and private realm that took place during and after the Enlightenment era which was discussed in chapter two (e.g. in 2.4). Consequently, and as Enderle insinuates, for senior personnel of Christian NGOs, the probability of having had a specific

46 For example, well-known German economists and professors, such as Horst Steinmann (1934-), professor emeritus for business administration in Nürnberg, who sees the aim of companies to maximise their profits as being compatible with moral standards and ethically justifiable. He, however, acknowledges the fact that in a market system based on the division of labour and thus highly specialised, moral conflicts are possible (Palazzo 2000:51). Similarly, Josef Wieland (1952-), a former Professor and now executive board member of the European Business Ethics Network, promotes institutional economics and organisational governance.

47 The financial crisis in 2008 might, however, have changed some rigid attitudes in the meantime.

encounter with business ethics in their professional or academic careers, seems to be rather low.

The problem for Christian NGOs is that they may not be aware of all these reductionist concepts and theories, and so they adopt them unconsciously in their NGOs. This may especially be the case when people working in NGOs have worked in profit companies, and/or have studied business management in Germany. Christian NGOs, therefore, need to understand economic theory and business ethics as they have evolved before, during and after the Enlightenment. A narrow view of the economy that excludes ethics or relegates it to the private realm should not be acceptable for a Christian organisation.

3.3.3 Ulrich: Ethics and business should be integrated

Peter Ulrich (1948-), an Emeritus business ethics Professor at the University of St Gallen, Switzerland, rejects the rationality of business and the principle of profit maximisation⁴⁸, because socio-economic normative requirements are not reflected sufficiently in this principle. He also rejects the two-world-conception of conventional business ethics, where business and ethics are completely separated. He sees the danger of an advancing reductionism, where all facets of life are reduced to economics, and economics are reduced to profit.

Ulrich orients himself around the philosophy of Kant who claims that human beings have free will and a freedom of action. Based on this autonomy, humans are able to reflect on their existence and their moral behaviour and also evaluate the moral behaviour of others. The understanding of moral action comes from the good will of the human being and not from an external authority (Ulrich 2008:23f). Thus Ulrich, like Kant, disregards faith and seeks to find answers for moral behaviour in business in the human beings themselves, and not in God.

48 A public dispute that goes on between him and Karl Homann regarding the principle of profit maximisation (see also Palazzo 2000:47).

For Ulrich, the discourse rules of Habermas⁴⁹ are important, where consensus can be achieved in the discourse, together with all stakeholders (Kreikebaum *et al* 2001:47; Habermas 1992:103). He, thus, points to a two-fold implication for business ethics, firstly, an open corporate “constitution” regarding the processes that include all interests of the stakeholders and how to deal with them in a continuing dialogue (Kreikebaum *et al* 2001:53f), and, secondly, consensus-oriented management, which means the permanent maintenance of the communication potential between all stakeholders and the business leadership (:55). The standard work that he and Thomas Maak published in 2007 tries to bridge the theory of socio-economic requirements and management practice, and it has been taken as a fundamental literary source in this thesis (mentioned in 1.3.4.1 and 1.5.2, and worked in depth with in chapter four, 4.3).

In summary, Ulrich criticises the narrow view of economics as well as the complete separation of business and ethics in practice. The initial point of economy must always be the human being in their individual situation. Ulrich’s solution is to integrate socio-economic and political aspects by a dialogue with the stakeholders (socio-economic aspect) and a corporate constitution (political aspect). This solution, however, comes with a clear humanistic footprint, and it excludes religious thought.

For Christian NGOs, the idea of integrative business ethics by Ulrich (and Maak) is of value, since two mentioned aspects need also to be visible in a Christian NGO, firstly, the dialogue with stakeholders should always be kept up in a transparent way, and, secondly, an ethical code is helpful, especially when the organisation handles sensitive financial transactions, e.g. fund-raising and the use of donations.

49 Jürgen Habermas (1929-), a renowned German philosopher and sociologist, who set up a discourse ethics based on Kant’s categorical imperative. Habermas belonged to the Frankfurt School, a group of philosophers and scientists of different disciplines.

3.3.4 Rich, Herms: Business ethics needs religion

For Arthur Rich (1910-1992), a Swiss Protestant theologian, economics and religion belong together as two main pillars, viz. the idea of human orientation [*das Menschengerechte*] based on the three Christian values faith, hope and love, and the economically appropriate [*das Sachgemäße*]. The idea of human orientation is that elements of humanity, such as human dignity and charity, can also be accepted and respected by non-Christians. With these two pillars, Rich aims to bring together Christians and non-Christians in a discussion about economics (Oermann 2014:148).

Eilert Herms (1940-), a theologian who taught systematic theology in Tübingen, sees religion as a fundamental anthropological factor for every theory of economic order (*Ordnungstheorie*) (Munzinger 2010:36f). Herms does not see ethics and economics as separate elements in their relationship, but rather as an inner unity (Herms 2005:1623). There is a huge interdependency between the four functional areas in a society. Economics is one of them. The other three are the political, including the separation of powers, the scientific, and the world-view-religious area, including ethical matters (Munzinger 2010:38f). Because economics and religious convictions influence each other, ethical reflection on economic behaviour is so important.

Theology and, in particular, theological anthropology has a hermeneutical function in business ethical theory. Herms' idea of a *homo religiosus* instead of a *homo oeconomicus* is an interesting idea for Christian NGOs, and it may help to overcome a perceived gap between business and ethics in the minds of their leaders. It may help to encourage them not to prioritise one above the other, but to be able to perceive a certain unity. Both thinkers counteract the narrow views of economics which is common in German-speaking countries today.

3.3.5 Childs: From Dualism to Dialogue

James M. Childs Jr. (1939-), an emeritus professor of theology and ethics at the Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, contributes to a dialogic business ethics. In his book, *Ethics in Business*, Childs identifies five reasons why it is so hard and frustrating for Christian business people to apply ethical values and principles in business life:

- There is a secular perception “that objective reason can lead to moral truth along a path of neutrality” (Childs 1995:6); this also includes the language: “religious considerations may be operating within individuals’ consciences, but the moral insights they evoke need to be translated into a neutral vocabulary” (:7) – otherwise a person is probably prevented from being taken seriously in a business context, if pointing directly to religious convictions.
- There is a perception that common norms and Christian ethical principles are basically identical. Childs assumes that “matters of serious ethical consequence are in people’s thinking normally confined to the avoidance of behaviour that violates common norms against stealing, cheating, lying, and harming others directly” (Childs 1995:7). He adds that the fact that our society is based on Judeo-Christian ethos makes it easy to think that common norms and Christian ethical principles are basically the same. This makes moral reflection rather difficult and results in diminishing the tension between moral principles of faith life and work life.
- There is the separation of weekdays and Sundays, or the dualistic assumption that spiritual life and business life belong to separate worlds. Childs criticises the fact that this perception have been silently and deliberately kept up by both sides.
- The church has often been hostile in its attitude toward business, and it has neglected addressing specific daily needs of those in business. Childs argues that business people perceive responsible church people as their

adversaries rather than their friends. They feel that maintaining an image of integrity in the public is already very tough, but that it is extremely difficult at church. Making money is often simply equated with greed and dishonesty.

- Business people perceive the church as being out of touch with the real world, not even understanding what is going on outside the church walls. Obviously both sides, the church and business, operate with stereotypes of each other.

Childs calls these five points the “shareability gap” because both business and church have no common things to share, no shareable ideas, concepts and vocabulary “that makes the contributions of the faith intelligible to the experience of business and *vice versa*” (Childs 1995:10).

This is exactly where the dialogic business ethics takes effect. For Childs, dialogue is “a way towards consensus-building in a pluralistic setting” (Childs 1995:12), and it is about communication (52). He stresses that the Reformation rediscovered the theological truth that we are all hopelessly mired in sin and that we are accounted worthy and acceptable in God's sight only by the grace of God in Jesus Christ and our faith in that promise and not by any virtues we possess or works we have done. This central doctrine of the Christian faith is the key for understanding the dialogic business ethics, viz. the understanding that we live in a fallen world, and are dependent on God's grace, helps the Christian community see that it needs a dialogue. And this teaches the church that it must be ready for self-criticism and reform. If the church understands this, it is “wonderfully free for self-critical reflection and for honest dialogue” (:46). It means, basically, if we love, we can be, or should be, in dialogue.

Business ethics, according to Childs, is relevant not only for management but also for “shopkeepers, clerks, electricians and plumbers” (Childs 1995:13). It

applies to everyone at work⁵⁰. But the focus of his book is on the management of corporations or other organisations, as well as on students who aspire to enter these career paths.

Childs' assumptions regarding the church sound very harsh. By this critique it becomes obvious, though, that it is not only non-religious movements that have subtly accepted the dualism between faith and practice, but also that the church has been part of this deep and profound rift⁵¹. There is a huge silence on the side of the churches (Biggar 1997:130) about linking business and faith issues. For Christian NGOs it is a challenge that they deal with both sides, the church and the secular society. It is important that they are able to function and operate in this space.

In the last two decades, there have been different movements that take care of workplace spirituality and also many summits offered in Europe (e.g. *Kongress christlicher Führungskräfte*, a biennial summit of Christian leaders of the German-speaking countries) in order to bridge the gap and link business people and the church.

3.3.6 Summary of 3.3

In contrast to Friedman and Homann, thinkers like Koslowski and Göbel hold that ethics have to watch over and evaluate economics. Koslowski argues by employing the mathematical proof of the diminution of transaction costs when ethics is applied. Ethical behaviour, in his opinion, has to be voluntary and stem from an intrinsic motivation, and so he does not rule out religion.

For Ulrich, ethics and business are integrated, and there is no primacy of one over the other. He suggests achieving consensus with all stakeholders by discourse as well as a corporate constitution regarding all processes in the or-

50 In this statement there is an interesting link to the work ethics of the Reformers who made this kind of thinking possible. Shopkeepers, clerks, electricians and plumbers need business ethics because with their work they are able to glorify God.

51 In my view, it may as well be applied for the situation in Germany, even though Childs speaks about the USA.

ganisation. He agrees with Kant that human beings are autonomous and able to reflect and evaluate their moral behaviour. Faith and religion are not, therefore, needed.

Faith and religion are needed by Rich and Herms who state that business needs religion. They see an inner unity owing to an anthropological element in every economic order. With the *homo religiosus en lieu* of the *homo economicus*, Herms tries to bridge the gap between business and ethics.

Childs contributes to the explanation of why Christians may find it difficult to apply ethical values and principles in their business life. His five reasons give an idea of how Christian NGOs and the Christian individual may cooperate more effectively and differently with their respective churches, by entering into a dialogue. He is an important thinker for Christian NGOs because he includes the role of the churches without which it is difficult for Christians to overcome the different dualisms.

3.4 Moral agency: Who is responsible?

In this section, the idea will be discussed that it is inappropriate to reduce the moral responsibility of an organisation to its members.

3.4.1 Robert C. Solomon: Moral agency and virtues

Robert C. Solomon (1942-2007), a professor of philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin, deals with Aristotelean business and ethics in his book *Ethics and Excellence: Cooperation and integrity in business* (1992). He is convinced that business and ethics are inseparable because “[...] life was supposed to fit together in a coherent whole, it is the same holistic idea – that business people and corporations are first of all part of a larger community – that drives business ethics today” (Solomon 1992:102). He stresses the personal responsibility of an individual inside the organisation (Palazzo 2000:89), but acknowledges the organisation to be a moral agent, also owing to the fact that an organisation in-

corporates both society and culture. This is why the corporation is also a moral agent that has moral responsibility (Solomon 1992:125f)⁵². Solomon has a clear and holistic Aristotelean approach:

Aristotelean ethics takes both the corporation and the individual seriously without pretending that either is an autonomous entity unto itself. Corporations are made up of people, and the people in corporations are defined by the corporation. (Solomon 1992:152)

Moral responsibility, therefore, is a mutual task for both individuals and corporations. Solomon, therefore, merges individual and institutional ethics into an inseparable entity (Palazzo 2000:89). He is, thus, not convinced of the need to establish a code of ethics, something that has since gained approval in many organisations. He sees the personal integrity of the employees as being as important as the institutional norms (:90).

Solomon also stresses the formation of virtues in managers. He is convinced that the ethical problems of managers are rooted in their own personal responsibility (Solomon 1992:90). These virtues are dependent on the tasks required from the individual. In an economic setting in a free market, Solomon mentions honesty, justice, trust, and tenaciousness as the most important virtues (:91). Apart from this, friendliness, honour, loyalty and a sense of shame would be helpful for people to enable them to develop their full potential in an organisation (:92).

In order to achieve this, Solomon determines that there are six “essential parameters that circumscribe and define the virtues in business [...], concerns typically ignored in the more abstract and principle-bound discussions of ethics and policy discussions [...]” (Solomon 1992:145). These are: (1) the *community*, which means we are all members of organised groups with shared histories –

52 Manuel G. Velásquez, a professor of Business Ethics at the Santa Clara University in California, on the contrary, thinks that responsibility means to be accountable for one's actions and decisions, and thus rejects the idea of an organisation being a moral agency. For him, only individuals are accountable (see also Velásquez 1988:70ff).

and not individuals first of all (:146); (2) *excellence* in the sense of ‘quality’ that indicates a “sense of mission, a commitment beyond profit potential and the bottom line; it [...] synthesises the demands of the marketplace and the demands of ethics” (:153); (3) *membership* which means “that we join, stay, and succeed with one organisation rather than another because our values fit” (:161); and, because the personal values are always social, (4) *integrity* in the sense of ‘honour’ is a “complex of virtues, the virtues working together to form a coherent character, an identifiable and trustworthy personality” (:168); (5) *judgement* which is no abstract formulation and interpretation of general principles, but is centred on ‘perception’ and is the product of a proper education (:174); and, finally, (6) *holism*, in which it is important that the virtues of business should never “stand isolated from the virtues of the rest of our lives” (:180).

Solomon is an interesting thinker for this thesis, because, on the one hand, he sees ethics and business as integrated, on the basis of Aristotle's thought, and, on the other hand, he encourages managers to build on their characters in order to develop integrative personalities useful for their organisation. The question at this point is whether Christian NGOs are aware of their own organisations being and acting as moral agents, and what emphasis they give to the formation of character in their organisations.

3.4.2 Kenneth E. Goodpaster: Moral agency and corporate culture

In his approach, Kenneth E. Goodpaster (1944-), a professor emeritus at University of St. Thomas in Michigan USA, states that individuals and corporations have much in common. He explains that, while individuals are said to have personality or character, a company has a conscience and a culture (Goodpaster 2008:34). Goodpaster calls the similarities between both the *mindset*. He argues that mindsets are not purely behavioural; they are also cognitive. For him, this means that actions or the behaviour of people or organisations are the result of

two influences, “values and facts” (:37). Thus, a company for Goodpaster can have a conscience and a moral point of view, and so be a moral agent.

In addition, Goodpaster is convinced that moral responsibility does not lie in the invisible hands of the market but in the hands of management. He, therefore, demands an ethical awareness in management that must lead to responsible behaviour. This is visible, for example, in external measures to improve environmental protection issues or product safety, etc. But he also demands that companies show responsibility inwardly, for example towards personnel, organisational structures or incentive-giving. He suggests for this to happen corporate strategy should be aligned with ethical values, institutionalising these values by standards and codes⁵³ as well as trying to sustain ethical principles over generations of managers.

Goodpaster’s ideas are interesting for Christian NGOs, since he sees both individuals and corporations commonly as personal subjects and, in exercising their responsibility, bringing about a value-based culture in the company. But his statements are not clear regarding what kind of values are the outcome of a pool of many sources, and how he defines morality. Values need a reliable foundation of moral theory and convictions. In addition, the separation of values and facts shows that he builds his ideas on a dualism between metaphysical and physical aspects. The fact that he wants values to be institutionalised shows that he obviously does not see any differences between law and values. There is a tension between legal (compliance) management and ethical behaviour.⁵⁴

53 Edwin M. Epstein who earned degrees in political science and law, and is a Professor Emeritus in the Graduate School at University of California Berkeley, does not agree. For him, legislative processes alone are not enough to ensure fundamental values in a society as well as moral standards in business life. Enforcement is not possible in reality: it needs to come from within (Epstein 1989:584).

54 Stephan Grüninger, a professor at the Konstanz Institute for Corporate Governance, stated in an article that compliance has never worked and will never do. Examples are companies like Enron, Siemens, Volkswagen and many others that had perfectly working compliance management systems and failed greatly (Grüninger 2016).

In addition, conscience builds on a specific world-view. Which world-view he draws on, or whether he refers to what Mill called a supernatural, a mysterious law (see p. 60) or God's revelation by conscience (see p. 44) remains unclear.

For Christian NGOs, this means that they have to clarify for themselves what their world-views and their personal and corporate ethical responsibilities are, and how these can be advanced in their NGO.

3.4.3 Maak, Ulrich: Different aspects of moral agency

Maak and Ulrich (2007) underline the idea of a moral agency of organisations in their standard work mentioned previously (3.3.3). In here, both parts, 'policies' and 'processes', deal with elements of the moral agency of organisations, such as corporate citizenship or good corporate governance. Their input has been taken as a structuring model in chapter four (4.3) since it includes a large variety of elements and aspects. The view of Maak and Ulrich is shared by Stefan Jung, a professor of ethical leadership at the YMCA-University as well as André Armbruster, a researcher in organisational theory at the University of Duisburg. They point to an organisational view of leadership from the aspect of modern organisation theory in their article "Blind spots in ethical leadership" (2016). In this article they state that, in the past, moral behaviour in organisations has been tied to individuals, but, at the same time, the structures and the limitations of human behaviour were neglected (Jung & Armbruster 2016:91).

Maak and Ulrich are valuable for the thesis, since they emphasise both individual and organisational moral agency, a conviction which I share. Both approaches need, therefore, to be taken care of in the NGOs, and they need to be clarified.

3.4.4 Summary of 3.4

In this section, the question of moral agency has been discussed briefly. Solomon is convinced that both individuals and organisations have moral re-

sponsibility. Individual and institutional ethics need, therefore, to be established in an organisation. For the individuals, he stresses virtues and character in such a way that the organisation acts as a community and where excellence is a key to success. Velázquez rejects this view and states that only individuals are accountable for their own actions and decisions. But both Maak and Ulrich see both organisations and individuals as being moral agents, as do Jung and Armbruster who criticise the fact that in the past moral behaviour in organisations has been tied to individuals because the structures and the limitations of human behaviour were usually neglected. Instead of employing an individual approach only, more importance should also be given to the organisation as a moral agent.

For Goodpaster, the responsibility lies in the hands of the managers. As with Solomon, Goodpaster also combines individual and organisational responsibility; individuals have personality and character, whereas organisations have a conscience and a culture. He suggests the adoption of behavioural and cognitive elements in order to bridge what had previously been separated.

For Christian NGOs, it must be clear that both the individual and the organisation are moral agents and that both are important.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has commented on business and organisational ethics as it has been understood since the Greek philosophers to today, based on three different issues, namely whether (1) business and ethics are linked or separated, (2) business or ethics are more important and (3) responsibility is assumed either by the individual or the organisation, or both. As is the case in chapter two, it discusses a selection of philosophers and theologians, seeking to answer sub-question #2: *How is ethics understood and lived out in a Christian organisation?*

(1) We have started with the Greek philosophers for whom ethics, politics and economics belonged together in a natural way. For Benedict, in medieval

times, the working place, faith and everyday life belonged together as a unity. The idea of the *common good* by Aquinas, striving for the well-being of society, rather than merely that of the individual, is important because it stands against the narrow concepts of later thinkers. The Reformers, through the doctrine of the justification of faith, emphasised the role of individuals before God and society in a way that they are accountable before God and, on the other hand, are able to choose their profession as a result of their free will.

The *honourable merchant* in the medieval times naturally linked business and ethics as well as individual and organisational responsibility in business being exercised in an equal way. Responsibility was also assumed for the society and the whole economic system, as well as promoting values for their organisations.

We have discussed the idea of how an original unity of ethics and economics disintegrated as a consequence of the Enlightenment movement and became separate entities. With classical liberalism (Smith, Ricardo and Say), the link between business and ethics disintegrated further. While Smith stressed business theory as well as moral behaviour equally, Ricardo and Say started to see business as a mathematical process. Ethical issues played a decreasing role and rational thought prevailed in business. This disintegration has lasted until today, and it has been a source of discussion, in Germany as elsewhere.

(2) We have discussed the different schools of priorities given to economic theory and ethics. The first approach discussed in this section is that ethics needs to watch over business (Göbel, Koslowski) because ethics has the original perspective, namely from philosophy and theology. A second approach (Friedman, Homann) is that ethics means normative reasoning, in which business has a higher value and preference over ethics, and where ethics has to pay off economically. The third approach (Ulrich) offers a third way where ethics and business belong together and can be lived out by way of discourse as well as in a consensus-oriented management. All these schools exclude religious moral

thought. The three Christian approaches mentioned in this section (Rich, Herms and Childs) include religion as being important and inherent in business ethics. Rich sees the common thread in the human orientation based on the three Christian values, faith, hope and love. Herms even proposes the term of a *homo religiosus*. Childs stands for a dialogic business ethics and calls for the churches to support those who work in business.

(3) Finally, we have discussed who a moral agent is in a corporation or organisation, whether the individuals working in an organisation or the organisation itself, or both. In the view of Solomon and Goodpaster, the moral agency is both that of the individual and the organisation, in contrast to Velásquez for whom only the individual is a moral agent. Goodpaster states that the corporation has a conscience and that managers need to have ethical awareness in order to behave responsibly inwardly and outwardly. Maak and Ulrich also uphold both (individual and organisational) moral agencies, and they contribute to the discussion with issues such as corporate citizenship and good corporate governance, and thus may help Christian NGOs in a very practical way.

Concluding this chapter, it has become clear that the rift described in chapter two between faith and reason, which occurred in the last few centuries, has resulted in a separation between ethics and the practical business life which, in many Western countries, means rational-mathematical thought. Business today in most cases strives for productivity, efficiency, is strongly result-oriented⁵⁵ and has, thus, adopted a narrow view of economy.

What can Christian NGOs learn from this discussion? First of all, Christian NGOs have to know and understand what has caused the situation they are in today. They need to know that many aspects of their work-life are a consequence of the faith-or-business-separation. Secularism, thus, needs to be questioned and critiqued. In addition, they need to understand that many practical

55 This also applies for humanitarian organisations that generally use methods similar to those of profit organisations. The performance is calculated by the use of KPIs (Key Performance Indicators), even if the earnings are donations.

aspects of their business life may be grounded on misunderstandings of some main thinkers, such as Smith (see 3.2.6) and Friedman (see 3.3.2), who did include ethical views in their respective theories but their views were not taken up by other business ethicists or business theorists and were omitted from the discussions.

NGOs need to be aware of the fact that, in Germany, a narrow ethical approach prevails in universities and society, in which leaders of Christian NGOs may have studied business management or economics, and, this has, thus, found expression in the ideas of their organisations. It can, thus, be argued that, unconsciously, leaders and managers of Christian NGOs may direct their organisations with a narrow view of economic and business ethics in their minds and behaviour.

NGOs also need to learn that both organisations and individuals are responsible and they must both act in an ethical way. Values, such as trust, honesty, responsibility, etc., need to be lived in faith, business and private realms and cannot be separated. Christian NGOs should be able to identify with the idea of the *honourable merchant* which was a well-known concept in Germany and includes both organisational and individual aspects. In addition, the dialogue with the churches linked to the Christian NGOs needs to be intensified in a way that churches help the organisations to overcome the dualisms between faith and reason, and theological and business ethics.

After having researched key issues, such as the tension between ethics and business and the missing links of faith elements in this chapter, in the next chapter we will examine the organisations to identify the challenges that Christian humanitarian NGOs face in Germany.

4. Christian NGOs: World-views, theoretical and practical issues

4.1 Introducing the Chapter

In chapter two, we discussed philosophical and theological teachings from the Greek philosophers to today with selected relevant thinkers. The main issue has been that rationality and a scientific world-view have increasingly disregarded the theological contribution. This has led to a separation between the material and the spiritual, and between reason and faith. The effects on business and economy as a result of this development have been considerable and were discussed in chapter three. In that chapter, we found that, in the eyes of many, the economy has developed from a being a life-serving, God-centred issue (in which the moral good of the individual and community were valued) to a matter of profit-making, with the efficient and rational aim of making money.

This scientific-rational world-view that took a grip on the Western countries from the 17th century onwards, in society and the economy also left its mark on the way humanitarian agencies worked and how they developed. In this chapter, the aim is to understand what impact the dualism between the material and spiritual, reason and faith (discussed in chapter two) has had on Christian NGOs, and what impact developments in economics and business ethics (discussed in chapter three) have had on Christian NGOs. This will be done in two steps. Firstly, we will deal with how Christian faith is perceived by society and Christian adherents themselves. This includes issues of theological challenges and the transformation of world-views (4.2). In a second step, we will stress the view about the organisations and their challenges regarding the three 'P' (previously mentioned in chapter one, p. 15) which are 'policies', 'processes' and 'people' (4.3).

4.2 Christian NGOs and their faith

Contemporary humanitarian work of Christian NGOs finds its roots both in the biblical narratives and also in the different social teachings with their many different backgrounds and motivations. As discussed in chapter two, world-views are the basis of how reality is perceived and these deeply-held beliefs shape our work and how we treat staff and customers. We have discussed different world-views as well as ethical theories, e.g. the *common good*, virtues and responsibility. In addition, Catholic social ethics, based on Aquinas's strong influence (see 2.3.2.2 and 2.3.4.1), emerged in the wake of injustices committed towards the labourers during industrialisation of Europe. Similarly, Protestant social ethics emerged from different social challenges, such as slavery in the USA and the heavy burden on workers in Western industrialisation. Protestant social ethics includes faith as the foundation of the deeds on behalf of the needy and the poor and also the idea of the Kingdom of God. We will, thus, deal with the world-view, the faith and some specific challenges faith encounters in humanitarianism.

4.2.1 Christian NGOs and their world-view

Bryant L. Myers, the former Vice President for International Program Strategy at World Vision International, stated in his book *Walking with the Poor* (1999) that, in the Western world, the spiritual and physical realms of life are separated, that they are even unrelated, and that this assumption has "invaded and controlled almost every area of intellectual inquiry, including development theory and practice as well as much Christian theology" (Myers 1999:1).

Since the members of Christian NGOs have been brought up in Western cultures, it can be argued that they have been influenced by these views and understandings right from the cradle. Western humanitarian workers are, thus, supposed to address the poor and needy of other parts of the world with their Western mind-set, although almost all other societies display religious belief

very obviously (Arumugam 2014:33). Myers also points out the situation in the churches of which the members of Christian NGOs are usually part. He states that:

this framework of separated areas of life is also deeply embedded in the Western part of the Christian church, in its theology, and in the daily life of its people. On Sunday morning [...], we operate in the spiritual realm. The rest of the week, and in our professional lives, we operate in the physical realm and, hence, unwittingly act like functional atheists. Simply being Christian does not heal our dichotomous understanding of our world (Myers 1999:5).

As a consequence, Christian NGOs deal with their beneficiaries in very specific ways, for example one asks whether the spiritual needs of the beneficiaries in general are considered in the context of humanitarian work. In addition, are the poor, the malnourished, and the victims of disasters reduced to being seen only in terms of their material condition? This may be the reason why development agencies, relief organisations, etc. base their help to a great extent only on meeting the material needs.

In his article 'The flaw of the excluded middle' (1982), Paul G. Hiebert observes that not only is religion divided from science, but that there is also an excluded middle part in the Western world-view that functions between those two extremes (Hiebert 1982:43). It is the supernatural and this-worldly part, where spirits, witches, local ancestors, ghosts or souls of animals exist. Christian humanitarian workers from the West, thus, have immense difficulties in addressing issues that relate to this middle section (:43). Myers expanded on Hiebert's model and stated that the divisions taking place in the modern world-view result in separating 'word' and 'deed' in development work (Myers 1999:9), where development work belongs exclusively to the 'deed' part, which means simply meeting material needs.

This argument matches with the secular concept of development. Joel Matthews states, in his article about 'Biblical holism and secular thought in Chris-

tian development' (1999), that "at the very heart of the secular concept of human development is the belief in a better future world" (Matthews 1999:290). He explains that, in secular development, the conviction prevails that peace would find its way into societies when general prosperity is given. The underlying thought is that "along with material well-being would come social well-being" (:290). Hence, social problems can be solved by the sciences. We can see a naturalistic world-view underlying secular development thought where all reality is material. In addition, faith in mankind's ability to solve these problems has remained the core solution of the secular hope for the future (:290). Matthews also states that the most recent movement in secular holistic development, in which the poor and oppressed understand their world and gain control over it, relies on the work of Paulo Freire (:291) who has already been mentioned in chapter two in the discussion of liberation theology (2.3.4.1)⁵⁶.

Christian NGOs obviously have been strongly influenced by this naturalistic way of thinking. Biblical thought, in contrast to a naturalistic world-view, always includes the sinful nature of human beings, and development needs to be understood in a holistic way, with the Gospel (as word and deed) belonging together. And those who do not know of this separation (e.g. stakeholders, beneficiaries) need to be addressed in the same holistic way. If this does not happen, Christian NGOs may run the risk of being seen as similar to secular organisations that focus purely on deed.

In summary, Christian NGOs need to reflect a Christian world-view and principles, in which faith and deed, material and spiritual, play a joint role. Since, however, in the German context an emphasis on faith is seen in a negative way, this reflection may be very challenging. In one of the following sections "theological challenges", the word-and-deed problem is further discussed.

56 Interestingly, one of the Catholic NGOs interviewed in the empirical part of this thesis confirmed on the margins of the interview that their humanitarian work is based to a great extent on the ideas of liberation theology.

4.2.2 Christian faith in relief work

Even though religious aid agencies which had combined relief and missionary aims had existed earlier (Thaut 2009:322), it was not until 1863 that Henri Dunant (1828-1910), a Swiss businessman, initiated a wider humanitarian movement after he had come upon the scene of a bloody battle in Solferino, Italy, between the armies of imperial Austria and the Franco-Sardinian alliance in 1859. He passed by some 40,000 men lying dead or dying on the battlefield lacking medical attention. Dunant then organised local people to bind the soldiers' wounds and to feed and comfort them. On his return home, he called for the creation of national relief societies to assist those wounded in war, and, thus, pointed the way to the future Geneva Conventions. He also laid the ground for the Red Cross movement, when he and another four Geneva men set up the *International Committee for Relief to the Wounded* in 1863, later to become the *International Committee of the Red Cross*. In the following year, 12 governments adopted the first Geneva Convention, a milestone in the history of humanity, offering care for the wounded, and defining medical services as 'neutral'⁵⁷ (IFRC History, n.d.) which meant that helpers were to help all the wounded and sick soldiers without favouring any side in an armed conflict.

Dunant saw the wounded soldiers as *tutti fratelli*⁵⁸ (Dunant 1863:88; 108ff). He came from a middle-class Calvinist family and attended church and Sunday School. His parents were both involved in helping the needy out of a sense of Christian love and responsibility. His credo *sono tutti fratelli* stems from the Christian conviction to love one's neighbour. Dunant obviously benefited from the Christian moral education given by his parents, church and Sunday school teaching, and he continued the work of his parents as an adult. It is relevant to his profile to add that he had a participating role in the creation of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in 1852 and the World Alliance of YMCAs in

57 This idea of neutrality has lasted to this day – not only for medical services – and is well known as the so-called *Dunantist tradition* in relief work.

58 Italian for “we are all brothers” (*sono tutti fratelli*).

1855⁵⁹. Eva Wortel, an Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Military Ethics at the Netherlands Defence Academy, states that Dunant, inspired by his Christian faith, had a moral sense of the importance of human life which seems to her to be “closest to a form of Christian virtue ethics” (Wortel 2009:783). “Humanity appears to be a key ideal and value, and a theological code of conduct”, she writes in her article (:783). Dunant seemed not to act on the basis of rational moral norms of duty as promoted by Immanuel Kant (and discussed in 2.3.3.1), nor was his behaviour based on utilitarianism (on the thoughts of Bentham and Mill, see 2.3.3.2), but, instead, “his actions seem to derive from a sincere concern for the lives of those people” (:783). In chapter two, we discussed Benedict who took care of the sick in his monastery out of the commitment to live God’s love in his monasteries. Love was obviously the basic motivation for his deeds (see also 3.2.2). Dunant and his deeds can be seen as falling within this tradition.

This faith-based humanitarian origin has been changed not only by the legal separation of church and state in Western societies but also, by the secularism taking place in the Western countries at the expense of religion, but, as Barnett and Stein, two scholars of international relations, state with dry humour, “no one bothered to tell the religious” (Barnett & Stein 2012:3). There has not, therefore, been a decline in religious or faith-based organisations. It is obvious, though, that this development must have resulted in different understandings in terms of the Christian identity of these humanitarian NGOs.

Recently, as Kjell Nordstokke, an Adjunct Professor of Mission and Diaconia Studies in Oslo, Norway, states, there is a trend towards the rejection of secularism and this has consequences for humanitarian agencies. Many meetings between important global actors and faith communities have taken place

59 Dunant’s adversary, Gustave Moynier, co-founder of the Red Cross and later president, although with a Calvinist background himself, was very critical of Dunant’s plea for neutrality, since he saw this as an impractical desire (Vensky 2010), and he caused Dunant to be reduced to holding only a minor role at the declaration meeting for the Geneva Conventions in 1863, and eventually ruled him out of the Red Cross. It was Moynier, a lawyer, who, after all, left his mark in emphasising law principles inside the Red Cross movement (Vensky 2010).

(Nordstokke 2014:248f). In addition, Barnett and Stein state that, during the past decades, “even the avowedly secular United Nations system, which defines authority according to stated sovereignty and a secularised international community, began to recognise the importance of religion as it initiated projects on such issues as faith and development” (Barnett & Stein 2012:4).

Interestingly, at the same time, “once-avowedly religious organisations, such as World Vision International and Catholic Relief Services downplayed their religious identity” (Barnett & Stein 2012:4f), because religious organisations were cooperating increasingly with secular organisations and international (secular) institutions, and they used secularised methods and legal principles (:4). It still, however, remains unclear why Christian NGOs would downplay their identity when, obviously, there is so much Christian history involved in humanitarian work.

According to Barnett and Stein, three different waves of globalisation can be identified in the recent history of NGOs. In the first wave, Western aid agencies began spreading all over the world to bring humanitarian assistance, resulting in a variety of cross-cultural encounters. In the second wave, the number of organisations, on the basis of the four principles *humanity*, *impartiality*, *neutrality* and *independence*, increased significantly in the mid-20th century, that is, after World War II. Common standards were established, where secular organisations had a clear advantage. The four above mentioned principles are the universal principles. The Red Cross to this day works with seven (three internal principles are added: *voluntary service*, *unity* and *universality*). These constitute the most important moral values used.

The third wave “has been fuelled by growth in both transnational religious activism and humanitarian agencies from outside the West” (Barnett & Stein 2012:7), and in this third wave, faith-based agencies and donor governments “developed warmer relations, leading to a rise in official assistance towards religious organisations” (:7). The reason for the better relationship was the ac-

knowledge by all acting parties that religion continues to be an important factor in humanitarianism. In addition, the Global Agenda Council on the Role of Faith of the World Economic Forum put the topic 'faith' again on their agendas. On their website, the reason for including 'faith' in global affairs again is explained as follows:

[...] 80% of the world's population adheres to a religion, and in these societies recognition of the role played by faith and religious culture in public life and in tackling global problems is growing. In such societies, faith groups exercise authority, strengthen the social capital and provide services; they advocate for change and mobilize communities. There is a sense that the space where faith and society interact is evolving in dynamic ways, and that changes in society are affecting the relationships between faith groups and other societal and economic stakeholders. These shifts create an opportunity for collaboration to seek positive change and social transformation. (World Economic Forum, n.d.)

Whilst the World Economic Forum emphasises cooperation with faith-based organisations, relief organisations, at the same time, have to adhere to the Red Cross Code of Conduct, where it states in rule no. 3 that "aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint" (ICRC n.d.). This rule emphasises not only that there must not be a delivery or distribution of assistance under conditions (e.g. to become a member of a church), but it also makes it clear that religious standpoints are unwanted in the humanitarian context. This approach also found its way into the principle of neutrality of the Red Cross, and is, thus, evidence of the secularism that has entered the organisation. This is contrary to the early aims of the Red Cross. As noted earlier, under Dunant 'neutrality' meant not taking sides between two parties on the battlefield in order to help all as persons (and did not see them as combatants). This understanding of neutrality has been kept, but it was enhanced at a later stage:

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities **or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature** (IFRC Vision and Mission, n.d.), my emphasis.

This second definition is narrower, because it excludes religion and ideology. Apart from the fact that secularism is also an ideology, it is difficult, or even impossible, to put into practice since no one is neutral (not even secularists), and this is even more the case if we take into account that members of Christian NGOs are supposed to work in the humanitarian field as a result of a certain motivation. Dunant had a faith-based humanitarian motive that was rooted in the Christian faith, as was commented on earlier (on p. 127). It seems that these Christian roots have been replaced when one reads, in a further explanation of the term ‘neutrality’, “In other words, neutrality is a state of mind, an attitude [...]” (IFRC Vision and Mission, n.d.).

Elizabeth Ferris, research professor with the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service and a non-resident senior fellow in Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institution, states that faith-based organisations may be more sensitive to topics of justice, and, therefore, are even more prone to take sides (Ferris 2005:319). The principle of neutrality, thus, seems nearly impossible to achieve by humanitarian workers with a Christian motivation but also by secular NGOs.

