

THE NEGOTIATION OF MEANING:  
AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF PLANNING IN A NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

by

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## ABSTRACT

The research problem that this study addresses is two-fold. First, the persistence of poverty gives rise to a real world concern for improving the effectiveness of international development efforts. To address the link between the alleviation of poverty, adult education, and a grass-roots approach, this study focuses on planning within an organization that offers adult education programs overseas, specifically a non-governmental organization (NGO). An understanding of the dynamics of planning in such an NGO will help in articulating more effective approaches to planning practice in international development. The second aspect of the research problem is that the relationship between the planning process and the planning context seems not to have been fully explored in the literature on adult education program planning. There is a need for a more complete set of analytical tools that captures the complexities of planning and sheds light on the relationship between the planning context and the planning process.

The purpose of this dissertation is to address the main theoretical question raised by the research problem: How do non-governmental organizations (NGOs) plan so as to maintain themselves and be effective given the pressures on them? This theoretical question was investigated through a case study method, specifically ethnography. Ethnographic fieldwork, which included seventeen months of participant observation, twenty-five interviews, and document analysis, was carried out at an NGO, referred to here by the pseudonym of "Global Faith."

The conceptual framework developed in this dissertation builds on the negotiation approach to planning. The first part of the conceptual framework links two strands of research: leadership theory and negotiation theory. Through this juxtaposition, I was able to examine the process of planning in a new light - as the negotiation of meaning. The second part of the framework shows how a deeper understanding of the context of planning is accomplished by applying a subjectivist, multi-perspective approach to analyzing cultures in organizations. This approach - which incorporates the integration perspective, the differentiation perspective, and the fragmentation perspective - was used to see Global Faith cultures in three different ways. These same ways of viewing culture at Global Faith were matched with the varying interpretations held by staff members in order to characterize the cultural contexts for specific episodes of planning involving the negotiation of meaning.

The findings show that by including the negotiation of meaning in planning activities, Global Faith is able to motivate staff and deal effectively with confusing requirements, conflicting expectations, and diverse demands that they face in their interactions with CIDA, general public donors, the Board of Directors, and overseas partner organizations. There is a recursive relationship between planning processes involving the negotiation of meaning and Global Faith cultures whereby the cultures are both precursors and products of negotiation of meaning episodes.



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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This is the context in which international NGOs [non-governmental organizations] operate. The dilemmas integral to voluntary agencies are critical to the international NGOs. Questions of mandate, of relevance, of independence - essentially questions about whose interests are ultimately served by the activity of the NGOs and how well these interests are served - all begin here....(Murphy, 1991, p.168)

To plan is to hope. We make plans today with the hope that tomorrow our expectations will be realized. We believe that our present actions and decisions can affect the course of future events. Somehow, somewhere, something will be positively transformed as a result of our planning efforts. We do not envision the future as a pre-determined scenario imposed upon us, dictating our destiny. Rather, as planning creatures, we claim authorship of our own stories.

While the concept of planning implies hope and action, numerous planning attempts have resulted in just the opposite. Cynicism and passivity are the remnants of many well-intended plans, especially in the field of international development. After more than 30 years of development assistance from countries in the North to those in the South, widespread poverty continues to exist.<sup>1</sup> Mistakes have been repeated over and over again and the people who were intended to benefit from international

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<sup>1</sup> According to the World Development Report (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1990), "more than one billion people in the developing world are living in poverty....Progress,...however welcome, must not distract attention from this massive and continuing burden" (p.1).

development efforts have not benefited as much as had been hoped (Drabek, 1987).

My own experience living and working in rural Nepal in the late 1980s taught me that there are as many approaches to international development work as there are types of organizations funding and implementing the programs. Watching alongside bemused farmers yet another string of foreign consultants stroll from their jeeps to the tea house to discuss the village inventory of imported fertilizer, I had to wonder. I wondered too when I came upon several staff from a local non-governmental organization (NGO) speaking Nepali with a group of women farmers transplanting seedlings from the village fodder tree nursery to their own fields. I wondered: Why do different development organizations spawn such different programs? How are these programs conceived of and how are they planned? Who is involved in the planning process? What are they thinking about and what are they trying to do? Whose needs take precedence? What is really going on here?

These questions formed the starting points for this research. My interest in exploring the "taken-for-granted" aspects of planning within the field of international development led me to research the assumptions, the strategies and the interactions of the people involved in planning that are rarely articulated but nevertheless influence how problems are defined, how needs are addressed, and how programs are shaped. In addition to learning how the people involved in planning approach their



work, I also wanted to understand how the organizational context itself influences - or is influenced by - the process of planning. How does the context motivate planners and how does the context become enacted through the process of planning? In simple terms, this study is rooted in a deep-seated curiosity about the dynamics of planning.

In order to understand the dynamics of planning, it is necessary to investigate who the people involved in planning are - both as individuals with their own biographies and belief systems and also as institutional actors influenced by specific organizational contexts. This is the story of planning within one organization - a Canadian NGO that I call "Global Faith"<sup>2</sup> - told through the words, ideas, and habits of the people who participate in planning and decision-making there. It is a story told - using the framework of organizational ethnography<sup>3</sup> - "from the inside out" (Schwartzman, 1993, p.4).

The telling of this story is important because it is based on the assumption that "there is no single path to the future. It is the mission of development agencies to give form and focus to human hopes for change: how they translate idealism into strategy will determine their continued relevance" (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley, 1988, p.156). Ideals can be translated into actions

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<sup>2</sup> "Global Faith" is a pseudonym.

<sup>3</sup> Because I am concerned with interpreting the cultural context of an NGO, I chose ethnography as the methodology for the research. The ethnography involved seventeen months of fieldwork using the techniques of participant observation, in-depth interviewing, and document analysis.

through the process of planning - planning that is carried out by people making commitments, compromises, and concessions based on what they believe to be at stake. As will be shown in the remaining sections of this chapter, planning in international development, specifically within an NGO setting, inevitably involves the often conflicting or confusing challenges of meeting government requirements, satisfying general public donors' demands, remaining responsive to the needs and interests of overseas partner organizations, and staying committed to a cause that is difficult to define.

This introductory chapter helps to ground the dissertation in the real-world problems related to planning in NGOs and also serves to demonstrate the significance of the research. First, I develop the problem statement which includes a brief look at the role of adult education in rural development and its relationship with the alleviation of poverty, and a consideration of some challenges specific to planners of nonformal adult education programs in international development. Also included in the problem statement is a description of the NGO sector in Canada and a discussion of some of the pressures facing planners working in an NGO setting.

Consideration of the problem statement leads directly to the presentation of the research purpose and significance. Then, the the research questions and their evolution are discussed. Finally, I end the chapter with a section on the organization of the dissertation.

## **The Problem Statement**

The research problem that this study was designed to address is two-fold. First, the persistence of poverty gives rise to a real world concern for improving the effectiveness of international development efforts. "Despite three decades of aid, conditions in many countries, especially the poorest, have worsened....The reality of today's development climate forces NGOs to pay more attention to the impact of their activities" (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley, 1988, p.146). To address the link between the alleviation of poverty, adult education, and a grass-roots approach, this study focuses on planning within an organization that offers adult education programs overseas, specifically an NGO. An understanding of the dynamics of planning in such an NGO will help in articulating more effective approaches to planning practice in international development.

The second aspect of the research problem is the need for a more complete set of analytical tools that captures the complexities of the planning process and sheds light on the relationship between the planning context and the planning process. This part of the research problem is further developed in Chapter Two through a review of the literature on adult education program planning, and community and regional planning.

### **Adult Education and the Alleviation of Poverty**

Much attention has been paid in the literature to the role of adult education in the alleviation of poverty (Coles, 1969;

Freire, 1970; Simkins, 1977; De Vries, 1978; Muntemba, 1982; Duke, 1983; Bordia, 1984; Kassam, 1986; Parajuli, 1986; Alexander, 1987; Blunt, 1988; Ewert, 1989; Bhola, 1989; McGiveny & Murray, 1991; and Cassara, 1995). Specifically, efforts have been made to determine whether there is a causal relationship between adult education and the reduction of poverty. The following quote by Duke (1983) describes these efforts and the findings:

The studies so far fail to PROVE that adult education reduces poverty....There is, however, compelling cumulative evidence of the importance of adult education to the process of reducing poverty and removing its causes....Adult education is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the reduction of the poverty of groups, communities and classes: it is frequently a crucial element in such development work, whether national or local in scale. (p.77)

Thus, it appears that adult education plays a key role in international development, though it has been emphasized that, in practice, adult education is not an independent "prime mover" (Duke, 1983; Alexander, 1987). Instead, it is dependent upon a cluster of other forces (such as political, economic, socio-cultural, and technological) for its success in reducing poverty.

Particular emphasis in the promotion of adult education as a strategy for alleviating poverty has been given to nonformal<sup>4</sup> adult education. Much of the attention and accolades given to

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<sup>4</sup> The term "nonformal" refers to organized and systematic educational activities that are carried on outside of the formal system of schools, colleges and universities. In contrast with formal educational offerings, nonformal programs tend to be part-time, inherently flexible, of short duration, and oriented toward practical knowledge and skills (Coomb's, 1985).

nonformal adult education can be traced back to Coombs (1968, 1985) who not only "legitimized" the concept with his taxonomy of education (Ewert, 1989), but also endowed it with practical and effective qualities.

According to Coombs, nonformal education had the greatest potential for contributing quickly and substantially to individual and national development....It was seen as a more efficient alternative to formal schooling where educational resources were scarce, and as a means of providing low cost education and skills training to the rural poor. Nonformal education strategies were widely adopted in four areas of development activity: public health, agricultural extension, livelihood skills training and literacy. (Blunt, 1988, pp.40-41)

With all of the faith and resources put into nonformal education as a strategy for development, there is still a need to understand how adult education policy and plans translate into actual programs. Commenting on this gap between intention and implementation, Ewert (1989) writes:

Although the world is full of white papers, policy statements, and five-year plans, many are not translated into meaningful practice. The rhetoric of agencies on the needs of the poorest of the poor is not matched by the direction of their resources. (p.95)

### **Planning Challenges in International Development**

Planners of nonformal adult education programs within the international development arena are faced with several significant challenges. One of these is a result of negative perceptions of nonformal education by local communities. "Many communities perceive nonformal education as an inferior substitute for the formal system and the devolution of authority

to ensure the responsiveness of programs to local needs has often been withheld" (Blunt, 1988, p.43). Another challenge is due to the political nature of development activities. Fagerlind and Saha (1989) emphasize that "the political context has become all embracing, as all educational and development plans are inherently political, and all participants, whether academics, planners, politicians or recipient citizens, are caught up in the political process whether they like it or not" (p.vi). Bordia (1984) underscores the importance of political commitment in the field of international development as it is "indispensable for the organization of adult education programmes because it determines whether programmes would be organized at all, since requirements of priorities, resources and linkages are all political issues. Political commitment also determines the nature of programmes" (p.23). Consequently, it is often necessary to lobby governments and use pressure groups to influence political will (Duke, 1983). An additional difficulty associated with adult education program planning in international development is the close link between the design and evaluation of an individual program and the development ideology favoured by the sponsoring organization and the host country. Program planners are affected, and even constrained, by the dominant modes of development (Alexander, 1987).