4.2.3 Christian faith in development aid

After World War II, when the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund⁶⁰ were successful in rebuilding post-war Europe, the idea emerged of using this example in other situations, as well (Eckert 2015:5). This is seen as being the starting point for development aid. The rebuilding of post-war Europe started under the constraints of hunger and distress, and it was then that both Catholic and Protestant Central Offices for Development⁶¹ commenced their joint work. Their projects were established using their own means, and being supple-

60 Both institutions have their origin in the Bretton-Woods-System, established after World War II.

61 EZE Evangelische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe (Protestant Central Office for Development) and KZE Katholische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe (Catholic Central Office for Development).

mented financially by the German state, but apart from financial aid they worked autonomously from the German state (Kirchen-EZ n.d.).

Although the Catholic and Protestant churches in Germany worked together from the start in an ecumenical venture, the Catholic movement was widely influenced by the liberation theology that emerged in 1970 (as mentioned in 2.3.4.1) and, thus, developed a strong political connotation. In contrast to this, the German Evangelical Church (EKD) rooted its aim for development work in biblical narrative instead, without ignoring political and social affairs. Development became an official branch of the church in the 1960s, where topics, such as justice for the Third World, disarmament, racism, apartheid, etc. were part of public discussion. Two church-associated NGOs were established then (Bread for the World, 1959, and the Central Office for Development Aid, 1962⁶²). For the EKD, the biblical mandate for development work is:

Christianity is instructed to proclaim the coming of God's Kingdom in the world, to help and to heal⁶³. Its mission is based on the faith that testifies that the world is God's creation and on the love that encounters the disenfranchised and poor neighbour by loving God and hoping in the certainty of the coming new creation. That is why the proclamation that leads to faith and the service in which love is active form a unity⁶⁴. (EKD 1973:9, own translation)

The EKD admits that all activities must be undertaken only with an eschatological orientation which means that proclaiming, helping and healing should not be done in order to change the world but rather as a sign of God's love (EKD

62 Original names in German: "Brot für die Welt", and "Evangelische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe".

63 To this day, health and healing are an important area of missions to which many medical professionals feel called by God (DIFÄM 2014:7). For more information on medical development aid in Germany, see the documentation of the symposium at the German Institute for Medical Mission (DIFÄM) in 2014.

64 Original quote: "Die Christenheit ist beauftragt, das Kommen der Gottesherrschaft in der Welt zu verkündigen, zu helfen und zu heilen. Ihre Sendung gründet in dem Glauben, der die Welt als Gottes Schöpfung bezeugt, in der Liebe, die in dem entrechteten und armen Nächsten ihrem Herrn begegnet, und in der Hoffnung, die in der Gewissheit der kommenden neuen Schöpfung handelt. Darum bilden die Verkündigung, die zum Glauben führt, und der Dienst, in dem die Liebe tätig wird, eine Einheit".

1973:14). Although the motives may have different origins, such as from secular agencies (UN and the state), Catholic and Protestant agencies all work on the basis of the same UN-coordinated goals, and they all show a high level of economic and political motivation. For many donors, however, there is still a genuine interest in supporting the different countries in their development (Klingebiel 2013:1). These different motivations led to the establishment of the eight so-called Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and (from 2015 onwards) the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), for countries to work in an approved “frame of reference for global purposes” (:1). The Goals include many issues, such as eradicating hunger and poverty, achieving universal primary education, reducing child mortality, etc.⁶⁵, and they signify, as the former General Secretary of the United Nations Ban Ki-Moon put it, a “shared vision and a social contract between the world’s leaders and the people. They are a to-do list for people and planet, and a blueprint for success” (Ban Ki-Moon 2015). Significantly, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals were criticised not only because of being too numerous, but also by the envoys of 24 faith groups because “words like selflessness, sacrifice, love, compassion, duty, generosity and charity are entirely absent” (Erasmus 2015).

4.2.4 Characteristics of faith-based NGOs

Faith-based organisations work in many different ways with regard to how they integrate faith with relief mechanisms, and many authors agree that the term ‘faith-based organisations’ is too broad to encompass all the various types of religious actors (Sider & Unruh 2004:109f.; Ferris 2005:312). This is why there are different approaches to classifying and defining faith-based NGOs.

A basic idea of a classification of faith-based NGOs is given by Peter Walker and Daniel Maxwell, two researchers who have specialised in the field of relief aid from the Feinstein International Centre at Tufts University in Boston. Ac-

65 For further descriptions of MDG and SDG see the website of the United Nations: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>.

According to them, faith-based NGOs are simply one type of organisation, of at least four types of organisation, principle-centred, pragmatist, solidarist⁶⁶, or faith-based (Walker & Maxwell 2009:122-124), where the faith-based organisations cut across the other three types. According to Walker and Maxwell, what constitutes faith-based organisations are their fundamental principles which are “defined by a religious creed, not by secular principles or outcomes” (:123).

Julia Berger, a Harvard lecturer, states that, “although religious NGOs operate within the same legal and political frameworks of secular civil society, their mission and operations are guided by a concept of the divine and recognition of the sacred nature of human life” (Berger 2003:19). She adds that “in contrast with the rights-based approach⁶⁷ of many secular NGOs, the starting point for religious NGOs is the duty-oriented language of religion characterised by obligations toward the divine and others” (:19).

For Ferris, faith-based organisations can be characterised

by having one or more of the following: affiliation with a religious body; a mission statement with explicit reference to religious values; financial support from religious sources; and/or a governance structure where selection of board members or staff is based on religious beliefs or affiliation and/or decision-making processes based on religious values. (Ferris 2005:312)

Ferris adds that there are two characteristics which set faith-based humanitarian organisations apart from most secular humanitarian organisations:

They are motivated by their faith and they have a constituency which is broader than humanitarian concerns. For believers, to be a Jew or a Muslim or a Christian implies a duty to respond to the needs of the poor and the marginalized.

66 ‘Principle-centred’ means centred on the four humanitarian principles which are humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence (Bagshaw 2012), based on norms and values. Pragmatists focus on outcomes and impacts, based on consequentialist thought. They also are aligned with the political agendas of their funders. Solidarists are similar to the principle-centred but in addition tend to take into account the underlying causes of the conflict (Walker & Maxwell 2009:122).

67 This approach will be discussed on p. 139.

The expression of this faith takes different forms in different religious traditions but is a powerful motivation for humanitarian action. (Ferris 2005:316)

One of the most useful typologies of Christian faith-based agencies has been elaborated on by Laura C. Thaut, a US-American political scientist from the University of Minnesota. Her taxonomy seeks to explain how Christian faith-based agencies diverge from one another in their orientation and operations, how their theological tradition shapes their humanitarianism, and whether or how they are distinct from secular agencies. She examines Christian humanitarian faith-based agencies in the light of their theological roots, and delineates three classifications of Christian faith-based agencies (Thaut 2009:319ff).

Accommodative humanitarian agencies are virtually indistinguishable from secular agencies despite their religious roots. Their mission statements strictly exclude religious goals and Christian faith is not required of staff. In addition, the funding is not dependent upon religious sources. An example would be UK-based Christian Aid.

Synthesis humanitarian: These agencies attempt to balance Christian orientation and secular goals. They clearly define their mission and desire to serve as a Christian witness through their service. They do not, however, engage in proselytising. Examples are Catholic Relief Services, Lutheran World Services, and Mennonite Central Committee.

Evangelistic humanitarian: the most religiously oriented with evangelism incorporated into its humanitarianism. Examples discussed are Samaritan Purse and the International Mission Board of Southern Baptist Convention.

Thaut's typology also seems helpful for Christian NGOs in Germany, since all three groups may be represented there. German NGOs downplaying their Christian identity may be struggling between secular and religious requirements, and, thus, may be found in the synthesis humanitarian category. The EKD and some of the Catholic humanitarian agencies in Germany may rather be found in the accommodative category. The analysis of the empirical findings in

chapter six will give a clearer answer. It may be that, in Germany, the evangelistic humanitarian organisations are probably in a minority owing to the prerequisites given by secular umbrella organisations and institutional donors, and to a certain extent also by the mainline churches.

Ferris found in her research that, while Catholic and Protestant (mainline) church organisations usually separate help to the needy and evangelisation, Protestant free-church groups “see their humanitarian work as an integral part of their missionary activities” (Ferris 2005:317). This is why these last-mentioned groups are often criticised by other faith-based groups. Combining assistance with missionary messages is highly contested because of the possible negative impacts this may have on all faith-based organisations (:317). Obviously, there is a strong tension regarding the topic of evangelising in humanitarian work. On the other hand, there are different papers and standards that differentiate clearly between evangelising and proselytising. In the next section, two important challenges need to be clarified for Christian NGOs in order to form their self-understanding.

4.2.5 Theological challenges

4.2.5.1 Word and deed

As noted in section 4.1, the differentiation between word and deed is a consequence of the separation between faith and reason and of a rationalistic-scientific world-view. Missionaries and Christian humanitarian workers have been struggling with this issue ever since. When the first Protestant missionaries, Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Plütschau arrived in India in 1706, they were challenged by the misery of the indigenous people, and they soon started to open schools for low-caste children, especially for girls. But the social activities of the two missionaries raised criticism in their German home-town of Halle, since they were supposed to be acting as missionaries and not as social workers (Schäfer 2015:14). The differences were solved when the missionaries

and their agency agreed that concern for the soul and concern for the body were inextricably linked (:15). Twenty-five years later, the first medical-doctor-missionary was sent to India, followed by many others in the following years and decades (Grundmann 2002:29). In the same vein, the EKD in its position paper which was mentioned previously, states that their biblical mandate (proclamation of the coming Kingdom of God, serving, healing) forms a unity.

As mentioned previously, no. 3 of the Code of Conduct of the Red Cross is restrictive with regard to furthering religious standpoints (ICRC, n.d.). In the same vein, the Ecumenical Charter of 2003 states, in point number two (“Proclaiming the Gospel together”), that there must not be any moral pressure or material incentive for conversion (Charta Oecumenica⁶⁸ 2001:4-5). It seems obvious that, if material help is dependent on accepting faith, there is a strong moral pressure on the beneficiary. But it must also be clear that, if a preaching activity invites people into faith, this is not the case. In addition, the context is important, since some third world countries are open to the Christian faith, and others are not. A Christian humanitarian worker belonging to an *Evangelistic* NGO (according to Thaut’s taxonomy discussed earlier) will certainly feel the need to evangelise in the sense of inviting people into faith.

Those NGOs may see this issue as presenting them with a severe dilemma, since for them, as for Barth, the emphasis lies on the role of faith as the point of departure for assuming a Christian perspective. In this conviction, the Word is revealed (= Jesus Christ), written (= Bible), or proclaimed (= preaching) and human beings need to listen to it and obey it (see also 2.3.4.2). It is, thus, not just evangelism in the sense of preaching and inviting. Evangelism is also about proclaiming the word and will of God for individuals and the whole of society; it

68 The Charta Oecumenica encompasses Guidelines for the growing cooperation among the churches in Europe. It was published in April 2001 by the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Roman Catholic Council of European Bishops’ Conferences (CCEE) and represents the vast majority of mainstream churches in Europe. The EKD signed it in May 2003.

links faith and life. It is also about a sound understanding and valid interpretation of the scriptures.

During the Lausanne I Congress on World Evangelisation in 1974⁶⁹ the following statement emerged: “The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead” (Micah Network a, n.d.). Micah Network, a loose global alliance of evangelical Christian development NGOs, goes further:

Integral mission or holistic transformation is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. (Micah Network b, n.d.)

And:

If we ignore the world, we betray the word of God, which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the word of God, we have nothing to bring to the world. Justice and justification by faith, worship and political action, the spiritual and the material, personal change and structural change belong together. As in the life of Jesus, being, doing and saying are at the heart of our integral task. (Micah Network b, n.d.)

Two dilemmas become visible from the above, firstly, Christian NGOs in Western societies feel that they need to justify themselves before a secular world if they do more than helping and healing (‘deed’) by preaching the gospel and meeting spiritual needs (in ‘word’), but, secondly, they may also have to justify themselves before other Christians if they do more than spreading the Word, namely by combining word and deed. Obviously, secularism not only left the Western world, but also Christianity, disoriented to a certain extent. It bears mentioning that both secular development – as explained previously (on p. 124)

69 For further information see The Lausanne Covenant, online at www.lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant, accessed on 26 June 2018

– and Christian development emphasise deeds when Christians have a strong conviction of a present aspect of the Kingdom of God and so find themselves in accord with the tradition of Niebuhr and the Social Gospel Movement (see also 2.3.4.2).

Christian NGOs and relevant associations have set up an important instrument to deal with this dilemma. In the first place there is the differentiation between proselytising and evangelism, as described in Micah’s Network Paper ‘Proselytism’ (Micah-Network 2007). Here, evangelism has been described as “longing to see people coming to a personal faith in Jesus Christ” and proselytising as an “unjustified manipulation or use of coercive techniques or force to achieve conversion” (Lin 2018:188). This differentiation clarifies what is needed and wanted from a Christian perspective, and how unjustifiable accusations of exerting moral pressures, as described previously, can be countered⁷⁰.

Another helpful idea for Christian NGOs is the verse of Micah 6:8: “He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” This verse is used by the Micah Network as their basic motto (Micah Network c, n.d.). In this verse God opened the discussion with Judah and admonished its crooked ways. The situation was ripe for God’s justice. And in this dire situation, God pointed to nothing less than moral behaviour (Bellett 1984:43). The peculiarity is that it seems nothing new and extraordinary at all; it implies that they should already know what to do, that they have heard it in the past, and now they should merely put it into practice in a natural way. And it speaks in the same way to the people of the 21st century (Weißborn 2015:312ff). It is about spir-

70 The “Christian Witness in a multi-religious world”, an ethical code for behaviour in missions by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue (PCID) as well as the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) does not elaborate on this differentiation. It states only states that mission belongs to the church, and that witnessing is part of being Christian. The formulations are rather vague: ‘witnessing according to gospel principles, with full respect and love for all human beings’ and ‘Christians are commissioned by Christ to continue faithfully [...] in their witness’ (WCC, PCID & WEA 2011). What form the witness should take, remains unclear.

ity or faith, justice as well as mercy, which, for Christian NGOs, are all very important terms.

4.2.5.2 Charity and Human-Rights

The social tradition has three great themes, justice, charity and peace (Foster 2006:206-207)⁷¹, which are reflected in the Bible. An example of justice is Psalm 103:6, "The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed", or "loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke" (Is 58:5-7).

In addition, there are many examples of merciful laws of charity, for example the farmer on the edges of the fields should leave something of the harvest and also the grain that fell on the ground during the harvest so that the poor could collect it (Lv 19:9-20).

Peace is expressed in the term 'shalom' which means harmony, harmony with God, with our neighbour, and with nature. Economically and socially, shalom means "concern for and consideration for all people" (Foster 2006:210).

Christians can be committed to social justice by reflecting it in their own lifestyle: They cannot live in injustice themselves and fight for justice at the same time (Foster 2006:211-212). In addition, by emphasising social, i.e. interpersonal, relations at the level of individuals and of societies (:212-213) and by being committed politically our task is to work towards a society in which it is easier to do good and harder to do evil (:214).

According to Foster, the social tradition has the advantage that, apart from just relations and just living conditions (Foster 2006:216-217), the concern for social justice broadens our understanding of the Church. It helps to make our faith concrete and prevents us being stuck in theory (:217).

In the same vein, in the New Testament, the parable of the Good Samaritan shows an example of charity by defining who 'a neighbour' is (Lk 10:25-37). The

71 For this thesis, the German translation was used.

value of the parable is that it has moved people and organisations to do as the Good Samaritan did and go forth and help the needy for nothing in return. Many NGOs have drawn directly or indirectly on the parable of the Good Samaritan as an expression of neighbourly love, compassion and charity, and it may be one of their prime motives for their work, even if the message is at times misinterpreted as an instruction for disaster relief (Eichberger 2015:68; Kröck 2007:368).

Significantly, there are Christian NGOs that reject this parable as a foundation for humanitarian work. For example Christoph Dehn, a former deputy member of the executive board of a well-known German Christian NGO, sees the parable of the Good Samaritan as anachronistic, because, in his eyes, compassion is at its core linked to a difference in status and power (Dehn 2017, n.p.) in the sense that the one who is compassionate is ‘above’ the needy. In his eyes, the compassionate one bends down to the weak and gives out of their abundance. According to him, charity is not needed any more, because the beneficiaries should no longer be objects of welfare but owners of rights. This statement seems strange and disconcerting owing to the fact that both charity and human rights are important. Elina Hankela, a Finnish researcher based in South Africa, criticizes this view in an article dealing with the relationship between charity and social justice and argues that the term ‘charity’ seems to be more and more replaced by the call for justice (Hankela 2017:49)⁷². Terms associated with Christianity, such as ‘charity’ or similar concepts, are described in negative terms in the recent social justice debate (:48)⁷³ or even used in a derogatory way in the international humanitarian sector (:49). Dehn states, “That compassion gradually takes a back-seat – perhaps it’s a blessing”⁷⁴ (Dehn 2017, n.p.). With these statements, Dehn gives up the idea of charity by replacing it with arguments of

72 This was confirmed by both NGO2G and NGO8A in question 2.3 (see p. 220).

73 See also the critique on the 17 Sustainable Goals regarding the missing out of faith-terms (p. 132).

74 Original quote: “Dass die Barmherzigkeit allmählich in den Hintergrund tritt – vielleicht ist es ein Segen”.

the Human-Rights-based approach. This seems to be a very narrow view given the fact that the Christian social tradition is based on unified concepts of justice, and charity, as described by Hankela and Foster previously. Also for Steffen Fleßa, the basic Christian values derived from the Bible, are justice and charity, together with freedom and human dignity (Fleßa 2006:89-113), all terms that, for Christians, should not be separated from each other or replaced with other terms.

In addition, human rights are based on an understanding of human dignity which is defined in Merriam Webster's Dictionary as "the quality or state of being worthy, honoured or esteemed" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). As the phrase indicates, therefore, human rights seek to realise the dignity and worth of humans. From a theological perspective, the concept of human dignity can be derived from the biblical understanding that the human person was created in the image and likeness of God (*Imago Dei*), as pointed out in Genesis 1:26-28. The implication of this concept is that everyone is of equal value before God.

Elizabeth Ferris goes to the heart of the issue when she states that the modern humanitarian system and the Human-Rights system:

have their roots in the Christian evangelical tradition of the mid-1800s. At that time evangelicals were at the forefront of a remarkable reform movement on many levels, seeking to abolish slavery, reform prisons, and establish humane systems for the treatment of the mentally ill. Henri Dunant [...] and many other humanitarians came to the fore during this reform era. Nearly a century after Dunant's epiphany on the battlefields of Solferino⁷⁵, religious values and particularly Christian ideals were central to writing the United Nations (UN) Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [...]. While today's proponents of humanitarianism and human rights worry that their security is endangered when humanitarian action is seen as a Western tradition, they cannot escape the historical fact that the modern humanitarian system came out of the Judeo-Christian tradition [...]. (Ferris 2011:608)

75 See also chapter 4.2.2.

The foundation for the Human-Rights based approach is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948. The approach was established in 1997, when the Secretary General to the United Nations introduced the concept of Human Rights into all the work of the United Nations. The approach analyses inequalities, eliminates discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power inside the development processes (UNFPA 2014). For the work of NGOs this means that the beneficiaries are not objects of help, as they allegedly have been in the past (Roller 2015:65), but they have become legal persons, so-called rights-holders. The question that arises in this context is whether, and to what extent, this criticism is also valid for Christian NGOs, where love, justice and human rights are linked in Christian thought and practice and the beneficiary is not supposed to be seen as a mere object.

The Human-Rights based approach in a specific development programme begins with the analysis of the unfulfilled Human Rights. Missing human rights have to be restored, and are, thus, claimed by the rights-holders from the so-called duty-bearers, who can be state- or non-state actors (Roller 2015:67). The Human-Rights based approach means a paradigm-shift from the needs-based approach (:67), and NGOs are constrained to promote and protect human rights directed by accountability and rule of law. Because of the strong Christian foundation of Human Rights, as evaluated by Ferris and many others, as well as very concrete Bible verses that encourage Christians to “learn to do good, seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow” (Isa 17:1), as in many other parts of Scripture, Christians may feel familiar with many elements of the Human-Rights based approach. Statements like that of Dehn mentioned above, namely that charity needs to be replaced by human rights, seems all the stranger. It seems doubtful that the leader of a Christian NGO does not believe in people having been made in the image of God, and who we must love and help in neighbourly love. In this vein, it seems to be unclear

on what Dehn bases his emphasis on human rights and his denigration of charity.

In March 2017, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR 2017) launched the 'Faith4Rights' framework during an expert workshop in Beirut. The new concept calls for a cross-disciplinary reflection on the connections between religions and Human Rights. The objective is to foster the development of peaceful societies, those which uphold human dignity and equality for all and where diversity is not merely tolerated but fully respected and celebrated. The Beirut Declaration includes 18 commitments and:

considers that all believers – whether theistic, non-theistic, atheistic or other – should join hands and hearts in articulating ways in which 'Faith' can stand up for 'Rights' more effectively so that both enhance each other. Individual and communal expressions of religions or beliefs thrive and flourish in environments where human rights are protected. Similarly, human rights can benefit from deeply rooted ethical and spiritual foundations provided by religions or beliefs. (OHCHR 2017)

The 'Faith4Rights' concept seems to build up a complete new shape for humanitarianism. The Declaration includes verses from the Bible, Quran, sayings of Buddha, Bahai and others. The under-title of the Declaration is the old Sufi-proverb "There are as many paths to God as there are souls on earth" (OHCHR 2018:7). This approach seems to be based on a pluralist world-view. This paradigm shift is promoted by the UN based on humanistic and relativistic values to a globalist view. It can be argued that, with the growing significance of supra-national institutions, this may become more important in the future. It will challenge Christian NGOs even further, since not only does it tend to sound like a new religion that all might have to aspire to⁷⁶, but it also gives the impres-

76 The idea of a new religion assumed shape when reading the article in a Christian magazine about the leader of a Gospel-choir who created a melody for the Human-Rights text to be used in a Gospel song. He deliberately was looking for a text without any Christian content (PRO 2018; <https://sing-human-rights.org/>, accessed on 30 June 2018).

sion that the gap is widening more and more; on the one hand there is an affirmation of a pluralistic and vague spirituality and on the other hand, a narrow rejection of all Christian faith perspectives.

For Christian NGOs this discussion is important, since they need to know how to handle these shifts and challenges and how they position themselves in such an environment with regard to their Christian self-understanding. In addition, the question arises as to which stories, credos or mottos humanitarian organisations use as their foundation.

4.2.6 Summary of 4.2

In this section we have seen how the Western world-view has left its mark on humanitarian work. The Christian world-view that originally united all elements of the seen and unseen world has been separated into two different elements in the secular world-view, bringing about a gap between word (unseen world) and deed (seen world). Christian humanitarian workers today are influenced by humanistic secular world-views. Hence, some may not reach the 'unseen' world of the beneficiaries they try to help with their projects. Because of this, it is necessary that Christians, especially those working in a humanitarian context, reach back to a holistic Christian world-view in order to reach those they aim to serve. Christians should also be able to engage with those who believe in spirits (including the power of evil spirits). Because God is Spirit and Creator, God can communicate in a hidden way with our human spirits and through our practical experience of the world. Our spiritual experience must then also translate into practical, concrete actions in the world.

Although Henri Dunant started his relief work inspired by his Christian faith, the institution he founded was soon influenced by a secular environment. In the same way, although development work after World War II was led by Catholic and Protestant churches with ecumenical cooperation, it culminated in the Millenium Development Goals. The more recent 17 Sustainable Develop-

ment Goals proclaimed in 2015 have been denuded of religious terms and ideas, such as faith-based compassion, love and selflessness. Concepts of neighbourly love and compassion have been replaced by the legal terms of the Human Rights-based approach which underlines the secularism developed in Western societies and in the U.N.

Because of the variety of faith-based organisations world-wide, classifications can be helpful, such as Thaut's taxonomy. Here, Thaut discusses the theological roots of the organisations and explains how the theological tradition influences the way humanitarian organisations work. These are *accommodative*, *synthesis* and *evangelistic* organisations, whereby the *accommodative* are practically indistinguishable from secular agencies, *synthesis* show a balance between Christian identity and secular goals, and *evangelistic* are the most religiously oriented where evangelism is included in practical work.

Two important challenges for Christian NGOs that relate to the relationship between faith and NGO work were discussed. The first challenge is the differentiation between word and deed that stems from a secular and scientific world-view. The Christian world-view emphasises both elements as being inextricably linked, but the secular world-view – and the practice of humanitarian work – separates them. It can be argued that Christian NGOs speak about 'word-and-deed' in a wishful manner, but that, in reality, only 'deed' is put into practice as long as secular standards and codes of conduct rule out religious thought for the NGOs. In this debate, Micah Network's definitions of 'proselytism' and 'evangelism' are helpful, where they demonstrate that evangelism is not manipulative. Evangelising and meeting spiritual needs of their stakeholders (being the 'word' part of 'word-and-deed') should, thus, be considered and ways should be found for the NGOs in which to clarify and communicate their understanding of religious practice in their work and so prove their non-manipulative behaviour towards beneficiaries and other non-Christian stakeholders.

The other challenge is that the Human Rights-based approach – just as with other concepts (e.g. the charity work of Dunant and the charity work that followed World War II) – has faith roots, but has become a humanistic concept. In the same way as the other approaches were denuded of their faith-based roots, today the faith roots of the human rights movement itself are also disregarded.

For Christian NGOs, this has the consequence that a discussion about how Christian identity needs to be shaped and formed in the organisation is inevitable.

4.3 Christian NGOs and their organisations

After having discussed the paradigm shifts in humanitarian work and society, we now come to the next section, in which the organisations themselves will be dealt with. Chapters two and three have shown the rift that has taken place between spirit and matter, faith and reason, and also between business and ethics. In this section, the following questions will be discussed, How are ethical issues dealt with inside the organisations and what are the practical staff and organisational issues that need to be attended to in Christian NGOs? To answer these questions, three main points need to be discussed: the relationship to society and stakeholders; the organisation as a business entity; and the relationship of the organisation to its employees. This three-fold structure has already been presented in chapter one (p. 15). Maak and Ulrich call the three structure points ‘Policies’, ‘Processes’ and ‘People’ and this approach will be adopted for this section. Another reason to adopt the structure of Maak and Ulrich is that it includes the moral responsibility of both the organisations and the individuals – a view also shared by Jung and Armbruster, as mentioned in chapter three regarding moral agency (p. 117). Hence, the sub-section ‘Policies’ deals with the relationship between the organisation and the outside world (government, stakeholders), whereas ‘Processes’ discusses the responsibility inside the organisation. Both deal predominantly with the moral responsibility of organisations.

And, lastly, 'People' deals with the moral responsibility of individuals, such as leadership and other specific HR-topics (Maak & Ulrich 2007:14-22).

4.3.1 Policies

Christian NGOs are part of the society. Their activities concern not only employees, beneficiaries and other stakeholders, such as the state and the environment, but also generations to come. This involvement, and its resultant impact, has led to an ethical and political responsibility of the NGOs. The following issues will be discussed in the next pages: (1) Corporate (global) citizenship; (2) Global and local standards and commitments; (3) Corporate stewardship; and (4) Stakeholder engagement and dialogue.

4.3.1.1 Corporate (global) citizenship

Corporate citizenship, as well as global corporate citizenship, asks for the organisation to act responsibly, just as if it were a citizen (of the country or even globally). Being a citizen usually means having rights and obligations and a shared identity with others of the same kind. The responsibility associated with the status of citizenship thus includes advocating respect for human and civil rights out of a politically ethical motivation, and not out of an economic motivation (Maak & Ulrich 2007:41). When serious deficiencies are found, they should be eliminated. In this respect, it is not only the recognition of basic human and civil rights that is included in the requirements of a corporate citizen, but also an active advocacy for better conditions within the framework of a reasonable commitment that should be taken into account (:41).

Corporate citizenship needs a solid normative foundation in order to be successful and credible. This includes a differentiated understanding of value creation (purpose), as well as an awareness of values and standards (principles) that is lived and communicated. But it also includes the question for whom (and for whom not) value creation is done. The clarification of this question is, in turn, a prerequisite for successful relationships with citizens and stakeholders.

This is so because corporate citizenship is a form of relationship, namely, to society in general, the local community in particular, the external stakeholders, the natural environment (which we leave to the citizens coming after us) and the world as such (Maak & Ulrich 2007:44). At the end, a successful and sustainable forming of relationships is reliant on values and principles (:45). Business principles and values often, thus, are found in codes of conduct of branches and are complementary to individual corporate citizenship principles. In the next sub-section (4.4.1.2) some important branch standards and codes of conduct are mentioned and explained.

For Christian NGOs this means a political responsibility that needs to be taken care of. In my work at a Christian NGO, I have experienced a reluctance by some NGOs with regard to political activities. There is, however, an irrefutable ethical responsibility as an organisation towards society. This is also confirmed by Habermas who states that space must be given to religious communities to play a role in the public sphere, since religion is important in the democratic project (Habermas 2010:21; Bentley 2015, n.p.). Given the fact that humanitarian work itself is highly political, it seems to be in the nature of humanitarian NGOs to engage politically. But corporate citizenship also includes the possibility of Christian humanitarian NGOs functioning as a bridge-builder between profit-oriented corporations who want to act as responsible (global) citizens (but do not have the means to do so) and Christian humanitarian NGOs who provide the knowledge and the projects in order to eliminate deficiencies in a society. The side benefit is the bringing together of what has been separate for a long time, faith and business. The idea of corporate citizenship is worth pondering in any Christian NGO.

4.3.1.2 (Global) Standards, codes and commitments

Standards, codes and commitments are often predefined by supra-national institutions, national states, umbrella organisations, etc. and they function like a trustee (Raiborn & Payne 1990:880) mainly to the society and also relate either

to processes inside the organisation (e.g. fund-raising) or to performances (e.g. sustainable outcomes).

The main point is that most NGOs in the humanitarian world find participation in these standards and codes crucial for their work. Some of these standards have an unofficially prerequisite character in order to receive funds from the state or supra-national and national institutions, although these are seemingly voluntary commitments.

Humanitarian organisations, when signing the respective codes, guarantee that they will comply with the commitments named in the codes. The underlying problem is that proper behaviour by the organisations is expected, but there is no control by the state or other institutions. The codes, standards or commitments try to bridge this gap by naming specific values or actions that are regarded as being desired. Membership or a signature, thus, serves as a trust-generating instrument and shows that values are taken care of. The respective values at stake are mentioned in the different (selected⁷⁷) instruments that are as follows.

The DZI Charity Seal of Approval. DZI is the German Central Association for Social Issues (*Deutsches Zentralinstitut für soziale Fragen*). The DZI Charity Seal of Approval has existed since 1992 and is involved with around 230 charities who have been awarded the DZI-seal in Germany. The goals of the Seal are designed to protect the donor and their donations from fraudulent organisations which may simply raise money without seriously conducting social projects or which have high ratio of administrative costs (DZI, n.d.). DZI, thus, assumes that NGOs cannot guarantee respectability and trustworthiness, and that donors are, therefore, left uncertain about their donations. The DZI Charity Seal of Approval intends to close this trust gap. They call themselves the “recognised testing authority that independently and competently evaluates the business operations of relief organizations” (DZI, n.d.).

77 The list is not exhaustive.

Christian NGOs are free to choose the Seal-of Approval of DZI (it may even be necessary in order to receive institutional donations), but they may think about how to be respectable and trustworthy on their own without a secular DZI Seal testing and proving it. In addition to requesting the seal, Christian NGOs, thus, need to consider ways to put these values into action, proving that they are taken care of and communicating such action to their donors in appropriate ways.

The Deutscher Spendenrat. The Deutscher Spendenrat (*German Donation Council*) was established in 1993 and currently has 65 members. It requires a voluntary commitment that intends to provide transparency to the donors and the interested public through the disclosure of structures, activities, projects and finances within the framework of an understandable annual report. Compliance is controlled by the internal auditors of the members. All members are expected to observe and work even beyond the minimum standards. A sanctioning system is part of the statutes, and allows for a membership exclusion as the last stage (Deutscher Spendenrat, n.d.).

The Deutscher Spendenrat obviously sees transparency in financial issues, as well as trust, to be values which are at stake. Those who sign this commitment comply with the donor's request to avoid mistrust and establish transparency. As mentioned above, Christian NGOs are free to decide about joining this voluntary commitment, but, in addition, they should translate the value of transparency into their activities and processes, put them into action, and accordingly communicate them to their donors.

The Initiative Transparente Zivilgesellschaft (Transparent Civil Society Initiative). Another voluntary commitment for fund-raising NGOs was created in 2010 by Transparency International Germany, with a focus on preventing corruption in the recipient countries (Transparency Deutschland, n.d.), owing to the fact that corruption is estimated to be one of the main obstacles to development. It has one overall statement: "whoever is active in public welfare should

tell the public *what* they do, *where* the means come from, *how* they are used, and *who* are the decision-making people of their organisation”⁷⁸ (Transparency Deutschland, n.d.). Again, the moral value at stake is transparency with regard to money and the use of funds.

The VENRO Voluntary Commitments. VENRO, the German umbrella organisation of development and relief organisations, offers three different codes of conduct for NGOs for their members in order to declare their commitment to fulfil the standards and to explain and justify any deviation from them (VENRO n.d.).

(1) The first code of conduct is, ‘The code of conduct on transparency, organisational management and monitoring’, and it discusses both the principles and standards of relevance for business ethical approaches. Regarding ‘organisational management’, ethically responsible, efficient, and competent actions, as well as a division of tasks to ensure the skills of the relevant persons and staff involvement are promoted. Employees are encouraged to reflect on constructive criticism, and to address complaints in a protected way without repercussions when they find that there is unethical behaviour. The values it promotes are responsibility, efficiency, competency, self-reflection, a trust-based culture, and participation.

Regarding communication in both public relations and fund-raising, members commit to comprehensive accountability and transparent communication in order to create trust. The values it promotes are openness, truthfulness, transparency, trust-based communication, high quality, credibility, and honesty.

Regarding operational management, members commit to the efficient use of funds, to fight corruption, ensure a balance between remuneration

78 Original quote: “Wer für das Gemeinwohl tätig wird, sollte der Gemeinschaft sagen *Was* die Organisation tut, *woher* die Mittel stammen, *wie* sie verwendet werden und *wer* die Entscheidungsträger sind”.

that attracts people and public expectations towards non-profit NGOs, ensuring that there are neutral ombudspersons employees who can be approached in cases of conflict and complaints. Values promoted are accountability, efficiency, good stewardship, and credibility.

(2) The second code is the VENRO Code Development-related public relations, and it deals with the tasks and objectives of development-related public relations, the members' obligations and the prosecution of breaches. The obligations include respect for the dignity of persons, tolerance, transparent and responsible use of funds, as well as honesty and efficiency in the acquisition of funds. The values promoted are transparency, tolerance, responsibility, efficiency, and honesty.

(3) The third code is the VENRO Code children's rights, and it deals with protecting children against abuse and exploitation in development co-operation and humanitarian aid. Here, all member organisations aim to create an environment that is safe for children and young people and persons at risk and that guarantees compliance with human rights. This also includes protection against abuse in the context of their own organisational and partner structures. The values promoted are responsibility and good stewardship.

All three VENRO codes (1-3) include the possibility of an independent arbitration tribunal on request in case a breach is observed.

For Christian NGOs, the values mentioned belong to their own Christian self-understanding, and so they should have no problem signing the three commitments. Signing a commitment does not, however, make an organisation work in an ethically sound manner. A Christian NGO should, therefore, make these values accessible to every member in the NGO. They can also be enhanced with by specifically personal, or even more faith-oriented, values or explanations. But it is important that these values are put into practice, discussing and

communicating them inside the organisation and outside to the stakeholders and the society.

The Core Humanitarian Standard. The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS n.d.) is based on the four humanitarian principles (see footnote on p. 133), and it has nine commitments that enable organisations and individuals involved in a humanitarian response to use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide. It provides for better accountability to the beneficiaries, both communities and individuals, since they are able to know to what humanitarian organisations have committed themselves. This will enable them to hold the aid organisations accountable. The official nine commitments with the underlying values put in brackets are as follows: (1) Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant (efficiency); (2) Humanitarian response is effective and timely (accuracy); (3) Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects (common good); (4) Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback (openness, transparency); (5) Complaints are welcomed and addressed (good handling of conflicts); (6) Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary (efficiency); (7) Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve (open-mindedness, humility); (8) Staff are supported in doing their jobs effectively and are treated fairly and equitably (mutual respect, boldness); and (9) Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose (responsibility). The Core Humanitarian Standard is addressed specifically to relief organisations. All NGOs, and definitely all Christian NGOs, can, however, probably identify well with most of the values. Leaders of Christian NGOs must, therefore, be aware that it is not only about signing the standard, it must be also about how to live those values and to implement them in the daily work.

The DEA Prüfzertifikat. The DEA Prüfzertifikat (*Certificate of Audit Inspection*) was established in Germany for Christian organisations dealing with religious, missionary or charity work. The DEA (*Deutsche Evangelische Allianz*, a

Christian umbrella organisation) notes in its preamble that compliance with existing financial law regulations is not enough to make sure that money donated is used trustworthily and efficiently by the organisations, and also it is not enough to avoid misuse (DEA 2013). The principles were set up with close coordination with the DZI Charity Seal of Approval (see above), and they include two additional Bible verses as a reminder about faithfulness in Christian organisations: “Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” (1 Cor 4:2) and “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Pt 4:10).

The DEA Prüfzertifikat is, therefore, meant as a clear appeal to Christian NGOs not only to comply with German financial law regulations but, additionally, to be accountable to God regarding the demand of good stewardship as well in relation to using the gifts received from God in order to serve others. Christians working in the different member organisations are thus urged to perform a work that goes beyond what the law demands by putting into practice all the mentioned values, such as faithfulness and stewardship.

All standards reflect their voluntary character. Punishment, in cases of violation, is the possibility of de-recognition of a seal of approval (e.g. DZI) or even the loss of membership of an umbrella organisation (e.g. VENRO). The biggest consequences are in the form of a possible public discussion after an event (as happened with UNICEF Germany in 2010 that lost its DZI seal of approval), and the loss of a fund-raising tool⁷⁹ apart from the loss of reputation.

The value of these codes can be found in the fact that the humanitarian sector is aware of the possibilities resulting from the misuse of funds and all kinds of other misbehaviours, and that they consequently try to do something about this by implementing their own voluntary commitment. They attempt to

79 Without the DZI, it can be very difficult to obtain funds from the German government.

establish trust with regard to their stakeholders by promising to follow the set rules.

The weaknesses of these codes are that self-commitment can either be made by an organisation or not. Even if they sign them, there is no guarantee that they will stick to them. A failure to fulfil self-commitment may go unnoticed. The above-mentioned codes and standards clearly reveal a very mechanistic understanding of values. At the end of the day, such self-commitment has little significance if it is reduced merely to a signature, and it may even prove to be completely ineffective. It may help only as a marketing instrument, i.e. for fund-raising, because it implies a good reputation and ethical behaviour.

The Christian DEA – even if it points out accountability before God – copies the ideas from the secular commitments, and may thus be as mechanistic and inefficient as they are. Christian NGOs should, thus, address trust and ethical behaviour not only by signing up to such a self-commitment, but by living and implementing the values within the organisation, working under good leadership, building on the moral formation of staff of the NGO and working on the moral responsibility that pertains to individuals and the organisation, and, in the end, communicating this in an appropriate way to the stakeholders.

4.3.1.3 Corporate stewardship

Stewardship has already been mentioned in chapter three when we discussed the term ‘economy’ (3.2.1). There, the term was linked to the image of the household. Corporate stewardship is important for Christian NGOs since it includes the responsible, faithful, and thoughtful handling of economic, ecological and social resources on the basis of the idea of a good steward who is entrusted with these resources by their stakeholders. Organisations have a responsibility with regard to the use of resources for their products or services. This goes beyond the mere use of material, and it also includes considering the consequences for future generations, thus including the idea of sustainability. The term sustainability was coined by the business consultant John Elkington in his 1994 concept of

the triple bottom line (TBL), where the corporate profit needs to be measured in economic, social and environmental bottom lines in order to take account of the full cost involved in doing business⁸⁰.

The concept of stewardship is known to Christians since it is one of the first commands that God gave to the first human beings in Genesis 1:28. At this point, Christian NGOs may ask themselves whether stewardship is being taken care of in order to function well, e.g. in how far future generations (of beneficiaries or other stakeholders) are included in the strategic and operational thinking behind their projects.

Maak and Ulrich call stewardship a basic ethical attitude of organisations (Maak & Ulrich 2007:119). For Christian NGOs, this attitude should also be prevalent in Christian NGOs, but they should be clear that they are accountable not only to their stakeholders, but also to God.

4.3.1.4 Stakeholder engagement and dialogue

The stakeholder engagement and dialogue belong to the very core of the work of Christian NGOs. Since they receive donations from institutional and private donors, from families, churches and markets, communication is one of their most important tasks. With regard to the stakeholders on the recipient side, i.e. the beneficiaries, it can be said that, owing to many improvements that have been effected in the last few decades, beneficiaries are not victimised, patronised or made dependent any more, as once happened very often⁸¹, but that now they are treated with respect and dignity on a level of partnership. Although many standards and regulations handed out by umbrella organisations, governmental or supra-national entities ensure that this behaviour is met by all NGOs,

80 For further reading on TBL: John Elkington 1997. *Cannibals with forks: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st century business*, Capstone.

81 Many mistakes have been made in the past decades regarding humanitarian work, and as a consequence, there have been many critical voices for example from the economists Skriver (1977), Anderson (1999) and Moyo (2010), to name a few.

Christian NGOs should take a leading role in this kind of behaviour, since they wish to be faithful to God's command to love others.

Christian NGOs should, thus, be able to define who their stakeholders are and what legitimate claims each of them makes of the NGO (Maak & Ulrich 2007:172). Maak and Ulrich state that stakeholder dialogue should be based on appropriate principles, one of which is the principle of mutual recognition as equivalent dialogue partners (:185; 191) in order to establish long-term trust. The value striven for is trust, and this is something at which Christian NGOs should be best.

4.3.1.5 Summary of 4.3.1

We have seen in this subsection that Christian NGOs have a responsibility towards their own society but also to the world as (global) citizens, which means that political engagement is necessary. Christian NGOs can participate in accepting different standards, regulations and self-commitments where certain values serve as trust-generating instruments. The question is whether these are sufficient for them to function as a Christian NGO that is also accountable to God. In addition, the efficiency of their value-promotion needs to be questioned if the values are not put into practice. Values that the standards and codes expect to be complied with are values of business integrity, such as transparency, honesty, credibility, truthfulness, good stewardship and responsibility in particular. These terms need to be worked on, discussed and put into corporate practice, otherwise they lose their effect. With regard to the sensitive handling of donated money, continuous engagement and dialogue with stakeholders should, also, be unquestioned for a Christian NGO in order to build and sustain trust relationships.

The issues behind 'Policies' may help Christian NGOs to clarify their Christian profile by asking what they can do in order to serve their society and the world, how their self-commitment can be trusted because their responsibilities are implemented and lived in an effective way, how they can reveal a biblical

understanding of stewardship in their organisation, and how their stakeholder relationship can build up trust.

4.3.2 Processes

Whereas the 'Policies' take care of the organisation's ethical responsibility with regard to the society, the focus in this sub-section is on how to describe ethical behaviour *inside* the company's management processes and systems. Here, importance is given to the organisation as being a moral agent, instead simply being confined to individuals. This is necessary because "the inner structures and dynamics of organisations both enable and limit human action. Since organisations are autonomous systems, they are not reducible to their members" (Jung & Armbruster 2016:85). In this vein, the concept of 'processes' deals with the following topics: (1) Good corporate governance; (2) A system of integrity; (3) Organisational structures; (4) Responsible change and moral learning; (5) Ethical culture; and (6) The corporate identity.

4.3.2.1 Good corporate governance

Since cases of ethical misconduct can also be attributable to the failure of an organisation's supervisory bodies, good governance needs to be addressed. This can be defined as an adequate division of powers between management and the supervisory board with corresponding checks and balances. It not only defines the rights of stakeholders but it also enforces them in everyday business life (Maak & Ulrich 2007:18).

In Christian NGOs, different forms of governance exist, depending on the legal form that the organisation chooses and on the country in which the organisation works. Boards of directors can be either one-tier or two-tier. Whereas a one-tier structure unites supervisory and management duties in one body, a two-tier board divides them into two separate bodies. The supervisory board (*Aufsichtsrat*) oversees the management board (*Vorstand*) which handles day-to-day operations (IFC 2012:20). *Aufsichtsrat* and *Vorstand* should be strictly separ-

ated in order to ensure good corporate governance. Whereas the one-tier structure can be found in countries with a common law tradition (mostly the Anglo-Saxon ones), the two-tier board appears in countries with a civil law tradition, such as Germany.

4.3.2.2 A system of integrity

Maak and Ulrich call 'a system of integrity' the organisation of responsibility as well as the establishment of systematic incentives in order to ensure that the behaviour of individuals is in accordance with defined principles. This system, thus, includes (1) mission statement, (2) vision statement, (3) a code of conduct, (4) a functional discursive infrastructure, (5) incentive structures, and, finally, (6) ethically-conscious controlling and auditing (Maak & Ulrich 2007:18).

(1) The mission statement is an expression of the purpose of the organisation, or its scope of business (as defined by Kühl and mentioned in chapter one, p. 18), and it may also include its conception of its ethical commitment. Mission statements are meant to let stakeholders feel secure about the organisation's handling of processes, while, in reality, they are often difficult to handle and these aims may even contradict one another (Kühl 2011:58). For example, many German companies describe on their web-sites that the customer is king. But what does this mean for those who are not customers? How, for example, are employees treated? These slogans are very abstract, and they say almost nothing about how the organisation handles its business in detail. NGOs, in the same way, may praise their attitudes towards the beneficiaries, but virtually nothing is said about the business culture inside the organisation. Kühl calls this kind of slogan "decoration" (:59) designed to appeal to the outside world. But Christian NGOs should not pretend to be ethical organisations by mentioning values or principles without really meaning and living their commitment or simply to attract donors. They should, as James 5:12 insinuates, 'walk their talk' which means living the values they talk about and functioning as role models with regard to their moral behaviour.

Examples of mission statements of humanitarian organisations are the following: to “empower the poor and marginalised to improve their living conditions” (Bread for the World n.d.); “empowering children to lead independent, self-fulfilled lives is what Kindernothilfe is about” (Kindernothilfe n.d.); or “to help people who suffer hardship due to disasters or structural poverty” (Humedica n.d.)⁸². Given that humanitarian organisations provide the community with ideas or projects that help other parts of the world fight disasters or bad living conditions, such mission statements must be as clear and concise as possible. Their ‘product’ is to provide occasions for donors to do something good by giving money, helping strangers, or volunteering time (CAF 2017).

(2) A vision statement in management literature⁸³ is usually a description of a future state of the company (Maak & Ulrich 2007:243). It resembles a general goal in a remote future, such as “We want to be the number one by the end of the decade” or “Our organisation wants to be the biggest automotive supplier in Europe in five years’ time”, just to name two examples from the profit industry. Vision in the image of a desirable future should include credible statements, desirable goals, and authenticity (:244), and it should be supported by all stakeholders, not only by a privileged few (:243).

My experience has proved that a vision statement in a humanitarian context may sound inappropriate when it includes a wish to serve a large number of beneficiaries in the future, as, in reality, no-one wishes there to be a large number of poor and war-stricken people. Such a vision could be seen to insinuate that it is an aim of the organisation to welcome poverty and disaster. Humanitarian organisations may, therefore, not even be able to have a vision statement at all.

(3) Codes of conduct are a moral compass for the company if they function effectively. Bernard J White, a former professor of organisational behaviour and

82 The three statements have been selected randomly from the internet.

83 The term ‘vision’ is also used with other meanings, such as religious e.g. Divine revelation or, in psychology, e.g. a sign of madness (Kessler 2017:4).

industrial relations at the University of Michigan, together with B. Ruth Montgomery, asked, in the conclusion of their survey conducted in different companies in the USA in the year 1980:

The most pressing question to be explored, concerns the effectiveness of codes of conduct. Do they have an impact on behaviour? Which code design, administrative procedures, and other practices yield the highest levels of effectiveness in terms of behavioural objectives? (White & Montgomery 1980:7)

To this day, codes of conduct are very limited in their effectiveness, since the mere existence of a code does not guarantee ethical conduct. Many companies have codes of conduct, but – as White and Montgomery already noted in 1980 – they are mostly ineffective, as became obvious some years later with Enron.

A moral compass for a Christian organisation needs to have an influence on behaviour. Behavioural objectives need to be implemented and fostered. Values also need to be translated into work-place situations.

(4) A functional discursive infrastructure allows moral communication in the company. It supports critical voices and does not penalise them. It, thus, ensures that ethical problems are raised and discussed. If, for instance, someone refuses to make a decision that will have short-term (mostly financial) benefits but long-term negative (ethical) consequences, the question is whether such a person has the strength to say ‘no’ to their superiors or whether they have to be fearful of losing their job if they do. In the case of Christian NGOs, the discursive infrastructure needs to include a clear approach on how moral communication should be dealt with in the organisation. It is recommended that the support given for critical issues and dealing with critique inside the organisation is mentioned in a clear way in the codes of ethics in order to be transparent and comprehensibly Christian to the employees.

(5) Incentive structures ensure that ethics-conscious action can actually be lived out sustainably and do not collide with economic incentives. Referring to the *menschenbild* of the *homo oeconomicus* (see 3.3.2), we discussed that eco-

nomically-rational minded persons, if they existed, would always need an incentive for ethical action and behaviour, asking “What’s in it for me?” (Maak & Ulrich 2007:258). Even if this does not reflect reality, discussing incentive structures can still be helpful by ensuring that appropriate action is encouraged, and not prevented.

(6) Ethically conscious controlling and auditing is an important element for business companies as well as it is for Christian NGOs. It is very tough to implement such an element because few people can read the results and actions that need to follow from the figures and tables of the company’s finances. For Christian NGOs, a responsible handling of the donations is critical. The previously mentioned seals and standards provide important checklists of what is important in order to act in an ethical manner.

For Christian NGOs all points from (1)-(6) are important for ensuring that an organisational framework is built in which the members are guaranteed behaviour that is according to established principles. This framework or system applies to all organisations working on ethically-based foundations. Christian NGOs, however, have to make sure that their Christian norms and their values are fully included in this framework and explained in a transparent way to all concerned members and stakeholders.

4.3.2.3 Organisational structures

For any kind of organisation, it is crucial to know the overall strategy of the organisation, in order to establish functioning organisational structures, since structure follows strategy, and not vice versa (Wöhe & Döring 2013:104)⁸⁴. Discussing organisational structures is important for Christian NGOs because they often underlie similar patterns as those for-profit organisations. This raises the

84 The original idea that structure follows strategy stems from Alfred D. Chandler in his book *Strategy and Structure* (1962), but is vigorously contested in crises or change situations.

question of why Christian NGOs often adopt the same hierarchical approaches as do for-profit corporations where efficiency, control and revenue are the major goals. Advantages of a top-down approach are, for example, that there is a clear allocation of tasks, responsibilities and competencies which, as a result, lowers the risk of conflict. There are also good control possibilities. On the other hand, there are long lines of communication and instructions, and there is an emphasis on hierarchical thinking as well as positional power. The pronounced dependence of the subordinates on the supervisory bodies makes team-work almost impossible. The system is thus extremely rigid.

The reason for the adoption of structures from profit organisations is that there may simply have been a lack of alternative functioning examples⁸⁵. This may also apply to churches⁸⁶. Stahlke and Loughlin state that “for an organisation to be healthy, both staff and clients must be equally fulfilled” (Stahlke & Loughlin 2003:3). The authors relate this to experiences where accountabilities were not clearly defined, and people double-checked in their organisations before making decisions (:5).

Their recommendation for Christian NGOs is to establish the idea of a tree (Stahlke & Loughlin 2003:63f) instead of a functional organisation structure. Briefly explained, the idea is that a tree represents a living organisation where the trunk is the well-functioning governing body (a team of board members), and where the top of the tree represents the employees and other stakeholders. A healthy tree will bear good fruit if it is planted in good soil and watered well. If a tree is sick, fruit will not appear. The employees are also seen as fruit and they are at the top of the tree. They will have a perfect view of what is happen-

85 Stahlke and Loughlin call it the *default model*, where the “characteristics are so common to organisations around the world that you would think someone wrote the book and everyone bought it”. The default model, of course, is “not a model at all – it’s the lack of a model” (Stahlke & Loughlin 2003:4). Furthermore, “We copied the Pharisees, instead of Jesus [...]” (:64).

86 Neil Cole, a US-American former evangelical pastor, marvels in his book *Organic Leadership*, how it can be possible that organisational charts in churches look like those of companies (Cole 2010:98f). He argues that Christians are anxious that a lack of a hierarchical system would mean a lack of leadership (:101).

ing around them, such as a view to the outside (customers, markets, etc.). Instead of being ‘top-down’, this approach is called ‘roots-up’ (:64).

4.3.2.4 Responsible change and moral learning

Many change processes are implemented under the banner of the primacy of the improvement of efficiency, and they often neglect the social (and cultural) consequences of interventions. Depending on the changes faced, uncertainty and ethical consequences may be increasing in a company. Responsible change management is, thus, to be understood as an integral part of corporate governance (Maak & Ulrich 2007:324). It is recommended that the different phases discussed in the management literature that may help an organisation to accept organisational change be observed (Frey *et al* 2014:547-559)⁸⁷.

Similarly, Christian NGOs undergo organisational changes. Whether these result from efficiency improvement or for any other reason, they usually cause pain and uncertainty. In order to prevent this from affecting the organisation, Christians NGOs need to be morally responsible and teachable.

As discussed in chapter two, responsibility is an important ethical issue, since all persons need to assume responsibility for their actions and the results that these actions bring about (see also Weber in 2.3.4.4). In change situations, Bonhoeffer’s doctrine of the four mandates may help to solve conflicts of interest and may help one to develop a responsible, holistic way of living and working (without a division of secular and divine). In addition, Jonas’s responsibility ethics is important in humanitarian organisations, since fast-changing technology often brings about insecurity, for example with reference to how to handle aid projects.

Responsibility for Christian NGOs starts with the point that they should be morally accountable as an organisation (and not only as individuals). Secondly, change and transition processes need to be taken care of in an ethical manner.

87 For example, the three-phase-model of Kurt Lewin (1963).

Ralf Juhre, a German organisational consultant, discusses, in his book *Ethisch Veränderungen herbeiführen* (2015), how Christian managers can handle change situations that for many employees engender fear. He suggests taking anxieties seriously and to know this and accompany each single step of transition processes with love, appreciation and positive communication (Juhre 2015:111). Change ethics, according to him, always bear in mind the anxieties of employees and do not treat them with disdain. The problem is that the majority of managers do not know how to lead within an atmosphere of uncertainty.

Christian managers need not only lead their teams in situations of anxiety, but they must also understand what needs to be changed in moral terms as an organisation from the start of the processes of change and transition and so effect good results for individuals and the organisation itself during and after the change processes.

With regards to moral learning, we need to clarify, first of all, what moral learning is and what it means for organisations. As discussed in chapter two (see 2.3.4.5), what a good person is needs to be clarified as well as how they become good persons. We also discussed that morality and good behaviour are consequences of habits and knowledge concerning how to live a good life. This is not only important in decision-making but also when forming character. But what form does this take in an organisation? Since moral formation does not occur by accident, virtues need to be exercised and practised (Kretzschmar 2002:13). Moral fitness also requires training and exercise just as physical fitness does (:13).

According to Hauerwas, Christian ethics must return to narrative (see 2.3.4.5), because the essence of Christian faith can be found there. In addition, Childs (in 3.3.5) states that, “character is shaped in community where community has formed around a ‘story’ that binds people together. The leaders of the community are those who keep the story alive” (Childs 1995:72). This is confirmed by Wright, who recommends not only dealing with stories, but also prac-

tising the virtues of faith, love and hope continuously by implementing five elements (see 2.3.4.5); apart from dealing with stories, these are looking for role models, having community with other Christians, doing spiritual exercises and reading the Bible. All five elements are easy to realise in the context both of the organisation, and also the individual. Combined with organisational instruments, e.g. a system of integrity, explained previously, and an ethical culture (explained in the next pages), this may sound like an interesting endeavour for a Christian organisation.

In summary, organisations have a collective moral awareness, and they are thus able to learn morality just as individuals do. This is particularly evident in crisis situations, especially for those organisations that experience drastic changes (Maak & Ulrich 2007:329). Since moral competence is “shaped in the context of a social community” (Kretzschmar 2002:14), an organisation needs to assume responsibility with regards to the character formation of its employees. This can be done by making use of stories that are able to shape the corporate culture and the characters of all employees. As a result, behaviour may change, codes of conduct may be adapted, and the organisational culture may be positively changed by moral learning.

Moral learning with regard to individuals is described in the next pages (see also 4.3.3 ‘People’).

4.3.2.5 Ethical culture

Values become culturally embedded when rhetoric about values is turned into action. This can be accomplished only by having each and every member know the company values so that they are reflected in the actions and processes of the organisation. It is, however, important to take into account that there are cultural differences between different types of organisations, such as business companies, NGOs and governmental organisations (Austin 2006:209).

For Edgar H. Schein (1928-), a Swiss-born US-American professor in organisational psychology⁸⁸, there are three informal elements in a company's business culture: visible elements that need to be explained further (artefacts⁸⁹); values and convictions (partly invisible and partly unconscious); and, thirdly, basic assumptions that are invisible and unconscious (Schein 2004:25f). The following scheme shows Schein's three levels of culture:

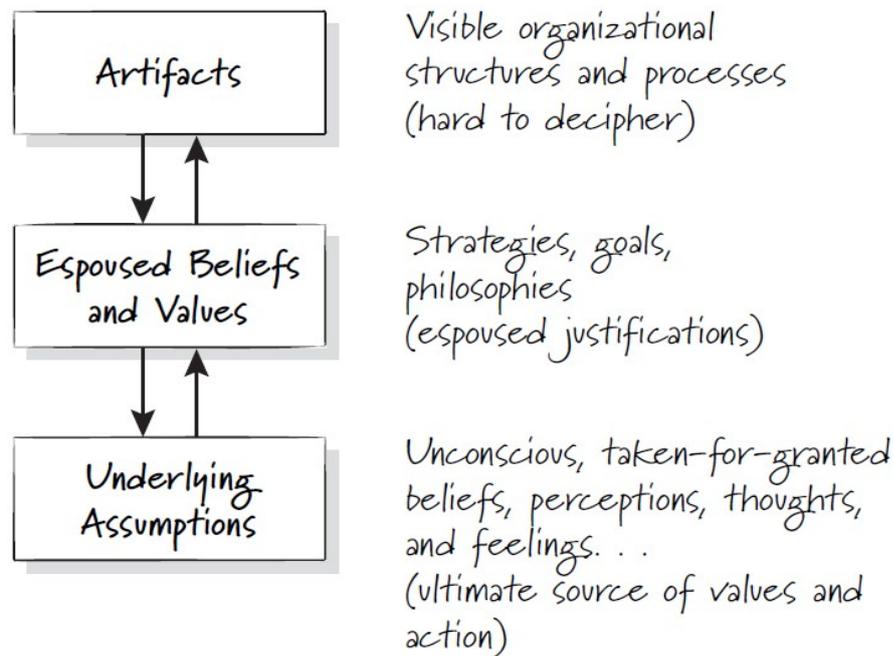


Figure 3: The three levels of culture

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For Christian NGOs, 'artefacts', could for example, be regular prayer meetings, chapel services, discussions or the study of scriptures (Sider & Unruh 2004:123). Symbols could also be part of this (Maak & Ulrich 2007:344), such as organisational logos. Such symbols need to be explained to any new employee or volun-

88 Schein was Sloan Professor emeritus for organisation psychology and management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge (USA). He was one of the founders of organisational psychology as well as organisational development.

89 'Artifacts' is American English for 'artefacts'.

teer. Many organisations, thus, use induction seminars to provide this group with important information as one of the first actions at the very beginning of their work, e.g. in the first week of employment.

‘Espoused values and beliefs’ can be mission statements, strategies and goals. They are formulated values to justify what the organisation does to those outside of the organisation. They are partly invisible and partly unconscious and this means that an organisation does well to explain not only the visible elements, but also the values and convictions that drive the organisation. Values are, however, often – to quote Kühl – mere “decoration” or even mere “*avowal machines*”⁹⁰ (Kühl 2011:59), in order to find acceptance from the customers (:59; Luhmann 1964:108ff) or prospective employees. Christian NGOs should not decorate themselves with value-statements, but rather prove that these are not only ‘buzz-words’ used for improving their reputation but that they are implemented in the working life of every day by the whole staff.

The ‘underlying assumptions’ are usually unconscious and taken for granted. They are the real supporting pillars. They are difficult to access and may have influenced an organisation over a long period of time. It is the actions of an organisation that show its underlying values and how they are lived out (Maak & Ulrich 2007:345).

As discussed in chapter three (3.4.2), another approach comes from Goodpaster who is convinced that companies have a conscience. He, thus, suggests institutionalising values together with the corporate strategy in the form of standards and codes. The aim is to uphold an ethical awareness in the company, but, especially, in management to achieve responsible behaviour.

For Christian NGOs, it seems important to know, communicate and deliberately to live out their company values. Stahlke and Loughlin, during their

90 Original term in German: *Bekennnismaschinen*. A good example of how such an *avowal machine* can look is the current case of VW who pretended over years to produce a car with clean emissions by their advertising. This turned out to be not only wrong but a downright lie.

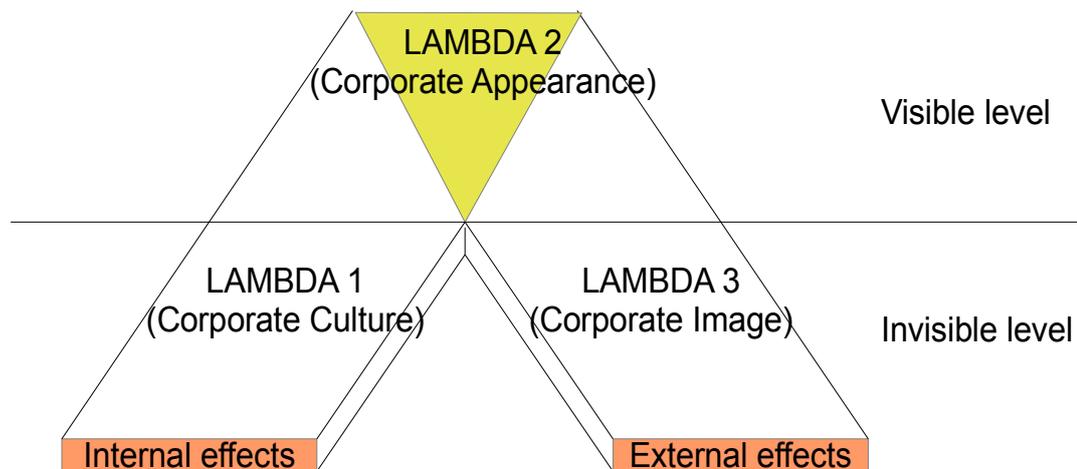
worldwide consultancy of Christian NGOs, found that employees of Christian NGOs do not seem to have a clear idea of the values of the organisation they are working in. They observed that employees are expected to have “Christian values”, but what these are is not clearly defined nor how they can be made useful for the organisation (Stahlke & Loughlin 2003:5)⁹¹. If the underlying assumptions are the supporting pillars of an organisation, however, Christian NGOs should clarify these issues.

Culture is part of the corporate identity and this will be discussed in the following pages.

4.3.2.6 The corporate identity

According to Christian Scholz, a HR professor of the University of the Saarland, corporate culture does not stand alone, but, together with corporate appearance and corporate image, needs to be embedded in an organisation’s operational framework. All three elements belong together and describe a real phenomenon, even if they are not analysed or designed by the organisation. The framework includes internal and external, as well as visible and invisible, elements (Scholz 2014:491), and, because of its shape as that of a Greek letter, it is called the LAMBDA-model, as can be seen in the following scheme:

91 This was confirmed with NGO3B in the interview (see footnote to question 1.2, p. 213).



Source: Scholz 2014 (own drawing)

Figure 4: The LAMBDA-Model

Whereas the corporate culture (LAMBDA 1) stands for the invisible, internal business area, the corporate image (LAMBDA 3) is the invisible, external area. Here, outsiders perceive the company's culture, performance and success subjectively. The resulting corporate image is the image that outsiders have of the corporate culture. This cultural perception, however, does not necessarily correspond to the actual corporate culture (Scholz 2014:491).

In contrast, the corporate appearance (LAMBDA 2) belongs to the visible area of the organisation and includes all the distinctive objects and behaviours which the organisation presents of itself inwardly and/or outwardly (Scholz 2014:491). For the communication of corporate culture both internally and externally, the visible level is the crucial medium (:491).

While LAMBDA 2 basically includes all visible objects and behaviours, the corporate identity results as a coherent part of LAMBDA 1, 2 and 3. Corporate identity is, thus, the sum of all consistent objects and behaviours which the company presents of itself both internally and externally, and which are also reflected in the corporate culture and corporate image (Scholz 2014:492).

Christian NGOs need to take care that the corporate image corresponds to the perception of the corporate culture by outsiders. The link is the corporate identity, which lies in the consistent overlap range of internal and external action at the visible level and provides an accurate image of the corporate culture to the outside world (Scholz 2014:493).

Since the majority of companies show corporate identity on the visible level, and mostly do not cover all internal and external fields (Scholz 2014:493), it should go without saying that Christian NGOs should strive for a corporate identity in which the overlap between internal and external action is maximised in order to have a coherent appearance to stakeholders, future employees, volunteers and donors. In addition, the Christian identity and the communication of it in all fields needs to be clarified. For this reason, the role of faith, as discussed in section 4.2, needs to be addressed and integrated, for example by the deliberate mentioning of Christian terms and needs, and the explaining of Christian values, e.g. honesty and trustworthiness as being inherently understood and lived by the whole organisation. This would – in my view – need to include a non-manipulative understanding of evangelism, as explained in 4.2.5.1. However, some Christian NGOs may not agree with this approach.

4.3.2.7 Summary of 4.3.2

In this section, we have discussed the second ‘P’ (processes). Both ‘policies’ (see previous section) and ‘processes’ are attributable to the moral agency of the organisation. In this area, six major themes were discussed.

In ‘good corporate governance’ the different structures of organisational supervision were discussed relative to Anglo-Saxon countries and Germany, and this showed that a strict separation of supervisory bodies is necessary, and it can be assumed in respect of the NGOs in Germany.

In a system of integrity there are six points that had to be discussed: the vision and mission statements; the codes of conduct as the moral compass for the company; a functional discursive infrastructure; incentive structures; and

ethically conscious controlling and auditing. All six points allow to see how the organisation presents itself in an ethical way. The prime issues learnt from these are that mission statements need to reflect reality without decorating aspects, and that codes of conduct, if there are any, should be effective instruments and have an impact on behaviour. In addition, the organisation is responsible for allowing communication about moral issues in the company without sanctioning critical voices. And, finally, incentive structures may influence behaviour patterns in an organisation.

In 'organisational structures' we discussed the fact that Christian organisations, for whatever reason, tend to implement rigid hierarchies that are rather similar to those of the top-down structures in industrial contexts. Christian NGOs may need to think about the impact that rigid organisational structures have on their processes and team culture.

In 'responsible change and moral learning', we discussed the fact that organisations continuously undergo changes. These changes cause pain and uncertainty within the group of stakeholders. Responsible change ethics respect the anxieties of the teams when changes occur, and it include learning about morality as an organisation where character is shaped in the context of a community. Organisations, thus, have a collective moral awareness, and because of this are able to learn about morality in the same way as individuals can.

The 'corporate culture' of an organisation is based on artefacts, espoused beliefs and values, as well as underlying assumptions. These are often unconscious and taken for granted beliefs, which thus provide the ultimate source of values and action. These need to be clarified in order to have a functioning organisation with clear values that are lived out and put into action.

'Corporate identity' forms the organisation's operational framework and includes the corporate culture, corporate appearance and corporate image. All three belong together. They must form a coherent synergy internally and ex-

ternally for all stakeholders, and they have to include a personal Christian awareness and an understanding of the role of their faith.

4.3.3 People

In this sub-section, the individual level of moral responsibility will be dealt with. Whereas in 'Policies' and 'Processes' we emphasised the organisation as a moral agent, either towards the society or towards the organisation itself, predominantly, in this sub-section, a focus on the individual will dominate with the following topics: (1) Responsible leadership; (2) Human relations; (3) Ethical decision-making; and (4) Moral formation.

4.3.3.1 Responsible Leadership

Research in leadership in the past decades has been focused primarily on leadership skills, effectiveness and traits (Ciulla 2006:19), and so only a few sources have dealt with responsible leadership. But leadership is ethical and “ethics lies at the very heart of leadership” (:17). It is, therefore, crucial that organisations deal with responsible and moral leadership. In chapter two, we discussed responsibility as being the anticipation of the consequences of our actions (Weber, see also p. 71) and the acknowledgement that modern technology has an ethical impact on work life (Jonas, see also p. 71) that needs to be dealt with in a responsible way. In modern companies, leadership often has a functional perspective, where “good leadership” is misunderstood as being *efficient* leadership. Leadership then becomes something like “good management” (Maak & Ulrich 2007:369).

Christian leaders are expected to lead responsibly. As was shown in the examples in chapter one, this does not always happen satisfactorily. The idea of how leadership is practised is strongly influenced by the attitude leaders have towards their employees and their *menschenbild* in general. There are two main streams dealing with this in the literature. These stem from Douglas McGregor's X-Y-theory. In his book *The Human Side Of Enterprise*, dated 1960, Douglas Mc-

Gregor⁹² suggests that there are two fundamental approaches of how to manage people. Managers who tend towards theory X expect people to be unwilling to work. For them, employees need to receive external impulses and incentives in order to comply. In contrast, managers who follow theory Y expect employees to be dedicated and intrinsically motivated and assume that both the performance and the results are better (Crainer 1997:179ff).

Often, the conviction prevails that a Christian leader needs to live the Y model, but this conception falls short of reality. As Kessler stated in his research, the wisdom teaching of the Bible shows a realistic picture of society; the book of Proverbs assumes that humans are capable of learning (Kessler 2004:245) but that not every human being will turn out to be wise or act in terms of their own responsibility. There will always be foolish people and also those who dislike work (:247).

Another concept of how attitudes towards employees can appear is the idea of the servant leadership, propounded by Robert K. Greenleaf⁹³. It is a “timeless concept” (Greenleaf, n.d.) where the leader “focuses primarily on the growth and the well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. [...] The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible” (Greenleaf, n.d.). As Northouse put it, “it focusses on the behaviours leaders should exhibit to put followers first and to support followers’ personal development” (Northouse 2018:240). John Stott, a British theologian and pastor of the Church of England, criticised Greenleaf’s concept as being a means to an end, namely for the sake of approval for leaders (Stott 1988:143), and he argues that, for Jesus, serving was an end in itself (:143). Northouse shows by his case studies that servant leadership is very popular in all kinds of organisations, even nowadays, with multinationals or or-

92 Douglas Murray McGregor (1906-1964) was a professor for management at the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology).

93 Greenleaf worked with AT&T for 38 years and contributed to the leadership discussion with his book *Servant Leadership* written in 1977.

ganisations in the Fortune 500, which are outside the Christian circles (Northouse 2018:243).

The Canadian consultants Stahlke and Loughlin in their *Relationship Model*, recommend the servant-leadership concept explicitly for Christian leaders (Stahlke & Loughlin 2003:91) since it appears to be compatible with a Christian attitude⁹⁴. But they embed it into what they call a set of three core values for healthy organisations. Firstly, there is affirmation (see below). Secondly, there is involvement, which means that people need to be involved in the decision-making processes, and, thirdly, there is servant leadership, in the sense of being empowered and lifted up by authorities rather than being put down (:221).

Affirmation, as one of the three core values, means love in the form of compassion and forgiveness, patience and understanding (Stahlke & Loughlin 2003:91). This reminds of our discussion in chapter two, namely about Augustine (2.3.2.1) who put the focus on the term of 'love', a norm that is deeply Christian, and one that should be one of the inherent and basic elements in Christian NGOs, in leadership, management and culture. This is also affirmed by Kessler in his book *Vier Führungsprinzipien der Bibel* (2012). Here, Kessler analyses the uniqueness of Christian leadership. He states that, proceeding from the two-fold law of love⁹⁵ (Mk 12:29-31), love should be the most important law for Christian leaders. This love makes it possible to serve God and others, be accountable to God and others, receive power from God and have power over others, and lastly, live from God's forgiveness, while forgiving others⁹⁶. The law of love, thus, becomes practical in terms of these four principles, service, power, accountability and forgiveness, and it enables a Christian leader to act in a

94 Different biblical leaders throughout the history have, however, had numerous approaches to leadership.

95 The two-fold law of love means love towards God, and, as a consequence, love towards others. See also the Good Samaritan, p. 139)

96 See as an example, Benedict of Nursia and the establishment of a culture where failure is dealt with in a constructive way in his monasteries (p. 87).

unique, and ‘God-acceptable’ way (Kessler 2012:76). In this way, love should also be the basis for Christian humanitarian workers who, believing that people have been made in the image of God, love their neighbours and brothers and can deal with charity, justice and human rights in a unique way.

The second core value is the involvement of the employees in the decision-making processes. Decision-making proceeds from shared values, vision and mission, and not unilaterally from the Board or the CEO, and decisions are made as closely as possible to where they are implemented (Stahlke & Loughlin 2003:91). Participative leadership is what Northouse defines as “inviting followers to share in the decision-making. A participant leader consults with followers, obtain their ideas and their opinions, and integrates their suggestions” (Northouse 2018:120).

In the *Relationship Model*, Stahlke and Loughlin recommend that Christian leaders be predominantly results-oriented (Stahlke & Loughlin 2003:91) which may sound contradictory to the relationship orientation in the *Model*. But task orientation is as important to the Christian leader as relationship orientation. As Kessler points out, Jesus himself was both relationship- and task-oriented, and it is the balance between the two sides that forms a good Christian leader (Kessler 2009:75f).

Responsible leadership is not only about methods that need to be put into practice, but it also includes attitudes and concrete behaviour. In this context, moral and character formation for Christian leaders is an important topic which will be dealt with in the next pages (see also 4.3.3.4).

4.3.3.2 Human relations

In chapter three we saw that one of the implications of the rational *homo oeconomicus* is that the influence of people is rejected (see p. 97). Instead, human beings need to function well only in order to enhance the profit of the company. In classic economics, the understanding of the human working force is in terms of factors of production, at the same level as labour and capital. Sometimes human

beings are also referred to as human capital. The problem is that these terms reduce human beings to the level of objects, and their character of being a subject (and not an object) is systematically neglected (Maak & Ulrich 2007:405).

Working ethically with members of organisations does not allow the use of terms that reduce humans to being no more than resources, but puts regarding them as human in the forefront, together with the relationships that they have in their respective organisations. Apart from renaming 'Human Resources' as 'Human Relations' to ensure a different understanding, an approach that is value-oriented and led by principles (Maak & Ulrich 2007:407) is needed for a change of the mind-set towards a humanly oriented HR.

Christian NGOs are expected to be more human-oriented in relation to their employees. But the examples with the three deaconesses (see also p. 5) reveal that efficiency and a technocratic understanding of their work had taken place in that organisation. Given that NGOs are under enormous pressures relative to efficiency and funding, as well as increasing competition, there seems indeed to be a danger that Christian NGOs could reduce their working force to the level of being mere objects.