An analysis of the various theories of development is outside the scope of this inquiry. However, a brief description of the dominant themes and experiences related to rural

development can serve as an indication of the wide range of approaches. According to Berstecher (1985), there "is no commonly accepted view of what constitutes rural development, nor how it is best promoted" (p.23). However, it is possible to divide rural development approaches into four categories:

1. production-oriented approach (delivery of input packages and extension services related to agricultural production);
2. project-based rural development (format and objectives vary depending on the implementing and sponsoring agencies);
3. long-term rural transformation (rural development as the centrepiece of national development, not just as a sectoral issue);
4. alleviation of poverty approach (meeting basic needs of the rural population through skills training and income generating schemes).

The alleviation of poverty approach is compatible with the "grass roots" traditions of NGOs. While NGOs are influenced to some extent by differing strands in development theory, they have mainly "pursued an approach rooted in their own ethical and philanthropic traditions and conditioned by their position as outsiders - bit players in terms of resources and power. They adopted from the beginning a resolutely 'grass-roots' approach... because of practical limitations imposed by small budgets and staff, and uncertain funding" (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley, 1988, pp.6-7).

### **Planning in Non-Governmental Organizations**

International development projects are executed individually by, or through some combination of, the following

types of organizations: governmental agencies (e.g., Canadian International Development Agency), multilateral agencies (e.g., The World Bank), consulting firms, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This research focuses on NGOs, which typically are voluntary<sup>5</sup>, non-profit agencies engaged in three broad categories of international development work: 1) development education, 2) public policy advocacy, and 3) overseas programs and projects. Overseas activities include relief and emergency assistance, placement of personnel, child and family sponsorship as well as specific projects designed to reduce poverty and promote long-term development. According to Bordia (1984), NGOs "are eminently suited for taking up an adult education programme because of their usual characteristics: high quality of voluntary workers, possibilities of organizing flexible programmes, contact with the local community, and tradition of innovation in their work" (p.26).

The NGO sector in Canada has grown in both size and scope of activities over the past 25 years. The more than 200 NGOs currently operating employ approximately 2,500 full-time staff based in Canada, and about 500 more paid staff working overseas (Murphy, 1991). If professional-technical (pro-tech) volunteers

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<sup>5</sup> NGOs are considered to be voluntary agencies from a legal perspective because Boards of Directors receive no remuneration and private donations are voluntary contributions. The popular conception that voluntary agencies are run by volunteers is also often true of NGOs: much of NGO work is subsidized by individuals who donate their time, materials or other resources. Basically, NGOs are voluntary agencies in the sense that people come together by choice to strive toward a common cause or overarching goal.



and short-term placements are included, the total number of Canadians involved with NGOs on a full-time salary or vocational basis comes to about 12,000. In addition, there are approximately 40,000 Canadians working directly with the NGOs as volunteers (this number does not include the general public donors or members of specific organizations such as the YM/YWCA) (Murphy, 1991). There is tremendous variation in the size of Canadian NGOs: from those with tiny budgets with no access to Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funding and no full-time staff to those with budgets of over \$25 million annually. Approximately 73 percent of the NGOs in Canada are secular. The remaining 27 percent of NGOs are religious, with 13 percent of these being non-denominational and just over 14 percent being denominational groups (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley, 1988). Within the group of religiously-oriented NGOs, there are some that emphasize personal salvation and evangelism as their primary aim. Consequently, development is viewed as a means, not an end in itself. For other religious NGOs, evangelism is seen as a secondary goal of the more important work of development.

Although Canadian NGOs vary greatly in terms of size, origin, purpose and approach, "there remains an essential self-defining core to which all development NGOs aspire: altruistic in motivation, independent in status, participatory in structure and methodology, respectful of the rights and dignity of individuals and collectives, and capable of mobilizing resources effectively"

(Brodhead & Herbert-Copley, 1988, p.8).<sup>6</sup> These principles - which are also relevant to voluntary action in general - highlight the commonalities across NGOs in Canada. They are also useful in that they help to uncover some of the contradictions and dilemmas confronting planners working in an NGO context. These five tenets - autonomy, altruism, participation, cooperation, and efficiency are discussed in greater detail below.

### Autonomy

Clues to the paradox underlying the principle of autonomy lie within the term 'non-governmental organization' itself. Regardless of the awkward nature of this term, it has remained the most extensively recognized label for voluntary agencies active in international development. What does the term actually mean? Murphy (1991) provides the following insights:

It is ironic, but revealing, that 'non-governmental organization' does not tell us what an NGO is, but rather what it is not: it is not a government organization.... It is normally used only to refer to agencies active in international development, peace, human rights, environment, and development education. Why would this denotation be required? Perhaps because the NGOs support or implement programs for which governments are normally thought to be responsible; and they often do these things in co-operation with governments, relying to a large degree on government

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<sup>6</sup> The five principles are based on material gathered in an intensive two-year study of Canadian NGOs sponsored by the North-South Institute. Questionnaires were mailed to 220 NGOs across Canada; 129 organizations responded. "The questionnaire responses highlighted a series of statements, or 'articles of faith', widely used by NGOs to describe their work" (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley, 1988, p.29).

funds. Therein lies much of the significance, and the contradictions of NGOs. (p.163)

Canadian NGOs receive funding from two sources: private donations and government grants. The government grants are part of the official development assistance (ODA) budget and are channelled through matching grant programs and bilateral contracts of CIDA and to a lesser extent, provincial governments. In 1990-91, NGOs operating in Canada received just under \$200 million in ODA funds (CIDA, Annual Report 1990-91, p.S30). Government funding reached a peak in 1992-93 with a total of \$310 million from various branches at CIDA allocated to Canadian NGOs (CCIC Policy Team, 1995a, p.13). Ironically, the single biggest influence on the non-governmental scene in Canada has been the federal government; an influence applied through the offering of government funding conditional upon adherence to government policies and procedures.<sup>7</sup>

One consequence of the large amount of government funding provided for NGOs has been increased interaction and a merging of the discourses of government and NGOs. "As the gap narrows it has become difficult to determine from the pronouncements of Canadian voluntary agencies how 'different' they now view themselves to be from government. At times they argue that increased government support is justified precisely because they are doing what government cannot do, or ought not do; at other times they argue equally forcefully that they deserve more support because they

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<sup>7</sup> Tax relief, which is provided to donors of registered charities, is another form of government support to NGOs.

represent a more cost-effective way for government aid to achieve its objectives" (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley, 1988, p.47). The paradox of NGO autonomy in the face of government support becomes clear.

NGO dependence on government funds can be especially risky; not only because NGOs can become vulnerable to cutbacks or wide swings in CIDA policy, but also because NGO programming can end up as a reflection of funding agency priorities instead of program participants' needs. "Many NGOs, both in the South and North, have allowed the availability of funding, rather than need, to dictate programming decisions" (CCIC Policy Team, 1995a, p.9).

An additional implication of lack of autonomy among NGOs is a reduced ability to be effective in advocacy and policy debates, which is essentially a departure from the original mandate of NGOs. Murphy (1991) explains this dynamic:

Political action in the voluntary sector has become virtually restricted to lobbying government for funds, for political legitimacy, and for fiscal policies and priorities that promote the organizations and programs of specific sectors. This has meant that for reasons of institutional maintenance and security (and not incidentally the security of paid workers), organizations and even movements have developed pragmatic partnerships with government as an extension of government programs and priorities within specific communities, rather than operating as an authentic nexus of community-based social action. (p.167)

To understand NGO behaviour, it is necessary to also comprehend how NGOs relate to government, specifically to CIDA.

## Altruism

Altruism is another principle - like autonomy - that sets NGOs apart from government. Most NGOs "come into being from a sense of compassion or injustice, a burning vision of a wrong to be righted, or a new perception of the world to be expressed and acted upon. Their goals, unlike those of government or business, are altruistic: they seek to benefit others rather than themselves" (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley, 1988, p.31). However, the goal of altruism - like that of autonomy - can also lead to confusion and contradictions.

First, NGO workers vary in their beliefs about the role of NGOs in development, how to "benefit others," and even what the concept of "development" itself means. Altruistic motives like compassion are difficult to define and to operationalize.

Furthermore, generous motives do not necessarily lead to appropriate actions. Viewing altruism as an end in itself can affect perceptions of accountability. As explained above, NGOs receive funds from two sources: general public donations and government grants. Because there are multiple NGOs competing for charity dollars and because the amount raised from the general public sets a ceiling on the amount of funds available through the matching grant programs of government, NGOs are inevitably preoccupied with fundraising, issues of image and credibility, and meeting donor expectations (Murphy, 1991). Consequently, most NGOs would insist that they are primarily accountable to their individual donors from the general public who contribute funds

and support their organization. However, it is difficult for individual donors to exercise their collective strength in order to hold NGOs accountable (CCIC Policy Team, 1995b). NGOs would also recognize their accountability to government, and to their own Boards of Directors, for the funds they receive and how they are used. Finally, there is another level of accountability to those that they "seek to benefit." "NGOs face an anomaly in responding to needs defined by one group, beneficiaries or NGO planners/implementors, while holding themselves responsible for their success or failure to an entirely different group, namely their donors or the government" (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley, 1988, p.44).

Planning within an NGO context inevitably involves dealing with nebulous concepts surrounding the goal of altruistic actions, and a diversity of interests. To understand NGO behaviour, it is necessary to also comprehend how NGOs relate to the groups that help to articulate the altruistic vision (e.g., the Boards of Directors) and to those groups that help to inspire and implement the vision (e.g., to beneficiary populations and overseas partner organizations).

### Cooperation

The tenet of cooperation refers to the distinctive relationships NGOs have with beneficiary populations and with overseas partner organizations. For example, "NGOs speak of their 'grass-roots' style, of a 'participatory' approach to

development, of development 'from the bottom up', of 'fostering local capacities for self-reliance', or of 'empowering' communities and 'facilitating' development. The common thread running through all these self-descriptions is a respect for the people with whom they work" (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley, 1988, p.119).