How can this mind-set be changed for companies and also for Christian NGOs? Maak and Ulrich state that there are three elements that members need: (1) they long for bonding and a sense of belonging (Maak & Ulrich 2007:411); (2) they long for respect and appreciation; and (3) they long for meaning in their work (:411-412). A humanly oriented HR needs to take into account all three elements and to integrate them into a systematic Human Relations system.

How can this be done? First of all, organisational values and principles need to be translated into concrete business situations which is a huge challenge for any organisation. They need to be made graspable and then translated into observable behavioural indicators (Maak & Ulrich 2007:425). If, for example, the value is "respect and appreciation", then the question is what exactly can be observed with employees behaving like this (:425). Answers could, for

example, be: listen to the other person without interruption; do not react with depreciation when positions are contrary, etc. As such, these indicators can be included in target agreements and employee ratings and be available for personal evaluation.

Christian NGOs, given the fact that they also are in danger of losing the caring part of HR because of the huge pressure coming from the outside world, should think about whether the three elements are taken care of sufficiently.

4.3.3.3 Ethical decision-making

Ethical decision-making describes the process of making decisions of integrity in the face of conflicts of interest or moral dilemmas in an organisation (Maak & Ulrich 2007:441). The foundations for ethical decision-making are ethical theory (the ways of understanding what is right and good) and also moral formation, which will be discussed in the following pages. Similarly to the different ethical theories we discussed in chapter two and three, ethical decision-making approaches can be very different. Some approaches will, therefore, be discussed in this sub-section.

According to Maak and Ulrich, ethics and economic efficiency sometimes oppose each other in an organisation's decision-making process. All options need, therefore, to be evaluated according to ethical *and* economic criteria which, in the majority of cases, allows for good solutions and options (Maak & Ulrich 2007:452). In the same vein, ethical dilemmas in business are very seldom inescapable quandaries, but, if broken down, are often unmasked as being no more than a conflict of interests. Before a moral dilemma can be solved, however, it must also be recognized as such (:453).

According to Schirmacher, in his book *Führen in ethischer Verantwortung*, Christian leaders should work and lead differently from non-Christian leaders. He differentiates the aspects of decision-making for Christian leaders as being “normative”, “situational”, and “existential” (Schirmacher 2008:42f.). Schirmacher's *normative* aspect includes organisational norms and values in decision-

making (:45ff.) both of which are determined by the aspect of love. Christians are willing to fight for these values if they are ignored or trampled on because they result from their faith (:45).

The *normative* aspect strives to see realisation within a specific situation or an experience. In the *situational* aspect, therefore, the decision-making is pondered over with regard to impacts and possible outcomes. Schirrmacher names ethical conflicts (such as the one in Acts 5:29, in which Peter states to the Jewish authorities who forbade evangelism, “We ought to obey God rather than men”), or when values need to be balanced (e.g. with life-saving lies).

The *existential* aspect is all about the heart and the conscience. The term ‘existential’ refers to using heart and mind as well as internalising good deeds and values (Schirrmacher 2008:110f.). It also strives to combine the use of tradition, experience and reason in order to make good decisions and provide good leadership (:115).

As was discussed in chapter two, Bonhoeffer not only rejected the division between secular and divine things, but he also provided a helpful and practical instrument with his doctrine of the four mandates (see p. 72). According to this doctrine, Bonhoeffer shows that a Christian leader is governed by four areas of their lives, family, work, church and the state, and they relate to these areas as if they were covenants God made with Israel. As described in chapter two, all four mandates underlie different covenants, and can thus be dealt with in different ways, without having to divide between secular and divine, since all mandates are God-given. This gives the Christian leader practical help for leading ethically and for decision-making in conflicting situations.

In chapter two (p. 76), we also discussed Hauerwas who understands moral decisions as being consequences of character. He gives virtues a high significance in a Christian life and thus offers a counterpart to a rationalistic ethical decision-making. He objects to those who offer formally developed ethical

decision-making rules⁹⁷. For Hauerwas the church has a decisive role in moral education because it can provide the biblical narratives that enable people to follow Jesus's role model.

Whereas Maak and Ulrich promote a very functional way of decision-making, Hauerwas and Schirrmacher bring in other aspects that can be considered of importance, such as norms and values, but also love, wisdom, the human conscience and intuition. They, thus, stress the formation of character and virtues which will be dealt with in the next sub-section.

4.3.3.4 Moral qualification and formation

An adequate professional qualification plus a certain amount of professional experience is expected of those working in humanitarian NGOs. People are required to keep their qualifications up-to-date to meet professional needs and standards. To be a manager in any organisation, it takes more than having a formal qualification, and this is even more so in a Christian NGO where integrity, character and exemplary moral behaviour are expected from a manager. But what does this mean?

According to Lutz von Rosenstiel, a former professor of organisational psychology and economic psychology at the University in Munich, managers need to have at least a minimum level of intelligence, good social skills, high motivation, a willingness to learn, as well as an openness to new challenges (von Rosenstiel 2014a:9). Good social skills are primarily communication skills (von Rosenstiel 2014b:338; Wastian 2014:393) and also being a good role model (Regnet 2014:44). But how can one become a role model, what about personal or character traits? In addition, how are these traits formed in ethical behaviour? In classic business literature, it seems difficult to find answers to this kind of question, and competencies related to skills and moral character are treated as being the

97 See for example Eduard Tödt (1977), who established a six-step method to help make ethical decisions under the principle of responsibility in the second half of the last century.

same issue. The reason for this is to be found in the artificial rational model of a business person (*homo oeconomicus*) prevailing in the business literature in Germany, but also in the social sciences which have developed the behavioural model since the 1970s. Whereas the rational model rules out feelings, conscience, etc., the behavioural approach brings in psychology as an explanation model for the behaviour of human, neither approaches stressing the religious source and motivation of moral behaviour (see also 3.2.7). A well-known example is Kohlberg whose scheme of character development shows different steps of personal development from the very egoistic to the universal way of moral understanding (Maak & Ulrich 2007:473)⁹⁸. Maak and Ulrich build on Kohlberg's scheme and claim that character can always be formed years after childhood (:458; 473). These psychological approaches to a great extent emphasise human reason and human autonomy, however, and are thus not enough to answer the question about how Christian character formation can take place.

Firstly, regarding moral character, the US-American theologian William P. Brown (1996) identifies three elements of it, namely perception, intention and virtue. Whereas perception means a selective internalising of events so as to create meaning for oneself (i.e. understanding things as the will of God), intention is the expression of the character (i.e. business people act ethically when they consciously decide to do so). Virtues, as the third element, reveal and express the character, and demonstrate who the acting person is (Brown 1996:7; Kretzschmar 2002:10f). Virtues can be learned or acquired through education and practice, and they thus need to be identified and nurtured (Kretzschmar 2002:11).

Secondly, with regard to moral formation, the Dutch scholar, J.A. van der Ven, points out that, apart from discipline, socialisation (e.g. at school or at home), experience and emotional formation, there are two more important gen-

98 See also Kohlberg (1981) for further reading.

eral modes that are relevant for Christian NGOs, viz. transmission and moral development (van Niekerk 2009:101ff).

Transmission means that there is moral teaching that a group passes on or transmits to its members, e.g. answers to the question posed by MacIntyre (see 2.3.4.5) which was ‘what is it to be a good human being?’, or the way that good habits and knowledge about virtues can be learned and practised. For Christians, this can be through scripture classes, sermons, small groups, etc. in which the narratives of the Bible are emphasised (see also Hauerwas, 2.3.4.5). Moral development is an internal thought process of people, in which they learn how to make moral distinctions and judgements. For example, Maak and Ulrich suggest how to handle dilemmas in an organisation. There must be a conscious handling, namely recognition, analysis and reflection. This is possible only with the direct participation of the parties involved. A conscious handling means that dilemmas arising in everyday organisational situations have to be discussed openly, and this will promote the collective and the individual moral level of reflection (Maak & Ulrich 2007:456).

Moral formation, however, also needs to be an issue for the leaders of organisations. The formation of the character of leaders is even a “matter of urgent concern” (Kretzschmar 2007:19). Kretzschmar notes, in her paper regarding the formation of moral leaders in South Africa, that “moral leadership, as opposed to any other type of leadership, is specifically leadership attuned to moral values: leadership that promotes what is good” (:20). This is why skills and professional traits are not enough.

Apart from the motivation by goodness and being attuned to the needs of others, there are different aspects of personal character that require moral formation for a leader. Kretzschmar discusses her approach of moral formation on the basis of *mind*, *heart*, *will*, *relationship* and *actions* to which she applies the metaphor of conversion:

The conversion of the *mind* requires the abandoning of pride [...], the development of prudence, conscience, wis-

dom, integrity and a commitment to further the common good of society. The *heart* needs to be orientated to love for God and neighbour, and the desires of the heart trained towards justice, service and sharing and away from gluttony, lust and greed. The conversion of the *will* means that wilfulness is progressively replaced by a willingness to be shaped by God's will and character. [...] the redeemed will become enabled to act justly, wisely and effectively. *Relationships* [are] effected both by being exposed to the stories and lives of others, [...] ignorance, self-deception and selfishness are exposed [...] moral *action* is both a consequence of the other four conversions and, because it exposes leaders to engagement with people in concrete contents, illuminates the strengths and weaknesses of the other conversions, further motivating moral conversion in all five areas. (Kretzschmar 2007:36).

Kretzschmar's approach shows that, only if the formation of character has taken place, may acting with morality occur. It shows how moral formation can take place and can be nurtured in Christian NGOs. But it also shows that human autonomy is out of place; the five conversions can take place only when they are rooted in a relationship with God and a faith community.

4.3.3.5 Summary of 4.3.3

As discussed in the introductory section of chapter four, we need to deal with three steps in order to take a closer look at the ethical performance and attitudes of organisations and their people. In the third step, the issue of 'People' has been discussed with four major themes, responsible leadership, human relations, ethical decision-making as well as moral qualification and formation. All these themes tried to shed light on the way organisations deal with their employees, and what ethical frameworks underlie their attitudes and their treatment of their stakeholders.

In 'Responsible leadership' we examined the different attitudes and *menschenbild* towards employees as well as the concept of servant leadership and Stahlke's *Relationship Model*. The two-fold law of love is by far the most im-

portant concept for Christian leaders. As a result of God's love, fellow Christians, donors, employees, stakeholders, etc. are treated in an affirmative and participative way. In addition, responsibility needs to be assumed for decisions made, consequences anticipated, and technological impacts included within a responsible leadership.

'Human relations' must not reduce humans to being mere resources. Employees long for a sense of belonging, respect and appreciation, and the work needs to be meaningful for them. A human relations approach that deserves the name needs to be led by values and principles on condition that these are translated into observable behavioural indicators and lived in the organisation.

Christian leaders should not only follow the functional way of 'decision-making' as promoted in most of classic business literature, but also see the conflicts from different point of views, including normative, situational and existential aspects, as promoted by Schirrmacher, as well as Bonhoeffer's four mandates both of which help Christian leaders to see God's purpose within each task of their organisation.

The last theme is 'moral qualification and formation' where we saw that Christian leaders need to augment their knowledge with regard to the mainstream business literature where moral formation or character aspects are nonexistent or are misunderstood by being equated with professional skills. Although professional skills are crucial in any organisation, moral qualification and formation needs to be included. The basic question is what it takes to become a good person, and which aspects of personal character require moral formation. Here, the approach of Kretzschmar of bringing about life-giving changes in five conversions, namely mind, heart, will, relationship and action is a very promising approach to moral formation for leaders.

In summary, the challenges of the Christian leader and the people those leaders lead are many and diverse. The most obvious problem seems to be that

the business literature gives formal help and methods, but these are not sufficient for responsible Christian leadership.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter aims to understand how Christian NGOs work within a secular society, which world-views prevail and what challenges in theological and practical issues they face. The impact of the dualism between material and spiritual and reason and faith (discussed in chapter two), and the influences of the economic developments on work-life (discussed in chapter three) become visible in many ways. This chapter tried to find answers to sub-question #3: *How do Christian NGOs deal with ethical matters in their organisational structures and practices?*

In a first step, we saw that a Christian world-view differs from secular (or scientific) world-views. Christian humanitarian workers have, however, themselves been influenced by a secular world-view, and some may divide the seen and the unseen world, and separate word from deed.

The founder of the Red Cross, Henri Dunant, was inspired by his Christian faith and a Christian education. But after some time the Red Cross adopted secular convictions, i.e. Christian faith and religious standpoints were rejected owing to targets of 'neutrality'. Additionally, although the secular UN acknowledges the importance of religious NGOs to a certain extent, the recent SDG goals are devoid of religious terms, and these have been replaced by legal terms of the Human Rights-based approach. Humanitarianism has, thus, to a great extent, turned its back on its faith-based origins. This has serious consequences for the personal identity of Christian NGOs, be they relief or development agencies.

The developments mentioned above are reflected in the different classifications of faith-based NGOs, especially the one provided by Thaut, where three types of faith-based NGOs are shown, viz. organisations that are *accommodative*, which means that they are indistinguishable from secular ones and would

have to answer the question of what it means for them to be a Christian organisation, whereas the *synthesis* show a mix of Christian identity and secular goals, and *evangelistic* organisations are the most religiously oriented.

With regard to the faith positions of NGOs and Christian self-understanding, two main underlying theological challenges were discussed in greater depth, the word-and-deed-problem, the contrasting terms of charity and justice, and the Human Rights-based approach. Even if Christian NGOs work in the midst of a secular society, they should have a clear religious profile where word and deed are inextricably linked and where evangelism is explained as being a non-manipulative and non-aggressive activity that is inherent in their work. They also need to use religious terms in a conscious way. Christian humanitarian NGOs have to a great extent contributed to the development of this sector, and there is no reason to hide Christian beliefs and convictions.

In a second step, we researched the moral agency of Christian organisations in the structure of 'Policies', 'Processes' and 'People'.

The sub-section 'policies' described the ethical and political responsibilities of an organisation with regard to the context of societal and stakeholder expectations. Christian NGOs have political responsibility, since their work is highly political. The implications of corporate citizenship, stewardship and also the stakeholder engagement need, therefore, to be thought about on the basis of their Christian foundation, asking, for example, how their faith tradition and Christian identity can help their being a good steward and a good corporate citizen. Christian NGOs should, thus, define adequate policies, principles of corporate policy and guidelines for dealing with these societal and stakeholder concerns and demands. Policies and guidelines (as well as the overly secular codes and standards established by supra-national and national entities) can be important in with regard to raising funds, but they are not sufficient to guarantee an ethically sound working organisation, since the underlying values have to be owned and expressed in action. In addition, a Christian NGO needs to add to the

secular codes good leadership and the moral formation of their staff, because good leadership promotes what is good and thus serves the genuine needs of individuals and society alike (Kretzschmar 2007:18).

The sub-section 'processes' described the ethical responsibility of the NGO towards its own organisation. Different topics, such as corporate governance, organisational structures, change management and moral learning as an organisation were discussed. Ethical organisations need to provide a system of integrity where their Christian values are put into practice, mission statements are clear of any 'decorative' statements, ethical issues and dilemmas can be discussed openly and critique can be openly offered without any fear of repercussions. NGOs should reflect on whether top-down structures (often copied from the industry) really fit to the NGOs' concerns and goals. They also need to establish a corporate Christian identity that is not only communicated internally but can also be perceived and understood from the outside. If Christian NGOs cannot live out their Christian identity everywhere, or if they feel the need to hold back or downplay issues, then this must have a serious impact on the appearance, culture and the image of the organisation, and may transmit different, maybe even contradictory, information about the organisation both outside and inside the organisation. The LAMBDA-model has shown that all three elements need to be coherent in order for the NGO to be credible and, at the same time, attractive to current and prospective donors and employees. All three elements, therefore, need to show how the organisation lives out its convictions and its values, and how it deals with secularism in the humanitarian sector, such as a critique on terms like 'neutrality' or incorrect perceptions of evangelism.

In the sub-section 'People', we discussed issues of responsible leadership, human relations, ethical decision-making and the moral formation of staff and leaders. The main aspect of dealing with models, such as the servant leadership model or the *Relationship Model*, was that the two-fold law of love needs to be attended to by Christian NGOs. In decision-making, Schirrmacher's normative,

situational and existential aspects of leadership, as well as Bonhoeffer's four mandates, are important for consideration by Christian NGOs. One very important aspect identified in this chapter is that of character and character formation in order to know what it takes to become a good person and a good leader. Some aspects of personal character require moral formation, and organisations need to put a focus on that, e.g. by Kretzschmar's life-changing model of the five conversions.

Even if Christian NGOs feel that they are being put under a certain pressure by the demands of a secular society, there are many ways to lead the organisation in all three 'P's' (policies, processes, people) differently and in a discernibly Christian manner and to build up trust towards their stakeholders. There is no reason for Christian NGOs and their employees to downplay or even hide their faith. Christian organisations, thus, need a clear profile, but they do not have to choose between two options, for example a Christian approach against a secular approach. It is not always 'either/or' but can well be 'both/and'. Christian organisations are free to choose, for example they can comply with secular regulations (i.e. standards), but, at the same time, they do not have to give up their personal Christian understanding. It is important, though, that regulations (or psychological methods, etc.) are not simply adopted but that everything is well explained and substantiated in relation to the Christian faith and tradition.

After having researched several key issues, such as the interaction with the secular environment (4.2 and 4.3.1), the Christian identity (4.2 and 4.3.2), the character and character formation (4.3.2 and 4.3.3), the Christian corporate culture (4.3.2.5), ethical decision-making (4.3.3.3) as well as leadership and management (4.3) in this chapter, the research methodology and especially the empirical methodology will be described in the next chapter.

5. Empirical research – methodology

5.1 Introducing the chapter

After having elaborated on the theoretical discussion in the previous chapters, we will now turn to the empirical part. In section 1.5 it was stated that the empirical research is designed to build on the foundation laid by the theoretical research recorded in chapters two, three, and four. The empirical research enables the author to generate, analyse and compare data from leaders of the Christian NGOs. The empirical research contributes to what has been discussed in the theoretical research; it may confirm or challenge, or even refute, the theoretical findings.

Whereas in chapter one it was explained *why* it was necessary to conduct empirical research, this current chapter will provide information on *how* the empirical research has been carried out and how the data was collected and interpreted.

In chapter one, I referred to Mason (2002) who indicates the importance of reflecting on and determining how theory, data, and the analysis of the information can be put together in a cohesive way (:180). I also referred to Merriam (1998) who stated that the research is able to shape or modify the existing theory rather than develop a new concept, which is the case in ‘grounded theory’ (:49). At the same time, I want to add to the knowledge and be able to provide recommendations stemming from the research topic and relevant for the Christian NGOs in Germany. This research study is a combination; it will be adding to existing theory, but it has developed new concepts or perspectives. I, thus, formulated the main research question and carried out a qualitative research on the topic of ethical frameworks, organisational practices and conduct of Christian NGOs in Germany. The elaboration of the research question has been accomplished by the use of semi-structured interviews⁹⁹.

99 With the support of documents, such as the public and internal material of organisations. This material will be referred to later in this chapter on 5.4.1 “Document ana-

The chapter will present the criteria for the selection of the interviewees and a description of the process of the development of the empirical research which includes a description of the drafting of the questionnaire. I will also reflect on the ethical considerations relating to the empirical research. The chapter will conclude with explanations about how data were collected, analysed and structured.

5.2 The interviewed organisations

5.2.1.1 Research sample

Qualitative research involves a sampling or selection. It means a selection of, and a focussing on, key topics (Mason 2002:121). In the case of this thesis, not all NGOs in Germany were interviewed but a (smaller) group of Christian NGOs were selected. Interviewees for the present study were identified from a variety of humanitarian organisations in Germany. They needed to have links to the German Evangelical Church or EKD¹⁰⁰, as explained in section 1.3.2.1), Free Church, or Catholic Church, have German headquarters and have more than 50 employees. In addition, they needed to work clearly and officially on a Christian faith basis. The aim was to study organisations with about 50 or more employees, but because organisations with the above mentioned balance of faiths were either smaller or have international headquarters, a few organisations with fewer than 50 employees had to be included to the sample.

There are more than 600,000 charitable organisations in Germany (Labigne *et al* 2019:9). VENRO, the German umbrella organisation of development and humanitarian aid NGOs, comprises around 140 members of humanitarian organisations. Christian organisations with German headquarters number around 30, according to other sources¹⁰¹. Approximately 80% of those are

lysis”.

100 EKD = Evangelische Kirche Deutschlands (German Evangelical Church).

101 Official membership lists from the internet, that will not be named at this point for anonymity reasons.

very small with less than 50 employees. This means that there are around 25 organisations out of which 13 have been contacted for this research.

5.2.1.2 The organisations

This research study was conducted with eleven German organisations for a period of three months (September to December in 2017). The CEOs of thirteen organisations had been asked to participate prior to the interviews by phone calls, e-mails or personal contacts. Two declined and were not replaced.

The empirical research was conducted by means of semi-structured interviews which took place in the respective offices of the NGOs. What follows is a brief description of the organisations which took part in the empirical research, specific relevant information and an explanation as to why they were chosen. The organisations will not be mentioned by their names nor will the interviewees be named directly. In accordance with the concept of confidentiality (which will be explained further in 5.4.2.4), all participants will be unrecognisable throughout this research.

As mentioned previously, the organisations were selected according to the following three criteria. Firstly, the organisations were required to represent the two main aspects of humanitarian work, relief work, development work or a combination of the two. Secondly, organisations that represent different types of Christian tradition were selected. As has already been explained in chapter one, the differences between Roman Catholic, EKD and free Protestant churches in Germany are thought to be significant, since their faith traditions differ from one another and lead to different conclusions relative to social ethical issues. This is why it was necessary to investigate a range of Christian traditions.

As a third selection criterion, it was important to investigate organisations that have headquarters in Germany and not in neighbouring German-speaking countries or elsewhere. To conduct research in all three German-speaking countries was the original idea of this thesis but this needed to be restricted at a later stage. The reason for this was the conviction that the national and working cul-

tures of Germany, Austria and German-speaking Switzerland were too different and, hence, this would distort the results.

Prior to the interview, an appointment date was arranged with either the CEO or other senior managers or Board members by way of their personal assistants. All contacted NGOs (except for the two organisations mentioned above that declined) were so interested in the topic that they agreed without any further hesitation or restrictions to an interview. All kept their appointments, and only one NGO had to postpone the appointment date owing to another priority, but it was arranged for another day later that week. The CEOs found the topic very relevant and they looked forward to the interview. Some of them even prepared answers to the questions beforehand.

5.3 Semi-structured interviews

In order to be able to answer the research question and to add to the required knowledge, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were chosen as the research method. They were the preferred way of conducting the interviews for this thesis, because possibly sensitive topics were to be discussed, such as personnel procedures or personal convictions about religion or ethics. Given this, I assumed that trust could be established in a personal meeting more effectively than otherwise and there was the possibility to being given more comprehensive answers this way.

The questions were a mix of open-ended and closed questions. An advantage of open-ended questions is that the interviewee may get into a conversation and produce interesting and new answers that may advance the understanding on the topic. But the problem may also be that the interview may be perceived as having a lack of structure. In contrast, closed questions usually bring about short and concise answers. Sometimes, however, the background of the answer is interesting but will not be considered sufficiently with short and concise an-

swers. An advantage of them, though, is a clear structure which makes it possible to compare the answers to those of other organisations.

The CEOs, managers or Board members received a clearly structured copy of the whole questionnaire¹⁰² some days before the interview took place. At least three of them used the time to prepare themselves beforehand. All interviewees were willing to participate in this study, and they provided enough time for the answering of the questions which took at least one and a half hours, in some cases more than two hours, depending on the time and interest of the interviewees. Some of them also provided me with internal papers, such as codes of ethics, but many were understandably more reluctant to do so. Only in one case did we hold the full interview by way of a combination of phone calls and written notes, owing to the many travels of the CEO. In this case, a final phone call was conducted to clarify and discuss issues that had emerged from the written answers and the first conversation.

All interviewees signed the consent letter¹⁰³ (provided in both English and German) in which they agreed with the way the interviews were conducted, the sound tracks transcribed and the information gathered. They agreed with the privacy proposal and identity protection, by which I am required to code all names and not reveal any affiliations with organisations. They also agreed in this consent letter that the interview transcription would not be published, except for any important quotations which contribute directly to the findings of this research and which will be included in the text of the thesis.

5.4 Data collection

Data were collected from the interviews, information which is publicly available and inside information handed out by the interviewees. In this sub-section, the analyses of these documents will be explained.

102 See Appendix A: Research Questionnaire.

103 See Appendix B: Consent Letter.

5.4.1 Document analysis

Publicly accessible material, such as mission and vision statements, annual reports, etc., are usually available on the web-pages of the organisations. They helped me prepare the interview and form a first impression on the NGO, its origins, and also its values and world-views. The preparation for the interviews on the basis of publicly accessible material included the following questions:

- Do the mission statement, the purpose and objectives include Christian values?
- What do organisational structures look like, and how have they developed?
- What is the history and the original intention of the organisation,; how has it developed or changed?
- Are any Christian symbols (e.g. the logo) visible and part of the corporate culture?

Internal material, such as ethical guidelines, are usually not openly accessible. Some organisations handed over this kind of internal information freely, some organisations were more reluctant to do so, but, in any case, all organisations were asked for useful material. With regard to these documents, the intention was to see whether such papers existed at all and how they expressed the purpose and functioning of the NGOs.

5.4.2 The questionnaire

Questionnaires formed the basis for the one-on-one interviews which were conducted in the offices of the different German headquarters with senior personnel (CEOs, Board members, or other relevant senior staff) of the specific NGO. The purpose of having a questionnaire was to structure the questions in a comprehensible way for all participants and to obtain answers to the research questions. In addition, the aim was to have comparisons between data from differ-

ent organisations. The questionnaire was personally administered so that the interviewees had the opportunity of explaining their answers and expanding on them where appropriate. This allowed an opportunity for checking back if necessary, and to gain a deeper understanding of the issues discussed.

Questions were designed to determine how the organisation related to its social context as a Christian organisation, and how it influenced those who work in the organisation. They were also designed to find out how members of the organisation understood their Christian foundations and their world-views, e.g. by relating to religious or philosophical thoughts, and from which ethical frameworks they draw their convictions and their behaviour. Questions were also designed to gain knowledge about decision-making processes to see how being a Christian organisation influences its thoughts and processes in daily business.

The questionnaires allowed the participants to use their own words, or where possible answers were provided, they could expand on their answers. Below each question, there was a section 'Please explain' that encouraged the participants to go beyond the given answers if they wished to do so. Being able to give answers in their own words gave the participants a chance to place an emphasis on the meaning and understanding of a phenomenon from their own viewpoint, which is a crucial characteristic of qualitative research (Merriam 1998:8).

In addition, in many cases the interviewees commented on the questions that needed only to be ranked on the base of rating scales. This was helpful to provide a varied style, to avoid monotony with regard to the questions, and also to help get answers more quickly, while still being able to be compared with answers of other organisations. Rating scales can be problematic, since there may be a tendency by the interviewees to not want to respond to extremes of the scale. In this regard, two NGOs had some trouble providing answers to some of

the rankings, and this will be referred to in detail in the next chapter where the findings are analysed and interpreted.

For the documentation and evaluation, I used MAXQDA¹⁰⁴, a software programme used for qualitative data analysis. The main benefit for this study was the high flexibility of establishing a sophisticated code system with different hierarchical levels. The evaluation of codes, together with the transcription of the text, is simple and effective, since the text passages could easily be allocated to different codes. If necessary, the codes could be changed or adapted easily.

5.4.2.1 Structure of the questionnaire

The questionnaire started with profile questions about the organisation. This was done in order to determine the size of the NGO, the denominational specification and the location of the organisation, as well as the position and function of the interviewee. Another profile question was to identify whether this organisation was more development-oriented or relief-oriented. Although the annual report and other public material provided much of this information, these questions were important since the interviewee usually explained the relations and the history of the organisation in greater depth.

The main part of the questionnaire was divided into the following sections, based on the theoretical research chapters:

1. How do Christian NGOs relate to the society and world in which they live?
2. How are Christian ethics understood and lived out in their organisation?
3. How do Christian NGOs deal with ethical matters in their organisational structures and practices?

The first question refers to *world-views/philosophical ethics/theological ethics*. This section encompasses three key issues, which are: (1) sources of world-view

104 For further information or to download a *demo* version, see also www.maxqda.com, accessed 31 Jan 2017.

and moral thinking; (2) Motivation and intention; (3) Interaction with secular society.

The second question refers to *organisational and personal ethics* and encompasses three key issues: (1) the question about the Christian identity to be described and classified; (2) what emphasis there is on Christian character and conduct in the interviewee's organisation; and, lastly, (3) the corporate culture of the specific organisation.

The third question refers to *practice* and encompasses specific ethical issues of the organisation in regard to the three 'P': (1) the decision-making processes of the Christian NGO; (2) issues of management; and (3) issues of leadership, where an emphasis is made on the dealing with the members of the organisation.

All key issues which had previously been identified during the writing of the theoretical chapters¹⁰⁵ formed part of some of the questions so that altogether 50 questions were included in the questionnaire, apart from the profile-questions mentioned above. After having asked these 50 questions, I approached the participants in a final question about whether there was anything else that they would like to add after having discussed all the three main sections of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was drawn up in both English and German but was presented to the NGOs in German only. Similarly, the interviews were conducted in German and the transcripts were also written in German. The answers and the findings were included in English in the evaluation text of chapter six. Significant quotes from the interviewees were provided in English but with the German original quotation provided in the respective footnotes.

105 The key issues are elaborated in the conclusions of the theoretical chapters.

5.4.2.2 Development of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed over a period of time and was influenced by the theoretical research and the reading in empirical methodology. Key issues were identified and clustered in order to form a comprehensive questionnaire which made several drafts necessary. The questions were validated and refined through discussions with my supervisors and the input of two pilot interviewees.

First of all, I established a table where all the key issues were listed. I then arranged all the statements made by the theological and philosophical thinkers in order. From these I established a pool of questions that were of interest for my research. The first draft of the questionnaire thus consisted of 100 questions, which needed to be reduced and focussed. The questionnaire was finalised after completion of the three theoretical chapters two, three and four. All in all, it was a lengthy process where many changes were necessary in order to produce a questionnaire that would adequately generate the data needed to answer the research question.

Several factors influenced the development of the initial draft. First of all, the revision and extension of the theoretical research made it possible for me to focus more clearly on the aspects that were necessary to address in the questionnaire. For example, some theological and philosophical statements, although interesting as general topic for NGOs, were not appropriate with regard to answering the research question or any of the sub-questions, and they could, thus, be discarded in the end. Another factor that I needed to have in mind was the time frame that many CEOs and senior personnel were going to provide for my interviews. At the end of the process, I reduced the questionnaire to 50 questions and fixed a time limit of one and a half hours.

5.4.2.3 Pilot interviews

The questionnaire was further refined by conducting pilot interviews. Pilot interviews can be helpful for testing a questionnaire (Merriam 1998:75), and they are recommended to obtain valuable feedback. Holding pilot interviews had the advantage that the questionnaire could still be changed if the pre-testers had objections, such as problems of understanding, structure or time issues. I, therefore, conducted two pilot interviews to test the clarity of questions, to ascertain whether the information they elicited was relevant and to check on the time situation.

The pilot interviews were conducted with a former CEO and, later, a member of the Board of Trustees of an international NGO with an affiliate office in Germany, and another with a chairman of the Board of an advocacy NGO which also had an affiliate office in Germany. They were both willing to conduct a test with the preliminary questionnaire and were also willing to give feedback afterwards on form, content and time. This was done in the summer of 2017. Their input led to some changes regarding the length of the questionnaire. In addition, it led to a change of re-formulating of some questions because they were not clear enough. It was also clear that the time that I had left for the people to answer openly was clearly underestimated. There was a need for a reduction of questions if they were to be answered fully without time pressure.

I then reduced the questions and built in some examples (in the copy or during the interview) so that the interviewees knew what I meant by the questions. The former CEO (one of the pilot interviewees) gave me the suggestion of sending the questionnaire days before the interview to the organisation I was dealing with. I had done this with him, and he confirmed that this provided an excellent opportunity for him to be well prepared.

His idea of combining a written (sent-in) questionnaire containing the questions that needed to be ticked or ranked with an interview after receiving the results was discarded in the end. I found it better to discuss all relevant

questions face-to-face because I wanted to listen to all the comments, even those made while the ranking and ticking of questions was undertaken.

5.4.2.4 Ethical considerations

All interviewees were older than 18 years and all consented to participate in the research by welcoming me into their organisation for an interview. Their identity and that of their organisation remains anonymous and no reference to any person is made that could link them to an incident or viewpoint within their organisation. Each leader that expressed willingness to participate in the research by participating in the interview signed the participant's informed consent which can be found in the **Appendix B**. It was also clear to them that they could withdraw at any point if they so wished. In this consent letter the principle of confidentiality and anonymity was explained so that the interviewees would feel completely comfortable giving answers. Permission was obtained prior to the interview from the interviewees for the whole meeting to be recorded. All consented to the recording, since they were assured that there would be no violation of their privacy.

The participants understood that the purpose of the interview was that of collecting research data and that this included ethical topics relative to their organisations. In addition, they understood that they would not be compensated for their participation in this study.

In order to maintain anonymity, I used codes for the organisations, but no codes were used for the interviewees themselves. Codes were used for the organisations only in the write up of the findings as though they were persons. If anything in the responses could possibly identify the organisations or the interviewees, these responses were anonymised to ensure that there was no breach of confidentiality. As has already been mentioned, men and women were interviewed, but I use only male pronouns to facilitate the preservation of anonymity.

All interview documents will be protected by an electronic password. They may be used again for further research, given the permission from the interviewees.

Because of the high level of interest from the interviewees, they will be informed of subsequent publications that will be made available to them. They will also have the opportunity to upload the thesis from the Unisa Institutional Repository.

5.4.3 The organisations

In order to collect data from the organisations, it was important to design a comprehensive overview of the NGOs that were to be visited. In the following table, the NGOs interviewed in the empirical research are listed, including the profile questions from the top of the questionnaire, e.g. the founding date, etc. The table is explained in detail below.

Table 3: Interviewed NGOs for the empirical research

NGO name (a)	Founding was (b)		Contracted employees (without volunteers) (c)		Project classifications (d)		Code of ethics? (e)
	before WW II	after WW II	< 50	> 50	Develop-ment	Relief	Yes / No
1F		X	X		X	X	Y
2G		X		X	X	X	Y
3B		X		X		X	N
4G	X		X		X	(X)*	N
5A	X			X	X	(X)	Y
6F		X		X	X	X	N
7C	X			X	X	X	N
8A		X		X	X	(X)	Y
9F		X	X		X	(X)	N
10C		X		X	X		N
11K		X		X	X		N

* (X) = the brackets mean that in these organisations development projects are conducted predominantly. This is a general statement, and cannot be supported by figures or ratios, because of the volatile business character.

Here are some explanations with regard to this table:

(a) The NGOs are numbered in relation to the order of my visits, NGO 1 being the first organisation visited, and NGO 11 the last. Regarding the religious affiliation, there are three Catholic affiliated NGOs and three that belong to the EKD (German Evangelical Church). There are two NGOs loosely linked to the EKD by committing to an EKD-oriented umbrella organisation. In addition, three NGOs were interviewed that do not belong to the EKD or the Catholic Church, and are not associated with them, but consider themselves to the Protestant free churches. For reason of confidentiality, the religious affiliation is not made visible. For an easier reading in the analysis, I gave the different NGOs an additional letter which is a deliberate internal coding and is not further explained for reasons of confidentiality.

(b) The second column in the table shows whether the NGOs were founded before or after World War II. The ticking makes it obvious that many NGOs were founded after WWII and this, thus, confirms the view of Barnett and Stein (2012:7, see also section 4.2.2, p. 128) who stated that this is the case for the majority of NGOs in the West. Those which had been founded before World War II were started at the beginning of the 20th century. The idea of humanitarian organisations being a rather recent phenomenon can thus be confirmed with regard to the Christian NGOs in this study. A high number of interviewees emphasised the traumatic impact World War II had made on the European civil society, and that this was the reason for the initiation of their organisation.

(c) The third column shows the number of employees, excluding the volunteers. The reason for excluding volunteers is that there is a high possibility of very small organisations with thousands of volunteers. Apart from this, the numbers of volunteers may rise in times of a specific disaster but may change in weeks or months. The numbers of volunteers are, thus, always a snapshot in time. This information would not have contributed to a better or more distinctive understanding of the NGO, and so I chose to point out only the contracted employees.

The table shows that most of the organisations have more than 50 employees, with only three having fewer than 50. I chose the differentiation for two reasons. Firstly, 50 is usually indicative of the organisation's being on the verge of becoming a medium-sized organisation. Experience shows that this size is often crucial for laying new paths in regard to organisational structures, building new efficiencies, thinking about long-term and sustainable strategies, and claiming a presence in a country's organisational landscape. Secondly, and as has mentioned at various times in this thesis, it was necessary to stick to the promise of anonymity. Presenting the exact numbers would not have guaranteed that.

(d) In the penultimate column, the project classifications were differentiated only into development or relief, although not all organisations use the same definitions for these terms. In addition, some organisations had difficulty naming their projects this way, because they were coordinated by local churches and were, thus, called pastoral projects, without differentiating in one way or another. Another definition challenge related to the organisations that dealt primarily with health issues. Where does relief end, where does development start? A measles break-out may be a sudden disaster, but to offer a long-term measles vaccination project for a specific region may already count as a development project. Since the organisations dealing with health had identifiably both short-term (or disaster) and long-term projects, I deliberately qualified them as offering both kind of projects (development *and* relief). Other classifications, such as mitigation or rehabilitation as officially defined in the phases of the relief-development continuum, were not differentiated in this classification¹⁰⁶.

106 The 'relief and development continuum' describes the sequence of actions to be taken in a humanitarian context. The different phases in the continuum, such as relief and development, mitigation and rehabilitation, are not seen isolated any more but rather as challenges that need to be tackled holistically. For more information on the continuum see also VENRO 2006:3-5.

(e) In the last column of the above table, I asked the organisations for the ethical codes of their respective organisations. Often, these related to self-commitments or voluntary agreements offered by umbrella (secular) organisations, such as VENRO. Unfortunately, I was not always given access to their internal papers and could, thus, refer only to the public material, e.g. published on their websites or in their fund-raising or image brochures. The answers ‘yes’ or ‘no’ were, thus, the interviewees’ own answers to my question as to whether they had ethical codes or not.

In summary, I conducted eleven interviews with NGOs from different Christian traditions. The interviews were held in the offices of the interviewees, and sometimes in meeting rooms inside their buildings. I was able to get to know some employees, and when possible spoke to them, looked at the pictures on the walls of their corridors, and tried to assess their office culture.

The representatives of the NGOs were, all in all, very cooperative. Before I conducted the interviews, I was advised by one of my two pilot interviewees of the fact that I might encounter great difficulties with regard to holding interviews with CEOs, since they receive many enquiries from master’s and doctoral students for interviews. Contrary to this remark, only two organisations declined out of 13 enquiries, so, apparently, the topic was interesting enough for the others to participate and provide enough time even for such a lengthy interview. This fact boosted my motivation and made me thankful. It showed me that this topic apparently struck a chord with the responsible employees of humanitarian organisations and that there were questions for them that were unanswered in their daily work.

All interviewees were of German nationality and had been brought up in the West. Only four of the interviewees had a theological background; all others showed a wide range of professions, such as medical or economic ones. All the interviewees took the questions seriously, tried to answer as fully as possible

and were interested in the outcome or in hearing what the other organisations might have answered.

5.5 Data analysis

Data analysis, according to de Vos (2006:333), is “the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative and fascinating process.” In the following chapter six, the data will be analysed and presented. Hofstee (2006:140-141) suggests various structures for the analysis and presentation of the data collected. The data description and analysis in chapter six follows one of Hofstee’s suggestions in which the research findings are broken down into appropriate sections and the analysis with sub-conclusions follows in the same chapter. In the final phase of the analysis, the findings need to be discussed. This means that I have to “present the data, a packing of what was found in text, tabular or figure form” (de Vos 2006:339) and discuss the results. Here, all findings, irregularities, specific results, and questions that had arisen from the answers of the organisations are organised and presented.

In this section, I will explain how I structured, described and interpreted the data. Eleven organisations, with a minimum of 1,5 hours of interview each, made at least 20 pages of transcription material for each organisation, and, in many cases, more. This meant that hundreds of pages had to be structured and analysed. This quantity of data makes it necessary to explain thoroughly what strategy will be used to get the most out of the information.

I planned on how I wanted the data to be recorded. I used an app in my mobile phone since I was not sure whether building up a microphone set on the table would confuse the interviewees. A small mobile phone would not be too intrusive, and it, thus, seemed to be the best device for the interviews. Additionally, in case something had not been well recorded, I took notes on the main answers by filling in the questionnaire personally while the interviewee was

speaking. The use of data-recording fitted the setting and the participants' sensitivities and was used with the participants' consent (de Vos 2006:334f). In addition, the recording was valuable for the later analysis work, because I could refer to the answers in the interview anytime when needed.

I ordered the key issues generated throughout the theoretical part with the software of MAXQDA. The transcriptions that were generated in files of the Word software could easily be imported into MAXQDA. Statements of the interviewees could be ascribed to different key issues ('categories') or to questions from the questionnaire by drag-and-drop marked with colours. The idea behind working with key issues and using MAXQDA is to be able to generate new key issues that may have emerged from the interviews, if any, additionally and easily and for that reason to be able to compare different NGOs. In this way, "cutting and pasting" (de Vos 2006:337) was not necessary when using this software, which made the analysis less complicated.

5.5.1 Description of data

The first task that has to be done is to describe the data. The following matrix scheme shows the way I have proceeded with the different sections and questions:

Table 4: Matrix scheme of answers

		NGO 1	NGO 2	...
Section I	Question 1	Answer	Answer	...
	Question 2	Answer	Answer	...

Section II	Question 1

For each question, I copied all the responses from the interviewees from MAXQDA into one table, in a manner that the answers are able to be compared at first sight. This applies for ranking choice questions, Yes-/No-questions and

for open ended questions. In most of the cases, I summarised the answers, and, only in some cases, did I use direct quotations. This is because the answers were at times very lengthy, and, in order to keep an overview, it was the best to keep the table concise to get the most out of the information. In each table or overview in chapter six it will be explained how I processed the data for that specific question. Direct quotations will be presented in the footnotes with the original text.

5.5.2 Interpretation of data

Data analysis, according to de Vos (2006:335), needs a two-fold approach. The first is that data analysis already takes place during data collection. The second approach involves the data collection away from the site and after the completion of the data collection. A qualitative study, thus, involves an inseparable relationship between data collection and data analysis. This meant that, for my study, already during the interviews and reading of material, the data collection and interpretation had already started taking place during the interviews and reading of material.

In addition, by inquiring about different statements, answers by the interviewees could be understood much more clearly, and, in many cases, this deepened the knowledge or even generated new questions. Since the “tough intellectual work of analysis is generating categories and themes” (de Vos 2006:338), coding schemes to those categories and themes were conducted and brought about new understanding that might even make changes in the original plan necessary (:338). This has been the case; new findings have arisen and are explained in depth in the next (analysis) chapter. When interpreting and comparing the data, I tried to take into consideration the leaders’ viewpoint of the interviewee, the size of the organisation, the denomination and possibly other specific issues or challenges an organisation was dealing with.

5.5.3 Literature control

The literature control was used as a way of corroborating the analysis of the data. The responses of the interviewees were first described and then analysed and compared, as mentioned above. The comparisons were made among the NGOs but also with the previously discussed literature from the theoretical part of the thesis. Morse and Field (1995:107) state that the literature control confirms the usefulness of the findings. This study illustrates differences and similarities between the literature and the responses. In addition, there will be comparisons between the organisations if these are meaningful. The comparison with the literature has the aim of contributing to the trustworthiness of the research.

5.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to explain the methodological framework used for this research study.

The contribution to the research of ethical frameworks, organisational practices and conduct in Christian NGOs in Germany will be to expand the knowledge base and not develop a 'grounded theory' in the sense of new concepts and constructs. Nevertheless, the research will bring new insights and results, and, most importantly, it will be able to answer the research question. In this respect, the findings of the empirical research will be dealt with in the next chapter.

6. Empirical research findings

In this chapter the findings of the interviews will be presented. They will be described, analysed and interpreted. The interviews were conducted with eleven NGOs, and recorded, transcribed and processed with MAXQDA. The answers of the interviewees are compiled in tables in a condensed way in order to provide easy access to the data and to allow for a comparison of the answers. This means that the answers are described and predominantly not presented in direct quotations. Statements considered to be significant are, however, reflected in direct quotations which are translated and displayed in the footnotes using the original German text.

All references are marked with MAXQDA references made available by the software; the reference after a given statement, e.g. (6F:632) means that 632 is the numbered paragraph in the transcribed interview of the NGO “6F” in the MAXQDA software. The tables do not necessarily reflect only what the interviewees answered immediately to one specific question, but also include what they may have said at a later stage of the interview regarding this issue and this was one of the helpful features of the software.

Following the respective table-illustrations, the findings will be described briefly and interpreted where appropriate. As explained in chapter five, the questionnaire and the findings have been split into three different segments which correspond to the three sub-questions detailed in the research journey of chapter one. They are:

- World-views, philosophical and theological ethics;
- Organisational ethics; and
- Practice.

These three segments will become sub-sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 in this chapter.

6.1 How do Christian NGOs relate to society and world in which they live?

In this section, the different sources of ethical thinking, the motivation of the NGOs, their intentions, and also their different activities and interactions with the secular world they need to work with inform the main questions.

6.1.1 Data compilation: Sources of ethical thinking – Questions 1.1-1.4

If not indicated otherwise, all answers and ticks in this and the following sub-sections have been processed from the MAXQDA software. Answers have been summarised and put into concise language in the 3rd person for reasons of readability either in a table or (when the answers were similar) described in one or two sentences. References that refer to answers of the organisations (such as 1F:234) have been documented and processed in MAXQDA.

Table 5: Question 1.1 Where do you think the source of morality comes from? Tick the five most important.

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K	Σ
The Bible	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	11
Human conscience		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		9
Christian theological teaching or traditions	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	8
Family teaching	X		X	X		X	X	X		X		7
The example of people I admire	X		X	X			X	X				5
Guidance of the Holy Spirit	X				X	X					X	4
Cultural values				X			X		X		X	4
Human experience				X		X			X	X		4
Philosophical principles					X						X	2
Nature (human nature)									X			1
Ethical rules are man-made												0

The Bible was named by all interviewees as one of the five most important sources of morality. This high rate was followed by human conscience and Christian theological religious teaching or tradition. In addition, family teaching was named as an important source. No ticks were given by the NGOs for the statement that ethical rules are man-made. This option was the conviction of secular-minded Paul Kurtz (see 2.3.4.3). During the interview, 4G wondered whether people could really know for certain what is morally right or wrong (4G:14).

The naming of the Bible seems to confirm the statements by Gustafson and, especially, Schirmacher in 2.2 (“Sources of ethics”) that the biblical teachings have great authority for Christians (Gustafson 1986:88; Schirmacher 2008:48).

Statements by Wells (2.2.3) and Mills (2.2) who gave the inner feeling or human conscience a high relevance or even ascribing to it God's voice (Wells 1998:170; Mill 1879, n.p.), were also reflected in the interviews.

The naming of religious teachings confirms the statements of both Gustafson and McGrath that, apart from the Bible, Christian tradition and experience were important sources of ethics (Gustafson 1986:88; McGrath 1997:189, see also section 2.3.3, p. 56). The story of Henri Dunant (see 4.2.2) is a vivid example of what family teaching can look like; without the influence of his parents, it is doubtful whether he would have assumed the compassionate attitude of his parents and founded the Red Cross at a later stage of his life.

Table 6: Question 1.2: In which ways have the options you have selected influenced your role and conduct in your organisation?

Answers from 1.1	Examples given by NGOs on the influences to their role and conduct:
The Bible	9F: offers a Word for the Day throughout the week, in order to get inspiration from the Bible as a team (9F:61). 10C: sees his appreciative communication towards his employees as a way where the Bible has influenced his conduct (10C:36). 11K: is led on the idea of how his organisation, a "service community of Jesus' disciples", could look like nowadays. For example, are employees not eventually fired even when redundancy may seem to be compulsory (11K:50).
Christian theological teaching or traditions	2G: wants to enhance his influence inside the organisation to achieve solidarity with the victims of injustice and discrimination a constant topic (2G:96).
Guidance of the Holy Spirit	1F: wants Holy Spirit to be active in meetings by letting people speak freely (1F:50-53). 5A: speaks verses from the <i>Veni Sancte Spiritus</i> ¹⁰⁷ when he opens a meeting in prayer (5A:35). 6F: expects the Holy Spirit to guide him in difficult decisions regarding an emergency situation (6F:49).
Family teaching	3B: wants to give his employees a sense of Christian community inside the organisation (3B:76).

107 *Veni Sancte Spiritus* (engl: come Holy Spirit) is a sequence prescribed in the Roman Liturgy for the Masses of Pentecost. It is usually attributed to either Innocent III in the thirteenth-century or to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Stephen Langton, although it has been attributed to others as well.

The example of people I admire	8A: works on his leadership style in order to have a good influence on his people and be a good role model. His preferred way to lead is according to the attitude of a servant-leader (8A:60).
Cultural values	4G: states that employees bring in their own values and individual cultures. This needs to be regulated by guidelines and policy papers (4G:40). ¹⁰⁸ 7C: lets the Sermon on the mount / Beatitudes guide his interaction with employees (7C:79).

Through the examples of the Bible or the Holy Spirit it becomes clear how different the manifestations can be. 4G who doubted (in question 1.1) whether people can really know for certain what is morally right or wrong, refers, in 1.2, to the organisation and its guidelines and policy papers and does not mention his own conduct.

Question 1.3 The answers to this question did not contribute to the research question. Therefore, the analysis of the answers has been omitted.

108 Interestingly, 4G has no specifically defined Christian values. “Christian values” are referred to in their policy papers but are never defined. The CEO says: People “have to know what that means by themselves. We expect them to know what Christian values mean” (4G:171). This may confirm the view of Stahlke and Loughlin, based on their experience, that people working in Christian NGOs often do not know which Christian values exist in their organisations (Stahlke & Loughlin 2003:5, see section 4.3.2.5 on p. 169).

Table 7: Question 1.4: How should human beings aim to live? Please rank in order of importance.

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K
To experience a good life and happiness on this earth	3		3	2		5	3	5	3	1	1
To experience a good life on this earth by loving God and others	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	3
To inherit eternal life in the next world one day	1		5	4		2	4	4	4	4	2
To work towards the common good for the human society	4	2	2	3		3	1	2	2	2	4
To live according right norms and duties in order to experience a happy life	5		4	5		4	5	3	5	5	5

2G and 5A found it difficult to rank all five answering options, and thus ranked just a selection. In general, Christian NGOs gave high scores to experiencing a good life on this earth by loving God and others, an idea that stemmed from Jesus, taken up again by Augustine and Aquinas (2.3.2). To experience a good life on this earth, as promoted by Aristotle and Bentham (2.3.1 and 2.3.3.2), was given relatively high rankings by many; some of the NGOs even put this one as their number one. It may show that those working in Christian NGOs are more ‘this-life oriented’ than may be expected in this context. In contrast, the question regarding the future eschatological life, as promoted by Aquinas, received rather low scores. Also interesting were the low scores given to the answer to live according to norms and duties as an aim to live a good life. In Germany, Kant’s influence may have been expected to be stronger and more evident.

6.1.2 Data compilation: Motivation and Intention – Questions 2.1-2.6

Table 8: Question 2.1 What do you think the motivation of humanitarian organisations should be? All applicable options can be ticked.

NGOs 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K	Σ
An obligation to help others	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		10
A sincere concern for the lives of people	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	9
A sense of personal fulfilment	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	9
The satisfaction of working for justice		X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	8
To fulfil the commandment of love	X	X		X	X	X		X	X			7
Their faith in God				X	X	X			X			4
Needy people depend on our knowledge, planning and resources			X			X	X					3
Recognition and appreciation from the beneficiaries	X		X	X								3
Doing good works draw us closer to God									X			1
Doing good works compensates for the impact of sin												0
Other:	Word and deed	Inter-cultural experiences										

The strong feeling of an obligation received the highest score with ten out of eleven NGOs. The second highest score was given for the sincere concern for the lives of people, and then for personal fulfilment when working in a humanitarian context. The satisfaction of working for justice was also a motivation for many NGOs working in that context. It is interesting that some NGOs (7C, 10C and 11K) have ticked neither the commandment of love nor the faith in God as being their major motivation for their work in working in a humanitarian NGO.

And, finally, it is obvious that there is no pronounced motivation for any of the NGOs in doing good works in order to come closer to God or out of a need of compensation for sin.

Two supplements have been added by the interviewees: 1F explained that the motivation of combining word and deed in the humanitarian work of the organisation was not explicitly named in the questionnaire, but he would consider that this was the major motivation of his employees; in addition, 2G missed the mentioning of inter-cultural experiences of young people in the list of options. He stated that young people often develop a deep desire of wanting to work in an international or humanitarian organisation when they returned from their FSJ¹⁰⁹ or other youth programmes abroad where they encountered religious and social contrasts not known to them before.

The clear tendency of the NGOs to say that they are motivated by an obligation to help others may arise from different sources which were not discussed during the interviews. These may include ideas from thinkers, such as the Australian philosopher Peter Singer who suggests that helping the poor is our moral obligation, or senior lecturer Margot E. Solomon from the London School of Economics who promotes obligations of international cooperation¹¹⁰. They may also arise from one of the principles of the Humanitarian Charter¹¹¹ where it says in the first principle that helping is an imperative. Whether these feelings of obligation towards the poor and needy derive from conscience, faith or reason, or any other source, was not further discussed during the interviews.

109 FSJ: *Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr* (engl: voluntary year of social service), usually meant for young people who have just finished school. They are given the possibility of an orientation year to gain time after school to think over their future. Different programmes are coordinated by a variety of institutions such as government agencies or mission agencies.

110 For further reading see Singer, Peter 1972. 'Famine, Affluence, and Morality', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1(3), 229-243 and Salomon, Margot E. 2011. 'Why should it matter that others have more? Poverty, inequality, and the potential of international human rights law', *Review of International Studies*, 37 (5), 2137-2155.

111 The Humanitarian Charter is part of the Sphere Project and is based on the principle of humanity where it reads, "we affirm the primacy of the humanitarian imperative: [...] and that nothing should override this principle (Humanitarian Charter n.d.).

Both the ‘obligation’ and a ‘sincere concern for the lives of people’ (Wortel 2009:783) scored highly. Although these are two different motivations, they can be traced back to the commandment of love, both in the Old and the New Testament. Love towards the neighbour is a commandment to Christians (and to Jews) but also a response to grace received from God. This love of God and neighbour flows from grace, relationship, gratitude and joy. Christians feel obliged to love others because they have received God’s forgiveness and love and not out of a cold sense of duty. Contrary to this, Kant’s understanding of duty and the application of autonomous reason amounts to a moral obligation, a normative ethic, and it can be cold and sterile.

This is what the parable of the Good Samaritan (4.2.5.2) points to. The perception that faith-based NGOs are predominantly “duty-based” (Berger 2003:19; Ferris 2005:316, see also 4.2.4), namely based on the norm of love, can be linked to this description.

4G stated that the last two options had something to do with the generation that is about to be retired or has already retired, and that, for young people, these two options were not applicable (4G:73). This is interesting since, e.g. in the Catholic Catechism, the points of doing good works are clearly formulated (e.g. CCC1460).

The notion is evident that the motivational aspect is part of the self-understanding of the different humanitarian agencies, and the cultivation of motivational aspects ought to be a part of the corporate culture.

Table 9: Question 2.2 How do the motivating factor(s) selected in the prior question become evident in the work of your organisation?

Answers from 2.1	Examples given by NGOs on the evidences on their motivations for the work:
Obligation to help others	1F: "Neighbourly love and the mandate from God. [...] Obligation is such a hard word. [...] Obligation means: you must. But I am allowed to [...] and, I think, this is what labels us. If I am allowed to, I am more motivated. If I 'must', there is lots of pressure. [...] But many of us are volunteers, they are allowed to participate, and there is no 'must' to participate, and many of them are very motivated to do so" (1F:111-113) ¹¹² .
A sincere concern for the lives of people	2G: wants to enhance his influence inside the organisation to make solidarity with the victims of injustice and discrimination a constant topic (2G:96).
Needy people depend on us	2G rejects this superior-like attitude, since they work with the beneficiaries as partners (2G:159). 7C: Needy people are dependent, and that is a fact (7C:127).
To fulfil the commandment of love	1F: motivation factors are both neighbourly love and the mandate to help (1F:111-113).
Recognition and appreciation by beneficiaries	9F: the motivation can be seen in the high engagement and the emotional commitment in the work (9F:115).
Sense of personal fulfilment	6F: the sense of personal fulfilment is especially visible amongst the Christian believers. (6F:82)
Satisfaction of working for justice	2G: the organisation comes from a strong Protestant movement of justice that emerged after World War II. He, therefore, assumes that the satisfaction in working for a just cause may be especially high. Another aspect is the high motivation by intercultural and interreligious encounters that many employees have worldwide (2G:159). 7C: motivation becomes visible in the advocacy work, in the papers they write and in the political activities that need to be taken. (7C:137).
Faith in God	5A: "all named motivational factors can be visible in the work we do, <u>except</u> for the faith in God, because we are a diaconal organisation. This is why it is difficult for us to show our motivation externally as an organisation" ¹¹³ (5A:70).

112 Original quote: "Nächstenliebe und Auftrag von Gott. [...]. 'Verpflichtung' ist so ein strenges Wort. [...]. Eine Verpflichtung ist ja gleich so: Du musst. Ich darf ja auch [...] und ich denke, das zeichnet uns ja aus. Wenn ich darf, bin ich auch motiviert. Wenn ich muss ist Druck da. [...] Also sehr viele Menschen sind ja auch Volontäre und dürfen mitmachen, müssen nicht mitmachen und da gibt es sehr viele [...], die sehr motiviert [...] mitmachen" (1F:111-113).

113 Original quote: "Also ich denke, dass da alles sichtbar wird, bis auf den Glauben an Gott. Denn wir sind ja eine diakonische Organisation. Und von daher tun wir uns immer ein bisschen schwer, [...] diese unmittelbare Verbindung zwischen der Motivation

To describe the evidence of the motivational aspects did not seem to be an easy task for the interviewees. The answers showed a balance between the sense of obligation and other aspects, such as compassion and personal advantages. 1F gives a new definition of obligation; it is a mandate, which means it is not a must, but a voluntary task. Since 1F has many volunteers, this definition indeed makes sense. In addition, he connects this mandate to the motivation of neighbourly love.

Also interesting is the controversy between 2G and 7C on the question of whether needy people depend on Westerners to help them. Whereas 2G finds that it sounds very superior and arrogant, the other says that, even if it sounds that way, it is a fact.

Another interesting statement is that of 6F that the sense of personal fulfilment is especially visible amongst the Christian employees. In my view, this would be impossible if helping the needy was only a sense of stern duty; there must be more to it. Calling the work a mandate – as proposed by 1F – instead of an obligation may, thus, indeed make sense for other NGOs.

The answer of 5A shows the subtle division between faith and deeds. Although they are a Christian organisation, the faith in God is nowhere to be seen as a motivational factor. The explanation that they are a diaconal (serving) institution prompts questions regarding their Christian self-understanding, which will be discussed further in this and the next section.

und dem, was dann nach außen in Erscheinung tritt als Organisation darzustellen” (5A:70).

Table 10: Question 2.3 Which themes or credos are important for your organisation, e.g. Good Samaritan, Micah, Amos, or others?

<p>The verse from Isaiah 58:7-10 is a clear mandate and top theme repeated in Matthew 25:35-36: "For I was hungry, and you gave me food: I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: Naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came unto me".</p>
<p>There is no theme. The human-rights approach is stressed instead of charity. The Good Samaritan stands for the charity approach, where the needy is a victim. But we do not want to do that. We support people; we empower them. That is a difference. If taken as a theme, Luke 4:18 and Isaiah 42:7 would fit best: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (KJV), because they mean healing and reconciliation, and would help people to reach out for more justice in the world.</p>
<p>The example and the parable of the Good Samaritan is very applicable for the organisation. But so also are, the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 appropriate.</p>
<p>The healing ministry of the church, taken predominantly from Luke 10:9: "And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, the Kingdom of God is come near unto you".</p>
<p>The theme is taken from Jesus' doctrines about reconciliation and the Kingdom of God. Since the Kingdom of God is not only prospective, but also a reality in the present, it is adequate to strive for things on this earth, as well as for spiritual needs. Examples are given in the Lord's prayer (Mt 6) and the Beatitudes (Mt 5).</p>
<p>The parable of the Good Samaritan is the central theme.</p>
<p>The healing ministry of the church, taken predominantly from Luke 10:9: "And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, the Kingdom of God is come near unto you".</p>
<p>In the beginning of the organisation, it was more of a charity organisation where the Good Samaritan played a significant role. But now, this NGO has changed from being a charity into a rights-based organisation. Central theme is Matthew 19:14 where Jesus allows the children to come to him.</p>
<p>The central theme is Job 6:14 "Anyone who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty".</p>
<p>This NGO uses the story of the multiplication of the loaves in order to give confidence that at the end there will be enough for everybody.</p>
<p>This NGO uses a Bible verse from the New Testament for their credo, which is taken from John 10:10, "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full".</p>

Due to the need to preserve anonymity, no links have been made to the interviewed NGOs in this table. The themes were surprisingly varied and related to both the Old and the New Testament. The empirical data forced me to expand the model of biblical motives or examples, since it obviously was too narrow. In addition, the verses in Micah and Amos were part of the question but were not

mentioned by the interviewees. Since all interviewees in question 1.1 referred to the Bible as one of the sources of moral thinking, and all credos discussed here relate to the Bible, this confirms the answers of question 1.1 (p. 211), namely the importance of the Bible as an ethical source for the NGOs. Three NGOs refer to the Kingdom of God, so being in accord with the Gospel and the tradition of the Social Gospel Movement, and in this way emphasising the 'deeds'-part of the gospel. As discussed in chapter two, Niebuhr promoted the Kingdom of God on earth to be the ideal that human beings should strive for (see also 2.3.4.1 and 2.3.4.2).

Table 11: Question 2.4 When interviewing potential staff members, how do you identify what motivates them in their work?

1F	F1 wants people with a “call from God” and not people who merely look for a job. This has to be found out in the interview. The call is more important than the professional qualification (1F:123).
2G	2G looks at the church membership, especially concerning their leaders ¹¹⁴ . But, generally, newcomers must accept the aims of the organisation and be loyal to them. This is discussed in an interview (2G:190-192).
3B	3B does not ask for the motivation but puts their trust in the fact that people bring along the right motivation for the work (3B:125-127).
4G	Is eager to comply with the European anti-discrimination laws. Thus, 4G puts a focus on professional background. Only by discussing practical concerns in the field, are Christian issues addressed (4G:83).
5A	Motivations of the candidates are found through classical interview techniques. The aim is to enter into a dialogue (5A:89-91).
6F	Is eager to comply with the European anti-discrimination laws. Thus, 6F puts a focus on the professional background. The professional skills have a higher weight than hiring a believer (6F:102-103).
7C	Motivations are found out through classical interview techniques. The aim is to enter into a dialogue. For 7C it is interesting to find out how the incumbent has Jesus as a role model (7C:154-158).
8A	Motivations of the candidates are found out through classical interview techniques. The aim is to enter into a dialogue. By discussing practical concerns in the field, Christian issues are addressed (8A:119).
9F	Motivations are discovered in a dialogue. The focus is not only on professional competence, but also inter-religious, inter-cultural and social competence. Christian values must be accepted (9F:148-150).
10C	Sees it very pragmatically; people also need to earn a living. If they can combine it with doing good, that is perfect (10C:95).
11K	Motivations are found out by asking two questions: why have you applied to work in our organisation? And: what is your position in the church? As a result, a discussion is usually initiated (11K:104).

The majority of the interviewees are interested in finding out the motivational factors from their future employees mostly by conducting interviews. But there are some very great differences in the expectations, where one predominantly needs a call from God (F1), others expect loyalty to the organisation (2G) or

114 Usually the ACK membership is sufficient (*ACK = Arbeitsgemeinschaft christlicher Kirchen* or engl. Council of Christian Churches in Germany, an associated organisation of the World Council of Churches).

want their internal values and principles to be accepted by the newcomer (2G, 9F).

Regarding religious issues, and in order to not contravene the strict European anti-discrimination laws, organisations ask for challenging situations in the field such as: ‘you may have to hold a church service on your own. How would you do that?’ Then, automatically a discussion is initiated concerning where the NGO can see the standing of their prospective candidate (4G and 8A).

Except for 1F, professional skills have a higher weight in the selection process than the Christian identity of the respective incumbents. Professionalism has become very important in the twentieth century, and this is, to a great extent, reflected in the Christian NGOs. As was mentioned in chapter one (p. 4), it was one of my observations that Christian organisations stress either the professional or the theological element. And it seems that, even if both need to be stressed, it is difficult to find employees satisfactory in both respects.

The answers to **question 2.5** (inner conviction) are included in the many answers regarding motivation. 2.5 has, thus, been omitted.

Question 2.6 Should Christians seek to shape public life or even participate in transforming society?

All Christian NGOs unanimously approved of this statement fully. Christian NGOs obviously do not struggle with this question. It was, however, surprising to see such a clear Yes from all NGOs since it was expected that there would be organisations which do not want to meddle in politics. In the interview, 1F answered:

We do this far too little. [...] If I want to change something in Germany, then Christians should come to power [...] We draw back and leave the world to the world. I am absolutely against this¹¹⁵ (1F:152).

115 Original quote: “Das machen wir viel zu wenig. [...] wenn ich hier Deutschland was verändern will, dann müssen Christen an die Macht [...]. Da ziehen wir uns zurück und überlassen die Welt der Welt. Absolut dagegen.”

5A pointed out that Christians should contribute to and engage and let everybody know of their motivation (5A:109-112). 8A stated that:

We are the 'Light of the World', if we do not do it, who else? In my opinion this is a deficiency in the whole church and Christian scene. And I believe that the potential of Christians to change societies is completely underestimated [...]. There is a well-known example that in the Protestant churches people pray for the Sunday school teachers, but nobody cares much for the teacher who works in the school from Monday to Friday and exerts more influence in the sense of spreading Christian values. I believe a lot has become stunted¹¹⁶ (8A:135).

9F added that this is even a mandate in the Kingdom of God (9F:170). This corresponds with Biggar who proposes that Christians should shape public life (Biggar 2011:pos.1138, see also 2.3.4.2), and obviously all Christian NGOs see it this way.

116 Original quote: “[...] Wir sind das Licht der Welt, wenn wir es nicht machen, wer dann? Meiner Meinung nach ein großes Manko in unserer ganzen kirchlichen und christlichen Szene. Also ich glaube, dieses gesellschaftsverändernde Potential der Christen ist völlig unterbelichtet. [...] Das schöne Beispiel ist [...], dass in evangelikalen Gemeinden dann gerne für die Mitarbeiter [...] gebetet wird, die Kindergottesdienst machen, aber für die Lehrerin, die von Montag bis Freitag in der Schule steht, und da eigentlich sehr viel mehr Einfluss ausübt im Sinne einer christlichen Werteverbreitung, die ist nicht so wichtig. Also, da glaube ich, da ist viel verkümmert [...].”

6.1.3 Data compilation: Interaction with secular world – Questions 3.1-3.4

Table 12: Question 3.1 In recent years, the relationship between UN and faith-based agencies improved. Still, NGOs downplay their religious identities. Is this true for your organisation?

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K
Fully agree			X								
Agree								X			
Don't know											
Rather not agree		X			X	X	X		X	X	
Not agree at all	X			X							X

1F and 6F have given significant proof by naming examples during the interview and explaining that they do not fear giving Christian references even in hostile surroundings. In contrast, 3B and 8A agree openly that there is downplaying going on in their organisations and that in some hostile surroundings this may even be essential, e.g. 3B:

[...] an example that we – e.g. in Afghanistan – deny that we are a Christian organisation. This is reasonable in this country. But you ask [...] about our basic motivation. And here, it is a fact that when an organisation emphasises too strongly a confession of faith or religious issues, others accuse us of receiving money for evangelising [...]. And we would like to stay on a neutral economic level and say that we do this for all human beings (3B:155).¹¹⁷

And 8A:

117 Original quote: “[...] dass wir uns zum Beispiel in Afghanistan verleugnen als christliche Organisation. Das hat Gründe in dem Land. Aber Sie fragen, [...] uns als unsere Grundmotivation. Das ist schon so, dass die/ wenn man zu sehr das bekenntnishaft, religiöse, kirchliche betont, dass man unterstellt bekommt: Na ja, ihr kriegt die Gelder, um dann die Leute zu missionieren [...]. Und da möchten wir gerne auf so einer neutralen wirtschaftlichen Ebene sagen: Wir tun es für alle Menschen”.

It is not as strongly noticeable as it is with our local partners. They have a stronger identity and hold tight to their religious identity. But I believe that in the Western organisations it is strongly visible, as it is also in our organisation [...]. This is due to the concern that one may lose donating clients [...] The majority of our donors are secular people, and we do not want to alienate or frighten them too much with an emphasis on the Christian content (8A:154-156).¹¹⁸

Most of the other NGOs also admit that it is not always easy, given the fact that state funds are needed for certain projects. Showing a Christian aim or their work in a Christian context in their projects would be counter-productive in these cases. In addition, downplaying takes place when organisations suppose that their secular donors would not want to hear about their Christian origin or identity, which, at times, can be difficult when Christian references are visible in the names or logos.

In summary, downplaying obviously takes place as a result of different motivations. On the one hand, this is when donations are at stake. The fact that cooperation on an institutional level has improved is irrelevant in this case. As long as secular supra-national organisations or national governments make the rules, and projects need to be free of religious elements in order to receive donations, it is very likely that the situation will not change too soon. The question arises here of whether Christian NGOs should not challenge these organisations and governments. On the other hand, in some countries NGOs fear to say that they have Christian roots for security reasons and so they downplay their identity. But it seems that the local Christian partners (usually in countries than Western, e.g. Latin America, Africa and Asia) consist of stronger religious groups with a stronger manifestation of their religious identity (see also evan-

118 Original quote: "Ja, also ich sehe das in unserem Partnerfeld nicht so stark. Also die haben eine sehr viel stärkere Identität oder stehen zu ihrer religiösen Identität. Ich glaube, bei den westlichen Organisationen ist das stärker und bei uns auch. [...] Das ist aber eher eine Sorge, Spender-Klientel zu verlieren. [...] Die Mehrheit unserer Spender sind säkulare Menschen und die will man nicht zu sehr jetzt mit christlichen Inhalten verprellen oder verängstigen".

gelism in different contexts, 4.2.5.1). Christian NGOs in Germany obviously operate between secular Germany and the mentioned religious groups in other countries. And they do not take their local partners as a model for the way they present themselves in Germany. In addition, many NGOs surrender to the mainstream secularism in Germany and do not seem to challenge it.

Table 13: Question 3.2 Although there are warmer relations with the UN, the Red Cross Code of Conduct expects compliance with the rule of not using religious standpoints in the field work. Do such ambivalent approaches from a secular environment make your organisation uncertain of the aims and goals of your Christian work or ministry?

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K
Yes, would feel uncertain	X								X		
No, would not feel uncertain		X	X		X	X	X	X			
Not applicable				X						X	X

Six NGOs state that they would not feel uncertain about their aims and goals of work in their Christian work or ministry. Here are some additional comments:

Table 14: Additional comments on question 3.2

1F	It provokes uncertainty, because although the help is welcome, it is prohibited to speak about the motivation for why they are doing this work (1F:175).
2G	They are part of the missionary mandate of the Protestant church, where mission means healing, reconciliation and liberation of this world, but this would differ completely from an “aggressive manner of intentional evangelism” (2G:227) ¹¹⁹ .
3B	3B even feels relieved because they do not know what their humanitarian workers would say anyway (3B:161).
4G	Not applicable.
5A	They do not discriminate against anybody (5A:132).
6F	They separate strictly (6F:160).
7C	They stick to the rules: “we do not evangelise, we do not baptise, we do no missionary work. And yet, we give testimony as Christians” (7C:197+203).
8A	They hold on to their professional standards (8A:166).
9F	It provokes uncertainty, because, although the help is welcome, they do not have the right to work authentically and honestly. But he agrees with the Red Cross by saying there is no mandate for faith-based organisations to evangelise or to “go on a crusade” ¹²⁰ (9F:208).
10C	Not applicable.
11K	Not applicable.

For three NGOs this question was not applicable. This may have to do with their organisational mandate to work predominantly with church partnerships on a local basis rather than directly with the beneficiaries.

It seems obvious that there is some struggle with the interdict of not being able to evangelise. Other organisations say that there is no problem and they accept holding onto professional standards. This professionalism obviously helps some organisations to be perceived as being ‘neutral’. To hear that a Christian NGO speaks about evangelising as being an aggressive action (2G), and another correlates the spreading of the Gospel with crusading (9F), was a bit surprising. Combining this question with the previous one where organisations downplayed their Christian identity, it seems that professional standards, Codes of

119 “[...] Das bedeutet nicht gewaltsame oder aggressive Missionierung” (2G:227).

120 “[...] wir haben natürlich kein Mandat jetzt, auf einen Kreuzzug zu gehen oder zu missionieren” (9F:208).

Conducts, etc. try to give the impression that organisations are ‘neutral’, although none of them can really be ‘neutral’. As we have discussed in chapters two (2.2.1) and four (4.2.2), all people, including secularists, have their specific world-views, and thus nobody can really be ‘neutral’.

Table 15: Question 3.3 Does your organisation use any of the following secular standards? Tick all the options that are applicable.

NGO 1-11 → Options ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K
DZI		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
VENRO Vol. Commitments		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dt. Spendenrat									X		
Initiative Transparente Zivilgesellschaft			X		X	X			X	X	X
Code of Conduct International Red Cross	X	X	X			X	X				
Core Humanitarian Standard		X	X			X			X		
PHINEO Impact Label											X
Others: Charter-4Change (2G, 8A) Act Alliance (2G) European Consensus (9F)		X X						X		X	
Σ	1	6	5	2	3	5	2	3	6	3	4

Table 16: Question 3.4 Does your organisation use any of the following Christians guidelines and codes? Tick all the options that are applicable.

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K
Christian witness in a multi-religious World		X		X							
DEA Prüfzertifikat	X										
CHEO Verhaltenskodex											
Other:											
Σ	1	1		1							

It is obvious that most of the Christian NGOs are committed to secular standards and codes, not only because these are more numerous, but they also seem to be better known and more important for their work. Some relevant statements during the interviews were as follows (clustered by the standards or codes, and in a table for better legibility).