Relationships between Northern and Southern NGOs<sup>8</sup> are ideally based on a conceptualization of partnership involving dialogue among equals, whereby Southern NGOs would identify and implement the projects funded by the Northern NGOs. However, the unequal distribution of power due to the flow of funding from the North to South means that this partnership is more complicated, and at times, more rhetorical than real. Decisions regarding which projects are to be funded are made mainly by donor NGOs. "Only a few agencies have brought overseas representatives onto their boards, and fewer still onto their project selection committees. For most agencies the authority to approve projects, to spend money, rests in Canadian hands" (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley, 1988, p.134). Furthermore, because of limited field capacity and cost constraints, Northern NGOs often view Southern NGOs only as a channel for disbursing funds. The only exchange of experience or information occurs through the packaging of periodic progress reports and short-term, face-to-face contact on monitoring visits. The relationship is based mostly on financial

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<sup>8</sup> The terms "Southern" and "overseas" are used interchangeably in this dissertation.

ties. Southern NGOs "continue to have a legitimate preoccupation with securing resources without compromising their autonomy as development actors" (CCIC Policy Team, 1995a, p.8).

Further complicating the tenet of cooperation is the assumption that beneficiaries should also be involved in identifying needs, and in designing and evaluating projects. However, this goal of cooperation and beneficiary collaboration in planning is often difficult to operationalize. "While beneficiaries are often 'consulted' during needs identification and design, and 'surveyed' in evaluation and monitoring, their degree of active participation in such processes is often slight" (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley, 1988, p.123).

Murphy (1991) emphasizes the importance of understanding the nature of the relationships with overseas partner organizations: "Canadian NGOs see and understand the situation of communities and countries through the eyes and experience of those with whom they work....The relationships nurture quite different views of reality, views of the needs of the people, and perceptions about the role of an international NGO" (p.185).

To understand NGO behaviour, it is necessary to also comprehend how NGOs relate to overseas partner organizations and to the beneficiary populations.

### Participation

The tenet of participation refers to the goal of providing channels for Canadians to participate in international



development. This can be accomplished through volunteer work either locally or overseas. Participation can also occur through increased awareness as a result of development education activities. "It is ironic that while NGOs are more convinced than ever of the need to involve beneficiaries in the planning and implementation of overseas projects, many have become less open to involving Canadians in their own work" (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley, 1988, p.77). Because of the need for an NGO to sustain donor support, volunteers are often given less attention than donors. Furthermore, development education programs are often seen as another avenue for fundraising. Assuming that development education involves the exercise of critical judgement, the emotional and simplistic appeals often used in fundraising could make the combining of development education and fundraising agendas problematic. Furthermore, many development education workers have not had long-term, first-hand experience in the Third World, and thus are not able to include a complex analysis of people's struggles and communities' changing needs in their presentation of development issues. Drabek (1987) sums up this fundamental contradiction of NGO development education: "how to reconcile the need for short-term fundraising with the need to create a long-term educated constituency for development assistance?" (p.xii). To understand NGO behaviour, it is also necessary to comprehend how NGOs relate to general public donors, volunteers, and participants in development education programs.

## Efficiency

The tenet of efficiency refers to the goal of mobilizing and using financial as well as other resources in a cost-effective way. NGOs have generally operated with low salary scales, minimal administrative costs, and small-scale programs enabling them to "go further with a dollar" than government or the private sector (Kerstiens, 1982, p.62). However, efficiency is more than cutting costs and keeping overhead low. Brodhead and Herbert-Copley (1988) suggest four other indicators of NGO efficiency: "the ability of NGOs to mobilize non-governmental resources; the sustainability of NGO activities over time; the degree of replication of innovative NGO programs; and the extent of cooperation among NGOs" (p.99).

Related to the tenet of efficiency is an NGO's ability to motivate staff (given the lower salary scales) and to learn from their own organizational history. Drabek (1987) points out that "there is a recognized need among NGOs for greater preservation and accumulation of knowledge and for the creation of their own institutional memories" (pp.xi). To understand NGO behaviour, it is also necessary to comprehend how the staff within the NGOs view their work and how institutional memories are created and sustained.

The scene is now set. We can begin our story aware of the challenges facing the people involved in planning in an NGO. They have organizational interests to protect, personal values to promote, conflicting demands to reconcile, and an idealistic goal

of remaining responsive to the needs of the people participating in their programs.

### **Research Purpose and Significance**

The problem statement drew attention to the complex nature of NGO work and to the need to understand more about how planning occurs within an NGO context. "Canadian NGOs, like their counterparts elsewhere, are increasingly faced with the realization that development is becoming more and more complex - both in terms of the problems addressed, and the strategies needed to deal with them" (Herbert-Copley, 1987, p.26). Furthermore, the relationship between the planning process and the planning context seems not to have been fully explored in the literature on adult education program planning.

The purpose of this dissertation is to answer the main theoretical question raised by the problem statement: How do NGOs plan so as to maintain themselves and be effective given the pressures on them? Case study - specifically ethnography - was chosen as the method to address the problem statement. The purpose of the case study is to focus on the complexities of everyday planning practice through an interpretation of the organizational culture of the NGO. By including an analysis of how planners make sense of what they do, this research contributes to the development of program planning theory that is grounded in the experience of planners. In addition to providing new ways to think about the mechanisms and contexts of planning behaviours, this research also serves to illuminate some broader

issues surrounding autonomy, altruism, cooperation, participation, and efficiency facing planners in an NGO setting.

Increased understanding of the planning process within specific settings can lead to improved effectiveness in planning practice. The following quote by Verhagen (1987) points to the anticipated practical relevance of research on planning in a non-governmental organization:

If we want to make our assistance more effective in strengthening the economy of the poor, we should start where some of the roots of the problem lie: that is within our own organizations and within our own minds where we tend to cherish ideas and assumptions which may provide legitimacy to our work, help secure the survival of our own organizations, but prohibit a consistent approach to self-help promotion among the rural poor. (p.13).

This research transcends conventional disciplinary boundaries. It will interest scholars of program planning in adult education as well as those studying negotiation theory and organizational decision-making. It is also relevant to nonprofit management and to voluntary agencies in general.

### **Research Questions**

This research was originally designed to address four main questions. These questions were first stated in my research proposal and guided entry into this study. However, as the ethnographic fieldwork and analysis progressed, I discovered that the four original questions did not fully capture what I ended up learning in this study. Instead, I realized that a new main question needed to be articulated. This section first presents the original four research questions and then explains how these

questions evolved into a new fifth question as my understanding of the complexities of planning within Global Faith deepened.

The original four research questions are listed below. The first three questions progress through a funnel pattern - from a broad investigation of the organizational context to a characterization of the planning process within that context and then to a more focused study of individual planners' perspectives. The final question links the other questions together through an analysis of how the organizational context, the process and outcome of planning, and planners' perspectives are all related.

**1. What are the essential characteristics of the NGO as a context for planning nonformal adult education programs?**

- 1.1 What are the relevant characteristics of the NGO? (e.g., origin, purpose, approach, administrative structure, leadership style, resources, and programs)
- 1.2 What is the effect of the NGO's relationship with funding bodies on the organizational context? (e.g., issues of accountability and autonomy)

**2. What is the nature of the planning process for nonformal adult education programs offered by the NGO?**

- 2.1 What is the general pattern or sequence of planning decisions and activities?
- 2.2 What is the nature of interactions among the people involved in planning?

**3. How do the people involved in planning make sense of their practice?**

- 3.1 How do the people involved in planning view their organization's role in international development?

- 3.2 What are the intentions with respect to planning?
  - 3.3 How do the people involved in planning interpret the process of planning within the NGO?
  - 3.4 What are the strategies or tactics for planning within the NGO?
  - 3.5 How do the people involved in planning describe and explain program outcomes?
- 4. What is the nature of the relationship between the NGO organizational context, the process of planning, planners' perspectives and the shape of nonformal adult education programs offered?**

While the first three questions were useful in the early days of the ethnographic fieldwork to help me organize data collection and analysis around the categories of organizational context, the process of planning, and planners' perspectives, I soon discovered that these categories were problematic in themselves. For example, with respect to the first question I was not sure what to include in the notion of context: Was context something that was "out there" - a constant force seen in the same way by all the members of Global Faith - that I could objectively portray? Or was the context something that was subjectively interpreted and continually enacted? I decided that a more useful way to view organizational context in this study was as "culture" - "both product and process, the shaper of human interaction and the outcome of it, continually created and recreated by people's ongoing interactions" (Jelinek, Smircich, & Hirsch, 1983, p.331).

The notion of program planning in the second research

question also became unclear. At the outset of the study, I intended to only focus on the decisions and activities directly related to designing specific nonformal adult education programs that were components of Global Faith's overseas projects. However, this approach proved to be fruitless for two reasons. First, the detailed planning of the content, delivery methods, and target group for specific adult education programs in Global Faith's overseas projects was carried out overseas - beyond my view. Global Faith staff posted in the Asian and African Regional Offices worked through the design of specific programs in conjunction with representatives from local partner organizations. The staff in the Global Faith Head Office were responsible for organizational decisions and activities that had an effect on which overseas projects were offered and whether some projects were even offered at all. Second, from my perspective in the Head Office, it was also very difficult to isolate the planning of individual nonformal adult education programs from the broader work of articulating organizational goals, mobilizing government resources, raising money from the general public, maintaining relationships with overseas partner organizations, and motivating staff. All of these activities were carried out in order to ensure the survival of Global Faith and the continued offering of overseas projects. Taken together as the guidance of future action, these organizational activities and decisions could all be called planning: that is, planning in order to provide adult education programs but not the planning of

the adult education programs themselves. In addition to expanding my range of interest beyond educational program planning to include a broader notion of planning, I also came to see the process of planning in a new light. Guided by the work of Cervero and Wilson (1994, 1996), I viewed planning at Global Faith as a process that involves negotiation.

Finally, the third research question based on analyzing planners' perspectives also became troublesome: Should I look for areas of agreement and steer away from inconsistencies and conflict? Or, should I acknowledge conflict but avoid areas of confusion or multiple interpretations? By adopting Martin's (1992) multi-perspective framework for analyzing cultures, I did not have to choose whether to focus only on consensus or on conflict or on ambiguity. I could include all the aspects of Global Faith culture as I perceived them and as the people of Global Faith perceived them.

Taking into consideration the changes in my approach discussed above, a revised research question that better captures what I ended up investigating in this study is:

**5. How does planning as negotiation occur within the organizational culture of an NGO?**

Further discussion of the rationale for expanding the research questions is continued in the review of the literature and in the presentation of the conceptual framework in Chapter Two.



## **Organization of the Dissertation**

In Chapter One, I discussed the problem statement from the point of view of the challenges facing planners of non-formal adult education programs in international development and the link between adult education and the alleviation of poverty. I also gave a brief introduction to the Canadian NGO community and considered some of the tensions inherent in NGOs' espoused goals of autonomy, altruism, cooperation, participation, and efficiency. Then, I presented the research purpose, significance, and the research questions.

In Chapter Two, I develop the problem statement through a review of the literature on adult education program planning and community and regional planning. I compare various definitions and treatments of the process of planning and investigate the relationship between the process and the context of planning in order to determine what still needs to be explored. Next, I outline a set of assumptions and develop the conceptual framework that I use to talk about planning as the negotiation of meaning. Martin's (1992) matrix framework for understanding the organizational context as multiple cultures is also presented.

In Chapter Three, I describe the methodology used in this study. First, I explain how an ethnographic approach is suited to the research questions. Then, I discuss the subjective nature of ethnographic research and look for areas where my subjectivity has been engaged. The pilot study, selection of the research site, the process of negotiating access, the nature of my roles

during the research, and the data collection and analysis procedures are all described. I end Chapter Three with a consideration of how this study addresses the criteria for trustworthiness in ethnographic research.

In Chapters Four, Five, and Six, I present the ethnographic findings organized according to a journey taken through Global Faith from the outside public shell in toward the private inner sanctum. The structure of these three chapters parallels the changes in my own understanding of the dynamics of planning and in my perspectives of the cultural contexts of Global Faith.

In Chapter Seven, I draw on the data presented in the three previous chapters to assemble a puzzle of Global Faith cultures using completed matrices from Martin's (1992) framework. I look at the cultures of Global Faith through three different lenses: 1) the integration perspective focusing on consistency, clarity and organization-wide consensus; 2) the differentiation perspective highlighting inconsistency, contradictions, and conflict; and 3) the fragmentation perspective revealing confusion, ambiguity and paradox. I then present and analyze five planning episodes illustrating the negotiation of meaning at Global Faith.

In Chapter Eight, I summarize the study and consider the contributions to knowledge, implications, and limitations of the research. In closing, I offer suggestions for future research and end with some concluding remarks dealing with the importance of learning.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In defining program-planning practice as a social activity in which people negotiate personal and organizational interests,....we wish to locate their actions as planners in a social world that both structures their action and is the means by which meaning is given to their actions. The central form of action in this social activity of planning, then, is to negotiate. (Cervero & Wilson, 1994, p.156)

Culture persists and is changed or maintained by virtue of its continual (re)creation through interactions of organization members, their shared interpretations, and the significations they attach to what occurs. Culture is intersubjective and simultaneously cause and effect....a guide for subjective meaning. (Jelinek, Smircich & Hirsch, 1983, p.336)

In this chapter, I develop the problem statement further through a review of the literature. First, I examine the literature on program planning in adult education in order to determine how the various models represent practice and define planning. Then, I turn to the literature on planning in another domain - community and regional planning - and discuss three main approaches to planning in this field. Finally, I return to the literature on program planning in adult education to determine how the planning context is described and why the context is considered important. The literature review leads to an expanded statement of the research problem and a summary of what still remains to be understood. The literature review also provides the basis for a set of assumptions about what already is understood concerning the planning process and the planning context.

The remainder of the chapter is then devoted to an explication of the conceptual framework used to analyze the

relationship between the process and context of planning at Global Faith. The conceptual framework is based on two main perspectives: 1) planning involves the negotiation of meaning and 2) the planning context can be analyzed as multiple cultures. Applied together, these two approaches provide a novel way of looking at the relationship between the planning process and context.

### **Literature Review: Planning, Context, and Consequence**

My intention in this section is two-fold: 1) to open up the concept of planning - by both widening and unpacking the concept - in order to determine what is understood and what remains to be understood about planning processes and 2) to consider the consequence of the planning context. By "consequence" I mean the effect and the significance of context. How does the context influence the process of planning? Why is the context considered important?

### **Program Planning in Adult Education**

The process of program planning has been addressed in the adult education literature in two ways:

- (1) through normative models which are based on the author's idealized notions of how program planning should occur (e.g., Boone, 1985; Boyle, 1981);
- (2) and through descriptive models which are based on case studies and related research into how program planning does occur in particular contexts (e.g., Pennington & Green, 1976; Burnham, 1984; Dominick, 1990; Sandmann, 1993).

While normative models have helped raise important issues

(e.g., What should the role of the program planner be?) and have upheld certain "principles" of adult education (e.g., programs should be based on client needs), they have been criticized for their lack of applicability to practice settings. According to Brookfield (1986), the planning guidelines put forth by the normative models are typically based on an assumption that planning can take place in an idealized world free from personality conflicts, resource constraints or political influences. This assumption has exacerbated the disjuncture between theory and practice and has decreased the utility of normative models. As Kowalski (1988) points out, practitioners have "become dismayed with textbook approaches which simply fail to produce effective results in the real world" (p.46).

The diversity of settings offering adult education programs makes consistent application of one model especially difficult (Boone, 1985). Even within settings, the uniqueness of a given situation means that the application of a particular model will not always be the same or the best choice. Boyle (1981) emphasizes that the process of planning is "dynamic and constantly being adapted to the actual situation" (p.51).

Normative models typically represent planning as a series of steps or phases to be followed sequentially. This makes the underlying logic of planning explicit, simplifies the planning tasks, and provides systematic guidance and a sense of security to planners (Kowalski, 1988; Sork & Caffarella, 1989). However, many of the authors of normative models also recognize that the

linear steps may actually be simultaneous, recurring, or out of sequence when applied to practice situations (Houle, 1972; Boyle, 1981; Sork & Caffarella, 1989).

Sork and Buskey (1986) carried out an extensive review of the program planning literature and synthesized the steps mentioned in various normative models into one "generic planning model" as follows:

- Analysis of the planning context and client system(s) to be served.
- Assessment of client system needs.
- Development of objectives.
- Selection and ordering of content.
- Selection, design, and ordering of instructional processes.
- Selection of instructional resources.
- Formulation of budget and administrative plan.
- Design of a plan for assuring participation.
- Design of a plan for evaluating the program. (p.89)

Recent research has begun to address the contextuality of practice by investigating how practitioners describe and explain their experiences planning programs in a health promotion setting (Lewis, 1996) and how personal and organizational interests affect the purposes, format and content of educational programs (Mills, Cervero, Langone & Wilson, 1995; Cervero & Wilson, 1994, 1996). These studies focus on practitioner perspectives and on the actual strategies they use in designing, constructing or promoting educational programs.

What we know about planning is a consequence of how the concept of planning has been defined - both in the normative models and in the case study research. Table 2.1 contains a sampling of definitions of planning (also called design, programming, and program development) taken from adult education

**Table 2.1: Defining Planning in Adult Education**

1.	Any design of education can best be understood as a complex of interacting elements, not as a sequence of events. In theory, the process of education usually goes through the stages of identification and refinement of objectives, selection of means of accomplishing them, conduct of the planned activity, and retrospective evaluation of it (Houle, 1972, p.39).
2.	It struck the researchers that program development was a form of administrative decision making (Pennington & Green, 1976, pp.20).
3.	The planning activity begins with certain value assumptions and proceeds through analyzing the system, setting goals, and selecting means to achieve those goals. The activity entails certain consequences. These may be planned consequences that follow a conscious and rational course of action even though they may have been modified throughout the process; or they may be unplanned consequences in that there is little relationship between two or more sequences, a lack of reciprocity between one element and another that results in inconsistent or even incompatible patterns of change (Boyle, 1981, p.170).
4.	Programming, as defined here, includes the individual and collaborative efforts of the adult education organization, the adult educators, and the learners in planning, designing, implementing, evaluating, and accounting for educational programs...programming is a decision-making process...programming is a judgmental process, based on values held worthwhile by both programmers and users (Boone, 1985, pp.2, 4, 47).
5.	Program planning is essentially an administrative responsibility. It entails aspects of leadership (knowing what should be done) and management (knowing how to do it) (Kowalski, 1988, p.5).
6.	...planning programs is a social activity in which people negotiate personal and organizational interests...planning is always conducted within a complex set of personal, organizational, and social relationships of power among people who may have similar, different, or conflicting interests regarding the program. The planners' responsibility, and the central problem of their practice, center on how to negotiate the interests of these people to construct a program (Cervero & Wilson, 1994, p.4).

literature. An examination of these definitions helps to highlight areas of similarity and divergence and also provides a starting point for discussion of broader issues related to the planning process - such as the nature of the planner's role and the basis for decision-making in planning. This discussion will also trace the evolution of some basic assumptions about planning in adult education and will show that some "new" metaphors for planning have roots in the past.

Houle's definition (#1) draws attention to the "complex of interacting elements" involved in planning as opposed to a clear sequence of separate events. According to Houle (1972), practice generally does not follow the logical pattern of a temporal ordering of steps. Instead, "from beginning to end, the design of an educational activity is usually in a constant state of reformulation....All the component parts of the design mesh together at every point at which it is considered. Only when they are separated for formal analysis do they appear to be logical and linear" (pp.39-40). Houle proposes his model of planning in a spirit of "pragmatic utilitarianism" (p.56) and encourages practitioners to use it only if "it works effectively and economically in either explaining or improving educational practice" (p.56). Otherwise, another model should be selected and followed.

Pennington and Green (1976) interviewed continuing professional education planners from five universities to determine how they describe their planning strategies. They



grouped the interview responses into six clusters of program development activities: originating the idea, developing the idea, making a commitment, developing the programs, teaching the course, and evaluating the impact. Pennington and Green (1976) stress, as does Houle, the inter-relationships and overlaps among the clusters and the fact that "every planner attended to each cluster in some way, although not always in a linear fashion" (p.20). Pennington's and Green's definition (#2) compares program development to "a form of administrative decision making" (p.20). Planners are seen as assessing the strength of various requests for continuing education programs, gathering resources, and carrying out "a number of critical decisions and a consideration of alternative activities which would lead to the execution of those decisions that in the end shaped the educational activity" (p.20).

Boyle's definition (#3) of planning includes "value assumptions" as a basis for decision-making and the selection of both goals and means. Goal setting implies a relatively clear view of the future. However, Boyle also recognizes the possibility of "unplanned consequences" of the planning activity that may result in "inconsistent or even incompatible patterns of change" (p.170). Boyle (1981) emphasizes, in a similar vein as Houle (1972), "that a completely rational model is rarely, if ever, achieved in the practical world of planning with people" (Boyle, 1981, p.42). "Planning with people" becomes especially important as Boyle insists that "the potential program clientele

must be involved in identifying the criteria to be used in making priority decisions" (p.47). Boyle justifies involvement of the learner as a way to avoid "a futile exercise of control."