Table 17: Comments to questions 3.3 and 3.4

DZI	All participating NGOs (except 1F and 7C) say they participate because of their donors, and that is highly respected and well-known to everyone. It is used to show transparency and builds trust towards the donors. 7C decided against it deliberately, because the effort for participation is too high. 6F and 7C do not take this seal seriously, because of too many possibilities of cheating and deceiving the donor by manipulating figures and receipts (6F:183 and 7C:218).
VENRO Vol. Commitments	For all NGOs the reason for participating is that a platform for lobbying and advocacy is offered. 2G says that they have to be in there (2G:239).
Code of Conduct International Red Cross	This Code is a must for relief agencies; otherwise it is not possible to work in a relief context: Whereas 1F states that they are not convinced of these principles (1F:207-208), for 2G this is not the case; they agree completely with the content of the humanitarian principles and the code (2G:239).
Core Humanitarian Standard	2G and 3B are involved here and both state that it will become more and more important in the near future (2G:239).
PHINEO Impact Label	11K was the only one to know this code. It uses PHINEO in order to publish the impact of their work, but do not use or have the seal (11K:163).
Charter4Change (2G, 8A) Act Alliance (2G) European Consensus (9F)	This is a standard meant for empowering the local actors and is very important for 2G. In addition, 8A is involved in the Charter-4Change-standard. 2G is a member at Act Alliance. It is known and used only by 2G (2G:239+242). They stated that the Act Alliance was ecumenical, although other (Catholic) NGOs said it was only for the Protestants. This is a standard on the European level, but named only by 9F. 9F states that the contents are acceptable, so they can participate without any problem, but the main reason was to be given better access to European funds.
Christian witness in a multi-religious World	2G and 4G appreciate this ecumenical set of recommendations for conduct on Christian witness around the world. The reason for them was that it is a common paper between Protestants and Catholics. All other NGOs during the interview did not know this paper.
DEA Prüfzertifikat	1F is the only one participating in this because of their Christian donors. Many of them ask for a donation label, and state: "You just need something" (1F:210). 6F was a member of DEA formerly, but they decided to change to DZI, because it is better known.
CHEO Verhaltenskodex	This was included to have a Swiss example, since the Swiss are very active in the humanitarian field (with the highest <i>per capita</i> donation of all European countries), and, thus, are perceived by many as a role model, but none of the interviewees had ever heard about this code. It can, thus, be neglected for this study.

There seems to be a strong pressure in favour of using standards and codes, especially from the side of institutional donors. The NGOs with the highest number of participations in the above table (2G and 9F) were the ones to speak about codes and standards very positively, and they seemed to be open to new ones that may be coming up in the future. The impression from the interview has been that even more codes will be introduced. They will probably be more detailed, and cover more specific professional activities, and NGOs will have to adapt and deliver results if they want to continue with their work and not become isolated from others. This seems to be going to make their work more complicated in the future.

Christian NGOs tend to commit to secular codes. Christian codes do not seem to be important at all. Since the DZI Charity Seal of Approval is very elaborate and expensive, Christian NGOs, in their early years, may want to participate in the DEA seal, and, as is seen with the example of 6F, might change to the more widely accepted DZI in later years. It was surprising to see that the Christian NGOs know the weaknesses of the DZI, but they are still not attracted by the DEA. The DEA could, however, be an alternative seal of approval for Christian NGOs.

6.1.4 Summary

Section 6.1 has answered the question of how Christian NGOs relate to society and their surrounding world. The NGOs have answered a variety of questions regarding their sources of ethical thinking, their motivation as well as their different activities and their interactions with the secular world around them.

The source of morality for the Christian NGOs come from the Bible, human conscience as well as Christian theological thinking (questions 1.1 and 1.2). They are convinced that human beings should aim to live a good life by loving God and others (question 1.4). Here, some NGOs clearly showed a ‘this-life’ orienta-

tion by stating that living a good life means to experience a good life on this earth.

Question 2.1 reveals that the motivation of humanitarian organisations stems primarily from a feeling of an obligation towards the needy ones. In addition, a sincere concern for needy people and a sense of personal fulfilment when being able to help could be identified as a basic motivation. These motivating factors become evident in the work place (question 2.2). Several themes and credos are used in the NGOs as important key statements, all taken from the Bible (question 2.3), and thus confirming the biblical source stated previously. NGOs identify what motivates potential staff members by conducting interviews and presenting them with typical situations in order to find out their reactions. For most of the NGOs, to have professional skills was more important than being theologically skilled. In question 2.6 all NGOs agreed fully with the idea that Christians should engage in social activities.

Most NGOs denied a downplaying of Christian identity in their organisations (question 3.1), but admitted that it is not always easy to decide when to show a religious identity and when not in order not to jeopardise donations. In addition, the fact they receive ambivalent approaches from the secular environment and supra-national institutions makes some NGOs experience a certain insecurity (question 3.2). Others react to this challenge by judging negatively what in the past had always been the classical Christian ‘word’ and ‘deed’ approach, by calling evangelism an aggressive undertaking, or comparing it to the crusades, or simply by being happy to be freed from having to evangelise. The separation of ‘word’ and ‘deed’ thus seems to have become common in German Christian humanitarian NGOs and firmly established by the supranational and national secular institutions in Germany.

Christian NGOs take part in secular standards and codes, but they mostly ignore Christian codes (question 3.3 and 3.4). Both secular and Christian codes ensure credibility for the donor, but the secular ones are needed by all NGOs in

order to receive public funding. The decision to turn to the secular, instead of the Christian codes, may thus simply have pragmatic reasons rather than a turning away from Christian values or downplaying their identity.

Whereas the ethical sources of the interviewees point clearly to the Bible and Christian tradition, there seems to be a strong compliance with secular society and with the regulations of national and supra-national organisations.

6.2 How are Christian ethics understood and lived out in your organisation?

In this section, the Christian identity of the NGOs, their character and conduct, the way they give these issues significance, as well as the corporate culture form the main questions.

6.2.1 Data compilation: The Christian identity – Questions 4.1-4.9

Table 18: Question 4.1 What is the greatest difference between secular and faith-based organisations?

1F	a) Biblical or Christian values; b) the Godly call; c) holistic love; d) the willingness to subject one's own advantages for the sake of others; e) the human being is seen holistically in a Christian organisation, and they are never a means to an end; f) mentalities can be changed in a faith environment (1F:216).
2G	a) The motivation by faith; b) the mutual relationship with the associated churches where key values can be applied, e.g. human rights orientation; d) since church is always organised worldwide (and local at the same time), the design of development work can be better shaped, e.g. smaller projects where local communities are relevant (2G:263).
3B	Names a specific tradition from the initiators (3B:199) as a clear distinction of their Christian work (which cannot be detailed owing to reasons of confidentiality).
4G	States that taking the way they work into consideration, being professional and working in partnership, there is no difference from secular organisations. But the motivation and the values by which people work are different (4G:170+171).
5A	Doubts that there are differences. He sees only differences in the interpretation of the action that may or may not be different in faith-based or secular organisations.
6F	Sees the difference in the leading of God inside the organisation, and also that people in a secular organisation would not know what this means (6F:188).
7C	Sees the difference in the way frustration is dealt with. The willingness to endure phases of frustration, and maybe even fail, is higher in faith-based organisations than in secular ones. Christians will not throw in the towel as quickly, because they have a mandate (7C:253).
8A	Names a) the motivation and b) the values.
9F	Does not believe that motivation is the difference. He knows many secular organisations with highly motivated people. But he sees differences regarding the clear reference to God, the <i>menschenbild</i> , and the values as a difference (9F:249-253).
10C	Sees no difference, since both are oriented around humanity (10C:145).
11K	Thinks that a) Christian organisations show more stamina and strength in difficult situations, because there is hope that God's Spirit will do well, and b) It is the faith that makes the difference in a Christian organisation (11K:177).

There was a wide variety of answers given to this question, but a high percentage say that motivation and values are different. Only a few point to character arguments, e.g. frustration-tolerance or behavioural changes, and only one

names 'love' as a visible difference. 'Love' was the basic commitment in Benedict's monasteries (see 3.2.2). Two organisations do not see any difference at all. There seems to be quite a bit of confusion about what makes a difference between Christian and non-Christian organisations.

Table 19: Question 4.2 Which books on Christian ethics have you read, and which did you find useful in your work? And, have you in the past 10 years, completed a short course on Christian ethics or done some formal studies in this area?

Yes, but no title at hand	Two NGOs (1F, 10C)
Yes: named title, or had a theological formation or wrote articles or held trainings	Six NGOs (2G, 3B, 4G, 7C, 8A, 9F)
No, or named no relevant titles and has no specific formation	Three NGOs (5A, 6F, 11K)

At least half of the interviewees had read some books about Christian ethics. Among the titles were Wolfgang Huber's *Ethik* (4G) as well as Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Ethik* (3B), but authors like Leonardo Boff and Eugen Drewermann (both 7C) were also mentioned. Those with a theological education did not claim to having had specific ethical formation, although it may have been included in their studies. Some held training courses, e.g. regarding corruption in development contexts (8A), or ethical training for Christian development workers (4G).

It seems that Christian ethics for a majority of NGO leaders is a significant issue which deserves positive acknowledgement, but it also seems that their understanding of Christian social ethics may not be very strong.

Question 4.3 How is your Christian faith mirrored in your organisation?

Regular and situational devotions (e.g. at the beginning of meetings) are named by almost all interviewees. They seem to be a common way to express and show commitment to the Christian faith within the different organisations. Some NGOs, however, stated during the interviews that these events were not well attended. One organisation names good salaries as a sign of Christian usage

which is in stark contrast to another where employees are expected to have a circle of friends who support them financially.

Table 20: Question 4.4 Do you understand the practical outcomes of your organisation as evidence of the impact of the Gospel? How do you deal with Jesus' demand to "make disciples" (Mt 28)?

1F	No, the projects are in no way to be understood as an impact of the Gospel. The Gospel is not only about making disciples, but it is also about taking care of the hungry, the thirsty, etc. (Mt 25:33-40) (1F:232).
2G	Yes, the projects are an evidence of the impact of the Gospel, because the projects are done in the name of the Gospel. But there is no mandate to make disciples "the classic way", because religious freedom and freedom of belief need to be accomplished. When people do turn to them and say they want to participate in church services or read the Bible, that is great. But it is not for the employees to make people curious about religious things (2G:275+277).
3B	No. The Great Commission does not have any significance, but the conduct does. And if people come asking about their motivation, then it is great (3B:214-224).
4G	Yes. The health work underlying the organisational work is how the Gospel is understood (4G:184).
5A	No. They do not baptise, they do not evangelise, they do not preach. They work with local church organisations, and this is their task (5A:172+174).
6F	No. Complete separation of deed and word.
7C	Yes, the health mandate according to Lk 10:9 is an impact of the Gospel. Healing is important, the Great Commission is not (7C:284-288).
8A	No. The organisation separates between word and deed; they only do diaconal work (=deed), and there is no missionary activity. For the interviewee personally, the manifestation of life of Christians is always both word and deed together (8A:251+253).
9F	No. The organisation sees missions as a holistic task; it is not always about the soul, but it is also about the whole person. Missions yes, but evangelisation is not allowed. The combination between word and deed is not allowed and would not be fair to practise (9F:290).
10C	No. sees no relevance to the Great Commission and sees no mandate for, and no relevance in, this kind of work at all (10C:157-163).
11K	Yes. Living according to the Gospel means personally living a lifestyle according to the Gospel. As an organisation this means being oriented about the economy and politics, and conducting development projects. Evangelisation means a collaboration of declaring the Gospel, having church services, and being oriented on neighbourly love. Talking without doing does not work. And prayer supports this lifestyle (11K:190-196).

This question, based on the statement of White (see 2.3.4.1) that, in the Social Gospel Movement, the proof of the gospel was evident in its practical outcome. Those answering with YES see their work as an impact of the Gospel, even if obviously only the 'deed' part is meant. Those answering with NO differentiate between 'word and deed'. Regardless of whether the answers are yes or no, most NGOs show an inner disunity. In their answers, some NGOs commit to a holistic approach (word and deed) but, in practice, they refrain from spreading the Word. This attitude can be observed with all above NGOs, only in different degrees from passivity, e.g. 'if stakeholders ask about our motivation, that's great' (2G:275; 3B:219), to rejection 'the Great Commission has no significance' (3B:216; 7C:284; 10C:157+161). The modern world-view (see 4.2.1) with a clear differentiation between word and deed can, thus, be observed in and confirmed by the majority of Christian NGOs in this study.

Looking at these results, Ferris' observation that Catholic and Protestant (mainline) church organisations would separate the help to the needy and evangelism, whereas Protestant free-church groups would rather see the humanitarian work as an integral part of their missionary activities (Ferris 2005:317, see also 4.2.4) cannot be confirmed. It seems that the NGOs have yielded to the interdict with regard to evangelising by national, international and supra-national regulations, and, thus, adopt 'only-deed' activities in their projects.

Table 21: Question 4.5 What characteristics other than faith-based does your organisation show? Tick all applicable options.

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K	Σ
Follow a minimalistic approach, i.e. primarily life-saving							X					1
The outcomes are measured in terms of whether the needs of the people or the community have been met	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	9
We adhere closely to the principles of humanitarianism		X				X		X	X			4
The focus is primarily on the outcomes, not so much on the means of how to reach them			X				X	X		X		4
We engage politically in the countries we work in – whenever necessary				X			X	X			X	4

A clear majority of nine NGOs measure the outcomes as to whether the needs of the beneficiaries have been met. And four NGOs state that the outcomes have such a priority that the means of reaching them play a minor role. Meeting the material needs is also a moral norm in which love for the neighbour is practised. But Christian NGOs should take care that the end, even done with good intentions, may not justify the means, a danger that is ascribed to the consequentialist view, as described in 2.3.4.4. There are four NGOs that also commit to political discussion if necessary.

Table 22: Question 4.6 Do the following characteristics apply to your organisation? Tick all applicable options.

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K	Σ
It is affiliated with a religious body or an organised faith community		X	X				X			X		4
The mission statement explicitly refers to religious values ¹²¹	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	11
Your financial support comes from religious sources		X				X	X			X	X	5
You have governance structures where board members or staff are based on religious beliefs or affiliation		X		X			X	X		X	X	6
The organisation was originally established by a religious group or institution		X			X		X		X	X	X	6
Your decision-making processes are based on religious values	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X	8
Your organisation draws staff, volunteers and their leadership from a particular religious group		X									X	2

¹²¹ The answers to whether religious values are shown in the mission statement differ from the answers in question 9.1 (p. 263), owing to different perceptions of the term “mission statement”. In question 9.1, therefore, mission statement, internal papers and policies are listed separately which is not the case in question 4.6.

Elizabeth Ferris stated that faith-based organisations should have at least one or more of these listed characteristics (Ferris 2005:312, see 4.2.4). Obviously, religious values play a significant role in the interviewed organisations. All of them name explicitly the religious values in their mission statements, and some state that these are important when making decisions. The five NGOs which said that their financial support came from religious sources, always complemented the sentence by adding, “yes, mostly, but not all”. So, the financial support usually also comes from other than religious sources. In the same way, a majority of the organisations have their leadership come from a particular religious group (namely Christians), but this does not necessarily apply to the rest of the staff, so only two NGOs ticked this term.

Table 23: Question 4.7. Which type of organisation does your organisation resemble best? Tick all applicable options.

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K	Σ
Type 1 (ac-commodative)			X			X						2
Type 2 (synthesis)	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	9
Type 3 (evangelistic)												

This classification of the three types stem from Laura Thaut (2009:319ff, see 4.2.4). Type 2 (a clear religious orientation as the primary motivation for its mission is maintained / no direct evangelisation / the acceptance of religious message is not a prerequisite for assistance) was chosen by the majority of the organisations. Some NGOs had some trouble in saying that there is a clear religious orientation as their primary motivation (7C, 8A). They said this was the case in theory but not in reality. But, since the other arguments could be applied, they adhered to this type rather than to others. Type 1 (which is indistin-

guishable from secular agencies) was named by only two NGOs, namely 3B and 6F. Type 3 (the most religiously oriented with evangelism incorporated into its humanitarianism) was probably not chosen because of the prohibition of proselytising. This finding correlate well with the findings of question 4.4 (p. 237).

Table 24: Question 4.8 Have sermons, retreats, bible studies or workshops in your church helped you deal with problems or planning in your NGO?

1F	Yes. 1F states that hearing Bible verses helps in the thinking process, and, when it is a helpful thought, it flows into the organisation (1F:280)
2G	Yes. 2G says that happens, but it is not meant as a disciplinary instrument (2G:315).
3B	Yes, for 3B personally. But he would not be able to confirm this for others in the organisation (3B:253).
4G	No, there is no connection (4G:211).
5A	No, but they do play a role (5A:207).
6F	Yes, because a pastor helps in the trainings. There may be direct connections at some point (6F:237).
7C	No.
8A	Yes. They help for personal activities and for making decisions. Impulses received from the Christian environment often help (8A:312).
9F	Yes. Names an example where he listened to preaching about social justice (9F:378).
10C	No. He states that it is he who has to give impetus himself (10C:202).
11K	No. Only in the social activities of the personal church community (11K:234-236).

Six interviewees confirm that they take impetus and ideas from their spiritual and communal life in their churches and transform them into ideas in their work. But five interviewees cannot confirm this. Obviously, for some NGOs, Childs' critique applies that workplace and church have no common things to share, no shareable ideas, concepts and vocabulary "that makes the contributions of the faith intelligible to the experience of business and *vice versa*" (Childs 1995:10). Of these five, interestingly four interviewees were members of the Catholic Church. It seems that for the leaders belonging to the different Protestant denominations, the walls between their churches and their work life may

be more permeable which may also have to do with the Lutheran heritage and the way the Reformers dealt with professional life (see 3.2.4).

Question 4.9 Do individuals or organisations have moral responsibility?

Three NGOs state that organisations do not have any moral responsibility, and that individuals only do. But the great majority of interviewees see that there is, or must be, some sort of organisational moral responsibility, even though some interviewees had difficulties explaining why they thought this was the case. The answers revealed a certain insecurity and confirm that the discussion by Goodpaster, Solomon, as well as Maak and Ulrich (see 3.4), about the organisations being moral agents is important. Goodpaster even thought that organisations had a conscience (Goodpaster 2008:34). 5A has trouble seeing any organisational conscience. In this context, 1F and 5A also reject the wording ‘Christian organisation’ because in their view an organisation cannot be ‘Christian’; only individuals can.

6.2.2 Data compilation: Christian character and conduct – Questions 5.1-5.5

Table 25: Question 5.1 Can you agree with the following statement: “Right decisions and actions emanate from a good character”?

NGO 1-11	Not agree because	NGO 1-11	Agree because
2G 8A	Character is not sufficient, professional skills and competences are needed, too.	4G	Character forms the way people work and their decision-making.
1F 7C	A good character can make wrong decisions.	11K	God’s Spirit is needed.
3B 10C	Both interviewees do not know what a good or bad character is.	5A	Character is not changeable.
6F	Simply “not agree”.	9F	Everybody has some good core elements in their personality.

The majority of NGOs did not agree with this statement which stems from MacIntyre who lamented the moral disintegration of society and people’s moral

obliteration and emptiness. For him, just as for Aristotle (2.3.1 and 2.3.4.5), morality is a consequence of habits and knowledge of how to live a good life, and not following formal rules. The answers came with some reluctance and perceived insecurity, and some even with a refusal. But it showed clearly that issues of moral character do not play a major role in the organisations, and, if they come up for discussion, as happened in this interview, they were mostly handled from a psychological view-point.

Table 26: Question 5.2 How would you describe a person of a good character?

A good character includes:	Frequency:
Self-reflection	Three times (1F, 2G, 3B)
Honesty	Three times (4G, 6F, 8A)
Reliability	Twice (5A, 6F)
Sincerity	Twice (7C, 8A)
Responsibility	Twice (8A, 9F)

Further terms named only once by NGOs with affiliation to:	
Protestant EKD	Fairness, Credibility, Trustfulness, Integrity, Diligence.
Catholic	Humbleness, Patience, Justice, Thankfulness, Forgiving, Humorousness, Discernment, Faith.

Taking the character traits that were named by the interviewees into account¹²², it can be observed that self-reflection as well as honesty were named by three NGOs. Reliability, sincerity and responsibility were each named by two NGOs. All other traits were named once only. Interestingly, ‘wisdom’, one of the virtues promoted by the Greek philosophers, was been mentioned at all by any of the interviewees, but patience was named by one organisation. From faith, hope and love, virtues set up by Augustine and Aquinas, only faith found its way into

122 Other skills were named as well, e.g. communication skills, professional skills, cooperation skills that have been omitted for this research.

the above list and was named once. Kant's virtue, simply to do one's duty, was not mentioned by any of the interviewees.

Table 27: Question 5.3 What virtues do you think are the best for leaders and staff members?

Virtues of leaders and staff members are:	Frequency:
Honesty	Eight times (1F, 2G, 4G, 5A, 7C, 9F, 10C, 11K)
Diligence	Three times (2G, 7C, 8A)
Humility	Three times (2G, 7C, 11K)
Reliability	Three times (4G, 5A, 9F)
Empathy	Twice (2G, 6F)
Sincerity	Twice (7C, 10C)

Further terms named only once by NGOs with affiliation to:	
Protestant EKD	Bravery, trustfulness, self-reflection.

The list shows that honesty was named by eight NGOs. Diligence, humility and reliability were each named by three NGOs. Self-reflection, the most often mentioned virtue when asking for a person of a good character in the previous question, interestingly was mentioned only once in the answers to this question.

No NGO works with a kind of character-check for potential candidates. Professional competence and other skills for communication and cooperation receive more attention. 5A has a catalogue of virtues for leaders, but, according to his own statement, most of the virtues are not specifically Christian, but are kept in a general mode for everybody (such as open-mindedness). Interestingly, 5A was the only one to mention bravery (see list), because there should be no cowardice in the face of conflict (5A:244).

Table 28: Question 5.4 For a Christian, the formation of a good character is achieved predominantly by...? Rate these options from 1 to 10 in the order of their importance, with 1 being the most important and 10 the least important.

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K
reading the Bible in order to discover and apply ethical teaching	2	10	8	2	9	4	5	7	5	7	3
being inspired to become a better person by meditating on Biblical stories of courage and integrity	9	9	4	1	3	9	6	6	6	8	8
Meaningful relationships with others have enabled me to be a better person		3	5	5	4	7	3	10	1	4	5
being influenced by good role models (e.g. by people I admire and respect)		4	1		7	8	4	5	2	6	10
being encouraged to do what is right by being supported by fellow Christians (e.g. in the local church or home-group)		6	9	8	8	5	9	4	10	1	1
practising spiritual disciplines / exercises (such as regular prayer, meditation, study, and practical service to others)	3	8	10		2	10	7	3	8	9	4
developing a relationship with God that has the effect of forming my moral character and actions	1	5	6	10	1	1	8	1	7	5	2
practical caring for others develops my faith and Christian character	8	1	2		5	2	1	9	3	3	9
the influence of my family has played a vital role in the formation of my Christian character	10	2	3	9	6	3	2	2	4	2	6
the teaching of the church has helped to form my ethical thinking and conduct		7	7	4	10	6	10	8	9	10	7

1F and 4G found this task difficult, and this is why only a selection of answers was ranked by them.

The answer with the highest ranking was the answer “developing a relationship with God that has the effect of forming my moral character and actions” ranked by five NGOs (1F, 5A, 6F, 8A and 11K). This high-ranked answer

was followed by “practical caring for others develops my faith and Christian character” ranked by four NGOs (2G, 3B, 6F, 7C).

The lowest ranking was “the teaching of the church has helped to form my ethical thinking and conduct” (5A, 7C, 10C, 9F). Obviously, the church, whatever is understood by this term, does not help in the forming of a character which is a rather surprising finding and does not necessarily shed a good light on the Christian communities. But it also correlates to some extent with questions 4.8 and 8.2 where we found that the interviewees were not satisfied with how their own churches supported them in their workplace. This is followed by the two answers “by being supported by fellow Christians” and “by meditating on Biblical stories of courage and integrity”.

Whereas the high-ranked “developing a relationship to God” seems to form a good character for Christians, it seems surprising that “reading the Bible” is not ranked the same way. Wright referred to reading the Bible as a very important way to form a good character since it makes adopting good habits possible (Wright 2011:221f., see 2.3.4.5).

Question 5.5 How is character formation understood, and what do you do to assess/improve/form the characters and conduct of the leaders and staff?

All interviewees answered that no specific character formation was offered. Instruments of personnel development, common in the world of Human Resources, are, however, offered instead. In addition, the leaders of the organisations address employees individually when their behaviour is not acceptable. In the interviews, I used to ask for one of the elements of the list that they themselves had brought in, e.g. honesty or responsibility, and asked them how they made sure that people would learn from or develop their behaviour in these directions. As a matter of fact, most interviewees acknowledged that there might be something missing in their organisations, but it was not clear how to address these kinds of issues.

6.2.3 Data compilation: Christian corporate culture – Questions 6.1-6.4

Table 29: Question 6.1 What is recognisably Christian about your corporate culture?

1F	God is asked to be in the organisation; prayer and devotions; biblical values as internal paper. (1F:335-337).
2G	The referral to the church; the way employees associate with one another; the focus on responsibility (2G:392).
3B	A specific tradition as an overall cultural element (3B:307).
4G	An appreciative attitude among all, openness, devotions, and church services (3B:268).
5A	Meetings start with a prayer (5A:273).
6F	Devotions in the morning; specific values as internal paper (6F:292).
7C	The participative culture in the organisation that stems from the principle of subsidiarity (7C:452-455).
8A	Devotions and prayer. Specific church employees in the Board of Directors (8A:380+407).
9F	A close-knit community (9F:469-471).
10C	All employees engage in church life (10C:253).
11K	Church services, prayer at meetings (11K:185).

Organisational culture is the collection of values and norms shared by the members of the organisation. The question about what is Christian about them is an interesting one. The majority of the Christian NGOs name devotions and prayers at meetings, and, if they named any, their values as being typically Christian for their organisation. Some other elements, such as responsibility (2G), community-building (9F), traditions (3B), specific referral to the church (2G and 8A), and the participative culture (7C) are also elements that were named. Only 5A said clearly that, apart from the devotions, there is nothing specifically Christian that is visible at work.

Klebe Treviño and Nelson (1999:204ff) differentiate between formal and informal elements of ethical culture in an organisation. The interviewees referred to rather formal elements of the culture. In the interview, informal issues were asked about, but few were named, such as an attitude of appreciation (4G).

The reason for this may be that many informal observances are hard to explain to an outsider or are so natural to the employees that they do not perceive them as being noteworthy. This is possible since behaviours in an organisation may have underlying assumptions that are unconscious (Schein 2004:24f).

Table 30: Question 6.2 How are the organisation's Christian principles, values and ethical codes put into practice?

1F	Values are always a topic in the devotions; Employees are cared for personally (1F:343).
2G	Through devotions and seminars, e.g. induction seminars are offered for all newcomers (2G:394-396).
3B	There is no such procedure.
4G	Regular <i>jour fixe</i> , regular appraisal interviews (4G:271-274)
5A	There is no such procedure, the values are too vague (5A:276-283).
6F	Only when they have trespassed, are the employees approached (6F:294-298)
7C	There is no such procedure (7C:452-454).
8A	Ethical codes and values are announced; in exceptional cases, dissonances in the behaviour will be discussed. Values and codes are reviewed every five years in the strategic planning (8A:413-420).
9F	There is no such procedure, only joint reflection and lessons-learned after projects are finished (9F:475-479).
10C	There is no such procedure. Principles and values are in the background, and, in exceptional cases, people are approached individually (10C:262-266).
11K	There is no such procedure. The values and codes are in the background; the projects are based on Christian principles.

Regarding how Christian principles, values and ethical codes are put into practice, all NGOs deny that there is a systematic procedure. In 1F, as well as 2G, values and Christian principles are spoken of in the devotions. Almost all NGOs approach individuals when they do not behave according to the principles and values. But the internally announced values are not concrete enough for all interviewees, such as for 5A. The experiences the consultants Stahlke and Loughlin described during their consultancy, can, thus, at least partly, be confirmed. Their experience was that employees of Christian NGOs seem to have no clear idea of company-values, and that it is not clear how they can be made useful for

the organisation (Stahlke & Loughlin 2003:5). Equally, if Christian NGOs are not clear about Christian values and character, it may be difficult for them to seek to promote and nurture them.

Question 6.3 Can you agree with the statement that Christian organisations – because they are Christian – do not need ethical codes?

No NGO could agree with this sentence. This is a strong statement that Christian NGOs believe that, even if they are Christian, they are not exempt from having ethical codes. Their comments are clear as well; 1F, for example, states that Christians are no better than others (1F:358). 2G also names compliance with policies, standards and procedures as a necessity in Christian organisations (2G:409). 3B states that only because the frame is there, it does not necessarily mean that people behave accordingly (3B:328). All passed similar comments. Not all NGOs, however, have ethical codes themselves. But in theory, and regarding whether Christians can be exempt from them or not, all are of the same opinion.

Question 6.4 Are there any visible patterns of behaviour (e.g. treatment, forms of communication) or symbols (e.g. clothing, office equipment, etc.) in your NGO? And how are they explained to new employees?

Apart from symbols, such as crosses on the walls, the logos, and pictures on the walls, not much could be said about typical behaviours. Two NGOs even answered, ‘nothing at all’. As a visible pattern of behaviour, one NGO offers an official blessing prayer of new employees in the weekly devotion when they start working there. In addition, new employees do not receive any induction with regard to symbols or visible patterns of behaviour in any of the NGOs interviewed.

Artefacts, as discussed in chapter four (see 4.3.2.5), were expected to be named abundantly, not only organisational logos and crosses, but also some typical behavioural issues, such as regular prayer meetings and the study of scrip-

tures (Sider & Unruh 2004:123), were expected to be named from all NGOs. The input was, therefore, rather scarce.

6.2.4 Summary

Section 6.2 has answered the question of how Christian ethics is understood and lived out in the organisations. The NGOs have answered a variety of questions regarding their Christian identity, Christian character and conduct, as well as Christian corporate culture.

When asked for general differences between Christian and secular humanitarian organisations, some interviewees denied that there were any (question 4.1). Others named Christian values, motivation or the way frustration is dealt with. Some interviewees read books about ethics or had some ethical formation, mostly within a theological formation (question 4.2). Christian faith is mirrored in the organisation mostly by regularly held devotions, e.g. at the beginning of meetings (question 4.3).

In addition, Christian NGOs differentiate clearly between ‘word’ and ‘deed’ (question 4.4). They comply with regulations required by national and supra-national organisations, where the ‘word’ part (evangelism) is not allowed. They are able to take care of the ‘deeds’ only. This follows the view of Myers and Hiebert who state that the world-view in Western development work is not holistic but thoroughly dualistic instead. What Christian NGOs need to clarify is whether they should not oppose this secular-oriented paradigm in order to stick to a Christian holistic Christian imperative. The ‘deed’-orientation, previously mentioned, can partly be seen in question 4.5 in which the interviewed organisations in their majority state that the outcome of their work is measured by having met the needs of the beneficiaries. In most of the cases, the needs are material needs¹²³. This is confirmed in question 4.7, where the majority of NGOs classify themselves as being type 2-synthesis-organisations (no evangelism).

123 There are also non-material goals attended to, such as behavioural changes regarding hygienic issues.

Strikingly, another point of the taxonomy is that there is a clear religious orientation as a primary motivation, one which some of the interviewees doubted was the case for their organisation in practice.

Only half of the interviewees confirmed that they take impetus and ideas from their churches and transform them into their work-place. The workplace and the churches seem to be alienated from one another to a certain extent (question 4.8).

Regarding the responsibility of organisations (question 4.9), only three interviewees are convinced that organisations do not have any responsibility and feel that only individuals do.

A great surprise in the findings was the fact that issues of moral character play practically no role within the NGOs (question 5.1). A person of a good character has been described as mostly self-reflective and honest, but also reliable, sincere and responsible (question 5.2). Honesty is the major characteristic named for people who work in their organisations. In addition, diligence, humility and reliability were often named (question 5.3). Although those characteristics have been named, NGOs do not have a character-check for potential candidates. In contrast, professional competence and other skills receive significant attention.

The corporate culture in Christian NGOs is hardly recognisably Christian (question 6.1). Some even state there is nothing specifically Christian visible within their work-place. In addition, there are no procedures for how Christian principles, values and codes are put into practice (question 6.2). Visible patterns of behaviour or symbols were scarce, apart from crosses; hence, new employees do not receive any induction in terms of cultural aspects (question 6.4).

All NGOs confirmed that the fact that they are Christian organisations does not exempt them from needing ethical codes (question 6.3). For the majority, this is not only theory, but seems to be put into practice in one way or another.

The answers reveal that Christian NGOs have some difficulties identifying what is expected from them as Christian organisations, and this influences their role and identity within the organisation and outside of it.

6.3 Ethical matters in organisational structures and practices

In this section, the attitudes towards ethical decision-making will be researched, and also the tension between practical issues and ethics that arise in the NGO workplace. In addition, management and leadership questions will form this third part of the analysis of the questionnaire.

6.3.1 Data compilation: Ethical decision-making – Questions 7.1-7.2

Table 31: Question 7.1 When making ethical decisions do you tend to... (please rank the answers in order of importance, 1 being the most important and 10 the least important)

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K
Consider what would bring about a good result	5	3	9		8	8	7	8	8	9	6
Consider certain principles such as “What is the most responsible / caring thing to do”	4	1	4	8	4	1	4	2	1	3	3
Base your decision on what the Bible commands, for example “Do not steal”	3	9	5		1	2	3	3	3	6	2
Think of what a “good person” would do	9	5	8		7	10	5	10	9	8	7
Identify what Jesus would do if faced with a similar situation	2	10	1	10	5	3	1	1	7	10	1
Consider ethical teachings from the Christian tradition	10	8	7		6	9	8	4	6	5	4
Use reason to make the decision	6	6	3	9	2	5	2	5	2	1	5
Follow the example of other organisations	8	7	10	3	9	7	9	6	5	7	9
Ask colleagues what they would do	7	2	6	6	3	6	6	7	4	4	8
Be guided by your intuition	1	4	2	5	10	4	10	9	10	2	10

When Christian NGOs make decisions, they find it very important (numbers 1 and 2) to ‘identify what Jesus would do in a similar situation’. This answer was given by five NGOs, followed by the answers ‘consider certain principles’ (four NGOs) and ‘use reason to make the decision’ (also four NGOs).

What Christian NGOs find the least important (numbers 9 and 10) are answers like ‘to be guided by the intuition’ (five NGOs), followed by ‘follow the example of other organisations’ (four NGOs) and think of ‘what a good person would do’ (also four NGOs).

It seems interesting that Jesus’ role model has obviously not suffered any loss of popularity in modern NGOs. In the midst of a secular environment, Christian leaders think about what Jesus would do. Jesus as a role model shines so brightly that other role models, e.g. the answer ‘what a good person would do’ takes a back-seat. Additionally, since ‘following the examples of other organisations’ generally received very low scores (which may have to do with strong competition among Christian NGOs in Germany), it seems possible that the leaders of Christian NGOs are lonely leaders. It must, however, be taken into account that three NGOs gave Jesus as role model the least possible ranking (2G, 4G, 10C).

The answer ‘what would bring about a good result’ received very low ranking although the question regarding how success is defined (question 9.3) reveals that the results are important for the Christian NGOs.

In addition, the fact that reason has such high acceptance seems clear. Leaders of NGOs lead ‘businesses’. Any other outcome for this answer would have been a surprise. This is why the contrary answer ‘led by intuition’ has received such low rankings. It must be said, however, that three NGOs ranked intuition as being very important for their decision-making (1F, 3B, 10C).

Obviously, this research shows that Jesus as role model is still vivid, even in post-modern and secular Germany, even if not all NGOs expressed this way of decision-making. Together with principles and reason, these are the three basic ingredients of how Christian NGOs make their decisions. Hence, a combination of faith and reason as well as Christian values can be identified in the working places of Christian NGOs.

Table 32: Question 7.2 Do you agree that staff members need to be involved in your NGO's decision-making processes?

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K
Fully agree	X			X	X	X		X	X		
Agree		X	X				X			X	X
Don't know											
Rather not agree											
Not agree at all											

All NGOs agree or even fully agree. Some comments are: 1F states that not all employees need to be involved in every decision; hierarchies determine who is responsible, and the person responsible makes the decisions (1F:436), whereas 5A admits that the fact that one person has to make a decision is a real struggle. Participation does not mean that at the end of the discussion there is a consensus. What seems important for 5A is that decisions are never made alone and that there has to be an “appropriate” consulting process beforehand (5A:340). 8A is even convinced that an organisation saves time if appropriate participation takes place (8A:474-476).

These comments point to where it does not make sense to include all employees for every decision, and this confirms the view of von Rosenstiel (2014a:12-13) who states that participation depends on many factors, such as the working place, the tasks, and other conditions, such as the overall strategy, but that it definitely enhances motivation (see 4.3.3.1 on responsible leadership) if done correctly in the right situation. The comments also show that this issue is not sufficiently clarified for the NGOs, and that there is struggle about how to range between participation and efficient decision-making.

For the participant Christian NGOs in Germany, it seems that Christian organisations let their employees participate in the decision-making, at least in theory. But the practical execution seems to prompt questions and reveals insecurities from the side of the interviewed leaders. In addition, it has to be pointed

out that I interviewed leaders who may have had different convictions about the situation than those held by their employees. Thus, a leader’s perspective in these interviews may reflect only part of the truth.

6.3.2 Data compilation: Relationship between ‘business’ and ‘ethics’ – Questions 8.1-8.5

Table 33: Question 8.1 Which aspect(s) can you agree with? For my organisation, ... Tick all the options that are applicable.