Involving the learner in choosing and designing learning experiences is important if such experiences are to be of any consequence. One's needs and thoughts are the focus of growth, and unless these needs are met, education becomes a futile exercise of control. The learner must therefore be involved in decisions concerning the content and structure of learning experiences. (p.25)

Boyle (1981) cautions that involvement of the learner is "not an absolute value that must be maintained at all times, but as a process that must be adapted to ever-changing situations. The limits of participation are determined by conditions prevailing in the situation at any given time" (p.94). Boyle does not elaborate on how specific limits of participation are related to specific conditions, implying that the planner's own working philosophy should be the guide.

Boyle (1981) also draws attention to the fact that learner needs, educator needs, institutional needs, and societal needs may be in conflict with one another and that the planner is faced with an important question: "In brief, which set of needs should be given the greatest weight? What criteria should be devised to facilitate a sound decision?" (p.30). According to Boyle (1981), the "interplay of all the values" will influence the shape of the program offered:

...certain values thought to be desirable by one group or another are brought to the fore. In terms of planning, the patterns of change that will emerge represent the interplay of all the values as they influence and balance each other (p.170)...Priorities are what is important or valuable at the present time. Programming situations often have a number

of priorities at any given time, so it is necessary to decide which priorities are most important. Although scientific facts can help us decide on priorities, the personal values of the programmer and others involved in programming determine their relative importance (p.178).

Boyle's emphasis on conflicting needs and priorities and the interplay of values foreshadows Cervero's and Wilson's (1994, 1996) approach to planning as the negotiation of interests.

Boone's definition (#4) includes the concept of collaboration (learner involvement) and emphasizes "values held worthwhile by both programmers and users" (p.47) as the basis for decision-making. Democracy in planning - referred to as the "collaborative and egalitarian involvement of educators, leaders, and learners" (Boone, 1985, p.122) - is considered to be "essential to good planning" (p.81). Boone does not explain the process or the mechanisms whereby "conscious choices and decisions are made collaboratively by representatives of all systems involved in the programming process" (p.5) and he also does not address the possibility of conflict in such a process. Boone (1985) simply states that the collaborative process of planning is "accomplished in a systematic, decision-making, and value mode" (p.5) and that "the adult educator must have knowledge and understanding of the processes and strategies for interfacing with the identified leaders of the target publics" (p.110). Boone (1985) does not provide a description of such "strategies" but he shows an awareness of the necessity for strategic action in planning which also foreshadows Cervero's and Wilson's (1994, 1996) view of planning as the social activity of

negotiating.

Kowalski's definition (#5) is similar to Pennington's and Green's (#2) in their common view of planning as an administrative responsibility. Kowalski (1988) further distinguishes between the normative aspect - "knowing what should be done" (p.5) - and the instrumental aspect of planning - "knowing how to do it" (p.5). This is accomplished by a systems approach to planning which involves "simultaneously considering individual needs and values, environmental needs and values, and organizational needs and of doing so within the confines first of the environment, secondly of the organization, and finally of the planning process" (p.36). This balancing act of planning "is viewed as a situational activity - one largely dependent upon circumstances surrounding the practitioner" (p.6).

It is these "circumstances surrounding the practitioner" that concern Cervero and Wilson (1994, 1996). In their definition (#6), they highlight the social nature of the planning process and the importance of understanding and managing "the complex set of personal, organizational, and social relationships of power" (p.4). While other models and approaches to planning have also mentioned the importance of relationships and the distribution of power (e.g., Boone, 1985), they do so only in passing. Cervero and Wilson (1994, 1996), on the other hand, place "power and interests of planning actors in the foreground" (Sork, 1996, p.82) in order to draw attention to the fact that planning practice requires more than technical skill or knowledge of

traditional planning principles.

Cervero's and Wilson's (1994) case study research directly relates people's interests to the purposes, content and format of educational programs. Drawing on Morgan's (1986) definition of interests, Cervero and Wilson describe interests as a "complex set of dispositions, goals, values, desires, and expectations that lead people to act in certain ways and to position themselves in a particular manner when confronted with situations in which they must act" (pp.122-123). Interests matter because they lead to the construction of certain educational programs and not others. Power matters because it determines whose interests are represented. Cervero and Wilson (1996) describe the interplay between interests and power as follows:

Programs do not emerge, then, from the technical application of planning principles but rather from the intersection of planners' and others' interests. In sum, power relationships structure the terrain on which people must act, and their interests provide their motivation for acting on that terrain (p.10).

The "intersection" of interests is enacted through a process of negotiation across two dimensions: planners negotiate between interests (their own and other actors') and they also negotiate about the interests and the power relationships that structure them.<sup>9</sup>

Wilson and Cervero (1996b) provide the following prescriptions for planning practice which they describe as "a way

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<sup>9</sup> As Sork (1996) pointed out, these two dimensions of negotiation correspond to Elgstrom and Riis's (1992) distinction between substantive and meta negotiations.

of seeing what really matters in planning educational programs for adults" (p.98):

Planners must learn to negotiate power and interests responsibly, because their actions (that is, their planning tasks) validate whose interests matter.

Because power and interests matter, planners must learn how to anticipate sources of support and potential obstacles to plan responsibly.

In order to anticipate, planners must determine the power relationships by figuring out who counts and who should count.

Planners must know who they are responsible to (that is, whose interests matter, both politically and ethically).

As can be seen from the discussion of various definitions of planning above, Cervero and Wilson (1994, 1996) are not the first to call for an approach to planning that incorporates the importance of social interactions and the negotiation of interests (for example, Boyle (1981) refers to the "interplay of values" and Boone (1985) emphasizes the importance of mastering "strategies for interfacing"). However, Cervero and Wilson (1994, 1996) are the first to pull the social and the political aspects of planning into focus. It is a matter of relative emphasis.<sup>10</sup> It is for this reason that Sork (1996) describes their approach as "a new set of optics for viewing the complexities of program planning" (p.81) and an overdue application of the social

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<sup>10</sup> Indeed, Cervero and Wilson (1996) recognize "...a growing research tradition in adult and continuing education that addresses the need for an understanding of program planning beyond the stepwise models presented in the past" (p.7). They refer to Brookfield, 1986; Casey, 1989; Mills, Cervero, Langone, and Wilson, 1995; Pennington & Green, 1976; and Wissemann, 1991.

dynamics perspective to program planning.

### **Planning across Domains**

Although the focus of this research is program planning in adult education, the domain of community and regional planning is also relevant. While each is a substantive area of planning and, as such, draws on different specific theories to inform practice, the concept of planning transcends disciplinary boundaries. At a broad level of abstraction, planning can be considered as the "guidance of future action" (Forester, 1989, p.3), which points to the foundation of hope, or the absence of determinism, underlying all planning efforts.

This section looks at planning from three different perspectives in community and regional planning. Freidmann (1973) advocates a "transactive" style of planning based on dialogue. Boothroyd (1986) discusses developmental planning and compares it to other types of planning. Forester (1989) interprets planning as a process involving communicative action. Each of these approaches is presented in turn.

Freidmann (1973) distinguishes between forms of planning and styles of planning. He discusses two main forms of planning: allocative planning (the allocation of scarce resources among competing users conducted within an equilibrium framework) and innovative planning (geared toward institutional change within a societal guidance system). Styles of planning, on the other hand, refer to the "ways in which planning is influenced by the

instruments and methods of control available to planners as well as by the social and institutional environment to which it must adapt itself to be effective" (Friedmann, 1973, p.50).

Transactive planning is a style of planning that can be applied to either the allocative or innovative forms. According to Friedmann (1973), "the transactive style is essential to the ultimate success of planning" (p.190). The underlying assumption of the transactive style is that planners and clients are in relationships of mutual dependence constrained by different vocabularies, methods of knowing, and role prescriptions.

Friedmann (1973) explains:

Institutions do not relate to each other as wholes, but through a complex series of exchanges among individuals. Although these individuals behave primarily according to their formal role prescriptions, each role masks a singular personality....The planner steeped in the practice of the transactive style will try to reach out to the person who stands behind the formal role. (pp.171-172)

Transactive planning is geared toward closing the communication gap between planner and client and is accomplished through dialogue. The characteristic features of dialogue according to Friedmann (1973) are as follows:

1. Dialogue presumes a relationship that is grounded in the authenticity of the person and accepts his 'otherness' as a basis for meaningful communication (p.178).
2. Dialogue presumes a relation in which thinking, moral judgement, feeling, and empathy are fused in authentic acts of being (pp.178-179).
3. Dialogue presumes a relation in which conflict is accepted (p.179).
4. Dialogue presumes a relationship of total communication in which gestures and other modes of expression are as vital to meaning as the substance of what is being said (p.180).
5. Dialogue presumes a relation of shared interests and commitments (p.180).
6. Dialogue presumes a relationship of reciprocity and mutual



- obligation (p.180).
7. Dialogue presumes a relationship that unfolds in real time (p.181).

These requirements of dialogue can be applied to any relationship. Friedmann's description of a relationship based on dialogue is indeed appealing:

We can be open and alert to the other, whoever he [sic] may be. We can accept him [sic] as a person different from ourselves without being threatening or feeling threatened in turn. We can try to hold our intellectual, moral, affective, and empathetic states of being in mutual tension. We can accept conflict as an inevitable part of dialogue and not its termination. We can look for the patterns of shared interests. And we can concentrate the life of dialogue on the here and now. (Friedmann, 1973, p.182)

The result of a transactive style of planning is mutual learning for both parties and a fresh appreciation of the possibilities for change.

Boothroyd's (1986) discussion of how education in systematic planning can contribute to Native self-reliance introduces some useful planning terms and vocabulary. First, Boothroyd describes the problem-solving approach of systematic planning as follows:

...it includes an identification of what one wants to achieve, an analysis of the forces which are acting to help or hinder this achievement, an identification of alternative solutions, an assessment of the likely effectiveness of each alternative in meeting all goals, and continuous evaluation of the selected alternative upon implementation. (p.16)

Then, Boothroyd considers four types of planning distinguished by either a directional or peripheral position in community decision-making and by either a centralized or participatory approach. These four types of planning are summarized below.

Ritualistic planning: is peripheral to decisions and actions in the community and involves a centralized process. "The plan may look good but the content is useless, or at least

not used. It is irrelevant to community action and decision-making" (p.19).

Placatory and wish-list planning: is peripheral to decisions and actions in the community and is participatory. "The planning process becomes an end in its own right - perhaps useful as a social activity in the short term, but bound to generate cynicism and 'apathy' in the long term....The process may be sincerely motivated but because it is not seen to change anything, such planning is dismissed as a useless exercise" (1986, p.19).