NGO 1-11 →	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K	Σ
... the terms “ethics” and “business” exclude each other. This is why we separate theological and professional aspects in our daily work.												
... it is often “business comes first”. Ethical reasoning is too complicated and might even be a hindrance to get the job done quickly and efficiently.												
... it is important to have an ethical appearance to the outside world in order to get more donations.		X	X		X	X		X			X	6
... ethics and business influence each other. Nevertheless, economic behaviour must always be subject to Christian ethical principles.	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	9
... the terms “ethics” and “business” are not contradictions. They are both part of human existence and Christians need ensure that both are given due attention.	X	X			X	X	X		X	X		7

Nine of eleven NGOs agree that ethics and business influence each other and that all their business actions need to be controlled by ethical principles. This is a clear statement about ethics as a priority which was promoted by Göbel, Koslowski (both 3.3.1). Seven NGOs ticked the answer that business and ethics are not contradictory and that both belong to the human existence. This is the thought of Rich and Herms who state that there is a common thread in the human orientation (3.3.4). It was also positive to discover that the sentence “business and ethics exclude each other”, was not ticked by any of the interviewees. This question shows that the line of separation between practical issues at the workplace and ethics may not be clearly drawn within Christian NGOs, which is a positive result; all the more when given the fact that not only profit companies but also non-profit organisations nowadays follow business rules (Gehra 2009:7).

Some NGOs, however, showed that an ethical appearance was important in order to get more money. In chapter 3, I discuss an ‘ethics pays-off’ mentality mentioned by Homann (3.3.2) who is convinced that moral action is taken only when an advantage is apparent (Homann & Lütge 2005:20). Obviously, non-profit Christian NGOs need to show their ethical side of business to their stakeholders. But this also means that it is not self-evident that the combination of the terms ‘Christian’ and ‘non-profit’ be perceived as being ethical; organisations need to show and prove their ethical standards to their stakeholders continually. Here, the distinction between profit /non-profit seems to be lessening. In addition, it becomes evident that humanitarianism is and has become a ‘business’ in the broadest sense. It also becomes evident that companies present themselves as being ethical without really proving whether this is the case or not. Kühl (2011:59) called this the decoration to the outside world. As stated in 4.3.2.2, in Christian NGOs the underlying corporate values or ethical descriptions should never be decoration only, or, even worse, presented only to attract

donors. Christian NGOs need to work on a sound ethical base with regard to every level of their work.

Table 34: Question 8.2 The church generally neglects to address the specific needs of those in business, and thus contributes to the rift between spiritual and business issues. Do you agree?

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K	Σ
Fully agree	X							X				7
Agree			X		X				X	X	X	
Don't know												
Rather not agree				X		X	X					4
Not agree at all		X										

Seven NGOs agreed with the question, and two of them did so fully. Four could not (or rather not) agree. The rift between the everyday work life and church life, the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane, becomes visible in this question. The churches the interviewees belong to seem to be unconcerned about them in their business life and in this way contribute to the rift between spiritual and business matters. The leaders (who belong to all denominations) give a poor attestation to the churches in this matter. And, although this question is actually a statement by Childs (1995:6-10) and thus posed over 20 years ago, it is interesting to see how many NGOs observe this within their own experience. Despite this, many business scandals have happened in the USA and Europe, and it seems the churches have reacted accordingly. They offer possibilities of different summits (e.g. *Kongress christlicher Führungskräfte*, a biennial summit of Christian leaders of the German-speaking countries) in order to bridge the gap and link business people, NGOs and the church.

The result of the above discussion shows that there is still a great deal left to do to bridge the perceived gap of dualism between business and the church.

Table 35: Question 8.3 Contemporary business companies need to strive for efficiency and compete to survive in the market place. Do you see a similar tendency developing in Christian NGOs?

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K	Σ
Fully agree			X		X			X	X			8
Agree	X			X			X			X		
Don't know												
Rather not agree		X				X					X	3
Not agree at all												

An overwhelming majority of eight NGOs replied ‘yes’ to this question. Most of the Christian NGOs feel enormous pressure from different sides, the audits requested from the institutional donors as well as the increase of non-profit organisations in the humanitarian sector. These two facts are best described by 8A and 9F; 8A says that there are continually new organisations entering the German market. The cake stays the same size over the time, so it is all about the size of the piece. To retain one’s slice of the cake, one has to invest increasingly more. And such an investment still means no growth. One interviewee states that the pressure regarding competition and efficiency is very high. They had an ECHO¹²⁴ Audit during that time the interview took place, and he said the audit literally looked at nothing else.

Even if the budget for 2019 will increase by 284 million EUR (VENRO 2018), it can be assumed that the competition will not slow down. This question shows the high economic pressure NGOs have to endure. Efficiency and effectiveness seem to have a strong grip on the NGOs with increasing consequences for them in terms of flexibility and dependency.

124 ECHO=The Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Table 36: Question 8.4 In your correspondence between your organisation and your different stakeholders (e.g. donors) do you use different communication styles by adding or avoiding religious language, etc.?

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6G	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K	Σ
YES, differences are made in the communication	X			X	X	X	X	X	X			7
NO, no differences are made in the communication		X	X							X	X	4

Seven NGOs said they make differences in their communication when approaching Christian or non-Christian donors or stakeholders. With those that do not differentiate, the question is whether the communication uses religious terms or whether they consistently stay ‘neutral’. Only 11K states that their communication is consistently religious, whereas even free-church NGOs hold that they must be neutral when approaching specific target groups. 1F points to the dilemma that many others experience. He states that differences have to be made. For instance, when meeting with company bosses who are donors, it is important to stay ‘neutral’. In the end, he sees this as a tightrope walk because fellow Christians say, ‘you do not evangelise enough’, but non-Christians may be reluctant to donate if leaders do try to evangelise (1F:487-489). 3B admits that they generalise in a way that Christian values are indicated, so that it sounds acceptable for everyone. When they are asked about their position, typical terms such as ‘neighbourly love’ and other terms that are widely accepted in the humanitarian realm, are used (3B:403-406).

This question and the answering examples show the tension that Christian NGOs have to endure. They need to avoid risks, such as reputation or economic losses, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, they want to hold true to their

Christian identity. As 1F indicates, the illustration of a tightrope walk may show this best.

Table 37: Question 8.5 Which books on business ethics have you read, and which did you find useful in your work?

Yes, but no title at hand	Four NGOs (1F, 4G, 7C, 10C)
No	Two NGOs (2G, 6F)
Named titles, but mostly leadership titles	Four NGOs (3B, 5A, 8A, 9F)

One NGO (11K) was not interviewed in relation to this question, because of time restrictions.

Those who said they read business ethical books could not name a title during the interviews, nor did they send any afterwards. Those who named titles, named primarily leadership titles, even though they were asked for business ethical books. Interestingly, two NGOs (5A and 10C) did not find their reading helpful for them or their work. In the end it very much looked as if business ethical books are not well-known, and the relevant issues seem to be scarcely dealt with among senior personnel in German Christian NGOs. This result makes the importance of this study obvious. NGO leaders need to be informed regarding Christian ethics and business ethics, in order not only to be able to make the organisation function, but also to be able to address ethical demands of their work.

6.3.3 Data compilation: Management and leadership – Questions 9.1-9.11

Table 38: Question 9.1 Are Christian values or principles visible in your vision and mission statement?

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K	Σ YES
Vision statement existent	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	4
Christian values or principles in vision statement			No	Yes	No			No				1
Mission statement existent	No	Yes	10									
Christian values or principles in mission statement ¹²⁵		No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	6
Christian values or principles explained (further) in statutes, policy papers etc.	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X	7

The table is split into vision statement (above), mission statement (middle section) and further policies and papers NGOs may offer to their stakeholders (below). Regarding a vision statement, a minority of four organisations have one. Of those four, only one shows Christian elements in its vision statement. In contrast, ten out of eleven NGOs offer a mission statement in their publications or on their website, and six of those refer to Christian values or principles. The four organisations that have a mission statement but do not show any Christian values or principles in it explain their Christian understanding in separate out-

¹²⁵ Some NGOs see their mere belonging to a specific Church or institution already to be a Christian element. This could not be considered as a description of Christian values or principles in the above table.

lines, policy papers, or statutes. None of the eleven NGOs withholds its Christian identity; it is only that some are more visible than others.

Christian elements in the above-mentioned statements are vague at times. An example is when there is a statement about basing the work “on Christian values” (e.g. 4G), without naming specifically which values. Owing to anonymity the different statements, as well as the values and principles, cannot be named, evaluated or compared any further. It is noteworthy that, with all NGOs, the focus lies in general on the professional side of the work which may be easier to handle in the statements.

All three Catholic NGOs have no trouble in naming religious issues clearly and directly. Since some NGOs have proved reluctant in naming religious issues in previous questions (e.g. question 8.4), this answer may be interesting for those NGOs that assume donors to be reluctant about donating when seeing a Christian connection. Obviously, this is not necessarily the case.

In general, it seems that vision statements (see 4.3.2.2) are not a crucial need-to-have element for Christian NGOs as may be the case with business companies. It seems to be more helpful to have a clear and concise mission statement. In addition, an explanation about the motivation and the Christian values underlying the purpose of the organisation may prove to be a good option for Christian NGOs in order to give an orientation regarding their Christian identity to their stakeholders. It may also be commendable to make it clear that the corporate identity and the underlying Christian values do not lead to an unjustified manipulation of the beneficiaries (see Micah’s definition of proselytising 4.2.5.1).

Table 39: Question 9.2 The worldwide NGO-advertisements reveal that most NGOs rely heavily on experts in their recruitment activities. Does the provision of experts reassure your sense of responsibility for the results of your work?

1F	The most important things are the attitude and the Godly "call". Professionalism does not have the same priority (1F:517-519).
2G	A network and constant communication with top experts is needed. In addition, knowledge transfer with local networks and indigenous people is needed (2G:508).
3B	The dependency on experts is high, but there is no alternative (3B:424-428).
4G	Without experts, acting responsibly would not be possible. Good will is not enough. But the right motivation for doing the work is also needed (4G:376-380).
5A	Professionalism is emphasised, e.g. in the annual reports (5A:408-410).
6F	One needs experts to understand all the humanitarian standards, regulations on child protection, emergency guidelines, etc. But Christian NGOs need experts who also relate to God (6F:430).
7C	It is irrelevant whether a humanitarian helper is Catholic or Protestant, or anything else, but that they know how to do their job. On the other hand, to be expert alone is not enough.
8A	Because of the strong pressure of responsibility, the expert would always be awarded the contract. But Christian convictions are also necessary, and so compromises need to be made (8A:559-560).
9F	There is an immense responsibility. Knowing that there are experts on the field relieves the management of responsibility (9F:603-606).
10C	(Skipped question because of time restrictions). This NGO is strongly focussed on professionals.
11K	(Skipped question because of time restrictions). This NGO is strongly focussed on professionals.

All NGOs that responded to this question acknowledged that the responsibility is very high and the requirements put on the experts by supranational, national or regional guidelines are strict. Nobody (except for 1F) would reject experts if they were not Christians, and all interviewed NGOs admit that the experts relieve the management of responsibility because they can rely on their experts' work.

In the humanitarian field, the responsibility is put into the hands of professionals. Without experts, the risks taken by the management is incalculably high. Jonas (see 2.3.4.4) put an emphasis on responsibility since the con-

sequences, risks and outcomes are more difficult to anticipate and are less predictable owing to the rapid development of technology and medicine. In the case of Christian NGOs, therefore, the challenge is which priority is given between engaging professionals and the need of Christian NGOs to hire Christians. In the end, it must not be either Christian or professional, it must be a 'both-and' answer, which is obviously another balancing act to be accomplished by Christian humanitarian NGOs.

Question 9.3 How is success understood in your organisation? And how is it measured?

The NGOs define success as being when the help reaches beneficiaries, transforms communities, brand awareness is raised, and donations increased. A majority of NGOs prove their success with a combination of quantitative and qualitative KPIs. The measurements are done by making comparisons with the numbers of previous years, or, in the case of qualitative indicators, by surveys after the project has been accomplished to be able to evaluate the impact of the individual projects. All organisations show a strong result-orientation, and they use indicators that measure these results. The answers of some NGOs reveal a certain pressure from institutional donors or their own Boards to fulfil their aims. Some NGOs, such as 6F and 8A, do not work with financial income targets owing to a high income-volatility.

It was interesting to see that success apparently had to do with the results the NGOs achieve in field-work or fund-raising and also in brand-awareness results in their home country. Success indicators are in no way linked with the conduct or perception of their leaders, employees or volunteers (at least this link was not an issue in the interviews). For instance, there was no mentioning of how success is evaluated in terms of personal fulfilment and receiving affirmation, although both elements were mentioned in question 2.1 as being the motivation of their employees. The request that the organisation should seek a balance between the fulfilment of the needs of the clients and the personal fulfilment of the staff and volunteers made by Stahlke and Laughlin in the first

point of their *Relationship Model* (see 4.3.3.1; Stahlke & Laughlin 2003:3, 91), may, thus, not being sufficiently attended to in the organisations.

Table 40: Question 9.4 How have the organisational structures evolved in your organisation? Tick all applicable options and explain by mentioning the type of structure (flat or hierarchical).

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K	Σ
The structure has changed since the organisation was founded	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	11
A striving for efficiency has been a reason for the development of the structure	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	9
Gaining control has been a reason for the development of the structure			X		X	X	X				X	5
The levels of responsibilities are clearly defined and visible for everyone	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	9
I am satisfied with the structure we have chosen as organisation	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	9
Hierarchies: flat (fl) or strong (str)?	fl	str	str	fl	str	fl	str	str	fl	str	str	4 fl 7 str

All NGOs have encountered changes in their original structures, some by growth, others by mergers, but there has been continuous change in all. The striving for efficiency has been a reason for restructuring in nine out of eleven organisations, a clear majority. Only five NGOs said that gaining control has been a reason for conducting structural changes. Nine organisations said accountabilities and responsibilities were clear, which means that two struggled

with this issue. 5A stated in this context that hierarchies are often overrated, and that they exist only when it comes to making decisions, but that, in the end, there is nothing much to discuss (5A:429). In all cases, the top-down organisational hierarchy was familiar to the NGOs, exactly as Stahlke described in his “default model” (Stahlke & Loughlin 2003:4f). Nine out of eleven organisations expressed their satisfaction with their structures. In general, thus, the experiences of Stahlke & Loughlin (:5, see also 4.3.2.3) where accountabilities were not clearly defined, and people double-checked in their organisations before making decisions, could not be confirmed by the interviewees.

Regarding the flat or strong hierarchies, only four out of eleven organisations would describe their organisations’ structures as being flat. But some interviewees expressed their wish to have more teams instead of depending on strong hierarchies. It would be interesting to see whether, for Christian NGOs, non-hierarchical organisation structures, as explained by Stahlke, may be an alternative to their current structures. The impression in the interviews was that the interviewees knew a lot about how to run their organisations, e.g. how to coordinate projects and fund-raising, but the organisational structure seemed to be a blind spot. Their organisational structures may have been chosen out of lack of knowledge of alternative options.

Question 9.5 Does your organisation have an independent board of directors that is willing to hold top managers accountable for their behaviour and that is capable of verifying the information managers provide them with?

All eleven NGOs state that, on a financial basis, there are independent outside entities or persons to whom they are accountable. Studying the statutes, as well as the declaration of financial processes in the Annual Reports, this is an evident and given fact. This is also due to the fact that, in Germany, the two-tier board is prevalent (see 4.3.2.1). On further questions about whether accountability also applies to the behaviour and the verification of information, the answers were affirmative.

Table 41: Question 9.6 What kind of assessment, training and encouragement do you offer your staff?

1F	Common and proven personnel instruments.
2G	Collegial advice (2G:529), open doors (2G:529).
3B	Pastoral counselling (3B:463).
4G	Debriefings.
5A	Prayer partnerships (5A:439), an official blessing for new-comers to the organisation (5A:442).
6F	Participation in conferences (6F:480); debriefings.
7C	Spiritual retreats and exercises (7C:614-621).
8A	Culture of constructive feedbacks and appropriate participation (8A:627-630).
9F	An external HR consultant, paid by the NGO, who offers career counselling (9F:660-668).
10C	Open doors (10C:410-413).
11K	Spiritual retreats and exercises (11K:427-428).

Apart from all kinds of training possibilities on the basis on commonly-offered personnel instruments on an individual and team basis (especially trainings and employee appraisals), the NGOs offer, as support and encouragement, other elements that are listed in the table.

In general, the tendency is there that, when employees need something, the organisations seem to be open to listening to their individual needs and finding a solution. Elements of Christian pastoral care are visible in the encouragements which means that these do not entirely have been replaced by personnel instruments from the HR departments. In general, it seems that assessment or encouragement takes place on an individual basis rather than on the basis of Christian community. This seems also attributable to the prevailing individualism in society.

Question 9.7 Are there any incentive and reward systems (including promotional systems) that reward people who engage in ethical behaviour and sanction those who do not?

Except for 1F, no NGO offers a system with incentives and reward systems for people who engage in ethical behaviour. Most of the NGOs that answered with a

‘No’ added that they would not like to introduce such a system in the near future, but that usually issues are discussed in the annual appraisal on an individual level. 4G pointed out that such a system would rather generate envy and conflicts (4G:412).

In contrast, 1F introduced such a system in 2018. It is a rewarding system that rewards people who engage in ethical behaviour (1F:552-556).

It may need to be discussed whether incentives and reward systems with the aim of encouraging ethical behaviour is an instance that needs to be implemented in Christian NGOs at all compared to secular organisations or business companies.

Table 42: Question 9.8 Does your NGO encourage managers and employees to refuse to make a decision that will have short term (financial) benefits but long-term negative (ethical) consequences? Do they have the strength to say ‘no’ to their superiors?

NGO 1-11 → Answers ↓	1F	2G	3B	4G	5A	6F	7C	8A	9F	10C	11K	Σ
Encouragement to refuse making decisions with negative ethical consequences Yes (Y) / No (N)	Y			Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	7
		N	N			N	N					4

There are seven NGOs that intentionally encourage their employees to refuse to make a decision if ethically negative consequences can be anticipated.

Of the seven, one NGO states that special encouragement is not needed since they work in teams and always try to find a consensus (4G), two NGOs say that it is already part of their corporate culture (1F and 9F). In 9F members of the organisation even remind one another that they can say what they think and feel, and they do this by a motto that everyone has internalised¹²⁶. Two NGOs reported some examples where this was the case to show that in their organisations people have the courage to do so (1F and 5A). The CEO of 11K even

¹²⁶ This motto will not be published at this point for anonymity reasons.

expects people explicitly to say when things are not in order in their view (e.g. 11K:440).

Of those that deny offering such an intentional encouragement, one states that, even so, there is a culture of open dialogue (2G). 3B denies offering such an encouragement, since the strong hierarchical pressure does not allow for it. Some NGOs think that many people simply do not have the courage to do so, and that it depends a lot on the individual and not so much on a top-down issue by the leadership (6F and 7C).

Question 9.9 In your NGO, is there is a possibility for employees to approach someone that handles confidential inquiries or ethical dilemmas, such as an internal ombudsperson?

All NGOs have an internal ombudsperson. In some cases, and, according to the different organisational statutes, it is also possible to approach an external ombudsperson. 1F has two ombudspersons, one man and one woman, because they supposed that this was necessary. To their own surprise, however, men also accessed female ombudspersons, and *vice versa* (1F:573).

Question 9.10 How does your organisation deal with conflict among its employees?

The NGOs interviewed showed a variety of at least four possibilities of ways of tackling the problem of conflict. Two NGOs let the rivals find their own solution to the problem, with the help of a mediator in tough cases. Five NGOs named the use of professional instruments, such as mediation and consultancy, offered by internal HR-professionals, and four NGOs use the open-dialogue-method where the rivals, together with their peers or managers, discuss the issues at hand. In addition, one NGO named, as a last-named possibility, the use of labour law. This is obviously the last option, but necessary when nothing else is fruitful.

In the interviews it did not become clear at which point a Christian-minded manager would act differently from a secular manager in a given conflict situation. It seems that working with common values and confronting em-

employees with those values, forcing them to change behaviour in order to live according to the values, increases the pressure and helps to find a solution. Law-enforcing instruments may then not be necessary any longer, and they are used as a final option only.

Question 9.11 How do you deal with non-performance of staff?

The organisations in general opt for dialogue, finding acceptable solutions, until, if nothing helps, dismissal would be considered. 1F uses the situational leadership method¹²⁷. If an employee wants to work well, but cannot, then they will get all the support necessary from the organisation, e.g. finding a suitable alternative place within the organisation (1F:584). 7C states that, as Christians, managers usually show more patience when it comes to dealing with people who do not work satisfactorily (7C:716).

As far as it was possible to discover by the interviews, there seems to be no unreasonable hire-and-fire-mentality within the interviewed organisations.

6.3.4 Summary

Section 6.3 has tried to shed light on the way ethical matters are dealt with in their work-place by NGOs, and the challenges and tensions they face.

When asked how ethical decisions are made (question 7.1), some interviewees said they would identify what Jesus would do if faced with a similar situation. In addition, following principles and using reason were estimated as being important in decision-making process. All organisations say it is important to include staff members in their decision-making processes (question 7.2), but the details proved that they were torn between submitting to hierarchies and finding a consensus.

127 *Situational leadership* can be described as a method where leaders adapt their leadership style to the performance readiness (ability and willingness) of the individual. See also Blanchard, n.d.

There is a perceived tension between business and ethics in the workplace (question 8.1). Some stated that there is no contradiction between them, and both are to be given due attention; others stated that they influence each other, but that economic behaviour must always be subjected to Christian ethical principles. For all of them it was clear that there is a tension that needs to be tackled. In addition, it is important for some of the NGOs to have an ethical appearance in order to receive more funds. Funds need to be raised in order to function, and so the method of how funds are raised and the ethical use of them needs to be taken care of.

A majority of NGOs feel ignored by their churches (question 8.2), and so there is a perceived gap between workplace and church. In addition, the competition and survival within the marketplace is a strong reality, even among humanitarian organisations (question 8.3), that needs to be faced.

A majority of the interviewed NGOs say they address their stakeholders differently (question 8.4), depending on whether they are supposed to be Christian or not. According to them, this is necessary because Christian NGOs need to avoid the risk of being perceived as being religiously active.

Not many business ethical books are known or have been read (question 8.5) which gives rise to the assumption that the leaders of Christian NGOs are not well enough informed about Christian ethics and business ethics and this makes this study all the more necessary.

Mission statements (question 9.1) and other outlines, policy papers or statutes show elements of the Christian self-understanding, although the explanations and terms are often not well explained. Question 9.2 reveals that more importance is given to the skills of the professionals than to their being Christians. But both Christians and skilled professionals are needed.

In question 9.3 success was defined in terms of the results of the NGOs' operational work, but it was at no time linked to the conduct or perception of their employees or terms of personal fulfilment and receiving affirmation.

For the majority of NGOs, the reason of organisational restructuring was the result of efficiency (question 9.4), for some to gain control. For the majority of NGOs, the levels of responsibilities are clearly defined and visible for everyone in the organisation. Although the majority said that they were satisfied with the structures, not all were as well happy with their strong hierarchies.

All NGOs have an independent Board of directors that holds managers accountable (question 9.5) which is due to the two-tier structure of the Board in Germany. The organisations use common personnel instruments when it comes to the assessments, training and encouragement of their staff (question 9.6). But they are open to individual needs and try to find individual solutions for their employees. Except for one NGO, there are no incentive and reward systems in the NGOs (question 9.7).

A majority offer encouragement to those who refuse to make decisions with negative ethical consequences (question 9.8). Question 9.9 reveals that all NGOs have ombudspersons to deal with conflicts more effectively. Question 9.10 showed that conflicts among employees are tackled with professional instruments, such as mediation. Only in one NGO are employees forced to reflect on their behaviour and character. In the same vein, non-performance of staff (question 9.11) is dealt with by dialogue, trying to find good solutions, up to the point of a dismissal when nothing else is fruitful.

6.4 Final question

Question 10. *Is there anything else you would like to add? Anything that needs to be changed, upheld or improved after this interview?*

This final question could not be posed at all the interviews as a result of time restrictions. It was answered positively by 9F, where he stated that, as a result of the discussion in the interview, there has been some impetus he wants to think about for his organisation. The rest said, “No, everything has been said”.

One NGO added the following thoughts that are worth thinking about and are apt to form a final thought of this analysis:

What bothers me the most is the unresolved tension between what is said by Christians (their words) and how they live them (the deeds). It is a huge controversy. Organisations offer devotional times, but not many attend them because there is such a big difference between word and deed. But Christian values are such a good thing, and the outcome is also very good, but it is thwarted by this tension. It saddens me. And this can also be observed in other Christian organisations [...]. This is inherent in the system of Christian organisations. It has something to do with hypocrisy and falseness, which are really bad words. I believe that not many leaders perceive this tension. They probably think that they behave completely normally, but they do not receive any feedback or supervision. Nobody tells them, “listen, [...] why don’t you just be quiet about your Christian attitude and behave normally. [...]” The problem is that leaders bring in specific character traits; they want to exercise power, and this is independent from being Christian or not. They are often power-obsessed and have the ruthless dog-eat-dog mentality, but that is completely contrary to Christian leadership principles; it is incompatible. And this is where all the misunderstandings and the weird situations come from [...]. People from the outside [...] who say, let us see how Christians are, are surprised and say, ‘wow, that is what Christians are like? This is even worse than in other places.’ [...] I expect from a Christian leader that they behave differently from secular ones. This is [...] a question of how yardsticks are set. This is a highly challenging task [...]. They need to strive for receiving feedback, be open to critique and demand it [...] ¹²⁸ (8A:687-693, own translation).

128 The statement has been slightly smoothed out linguistically. Original quote: “Also, was für mich so ein bisschen gefehlt hat, das habe ich mal anklingen lassen, ist doch diese schwierige Geschichte bei christlichen Organisation, dass das, was nach außen verkündet wird und das, wie es gelebt wird, dass das auf einmal sehr spannungsreich ist. Also, was ich vorher erzählt habe mit der Andacht, dass viele Leute nicht mehr zur Andacht gehen, weil sie das als sehr große Kluft erleben. Und das ist für mich doppelt schlimm, also einmal, weil es einfach diese Spannung dann gibt und zum anderen war ja dann das Positive, was man jetzt als Christ möchte, nämlich, dass christliche Werte an sich was Gutes sind und dass man, wenn man sie lebt, auch was Gutes dabei herauskommt, dass das konterkariert wird. Also das schlägt eher ins Gegenteil dann um. Das finde ich sehr schade. Und das habe ich jetzt nicht nur hier erlebt, sondern auch bei anderen christlichen Organisationen [...] das ist irgendwie so systemimmanent bei christlichen Werken. Also, das schlimme Wort wäre Verlogenheit. Und ich glaube, dass viele das gar nicht so wahrnehmen, die in Führungspositionen sind, dass sie so wahrgenommen werden. Die verhalten sich nach ihrer Einschätzung vermutlich ganz nor-

This last comment shows that more clarity is needed regarding Christian ethics, both in terms of the theory and practice. In addition, joint reflection within the Christian NGO seems to be missing and this may be hampered by the given hierarchies. Character formation is inherently important in order to have mature leaders, but it seems to be a neglected issue, not only in the NGO from which this comment comes, but, to a great extent in all NGOs.

mal und richtig, aber kriegen nicht das Feedback, das sie vielleicht bräuchten oder eine Supervision, wo mal jemand sagen würde, hör mal zu [...] also besser, du würdest überhaupt nicht dein christliches Menschsein rauskehren, sondern würdest ganz normal dich verhalten. [...] Es kommen nur bestimmte Leute in Führungspositionen, mit bestimmten Charaktereigenschaften, unabhängig jetzt vom christlich oder nicht christlich. Das sind dann schon eher Leute, die, ja, ich will nicht sagen, machtbesessen sind, aber Macht ausüben wollen, die eher sich durchsetzen und manchmal eine gewisse Ellenbogenmentalität an den Tag legen und das ist meiner Meinung nach ein Widerspruch zu christlichen Führungsprinzipien, das heißt sich. Und da kommen dann vielleicht auch oft diese komischen Situationen oder Missverständnisse her. [...] Aber jemand, der jetzt mit neugierigem Blick draufschaut und sagt: jetzt will ich doch mal sehen, wie die Christen hier leben, der denkt sich dann, häh, das soll christlich sein, ja also da ist es doch noch schlimmer als woanders. [...] Ich erwarte auch von einer christlichen Leitung schon ein bisschen anderes Verhalten als von einer säkularen [...] das ist auch eine Frage des Maßstabes. Das ist natürlich eine hohe Anforderung [...] Also ich erwarte zumindest von der christlichen Leitung, dass sie sehr bemüht ist um Feedback, sich öffnet gegenüber Kritik und die auch einfordert [...]” (8A:687-693).

6.5 Conclusion

I conclude this chapter with a brief summary of the data found by having conducted interviews with the eleven NGOs. For this conclusion, I follow the structure of this chapter and provide the findings to 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3. The questions answered are as follows:

- (1) How do Christian NGOs relate to the society and world?
- (2) How is ethics understood and lived out in a Christian organisation?
- (3) How do Christian NGOs deal with ethical matters in their organisation?

It must be pointed out that, owing to the ecumenism in Germany between Roman-Catholic and Protestant churches, it was not possible to determine which answers belonged to a specific denomination as may have been expected.

(1) “How do Christian NGOs relate to the society and world in which they live?”

(6.1)

Christian NGOs see themselves as part of the society and as those who want to shape and change societal life (question 2.6). Their ethical sources come from the Bible, human conscience and Christian theological thinking (questions 1.1 and 1.2). The aim of most of their leaders follows Christian thinking, living a good life by loving God and others (question 1.4). Shaping public life in their work as humanitarian agencies is motivated by the obligation to help the needy, but also by a sincere concern for them (question 2.1). In general, they do their work because it is right for them and there is a satisfaction of doing a good work which results in a personal fulfilment.

In contrast, the interaction with the (secular and pluralistic) German society is rather controversial. The NGOs' stakeholders are so different that it is not easy to address them equally. While the Christian donor may want to see more Christian activity, secular donors require ever less Christian elements. To receive institutional donations, the Christian identity may well be downplayed be-

cause a religious emphasis may jeopardise the conducting of a project (question 3.1). The project proposals submitted by the NGOs have to be ‘neutral’, which means free of all religious tendencies. But it must be clear that, in reality, nobody, including secular thinkers and practitioners, can be ‘neutral’, and there are no ‘neutral’ world-views.

Christian NGOs comply with the demands and standards from secular supranational and national institutions, but this happens at a cost; some NGOs experience insecurity in their work (question 3.2), others cope by surrendering to the separation of ‘word’ and ‘deed’ and accept the accomplishing of the ‘deeds’ as their sole mandate. This is confirmed in question 4.7, where most of the interviewees see themselves as belonging to Type Two of Thaut’s Taxonomy (“synthesis organisations”) where one of the points is that evangelism is a non-issue. This seems to be a severe limitation of Christian self-understanding and is apt to disturb the identity of a Christian organisation. The question, thus, arises as to whether Christian NGOs should not question or challenge governments, institutions and their standards regarding this matter.

(2) “How is ethics understood and lived out in a Christian organisation?” (6.2)

As a consequence of the limitation of the ‘word’ and ‘deed’ demand as discussed previously, Christian organisations in general are hardly distinguishable from secular ones (question 4.1). In addition, secularism seems to have influenced the staff to the point that even the weekly devotions, which are the most common way for the organisations to express Christian life, are not well attended when offered as a voluntary event (question 4.3). In addition, the orientation on ‘deeds’ results in formulating organisational goals aimed primarily at improving the material situation of the beneficiaries.

The churches to which the interviewees belong seem not able to handle, or are not aware of, these challenges. As a result, and because the interviewees mostly do not take ideas and impetus from their churches into their work-place,

a certain alienation between the work-places and the churches can be observed (question 4.8). This alienation also becomes visible in questions 5.4 (teaching of the church does not help in the forming of a character) and 8.2 (no support of the churches in their work-places).

Issues of character as well as character formation hardly ever play a role, and they are not fostered or facilitated in the organisations (question 5.1). In addition, Christian elements in the corporate cultures of the different organisations are not greatly pronounced (questions 6.1 and 6.4), and it seems that, for most Christian NGOs, apart from the regular devotional times, their culture may not be distinguishable from other, secular, organisations. But NGOs need to support and form the members of the NGOs and build a Christian corporate culture that is distinguishable from the secular one for the people who work in the organisation as well as for prospective candidates.

In addition, there is no systematic approach to finding out how principles and values are best put into practice (question 6.2). Christian NGOs seem not to be aware of the principles and values of their organisations, and they do not know how to transform them into their daily work in order to take advantage of them. Values and principles also seem not to be reflected in the work community; there is no joint discussion about them. Reflection regarding the principles and values are obviously left to the individual.

The interviewees are convinced that Christian NGOs do need ethical codes, and that being Christians or belonging to a church does not exempt them from needing them (question 6.3). Since organisations also have a moral responsibility for most of the interviewees (question 4.9), ethical codes are meant to address organisations as well. Only four NGOs out of eleven have, however, established ethical codes for their organisations, as shown in the overview of organisations in chapter five (5.4.3).

These findings reveal that a majority of NGOs miss the support of their churches. In addition, each member misses support and formation inside the

organisation. There needs to be a study and a joint discussion about Christian ethics up to the point where values and principles as well as character issues are reflected upon in the organisation.

(3) “How do Christian NGOs deal with ethical matters in their work-place?” (6.3). A majority of Christian NGOs regard decision-making (question 7.1) by identifying what Jesus would do if faced with a similar situation, but they would also follow principles and be guided by reason. Decision-making processes are, thus, based on different ethical frameworks that co-exist side by side (duty and virtue as well as consequential ethics in question 9.3). This means that it is not ‘either/or’ with regard to ethical frameworks, but, obviously, a mix of a number of them which can be drawn from Weber whose pragmatic evaluation about responsibility promotes a responsible use of a mix of different ethical frameworks, not only emphasising intentions or consequences or only principles and values. A responsible person knows what to do and is ready to answer the ‘why’ of their decisions and behaviour (see also 2.3.4.4). In these decision-making processes, religious values play a role (question 4.6) and staff members should be included in these processes (question 7.2). Both values (especially the question about which ones) and participation processes (especially the ‘who’, ‘when’ and ‘how’), reveal a lack of moral clarity within the organisations.

Christian NGOs in Germany generally believe that ethics are important in their workplace (question 8.1). The fact that NGOs are under the same or a similar pressure as profit companies with regard to efficiency and competition is reflected in their organisational structure in which hierarchies are predominantly strong (question 9.4).

Most of the interviewees feel isolated from their respective churches regarding matters of their work-place (question 8.2). They find that their churches rather neglect their specific needs, and thus contribute to the separation of work-place and faith. Apart from common personnel instruments, Christian

NGOs offer different forms of assessment, training and encouragement, such as pastoral counselling, career counselling, debriefings, spiritual retreats and other things to their employees (question 9.6) in a non-systematic way. They are also open to the individual needs of their employees.

The organisations' understanding of success is very much defined in regard to the customers (the beneficiaries) and is measured by performance indicators (question 9.3), but no NGO offers a definition of success in which their own employees are included.

In addition, there are no promotional systems when it comes to ethical behaviour (question 9.7). For specific situations, such as conflicts among employees (question 9.10) or non-performance (question 9.11), the NGOs seem to have concrete procedures to follow. All Christian NGOs gave the assurance that problems are tackled by dialogue, trying to find good solutions, but that, as a last option, dismissals always needed to be considered. A so-called 'fire-and-hire' mentality could not be identified in the interviews. The rational, economic, self-interested leader does not prevail in Christian NGOs and leadership issues are generally taken seriously. Significantly, as 8A noticed in answering the final question (question 10, p. 274), the attitude of 'walk-the-talk' seems to be missing with many Christian leaders.

What is missing are joint reflections over the differences in the communication and participation processes and how they can be improved as well as the questioning of organisational issues. Also missing is the consideration of employees in the strategic thought of the organisation, since employees wish to receive personal fulfilment and affirmation in their work. In addition, Christian community life is missing, as well as the character formation of not only the individual employee, but also of the leaders of the organisation. They are expected to lead maturely and responsibly. For this, there is a need for helpful means of tackling these challenges to be introduced.

Apparently, organisations and their leaders may need to consider some of these points and may find some help in the suggestions provided in the next chapter (chapter seven).

7. Conclusions and suggestions

7.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter recalls the reasons for this study and provides a summary of the research and the conclusions. It also provides answers to the research question and its sub-questions and outlines recommendations. In addition, the contributions and the significance of the study are outlined, and finally, issues for further research are identified.

7.2 Reasons and aims of the research

In chapter one, I recalled my time as a CEO for the German affiliate office of a mid-size humanitarian agency, based outside Germany. During this period, I observed major conflicting issues in the realms of work within a Christian NGO. These issues were described in chapter one and are the motivation for the research study.

The aims of the research study were, firstly, to identify the extent to which Christian NGOs draw from philosophical, theological and business ethical thought in their work and how moral responsibility is visible within the organisation in relation to the society, in relation to its own administration, and among the members of the organisation as individuals. The second aim was to gather empirical information from the NGOs themselves and discover whether this information correlates with the theoretical data derived from chapters two, three and four.

In order to do this, literature regarding philosophy, ethics, business ethics and relevant issues regarding humanitarian NGOs, and the practical challenges of their insights, were studied to identify the most important key issues. The theoretical part of the research, therefore, was the foundation for the empirical research which was conducted with the help of semi-structured interviews. My own experiences as a manager of both multinationals and NGOs further con-

tributed to the desire to find out what it is about philosophical and theological frameworks that influences Christian NGOs.

7.3 Theoretical and empirical results

In this section, the findings of the theoretical and the empirical research will be presented, drawn from the theoretical chapters and the empirical data. In the first and introductory chapter, the research question is stated. Because this research question is answered with the help of three sub-questions, I will answer the three sub-questions, providing conclusions that will, in the end, answer the research question. The findings are structured based on these three sub-questions and include the results of the theory chapters two, three and four, as well as the empirical research that was set out in chapters five and six. Recommendations, if any, will be made in the course of the description of the findings.

Based on the idea that Christian NGOs do not work in isolation from the societies around them but are instead influenced by political, ethical and religious movements, the theoretical and empirical research attempted to answer the following main research question with the help of the three sub-questions:

Which ethical frameworks influence – consciously or unconsciously – organisational practices and behaviour of Christian organisations?