Autocratic planning: is directional of decision-making and action and involves a centralized process. "The planning is effectively linked to action and decision making but it is centred in one person or group whose values, perceptions, and often interest, become paramount" (1986, p.19).

Developmental planning: is directional of decision-making and is participatory. "Because this form is truly community based (i.e., it is participatory) and is effectively linked to decisions and actions, it promotes in its outcomes and processes the development of the whole community" (1986, p.20).

Boothroyd (1986) emphasizes that "planning processes are complex; they involve delicate timings, both creative and analytical postures, conflicting interests, and limited knowledge about the future" (p.40). Because of this complexity and inherent uncertainty, it is important to engage in process planning (i.e., planning the planning process itself) before undertaking substantive planning (i.e., goal setting and consideration of alternative means and an evaluation system).

The work of Forester (1983, 1989, 1993) has served as a source of inspiration to Cervero and Wilson's (1994, 1996) approach to planning as the negotiation of interests. Forester (1989) uses the lens of critical theory to view planning practice as a form of communicative action which is the "selective,

communicative organizing or disorganizing of attention" (p.11).

Forester's (1989) account of planning practice is based on three assumptions:

First, such an account must do justice to the real, messy settings in which planning takes place. Second, it must embrace the everyday experiences of planners and make sense of their perceptions of the complexities, uncertainties, and ambiguities of daily practice. Third, it must explicitly address normative questions of information distortion, manipulated participation, legitimation, and ideological versus legitimate exercises of power. (pp.10-11)

According to Forester (1989), planning is neither just the technical application of a problem-solving approach nor just a matter of surviving political maneuvering. "These images of planning have aspects of truth to them - there are often both technical and political dimensions to planners' work - but such stereotypes poorly capture the realities of planning practice. That practice is both far more complex and far more fascinating than these images suggest" (Forester, 1989, p.4).

The complex and fascinating aspects of planning practice are revealed through Forester's view of planning as attention shaping. Planning actions are not only instrumental (i.e., a means to an end), but they are also a type of promise giving rise to certain expectations. "Even the most instrumental, apparently neutral, means/ends-oriented action is politically significant, as attention is shaped to necessity and possibility, and hence to hope, cynicism, passivity, and commitment" (Forester, 1983, p.242).

## Planning in Context

This section turns once again to the literature on program planning in adult education and poses two questions: 1) What is included in the notion of context? and 2) How does the context affect the process of planning?

In 1976, Pennington and Green pointed out that practitioners realize that "personal values, environmental constraints, available resource alternatives, and other factors impinge on the program development process" (p.22) and yet these factors are not given much attention in the literature. Twenty years later, a review of the literature on program planning in adult education suggests that the context of planning has still not been given adequate attention. Most authors provide lists of the different aspects of context that are considered to be important with respect to the planning process, but they do not explore the underlying mechanisms of how the context influences the planning process or how the context itself may be enacted through the process of planning. The context is usually described as an exogenous, constraining "variable" or "factor" as opposed to a recursive view where context is considered as both precondition and product.<sup>11</sup>

Boyle (1981) focuses on program type as the main factor determining the process and outcome of planning. He distinguishes among three types of programs: developmental (individual, group,

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<sup>11</sup> Cervero and Wilson (1994, 1996) are among the few that do allow for a recursive relationship between context and the planning process.

or community problem-solving), institutional (focused on improving individual learners' knowledge, skills and basic abilities), and informational (exchange of information).

"Understanding the different types of programs is significant because the type of program and its goals have implications for the nature and design of the learning opportunities to be provided, the resources necessary to achieve the goals, and the role of the programmer in the programming process" (Boyle, 1981, p.6). The three types of programs vary in their levels of flexibility and predictability and in this way can affect the planner's role. "For example, a developmental program...is generally a changing, flexible situation as compared with more institutional, predictable programs" (Boyle, 1981, p.70).

According to Boyle (1981), the role of the programmer is also affected by community factors, personal attributes of the programmer, and organizational factors. Boyle gives an example of structure as an organizational factor that can influence the planning process by limiting the planner's role.

The organization for which the programmer works obviously has an effect on the role(s) she or he performs. The structure of the organization may limit the use of certain role. A person working in a given organization may not be able to utilize conflict strategies or roles that coerce opposing community groups. Rather, they will need to use roles and strategies that neutralize the opposition and maintain community stability. (Boyle, 1981, p.71)

Boyle (1981) also mentions two other organizational factors influencing the role of the planner: the relative power and resources of the planner's organization. The prestige and leverage associated with the organization will affect what the

planner can accomplish.

In addition to affecting the role of the planner, the context, in the form of "institutional and individual constraints" (Boyle, 1981, p.46) can also directly inhibit planning. These constraints, which are not always obvious to the planner, can include: the organizational stance on planning, financial limitations, the interests and priorities of administration, external funders, and planners themselves. "In many cases, these constraints can be avoided through effective program development procedures. However, in other situations, the constraints must be recognized and accepted as a part of the program development framework" (Boyle, 1981, p.46). These constraints are viewed as given - to be "avoided" or "accepted," but not altered. One way that Boyle suggests for avoiding the related constraints of financial limitations and external funders' priorities is through involvement of stakeholders in planning:

The program development process must provide for the legitimation and other supportive actions that will facilitate the organization's efforts to obtain continuity and adequate financial resources. Involvement of influential decision makers at opportune times in the programming process will provide for greater understanding and acceptance. (Boyle, 1981, p.50)

Involvement of stakeholders often takes place in a group decision-making format. Advisory committees and Boards of Directors are examples of groups that come together to make decisions regarding priority programs or to legitimize the decisions already made by the planner. In either case, the

interactions and relationships among the group members will have an effect on the planning process. According to Boyle (1981), factors affecting interaction among members of decision-making groups include the following:

- presence of self-oriented goals (p.129)
- heterogeneity of the group (p.130)
- leadership style (p.130)
- formal structure of the group (p.130)
- pattern of communication among group members (p.130)
- amount of and distribution of power in the group (p.131)
- cohesiveness of the group (p.131)
- adherence to group norms (p.131)
- emotional and cognitive conflict (p.132)
- group size (p.132).

Boone (1985) lists three main categories of features of the context that affect planning: "the mission and philosophy of the adult education organization, the sociocultural characteristics of learner groups or systems and their environment, and the unique personal characteristics and style of the adult educator" (p.3). Boone (1985) focuses on the personal characteristics of the planner as a major influence on the planning process. "These characteristics include personal values and goals, mastery of certain concepts and principles of programming, and skill in programming decisions....The soundness of decisions taken will strongly influence the quality of the planned program and its outcomes" (pp.6-7). Boone (1985) emphasizes that planners need to understand the sociocultural context of the planning and implementation of programs and "...to be familiar with the linkages in the social structure and with the reference groups or leaders that are important to the publics they seek to serve" (Boone, 1985, p.44). Planners may not have control over many

events in the sociocultural context, but they should be able to take them into account, or even anticipate them, in planning.

According to Boone (1985), planners should also be sensitive to and in agreement with the mission and philosophy of their own organization. They should also be familiar with management processes. This understanding and commitment is a prerequisite for planning.

Conceptually, the mission, philosophy, functions, structure, and processes of the organization should be the first consideration in delineating planning as a major subprocess of the conceptual programming model. (Boone, 1985, p.66)

Brookfield (1986) identifies three main groups of contextual constraints facing practitioners: "personality conflicts, political factors, and budgetary constraints" (p.202). The unique configuration of personalities involved in every planning situation gets played out through a type of "psychosocial drama" (p.227). Political factors are present in decisions to cut back funding or terminate programs. Budgetary constraints or changes in resource allocation decisions are often imposed from above.

Brookfield (1986) also points to potential conflict between personal goals and organizational goals as an important contextual factor that has not been adequately addressed in the literature.

Many times the educator's sense of values will coincide neatly with the priorities of the institution....But at other times this fit between individual and institution will not be so easy to arrange. Individual programmers will often find themselves wanting to devote energy and resources to programs not deemed especially important in institutional terms. Here, a conflict between the practitioner's own value system and the institutional ethos and mission is almost inevitable. Few writers on program development in adult



education address this point of conflict. (p.231)

Kowalski (1988) groups the context for planning and implementation into four interacting clusters of factors: "the general environment in which the organization exists, the parent organization, the adult education program, and the learners" (p.9). The environment includes external elements such as the community, pressure groups, other institutions, demand for services, and societal needs and laws. Organizational factors that affect the planning process include role expectations, resources, organizational goals, policies, and regulations. The program factors are learner needs, the physical environment, instruction, learner motivation, learner access, and the curriculum. Finally, Kowalski (1988) places the learners in the center of all these nested clusters. Because there are so many contextual factors and they all interact, Kowalski emphasizes that each planning situation will be unique and that planning "as a critical aspect of administration, is a process which does not lend itself to single solutions. Rather, each program presents the practitioner with a novel challenge which necessitates an understanding of the adult as a learner, the environment as a restricting variable, and the parent organization as a controlling variable" (pp.10-11). Kowalski (1988) stresses that an effective program planner requires more than just knowledge related to adults as learners; it is also necessary to have an understanding of the relationship between the sponsoring agency and the program, and an ability to predict the potential effects

of the broader institutional context on the planning process.

Sork and Caffarella (1989) refer to the context of planning as a "milieu" that can "substantially influence" the planning process (p.235). The constraints imposed by the organizational context that can affect how planning proceeds include "histories, traditions, philosophical orientations, policies, and operating procedures" (p.235). Characteristics of the client system include "age, educational attainment, cultural background, facility with written language, economic status, history of participation in education, geographic distribution, and social affiliations" (p.236). Most models of planning incorporate the analysis of the planning context and the client system as a first step so that these factors can be considered in subsequent planning decisions. An example of how they could be taken into account would be if the discovery of financial barriers to participation for many potential clients led to changes in the pricing and promotion of a program.

Dominick (1990) conducted a multi-case study focusing on how decisions are made in planning and how the setting affects the planning process. Contextual constraints on decision-making were grouped into three categories: logistical, affiliative, and egocentric. Logistical constraints include time limitations, resources, and the physical setting. Affiliative constraints are considered to be "acculturation of the practitioner, the visibility of adult education in the mission of the organization, and the need for social acceptance in the organization which was

usually done through collaboration and delegation" (p.74). Finally, the egocentric constraints mentioned by Dominick (1990) are the "level of expertise in both adult education and the organization which then impinged on political savvy in the decision-making, gender expectation of the decision-maker and the individual's desire for decisional recognition" (pp.74-75). These three types of constraints affected the practitioner's choice of a "decisional repertoire" to be either an optimizing strategy or a satisficing strategy.

Cervero and Wilson (1996) list "resource competition and limitations, shifting alliances and demands, institutional policies, and power relations" (p.7) as the main factors that shape planners' actions. They also acknowledge that the rationality of planning agents is limited or bounded by other factors. The notion of bounded rationality was first developed by Simon (1955) and more recently by March (1978) and is based on the assumption that rationality is inevitably constrained by the informational and computational limits of human beings. Cervero and Wilson (1994) base their approach on Forester (1989) who has taken the concept of bounded rationality a step further. In addition to cognitive limits, rationality is also bounded by political, structural or systematic constraints (e.g., inequalities arising from division of labor) and by socially unnecessary constraints (e.g., deception). Taken all together, these bounds on a planner's rationality are described as communicative distortions. Cervero and Wilson (1994) emphasize

that if planners can learn to read situations in terms of the communicative distortions and then learn to anticipate the political bounds on planning, they will be better able to select the most appropriate strategy "for nurturing a substantively democratic planning process" (p.130). If relations among legitimate interests are consensual, then the most appropriate strategies are satisficing and networking. If relations are conflictual, then the planner should choose a bargaining or counteracting strategy. Cervero and Wilson (1996) point to a reciprocal relationship between the process of planning as negotiation and the context:

People's interests and power relationships are not static but are continually being acted upon by the negotiation process itself....We argue that power relationships and interests always both structure planners' actions (negotiation) and are reconstructed by them. In other words, planners act both within and upon their context. (p.10)

Mills, Cervero, Langone, and Wilson (1995) conducted a case study within the Cooperative Extension System (CES) using interviews and document analysis to determine how personal and organizational interests are related to the educational programs that get planned. Their study shows how interests are expressed through the context and how the context then influences which programs get constructed. Three contextual factors are identified: 1) organizational structure and culture, 2) available resources for extension programs, and 3) power relationships within the CES. Each of these contextual categories was further broken down into specific properties. The categories and their sub-groups are summarized below:

1. **organizational structure** (administrative hierarchy) and **organizational culture** (values and beliefs)
  - recruitment and selection practices
  - training and socialization
2. **available resources**
  - extension staff support
  - external support
3. **power relationships**
  - politics of funding and support
  - community dynamics

Their study shows how each of these factors affected the programs constructed by directly influencing the identification of needs and the choice of who to involve in the process of planning. The authors contend that:

...in linking contextual factors with planners' practices, we are better able to understand the mechanisms through which interests affect the educational programs constructed in any adult education organization. This suggests that program planning theories must attend to these mechanisms in order to have any chance to account for what really matters in adult educators' planning practices, and correspondingly, why certain programs are brought into existence and others are not. (Mills, Cervero, Langone, & Wilson, 1995, p.29)

This section of the literature review has looked at the consequence of the planning context according to various authors in the field of adult education. Although context is described in many ways, all would agree that the effect of the context on planning is something that should be taken into account, both in the planning process itself (as a first step) and in any attempt to theorize about program planning. Understanding the relationship between the context and the planning process is important because "the organizational environment of planning will substantially influence the reception, appreciation, and effectiveness of planner's work" (Forester, 1989, p.67). It is

also important from the point of view of theory building. Because planning is a complex situational activity, planning theory has to address the "contextual circumstances confronted by practitioners" (Sork & Caffarella, 1989, p.238) in order to be useful and applicable.

### **Further Development of the Problem Statement**

The review of literature on program planning in adult education revealed a variety of approaches to planning and helped to "open up" the concept. There is a great deal of overlap in how planning is defined in adult education, but there is no single definition that contains all the aspects of planning mentioned and that captures the complexities of the process in a clear and elegant manner. Planning is conceptualized in the following ways: as a complex of interacting elements (Houle, 1972); as administration (Pennington & Green, 1976; Kowalski, 1989); as the interplay of values (Boyle, 1981); as strategic interfacing (Boone, 1985); as the negotiation of interests (Cervero & Wilson, 1994, 1996; Mills, Cervero, Langone, & Wilson, 1995); as dialogue (Freidmann, 1973); as problem-solving (Boothroyd, 1986); and finally, as attention shaping (Forester, 1989). These metaphors for planning are not necessarily mutually exclusive; they provide us with complementary and often overlapping ways of looking at the process of planning.

The literature review also investigated the relationship between the planning process and the context. A cumulative list

of all the aspects of context mentioned in the adult education literature review as having an effect on the planning process is as follows: individual factors (planner's role, personal attributes, values, decision-making skills, awareness of the context, and bounded rationality); program factors (program type, goals, and logistics); organizational factors (mission, history, philosophical orientations, priorities, ethos, structure, resources, administration, policies, recruitment practices, staff training, budgets, interactions among members, personality conflicts, and power relations); and, environmental factors (relationships with external funders, community dynamics, socio-cultural characteristics of learners, pressure groups, and societal needs and laws). This unwieldy list reveals the wide variety of interpretations of "context" within the adult education program planning literature. While it is generally agreed that context affects planning, the mechanism for this influence is not yet fully understood. Cervero and Wilson (1994, 1996) and Mills, Cervero, Langone, and Wilson (1995) propose the negotiation of personal and organizational interests as the vehicle. While this approach offers immense potential for developing a better understanding of the dynamics of planning, "much work remains to be done to extend their analysis and to understand its implications for program planning" (Sork, 1996, p.89). Cervero and Wilson (1994) themselves recognize that further research needs to be carried out which would "treat systematically the intrapersonal or interpersonal dynamics that

often affect planning practices....[and] examine in the depth necessary the external relationships that planners form with other agencies in developing programs" (Cervero & Wilson, 1994, p.12). Sork (1996) also points to the need to supplement their work with a "more complete set of analytical tools...that capture the complexities of negotiations" (p.84).

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework developed here builds on the negotiation approach to planning. The framework provides a set of related perspectives that serves as an orienting strategy for the analysis of the ethnographic findings presented in Chapters Four - Seven. The first part of the conceptual framework links two strands of research: leadership theory and the social contextualist perspective in negotiation theory. Through this juxtaposition, I am able to examine the process of planning in a new light - as the negotiation of meaning. The second part of the framework shows how a deeper understanding of the context of planning is accomplished by conceptualizing context as culture and by applying a subjectivist, multi-perspective approach to analyzing cultures in organizations.

### **Basic Assumptions**

The basic assumptions that support this framework are divided into two groups: assumptions about planning and assumptions about the context. They are drawn from a variety of



sources in the fields of educational planning, adult education program planning, and organizational behavior. These assumptions are statements that I accepted as true prior to beginning the ethnography at Global Faith and continue to accept.

### Assumptions about Planning

**1. Planning is a mode of social interaction (Freidmann, 1973; Boyle, 1981; Brookfield, 1986; Adams, 1988; Forester, 1989).**

This implies that actors involved in planning "...take each other into account, that one actor tries to direct the other, and that they are operating in a common situation" (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980, p.17). Adams (1988) explains the consequences of viewing planning as an interactive social practice:

As viewed from within interactive models, planners are deeply enmeshed in practice and may be viewed as negotiators, consensus builders, human relations specialists, gentle arbiters or, because of political and power concerns, 'jungle fighters'....The metaphor that comes to mind when considering these models is a human drama replete with symbols, rules, special language, and personalities, in which the actors or players struggle to find and communicate meaning, to seek fulfillment, or to cope with alienation. (p.406)

This interactionist perspective puts the focus on the people involved in planning and is concerned with interpretation of shared meanings and structures of relevance.

**2. Planners are involved in relationships of interdependence (Boyle, 1981; Kowlaski, 1988; Forester, 1989).**

Planners do not work in a state of self-sufficient isolation. They are dependent on others (and are depended upon by others)

for information, for resources, for legitimacy, for support, and even for survival of the organization. This interdependence can be related to outcomes or behaviour and can be classified as either competitive or symbiotic. The dimensions of dependence are important because they help to "...determine whether parties stay in a given relationship, attempt to change it by tactical action, increase the amount of distance in the relationship, or simply abandon it" (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980, p.23). The dependence view of relationships points to the importance of understanding the distribution of power in the planning context.

Power is an intrinsic aspect of social relationships, even though it need not always be salient or perceived as such by the actors....Dependence is based on (1) the availability of alternative outcome sources (outcome alternatives), and (2) the degree of value attributed to the outcome at stake (outcome value). Outcome alternatives refer to the probability that an actor can obtain better outcomes from other relationships....The implication of the outcome alternatives dimension is that power must be examined not simply in terms of a particular relationship in isolation but in terms of the network of relationships that encompasses the particular relationship....The greater the value attached to the outcomes in the relationship, the greater the power of the other; by the same token, the more value the other attaches to the outcomes, the greater the actor's own power in the relationship. (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980, pp.20-21)

### **3. Planning is intendedly rational (Pfeffer, 1982; Bratman, 1987).**

Planning actions are foresightful and are chosen to serve a purpose. Planning is goal-directed and reflects intentions. Intentions play a key role in Bratman's (1987) philosophical analysis of planning. Intentions are "conduct-controlling pro-

attitudes" (p.16), and as such, are the "building blocks of plans" (p.8). Planning is affected by intentions because we frequently reason and plan from more general to more specific intentions and from an intended end to intended means. Intentions can vary through time and across different actors.

While planning is based on intentions, because of an uncertain future and incomplete understandings of the present, planning is also considered to be boundedly rational. This combination of intentional actions and bounded rationality is described by Pfeffer (1982) as "intendedly rational." Viewing planning as "intendedly rational" helps to explain why plans are typically partial and hierarchical. According to Bratman (1987):

The strategy of settling in advance on such partial, hierarchically structured plans, leaving more specific decisions till later, has a deep pragmatic rationale. On the one hand, we need to coordinate our activities both within our own lives and socially, between lives. And we need to do this in ways compatible with our limited capacities to deliberate and process information. Further, given these same limitations, we need a way to allow prior deliberation to shape later conduct. This argues for being planning creatures. On the other hand, the world changes in ways we are not in a position to anticipate; so highly detailed plans about the far future will often be of little use and not worth the bother. Partial, hierarchically structured plans for the future provide our compromise solution. (p.30)

The hierarchical structure of plans makes it possible to deliberate about certain components of a plan, while holding other parts constant. For example, a planner may "hold fixed certain intended ends, while deliberating about means or preliminary steps" (Bratman, 1987, p.29).