- How do Christian NGOs relate to the society and world in which they live?
- How is ethics understood and lived out in a Christian organisation?
- How do Christian NGOs deal with ethical matters in their organisational structures and practices?

7.3.1 Sub-question one: *How do Christian NGOs relate to the society and world in which they live?*

As discussed in chapter one (1.3.2.2), Christian ethics reflects on the values, norms, virtues and purposes of Christian life in any given contemporary con-

text. This calls for faith that is accompanied by action and a love that is a distinctive feature of every aspect of a Christian's life. For Christian NGOs, this includes actions that manifest the grace, love and charity of Christ in social and economic life and also in daily business life. Christian ethics is concerned not only with moral behaviour in this life but also with humanity's ultimate destiny. Religions are a source of ethics, they are a system of beliefs, moral values and practices, and they form a relevant *ultimate concern* of individuals and communities. Christians need to understand their Jewish roots where the love of God and the love and care for strangers play an important role. They also need to consider sources of Christian ethics such as the conscience and the Bible as well as Christian tradition and human experience.

As was discussed in chapter two (2.4), the main finding was that rationalist and secular ethics, especially from the Enlightenment onwards, increasingly disregarded the theological contribution in favour of scientific, 'rational' and 'objective' sources, and, thus, ruled out faith. As a result, a separation between the material and the spiritual, as well as faith and reason, was seen in Western societies, and this is reflected in the world-views of their citizens. In these world-views, moral questions relative to good and evil are not answered in any absolute manner, but only in relative ways. God and issues of faith for many are no longer existent (or may be lived out only in rather private realms). In addition, individualism has been adopted as a main societal framework in Western countries, and religion has started to become a private matter (2.4). This means that Germany, together with most Western countries, has become an individualistic, secular society and this may have influenced Christian NGOs to a great extent. It can, therefore, be argued that Christians may have adopted humanistic attitudes in their private and business lives which may lead to situations where Christian NGOs and their leaders encounter difficulties with regard to expressing their Christian faith within these societies. The analysis of the empirical study has shown that, regarding the world-views and sources of ethical think-

ing, the interviewed NGOs showed a high ranking of faith-based orientations, such as the Bible, conscience and theological teaching, whereas secular approaches were ranked low (6.1.1, question 1.1). Their motivation stems primarily from a feeling of an obligation towards the needy ones, as well as a sincere concern for needy people and a sense of personal fulfilment when being able to help (6.1.2, question 2.1).

In chapter two also, we found that social ethics (2.3.4.1), deriving from biblical sources as well as approaches from thinkers such as Aquinas' *Common Good* and Augustine's *Ordo Amoris*, were based on values such as love, responsibility and human dignity. God's love and the Kingdom of God are emphasised within both Protestant and Catholic social work where socio-political goals are put into practice to make the world a better place. Christians, and in particular Christian NGOs, clearly need to be engaged in this vision and they should, thus, understand and know about social ethics and its historical and biblical roots. The empirical part showed that, even when Christian NGOs stated that there is a need to be politically active (6.1.2, question 2.6) and that they see it as a clear necessity and as their mandate to change the world for the better, the knowledge of social ethics does not seem to be very strong (6.2.1, question 4.2).

In chapter four (4.2.2) we found that Christian NGOs suffer from ambivalent approaches from the secular environment, since, on the one hand, institutions and governments are open to Christian faith when it comes to humanitarian work, but, on the other hand, a public manifestation of religious issues makes it difficult for NGOs to receive public donations. The empirical part (6.1.3, questions 3.1 and 3.2) confirmed this ambivalent situation in the relationship between Christian NGOs and secular society. Christian NGOs admit that a certain downplaying of their Christian faith cannot be avoided when donations are at stake and that the controversial communication (openness to Christian faith, but, on the other side, a negative view of religion, for example by UN agencies and governments), makes the NGOs experience a certain insecurity.

In addition, in chapter four (4.3.1.2), we found that the secular standards and codes in the humanitarian field are mostly voluntary self-commitments, but Christian NGOs need to conform to some of them in order not to experience disadvantages. These standards and codes, on the one hand, try to convince the donors that values are taken care of and also that their money is not being used fraudulently. On the other hand, these standards may include statements that limit a Christian NGO's religious activities. The empirical study (6.1.3, questions 3.3 and 3.4) showed that Christian NGOs choose secular standards and codes and, mostly, ignore Christian codes since the latter seem not to be relevant to the aim of receiving public funding. The underlying values that obviously seem to be at stake here can be emphasised by Christian NGOs in their communication with their stakeholders in order to make it clear that these are taken care of.

Concluding sub-question one (how Christian NGOs relate to the society and the world in which they live), it can be said that, whereas the ethical sources of the interviewees point to a clear Christian tradition and to the Bible, which are very positively acknowledged, there is strong compliance with secular society. Christians working in the humanitarian field have partly accepted and adopted humanistic attitudes to enable their organisations to function. This is also due to the fact that secularism has become the dominant ideology in the humanitarian field (Arumugam 2014:33, see also 2.3.4.3), in which faith as a motive for social action is discarded. This must – inevitably – lead to situations where Christian NGOs and their leaders encounter difficulties in expressing their Christian faith within a secular society and to their stakeholders.

For Christian NGOs, therefore, it is important to understand this background, and they may, thus, need to question the narrow secular stance of governments and their institutions. They may also need to know about Christian ethics, especially social ethics, because here they can find the link between their

work and their faith in more concrete ways, both from an individual and organisational point of view.

7.3.2 Sub-question two: *How is ethics understood and lived out in a Christian organisation?*

In chapter three (3.2), the main finding was that, during the time of the Greek philosophers, ethics and business practice belonged together and were perceived as a unity. During the medieval times of Benedictine monasteries, working place, faith and everyday life were also a unity, as was the case at the time of the Reformers and during the era of the honourable merchant. It was because of the Enlightenment that a scientific-rational world-view (also in economic matters) was established. Rational economic thought began with classical liberalism which was based on a misunderstanding of Adam Smith's doctrine of self-interest. As a consequence, the working place, faith and everyday life started to become fragmented.

In addition, in Germany this rational view, together with the model of the *homo oeconomicus* (3.2.7), remains the main way in which economics is taught in Germany today. This model is based on the assumption that business is about rational behaviour only, and the aim of business is the accumulation of wealth and money, with the highest possible efficiency, ignoring emotions, ethical reasoning and religious convictions. In the last few decades, a behaviourist approach has emerged as a counter-concept of the rational model of the *homo oeconomicus*, including specific psychological aspects that focus on the autonomy and self-assertion of the human being and argue that behaviour is influenced by environmental factors. Christian NGOs may have leaders who have been formed in these 'rational' ways.

The empirical study has shown that the Christian NGOs interviewed indeed were familiar with the concepts of rational business, as observed in the profit business world. This was the case, for example, with efficiency issues, not least because of the strong competition among Christian humanitarian NGOs in

Germany (6.3.2, question 8.3) and the definition of success (6.3.3 question 9.3). Christian NGOs have also shown that they use the methods of modern Human Resources naturally, such as elements from staff and organisational development with all its psychological content (6.3.3, question 9.6). Even if the behaviouristic approach pays more attention to the human worker and includes more human-related issues, Christian NGOs should understand the humanistic background of the behaviouristic and psychological approaches, such as the concept of the human autonomy. Christian NGOs, thus, should draw on other ways of thinking, but not in an uncritical way that denies Christian beliefs. They may also need to know about how business ethics has evolved during the centuries and what its consequences are for them personally and for their organisations. They may also find support in concepts such as the honourable merchant which can help overcome the gaps between rational and behavioural aspects and between business and ethics. But it may also help in dealing with the challenge regarding the professionals. For most of the NGOs, more importance is given to the skills of the professionals than to their being Christians (6.3.3, question 9.2), but both are needed in a Christian NGO.

Regarding the perceived tension (3.3) between business and ethics in the workplace, some philosophers and thinkers stated that there is no contradiction between them and both are to be given due attention; others stated that they influence each other, but that economic behaviour must always be subjected to Christian ethical principles. The empirical part (6.3.2, question 8.1) showed that, even if no NGO sees that they exclude each other, which is very positive, they admit that there is an existent tension. Christian NGOs suffer from the influence of secularism in a way that it makes it hard for them to express their faith; the responses of the Christian NGOs regarding their self-understanding, for example, revealed that some NGOs struggle to see clear differences between Christian and non-Christian humanitarian organisations (6.2.1, question 4.1). 'Love' was mentioned by only one NGO as one differentiating element of many,

whereas some NGOs referred to ‘motivation’ and ‘values’. Two of the interviewees did not see any differences at all.

As discussed in chapters two (2.3.4.5) and four (4.3.3.4), virtue and character were issues as early as the era of the Greek philosophers, but it was more recently, however, that thinkers again emphasised the importance of virtue ethics and character. Christian ethics requires this emphasis on moral behaviour and moral formation. But, in mainstream business literature, moral formation and character issues play no role or are mistaken for professional skills which are not sufficient. The empirical part (6.2.2, all questions) revealed that character issues as part of Christian ethics in an organisation, receive little emphasis. The necessity for something like character formation in the organisations was also practically non-existent; it is not currently offered to the employees and not fostered within these NGOs. Although the interviewed organisations could describe important character traits for their employees and leaders, they do not have a character-check for potential candidates. Professional competence and other skills receive more attention. Christian NGOs should, thus, think about ways of how to integrate moral formation for all employees, and, in particular, for their leaders.

The literature study (4.3.2.5) showed that the corporate culture is the collection of values and norms shared by all the members of an organisation. Culture, however, is only one part of a framework that is aimed at establishing a coherent corporate identity. The aim must be to establish a corporate Christian identity that is not directed only at the employees, but can also be perceived and understood from the outside (4.3.2.6). All elements (corporate culture, appearance and image), therefore, need to show how the organisation lives out its convictions and its values, and how it deals with secularism in the humanitarian sector, such as a critique on terms like ‘neutrality’ or evangelism. They need to be coherent in order for the NGO to be credible and in the same way attractive to current and prospective donors and employees. This can be accom-

plished by clarifying the values and basic assumptions of the corporate culture as a first step through employee surveys or cultural analyses. The corporate image describes the characteristics of the organisation in the eyes of outsiders, for example through objects or behaviours which needs to be analysed as well, e.g. by way of surveys or interviews (Scholz 2014:422-423). Amongst the interviewed Christian NGOs (6.2.3, all questions), a number of principles, values and ethical codes are stressed, but whether they are put into practice in a systematic way is not clear. Most of the NGOs do not appear to know how Christian values can contribute to the success of the whole organisation. This also correlates with the fact that there are almost no visible patterns of behaviour or symbols. Most Christian elements are formal elements, such as devotions at the beginning of meetings or a worship service once a week (that admittedly was not attended in high numbers, if it was voluntary). In sum, then, the Christian profile, as well as a corporate identity, seemed to be shaped relatively weakly. Since an ethical appearance is important for most NGOs (question 8.1), but, on the other side, some NGOs downplay their Christian faith (question 3.1), this lack of coherence and application of culture, image, appearance, and identity may be dangerous, since some Christian NGOs may lose some of their distinctively Christian features.

In the theoretical study (3.4) another finding was that both individuals and organisations are moral agents in an organisation. We, therefore, discussed the ways in which this could be shown in a practical way in sections 4.3.1 [policies] and 4.3.2 [processes]), namely by deciding on issues such as corporate citizenship and corporate governance, just to name two, which will also be discussed in the next section (sub-question three). The empirical part (6.2.1 question 4.9) revealed some insecurities in handling this very important matter regarding the moral agency of individuals or organisations. Clarification of this matter is, however, necessary in order to address good governance, structures, moral learning, responsible change and ethical culture.

To conclude the second sub-question, namely how Christian ethics is understood and lived out in their organisations, it can be said that here also the influence of secularism (or rationalism) can be observed, instituted by a narrow ethical approach that prevails in the economy and is taught in the universities. Many of the leaders of NGOs may be shaped consciously or unconsciously by the thoughts of the *homo oeconomicus*, the mathematical-rational approach of how to lead organisations and also by the predominant separation of business and ethics. This becomes evident in the weak self-understanding of their Christian identity, but also by the almost non-existent handling of character and character formation which is not emphasised. For this, it may be helpful to deal with the example of the *honourable merchant* (or an updated version of it that would include global challenges, as discussed in 3.2.5) where the division between ethics and business is bridged, as it combines the three ‘P’s, and includes not only the moral agency of both individuals and organisations but also character issues.

7.3.3 Sub-question three: *How do Christian NGOs deal with ethical matters in their organisational structures and practices?*

In chapter four we found that the secular-scientific world-view has left its mark on Christian humanitarian work. Apart from the so-called ‘excluded middle’ (4.2.1) where the addressing of spiritual matters got lost to a certain extent, there is a strict separation of ‘word’ and ‘deed’, and a split of the spiritual from the material. It can, thus, be argued that Christians may not be aware of their own underlying world-views and may be influenced by humanistic thought which has consequences for the work of Christian NGOs and their behaviour towards their stakeholders and their organisations.

The empirical part has shown that Christian NGOs suffer from a strong separation of word and deed (6.2.1, question 4.4); they have also yielded to the pressure exerted by a secular society, umbrella organisations as well as supra-

national organisations and governments by excluding appropriate evangelistic activities from their agendas. This can also be seen in the results of their classifications according to Thaut (6.2.1, question 4.7); two NGOs admit that they belong to the accommodative type of organisation which means they are indistinguishable from secular agencies, and at least four other NGOs (6.2.1, question 4.1) struggled with the religious orientation of their organisation or did not see any differences between secular and Christian ones. We, thus, see that more than half of the interviewed organisations are having difficulties defining their Christian profile. Christian organisations that are indistinguishable from secular organisations have lost their Christian visibility and uniqueness. While a wrong type of evangelism ought to be criticised, to ignore the faith basis of Christian NGOs within the organisation and also in the field work is counter-productive, especially when the NGOs are working in countries that are open to the Christian faith.

In addition, spiritual realities of the unseen world need to be addressed as well as the spiritual needs of both members of the organisation and beneficiaries which need to be on the agenda. The strong separation can also be seen in the fact that a majority of the interviewed NGOs say they address their stakeholders differently (6.3.2, question 8.4) depending on whether they are supposed to be Christian or not. According to them, this is necessary because Christian NGOs need to avoid the risk of being perceived as being religiously active.

In chapter four (4.3.3.3), we discussed that, on the foundation of Christian ethics, decisions in a Christian NGO have to be made in such a way that values, norms, virtues and purposes of Christian life are reflected. The consequences need to be anticipated so that the decisions made bring about the best results. In addition, the values and norms need to allow for a decision to be made, and the question of what a good person would do needs to be answered. The different points of view taken from normative, situational and existential aspects (according to Schirrmacher, see 4.3.3.3), as well as Bonhoeffer's four mandates

(4.3.3.3), may form the base of decision-making for Christian NGOs. The empirical research (6.3.1, question 7.1) revealed that the NGOs stressed different ways of ethical decision-making. Jesus' role model received high scores by half of the interviewees; decision-making on the base of 'considering principles' as well as decision-making by 'using reason' received high scores by the rest. Although a very positive result, Christian NGOs may find help in knowing and practising the mix of possible decision-making methods and tools.

In chapter four (4.3.2.2) we learned that ethical organisations need to have a 'system of integrity'¹²⁹ in order to enable the organisation, and not only the individual, to act in responsible ways, i.e. it is the infrastructure of the organisation that has to facilitate the ethical behaviour of their employees and managers. The answers in the empirical part (6.3.3), showed that the mission statements of the interviewed Christian NGOs do not always include Christian values or principles, but these are instead explained in policy papers or statutes which is very positive (question 9.1). Regarding the functional discursive infrastructure, more than half of the NGOs systematically encourage critical voices (question 9.8), and all of them offer ombuds-people for their employees (question 9.9). Only one NGO offers incentive systems (question 9.7) in order to reward people who engage in ethical behaviour. The majority offer none, and some even reject the idea of having one. Owing to the many standards and public pressure, ethically-conscious controlling and auditing, as well as topics of good corporate governance, seem to be managed well in Christian NGOs. For the majority of NGOs, the reason for organisational restructuring was the result of efficiency (question 9.4), for some to gain control. Although the majority said that they were satisfied with the structures, not all were as happy with their strong hierarchies. In addition, all organisations are convinced that Christian organisations are not exempt from needing ethical codes (6.2.3, question 6.3).

129 Mission statements, codes of ethics, incentive structures, functional discursive infrastructure and ethics-conscious controlling and auditing.

In the theoretical chapters, we discussed the topic of corporate citizenship (4.3.1.1) and stewardship (4.3.1.3), namely the responsibility towards society and the world which for Christian NGOs would mean a clear political responsibility that needs to be taken care of. The empirical study (6.1.2, question 2.6) showed that all interviewees believe that political engagement is necessary for a Christian organisation and all strive to make the world a better place using their work as a bridge-builder to other sectors of society. The document analysis revealed that matters of stewardship receive positive attention and are seen as being important.

A last important finding from the empirical study is that there seems to be a general dissatisfaction and a certain frustration regarding the relationship of the church towards them and their organisation. The interviewees do not primarily take ideas and impetus from their churches into their work-place (6.2.1, question 4.8). Some interviewees also admit that the teaching of the church does not help in the forming of a character (6.2.2, question 5.4), and that there seems to be no support from the churches in their work-places (6.3.2, question 8.2). The churches to which the interviewees belong seem to ignore some of them in their business life and in this way contribute to the perceived rift between spiritual and business matters. But, as Willem Fourie states in his article ‘Can Christian ethics be used to engage business?’, a critical engagement from the churches with those in business life may be important, but there are also ways a church can “engage constructively, in the sense of co-creating solutions” (Fourie 2012:54).

Concluding this third sub-question, namely how Christian NGOs deal with ethical matters in their organisations, it can be said that the empirical study affirmed the assumption that Christian NGOs are strongly influenced by humanistic thought. A separation of ‘word’ and ‘deed’ seems to be commonplace within Christian NGOs. The different ethical matters inside the three ‘P’,

policies, processes and people – issues proposed by Maak and Ulrich (2007) – reveal that, in general, Christian NGOs are aware of many of the issues discussed here, and leaders try to act responsibly. For example, the interviewed leaders of Christian NGOs are open to individual needs and usually try to find individual solutions for their employees (6.3.3, question 9.6). It appeared, however, that some issues were missing, e.g. joint reflections over the differences in the communication (i.e. addressing Christian and non-Christian stakeholders differently) and participation processes and how they can be improved as well as the questioning of the prevalently strong top-down hierarchical approaches. Another missing issue is the way employees can be supported in their desire to receive personal fulfilment and affirmation in their work. In addition, it appeared that, in general, Christian community life is missing within the Christian NGOs.

7.4 Contribution of the study and future research

This study has contributed to the findings of Christian faith-based NGOs in their relationship with a secular environment on a macro-, meso- and micro-level. It has included ethical frameworks, philosophical and theological ethical thought as well as business ethical thought and their implications for the attitudes, work and behaviour of Christian NGOs. It has shown how Christian NGOs are affected negatively by the developments triggered by the historical separation between faith and reason. This has severe consequences for the way in which Christian NGOs work, how they perceive themselves and those they strive to help.

A significant contribution comes from the empirical data. Some (sometimes subtle) assumptions could be affirmed, and some not. The empirical study affirmed that communication when approaching Christian or non-Christian donors or stakeholders is mostly processed differently. It also affirmed the strongly hierarchical organisational structures. Some assumptions needed to be corrected after the empirical study, such as the overwhelming positive attitude towards political activity as well as the assumption that Christian NGOs thought

they would not need an ethical code (because of being Christian). In addition, a hire-and-fire mentality of Christian NGOs was not noticeable in the interviews.

The empirical study also revealed some surprises, such as the lack of emphasis on character issues and a missing character-checklist for incumbents. In addition, the frustration of many leaders with their relationship with their churches was not assumed at the beginning of this research study. It was also surprising to see the deep impact of secularisation within most of the NGOs and their weak knowledge of social and Christian ethics.

Future research could be done by including other countries in this study, adding international headquarters to national ones and comparing the results with one another. Inter-cultural elements of leadership, such as power-distance, collectivistic or individualistic challenges in the work-place and uncertainty-avoidance, according to Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede 2009), could also be researched in this context.

In addition there is Peirong Lin's research study (2018) which overlapped with mine, so that I could not build on her results when I designed my research. In her thesis, Lin outlines the Trinity as the basis of the *Missio Dei*, and World Vision as being part of that mission, particularly in its quest for justice. For example she shows that God who sends the church also sends Christian organisations by the way that they participate in the mission of God. She shows that, in the core documents of World Vision, there is a clear avowal to witness, but that this has waned as the organisation has developed (Lin 2018:188). World Vision has instead put a focus on the quest for justice. But the International Congress on World Evangelisation in Lausanne in 1974 states that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of the Christian duty. The rift between word and deed observed in my research with the German Christian organisations as well as the replacement of a former charity orientation with justice issues is confirmed in her research. Lin's work can, thus, be seen as an interesting complement to this research.

7.5 Conclusion

This thesis has discussed different ethical frameworks from which Christian NGOs draw, and the organisational practices and the conduct of Christian NGOs. The theoretical part has shown that world-views always show elements of faith. In Germany and in most Western countries, secular-scientific world-views have been adopted by the majority in their societies. We discussed this replacement of world-views and the contributions by the Greek philosophers and the many different philosophical and theological thinkers, such as Augustine, Aquinas and Kant. The implications resulting from this development for Christian NGOs and their work were also discussed in this thesis.

Secondly, we discussed the fact that, in the course of the centuries and owing to the mentioned developments, ethics, politics and economics separated to a certain extent which also influenced organisations so that ethics and business started to become separated. This also had an influence on Christian NGOs. In addition, here, different philosophical and theological thinkers, but especially business ethicists, were dealt with, such as Smith, Ricardo, Friedman and Homann as well as their contributions to this development.

A third point was the discussion about Christian faith-based NGOs regarding their organisations and their faith. Here, we discussed the historical development and influences of social ethics on their work, as well as organisational issues regarding macro-, meso- and micro-levels, such as leadership and moral formation.

The empirical part showed that, for a majority of the interviewed Christian NGOs, faith issues and ethics are separate from work life, and work-life is mainly filled with the concerns about the thought and processes of their deeds. But they also have strong convictions that send out positive signals into a secular world, for example the activities that Christian NGOs take part in helps shape public life, the positive role models of the Bible, the way they care for corporate citizenship, etc. There are, however, some issues that need to be worked

on if Christian NGOs want to shape public life effectively as Christians and act as a light in a secular and pluralistic world. Points that should be thought over have been included in the findings of this chapter (7.3), e.g. the weak Christian corporate identity, the inclusion of character matters, etc. Reflection on Christian ethics, especially social ethics, as well as reflection on the separation of the material and the spiritual seems also not to be well practised and is generally weak.

Finally, in closing, I affirm that I am very impressed by the work Christian NGOs do in Germany. Their work is very important for the society and for reducing the problems of the world. Many donors acknowledge the work that Christian NGOs do in Germany, and they trust the NGOs highly. While there are a number of areas of concern that could be addressed, such as the points mentioned above, there are also many aspects that can be affirmed and celebrated.

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Appendix A: The research questionnaire

Introductory questions

The organisation was founded in (year, location) _____

How many employees and volunteers are in the German headquarters? _____

What is the position/function of the interviewee? _____

The organisations' projects are relief or development, or both? _____

Which ethical codes – if any – exist in the interviewee's organisation? _____

Section I: How do Christian NGOs relate to the society and world in which they live?

1. What are the sources of your ethical thinking?

1.1 Where do you think does the source of morality comes from? *Tick the five most important.*

- The Bible
- Christian theological teaching or traditions
- Guidance of the Holy Spirit
- Human conscience
- Family teaching
- The example of people I admire
- Cultural values
- Philosophical principles
- Human experience
- Nature (human nature)
- None of the above mentioned, since ethical rules are simply man-made
- Other: _____

Please explain:

1.2 In which ways have the options you have selected influenced your role and conduct in your organisation? Can you provide an example?

Please explain:

1.3 What motivates human beings to do what is right and good? *Please tick the options you agree with and explain.*

- It is the love of God that directs our human will towards what is right
- The human will is completely autonomous
- By “nature” human beings are inclined to follow God’s law, on the basis of free will, and their reasoning capacity.
- The “fall” has damaged the human will and reasoning capacity, so the will and mind need to be redeemed by Christ to operate correctly.

1.4 In your opinion, how should human beings aim to live? *Please rank them in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 5 the least important.*

- To experience a good life and happiness on this earth
- To experience a good life on this earth by loving God and others
- To one day inherit eternal life in the next world
- To work towards the common good for the human society
- To live according right norms and duties in order to experience a happy life.

2. What motivates those who work in Christian NGOs?

2.1 What do you think the motivation of the members of development and relief organisations should be? *Tick all the options that are applicable for your organisation.*

- An obligation to help others
- A sincere concern for the lives of people
- Needy people depend on our knowledge, planning and resources
- To fulfill the commandment of love
- Recognition and appreciation from the beneficiaries
- A sense of personal fulfilment
- The satisfaction of working for justice
- Their faith in God
- Doing good works draws us closer to God
- Doing good works compensates for the impact of sin
- other: _____

Please explain:

2.2 How do(es) the motivating factor(s) selected in 2.1 become evident in the work of your organisation?

Your answer:

2.3 For Christian relief organisations, the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 is frequently named as a model to work with. Development organisations often name passages like Micah 6:8 or Amos' call to justice (Am 5:24) as more relevant for their work.

Which one applies to your organisation? Are there other central themes or credos that are important for your organisation?

Your answer:

2.4 When interviewing potential staff members, how do you identify what motivates them in their work?

Your answer:

2.5 When engaged in a humanitarian or development project – the inner conviction that one is doing the right thing is what counts in the end. Do you agree with this statement for your organisation?

fully agree

agree

don't know

rather not agree

not agree at all

Why?

2.6 People sometimes are motivated to be active in society or in political issues. In your opinion, should Christians seek to shape public life or even participate in transforming a society?

Your opinion:

3. How do Christian NGOs interact with the secular “outside” world?

3.1 In recent years, the (secular) UN system has begun to recognise the importance of religion, and has improved the cooperation with faith-based agencies.

Nevertheless, it has been observed that some faith-based organisations downplay their religious identities. Would you say this is true for your Christian NGO?

fully agree

agree

don't know

rather not agree

not agree at all

Please explain:

3.2 Although there are warmer relations with the UN, the Red Cross Code of Conduct expects compliance with the rule of not using particular religious standpoints in field work.

Do such ambivalent approaches from a secular environment make your organisation uncertain of the aims and goals of your Christian work or ministry?

Please explain:

3.3 Does your organisation use any of the following secular standards? *Tick all the options that are applicable.*

- DZI
- VENRO Voluntary Commitments
- Dt. Spendenrat
- Initiative Transparente Zivilgesellschaft
- Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and NGOs
- Core Humanitarian Standard
- PHINEO Wirkt-Siegel (PHINEO Impact-Label)
- Any other:* _____

Why have you chosen those? Do you find them helpful and why?

3.4 Does your organisation use any of the following Christian standards? *Tick all the options that are applicable.*

- Christian Witness in a Multireligious world
- DEA Prüfzertifikat (DEA Inspection Certificate)
- CHEO Verhaltenskodex für christliche Entwicklungsorganisationen
- Any other:* _____

Why have you chosen those? Do you find them helpful and why?

Section 2: How is Christian ethics understood and lived out in your organisation?

4. How can the Christian identity of your NGO be described and classified?

4.1 What would you say are the greatest differences between secular and faith-based organisations?

Your answer:

4.2 Which books on Christian ethics have you read and which did you find useful in your work in your Christian NGO? And, have you in the past 10 years completed a short course on Christian ethics or done some formal studies in this area?

Your answer:

4.3 Yours is a Christian organisation. How is your Christian faith mirrored in your organisation?

Your answer:

4.4 Do you understand the practical outcomes of your organisation (providing relief and assisting in development) as evidence of the impact of the Gospel? How do you deal with Jesus' demand to "make disciples" (Mt 28)?

Please explain:

4.5 In addition to being a faith-based organisation, what other characteristics does your organisation show? *Tick all the options that are applicable.*

- We follow a minimalistic approach, i.e. primarily life-saving
- The outcomes are measured in terms of whether the needs of the people or the community have been met
- We adhere closely to the principles of humanitarianism
- The focus is primarily on the outcomes, not so much on the means of how to reach them
- We engage politically in the countries we work in – whenever necessary

4.6 Do the following characteristics apply to your organisation? *Tick all the options that are applicable.*

- It is affiliated with a religious body or an organised faith community
- The mission statement explicitly refers to religious values
- Your financial support comes from religious sources
- You have governance structures where board members or staff are based on religious beliefs or affiliation
- The organisation was originally established by a religious group or institution
- Your decision-making processes are based on religious values
- Your organisation draws staff, volunteers and their leadership from a particular religious group

4.7 Tick the type of organisation that your organisation resembles best.

In your organisation...

...Christian faith is not required of staff members

Type 1

...the funding is not dependent on religious sources

...you maintain a clear religious orientation as the primary motivation for its mission

Type 2

...you do not evangelise directly

...the acceptance of religious message is not a prerequisite for assistance

...the primary mission of the organisation is to meet the needs of Christian believers

Type 3

...the mission is to expand the fellowship of Christian believers

...you aim for spiritual transformation.

4.8 Have sermons, retreats, bible studies or workshops in your church helped you deal with problems or planning in your NGO?

Please explain:

4.9 Responsibility in business is centred in the relevant individuals – or do organisations also have moral responsibilities?

Your opinion:

5. What importance does your organisation place on Christian character and conduct?

5.1 Do you agree with the statement “Right decisions and actions emanate from a good character”?

fully agree

agree

don't know

rather not agree

not agree at all

Please explain:

5.2 How would you describe a person of good character?

Please explain:

5.3 What virtues do you think are important in the lives of leaders and staff members? (Virtues are for example honesty, humility, diligence, etc.)

Please explain:

5.4 For a Christian, the formation of a good character is achieved predominantly by...: *Rate these options from 1 to 10 in the order of their importance, with 1 being the most important and 10 the least important.*

- reading the Bible in order to discover and apply ethical teaching
- being inspired to become a better person by meditating on Biblical stories of courage and integrity
- meaningful relationships with others have enabled me to be a better person
- being influenced by good role models (e.g. by people I admire and respect)
- being encouraged to do what is right by being supported by fellow Christians (e.g. in the local church or home-group)
- practicing spiritual disciplines / exercises (such as regular prayer, meditation, study, and practical service to others)
- developing a relationship with God that has the effect of forming my moral character and actions
- practical caring for others develops my faith and Christian character
- the influence of my family has played a vital role in the formation of my Christian character
- the teaching of the church has helped to form my ethical thinking and conduct
- Other:* _____

5.5 How is character formation understood in your organisation, and what do you do to assess and improve/form the characters and conduct of the leaders and staff?

Please explain:

6. What does a Christian corporate culture look like (in your NGO)?

6.1 What is recognisably Christian about the corporate culture of your NGO?

Please explain:

6.2 How are your organisation's Christian principles, values and ethical codes put into practice?

Please explain:

6.3 Can you agree with the statement that Christian organisations – because they are Christian – do not need ethical codes?

fully agree

agree

don't know

rather not agree

not agree at all

Why or why not? Please explain:

6.4 Are there any visible patterns of behaviour (e.g. fair treatment, forms of communication) or symbols (e.g. typical clothing, office equipment, etc.) in your NGO? How are they ex-

plained to new employees? Can you provide two examples?

Please explain:

Section 3: How do Christian NGOs deal with ethical matters in their organisational structures and practices?

7. How do you make ethical decisions?

7.1 When making ethical decisions do you tend to *(please rank them in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important)*

- consider what would bring about a good result?
- consider certain principles such as “What is the most responsible / caring thing to do”?
- base your decision on what the Bible commands, for example “Do not steal”?
- think of what a “good person” would do?
- identify what Jesus would do if faced with a similar situation?
- consider ethical teachings from the Christian tradition?
- use reason to make the decision?
- follow the example of other organisations?
- ask colleagues what you should do?
- be guided by your intuition?

7.2 Do you agree that staff members need to be involved in your NGO's decision-making processes?

fully agree

agree

don't know

rather not agree

not agree at all

Please explain:

8. How do you handle the tension between “business” and “ethics” in your organisation?

8.1 Which aspect(s) can you agree with? *Tick all the options that are applicable.*

For my organisation, ...

- ... the terms “ethics” and “business” exclude each other. This is why we separate theological and professional aspects in our daily work.
- ... it is often “business comes first”. Ethical reasoning is too complicated, and might even be a hindrance to get the job done quickly and efficiently.
- ... it is important to have an ethical appearance to the outside world in order to get more donations.
- ... ethics and business influence each other. Nevertheless, economic behaviour must always be subject to Christian ethical principles.
- ... the terms “ethics” and “business” are not contradictions. They are both part of human existence and Christians need ensure that both are given due attention.

8.2 The church generally neglects to address the specific needs of those in business, and thus contributes to the rift between spiritual and business issues. Do you agree?

fully agree

agree

don't know

rather not agree

not agree at all

Please explain:

8.3 Contemporary business companies need to strive for efficiency and compete to survive in the market place. Do you see a similar tendency developing in Christian NGOs?

fully agree

agree

don't know

rather not agree

not agree at all

Please explain:

8.4 In the correspondence between your organisation and your different stakeholders (e-mail, letters, etc.), do you use different communication styles (e.g. adding a Bible verse, or, on the contrary, avoid religious language)?

Please explain:

8.5 Which books on business ethics have you read and which did you find useful in your work in your Christian NGO?

Please explain:

9. How are issues of leadership and management dealt with in your NGO?

9.1 Are Christian values or principles visible in your vision and mission statement?

Please explain:

9.2 The worldwide NGO-advertisements reveal that most NGOs rely heavily on experts in their recruitment activities. Does the provision of experts reassure your sense of responsibility for the results of your work?

Please explain:

9.3 How is *success* understood in your organisation? How is it measured?

Please explain:

9.4 How have the organisational structures evolved in your organisation? *Tick all the options that are applicable.*

- The structure has changed since the organisation was founded.
- A striving for efficiency has been a reason for the development of the structure.
- Gaining control has been a reason for the development of the structure.
- The levels of responsibilities are clearly defined and visible for everyone.
- I am satisfied with the structure we have chosen as organisation.

Please explain by mentioning also the type of structure (flat or hierarchical) your organisation has at the moment:

9.5 Does your organisation have an independent board of directors that is willing to hold top managers accountable for their behaviour, and is capable of verifying the information managers provide them?

Please explain:

9.6 What kind of assessment, training and encouragement do you offer your staff?

Please explain:

9.7 Are there any incentive and reward systems (including promotional systems) that reward people who engage in ethical behaviour and sanction those who do not?

Please explain:

9.8 Does your NGO encourage managers and employees to refuse to make a decision that will have short term (financial) benefits but long term negative (ethical) consequences? Do they have the strength to say 'no' to their superiors? Is this included in your codes of ethics?

Please explain:

9.9 In your NGO, is there a possibility for employees to approach someone that handles confidential inquiries or ethical dilemmas such as an internal ombudsperson?

Please explain:

9.10 How does your organisation deal with conflict among their employees?

Please explain:

9.11 How does your organisation deal with non-performance of staff?

Please explain:

10. Is there anything else you would like to add about how ethics is lived out in your NGO? Is there something concrete in your organisation that needs to be changed, upheld or be improved?

**Thank you for your hard work and for participating in this study!
It is greatly appreciated.**

Appendix B: The consent letter

Dear Research Participant,

Some time ago I contacted you via telephone or e-mail, asking you if you would be willing to assist me in my research for my doctoral thesis at the University of South Africa with the title “Ethical frameworks, organisational practices and conduct: an analysis of Christian humanitarian organisations (NGOs) in Germany”.

The purpose of this doctoral thesis is to determine which ethical frameworks (consciously or unconsciously) influence the organisational practices and behaviour of Christian organisations.

I have nearly completed the theoretical research and am finally at a point where I am ready to carry out the empirical research, gathering data by conducting interviews. I am very grateful to you for your willingness to participate in this study. As previously agreed, I will be visiting you on in your office to conduct the interview, which shall not exceed one hour. Your answers will be recorded and transcribed with a transcription software and sent back to you for approval.

As mentioned in the phone calls, the data that you share in this research will be used in such a way that protects your privacy and identity. It also shall not reveal any affiliation you have with any organisation on which you may base your answers to the questions. Thus, the full text of the interview transcription will not be published with the thesis. Only important quotations, which contribute directly to the development of the theory, are included in the text of the thesis. Names of any kind will be coded. In sum, eleven organisations in Germany are represented in this research and have consented to participate in this study.

Additionally, I am required to collect a signed consent form from each of the participants. I would be grateful if you would print the form, sign and scan it and return it to me via email.

Kind regards,

Consent form

My name is Ana Maria Cabodevila, and I am a doctoral student of Theology in the Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology, University of South Africa. The title of my research thesis is “Ethical frameworks, organisational practices and conduct: an analysis of Christian humanitarian organisations (NGOs) in Germany”.

If you are willing to participate in this data collection process, please complete this form.

- I understand that my name and the name of my organisation will not be revealed in the doctoral thesis and my confidentiality will be protected. The data will be destroyed after the completion of the degree.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the research at any time, without supplying any reasons.
- Ana Maria Cabodevila has fully apprised me of the purpose and methodology of the proposed research.
- I am aware that my participation will involve carrying out an interview with the purpose of collecting research data including ethical topics in my organisation.
- I am aware that no remuneration is involved in my participation.
- I undertake to answer the given questions as carefully and honestly as possible.

I agree to participate on the basis of the above conditions.

Participant’s signature

Participant’s name (Please print)

Date