**4. Most decisions in organizations affect, or are affected by, planning (Boone, 1985).**

Planning is a form of decision-making and is related to many decisions within organizations. "The decision making perspective assumes that people try to achieve preferred outcomes, objectives, or goals, even though they may be unsure, in error, or unable to express their concepts of value" (Carroll & Johnson, 1990, p.21). Boone (1985) compares the pervasive aspect of planning in organizations to the manufacturing process in an industrial complex which "embodies all the functions, tasks, and events that contribute to producing, processing, and marketing a product" (p.41). Planning also provides a "road map for a rational response to uncertainty and change" (p.80), coordinated control of operations, and a futuristic leadership stance (Boone, 1985). While a program planner may not have direct control over many of the decisions within organizations, it is still possible to reconcile them with planning by giving the program planner credit for taking these decisions into account. It is not a question of being responsible for all organizational decisions, but rather being sensitive to them in recognizing both what is desirable and what is possible.

**5. Not all planning decisions involve negotiation (Sork, 1996).**

In its simplest form, negotiation is a response to conflict. Conflict comes from a perceived incompatibility of interests within a relationship of mutual dependence where the achievement

of one's own interest can be affected by the other party (Greenhalgh & Chapman, 1995; Elgstrom & Riis, 1992). It is important to emphasize, however, that negotiation is not the only response to conflict; use of power and conflict management are other alternatives for achieving interests. Greenhalgh and Chapman (1995) point out that "negotiation differs from the use of power in that negotiating parties voluntarily commit themselves to the course of action they agree upon, whereas power users overcome resistance in a way that results in compliance rather than commitment" (p.167). Sork (1996) cautions against categorizing planning as only negotiation.

...it is indeed useful to regard planning as negotiation, but we need to understand the dangers of only seeing 'negotiations' when we look at planning practice. While focusing our gaze on negotiations among the actors, we may miss events and decisions that are not strictly tied to negotiations but that may have an important impact on the program...Responsible planning, then, is much more than negotiating; it also involves applying knowledge and skills that have only an indirect or marginal relationship to the power and interests of the actors. (p.83)

#### Assumptions about Context

**6. Organizations are inherently mixed-motive in nature (Kochan & Verma, 1983).**

The mixed-motive nature of organizations implies that the parties share a range of common interests as well as conflicting interests. This range of overlapping and divergent interests provides the motivation for engaging in negotiation (as opposed to terminating the relationship) and allows for the possibility of integrative bargaining and a problem-solving approach.

**7. The interests that separate parties within organizations can vary considerably (Kochan & Verma, 1983).**

"Most mixed-motive processes involve both objective and subjective differences in goals and perceptions....[we] need to consider both the real and enduring and the perceived or constructed differences in interests or goals" (Kochan & Verma, 1983, p.19). This corresponds to Cervero's and Wilson's (1994, 1996) distinction between real interests and expressed interests. Bacharach and Lawler (1981) also emphasize that variation across interests can be related to different economic circumstances or structural roles or to subjective, interpersonal, or socially constructed perceptions of differences.

**8. Organizations must transact with other elements in their environment to acquire necessary resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978/1990; Kowalski, 1988).**

According to the resource dependence perspective, organizations are not internally self-sufficient or self-contained. They require resources from the environment. As a result of interdependencies, "most organizations are confronted with numerous demands from a variety of social actors, and many of these demands are incompatible" (Pfeffer, 1982, p.195). In addition to the option of complying with environmental demands, a variety of strategies may be implemented to make compliance less necessary. For example, the organization can either establish a negotiated environment to ensure the continuation of

needed resources or alter the pattern of interdependence facing the organization (Pfeffer, 1982).

### **Planning as the Negotiation of Meaning**

Central to the conceptual framework is the perspective that planning is a process that includes the negotiation of meaning. It is important to emphasize that this view of planning was not an assumption that I started with and then took with me to the field. I developed this perspective after completing the fieldwork while I was immersed in analysis and writing the early drafts of the dissertation (in particular, Chapter Seven). I did take an awareness of Cervero and Wilson's (1994, 1996) notion of planning as the negotiation of power and interests with me to the field.<sup>12</sup> While I saw the potential of their view for highlighting the interactive nature of planning, I was not convinced that the emphasis on interests and power relationships in their approach would be the most illuminating when applied to the ethnography of planning at Global Faith. After the ethnographic fieldwork was completed, I came across an article discussing leadership as the management of meaning (Smircich & Morgan, 1982). Linking the idea that meaning in organized settings can be "created, sustained, and changed" (p.261) together with the analytic tools provided by negotiation theory, I was able to see planning in a new light - as a process

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<sup>12</sup> In 1992, I read a pre-publication draft of the first three chapters of the Cervero and Wilson's 1994 book.

involving the negotiation of meaning. This new concept helped me to make sense of planning as I saw it occurring at Global Faith.

The purpose of this section is to discuss what the term "negotiation of meaning" refers to when I use it in this dissertation. Both aspects - "negotiation" and "meaning" - need explication. First I consider the meanings of "meaning" (i.e., meta-meanings). Then, I discuss "negotiation" and show how this concept can be linked to the metaphor of leadership as the management of meaning. The final part of this section draws on negotiation theory in order to draw attention to the role of planners as social decision makers and to highlight the impact of relationships and information processing on planning (Kramer & Messick, 1995). Using analytic tools provided by negotiation theory, I offer an organizing frame - which is new to the field of adult education program planning - for understanding planning activities as negotiation episodes.

### The Multiple Meanings of Meaning

What do I mean by "meaning?" The Oxford English Dictionary (1989) definition of "meaning" includes: "intention, purpose; that which is intended to be or actually is expressed or indicated; the signification, sense, import, interpretation; of a symbol, sign or token that; of an action, a state of things; significance" (p.522). Usage of the term "meaning" in a conceptualization of planning thus captures the intentional, expressive, interpretive, symbolic, and significant aspects of



the process of planning.

When combined with the process of negotiation, there are two dimensions along which "meaning" can vary.<sup>13</sup> The "meaning" of an activity, state, or object can be the focus or the subject matter of the discussions taking place between negotiating parties. Together, the negotiating parties are working through what something "means" (i.e., what is intended, expressed, interpreted, symbolized, and signified) in order to come to an arrangement or agreement. This is what I am calling the "meaning as text" dimension. The second dimension refers to the underlying meanings that negotiating parties may recognize, ignore, avoid, or deal with throughout negotiations. This is what I am calling the "meaning as sub-text" dimension. To summarize, planners both negotiate meaning and they deal with meaning in negotiations.

#### Leadership and the Management of Meaning

The perspective that planning includes the negotiation of meaning is related to a similar metaphor in the field of

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<sup>13</sup> "Text" and "sub-text" as meaning dimensions were suggested by Peter Boothroyd in personal communication. Usage of these two dimensions is similar, though not identical, to Cervero and Wilson's (1994) idea that "negotiation always involves two separate actions that occur simultaneously...not only do planners negotiate with and between interests, they also negotiate about the interests and power relationships that structure their planning practice" (pp.29-30). However, there is an important difference in emphasis. I am saying: not only do planners negotiate about various meanings as they engage in their planning activities (i.e., meaning as the subject matter or text), but they also negotiate with and between consistent, conflicting, and confusing meanings (i.e., meaning as the underlying set of interpretations or sub-text).

leadership research: that leading includes the management of meaning. Smircich and Morgan (1982) explain that the "management of meaning" metaphor can be helpful in understanding both the practice of leadership and the phenomenon of organized activity:

A focus on the way meaning in organized settings is created, sustained, and changed provides a powerful means of understanding the fundamental nature of leadership as a social process. In understanding the way leadership actions attempt to shape and interpret situations to guide organizational members into a common interpretation of reality, we are able to understand how leadership works to create an important foundation for organized activity...Leadership as a phenomenon is identifiable within its wider context as a form of action that seeks to shape its context. (p.261)

The management of meaning entails the framing of experience "in a way that provides a viable basis for action, e.g., by mobilizing meaning, articulating and defining what has previously remained implicit or unsaid, by inventing images and meanings that provide a focus for new attention, and by consolidating, confronting, or changing prevailing wisdom" (Smircich & Morgan, 1982, p.258).

According to Smircich and Morgan (1982), leadership involves a process whereby the power to define reality or shape meaning is either implicitly or explicitly surrendered by the led to the leader. "The actions and utterances of leaders guide the attention of those involved in a situation in ways that are consciously designed to shape the meaning of the situation. The actions and utterances draw attention to particular aspects of the overall flow of experience, transforming what may be complex and ambiguous into something more discrete and vested with a

specific pattern of meaning" (p.261).

The main challenge facing a leader is the same as the key challenge facing a negotiator: "to manage meaning in such a way that individuals orient themselves to the achievement of desirable ends" (Smircich & Morgan, 1982, p.262). Thus, the concept of the management of meaning is relevant to both negotiation and leadership. There is an important distinction to be made, however, between the negotiation of meaning and the management of meaning: in this dissertation, the latter is considered to be a strategy used to effectively carry out the former.

#### Characterizing Interactions as Negotiations

I am assuming that planning is a mode of social interaction and that planners are involved in relationships of interdependence in order to get their planning work done (assumptions #1, #2). While I agree that "negotiating is a pervasive activity that is central to organizational life" (Bazerman & Lewicki, 1983, p.7), I am also assuming that not all planning decisions inevitably involve negotiation (assumption #5). What needs clarification, then, is how to characterize interactions as negotiations. Kochan and Verma (1983) provide the following set of necessary characteristics:

Negotiations represent a special form of social interaction or decision making that (1) involves more than one party, (2) who hold some potentially conflicting interests as well as sufficient common interests or interdependence to motivate each to remain within the relationship or complete the exchange, and (3) involves reciprocity. (p.14)

These characteristics of negotiation interactions - multiple parties bound together through mixed motives and reciprocity - underly the importance of shared power across the negotiating parties. Without mutual interdependence or shared power - even if it is an unequal distribution of power - the one party holding all the power "can unilaterally decide the outcome without negotiating with the others" (Kochan & Verma, 1983, p.24).

### Relationships in Negotiations

Greenhalgh and Chapman (1995) provide a conceptual definition for a relationship "as the meaning assigned by two or more individuals to their connectedness or coexistence" (p.179). Within the context of negotiation theory, the set of cognitions generated by a relationship help determine a negotiator's posture toward the other party. The other party may be an individual negotiator (dyad configuration), or two or more individuals acting as one party (team configuration), or may include groups of three or more individuals each representing their own interests (multiparty configuration), or may consist of individuals representing different social groups negotiating with members of other groups (intergroup configuration), or may involve an alliance among a subset of members within a larger group (coalition configuration) (Thompson, Peterson, & Kray, 1995; Polzer, Mannix, & Neale, 1995).

In addition to party configuration, relationships can also be characterized by degree of familiarity (friend, colleague,

stranger) and by expectations of future interaction. Greenhalgh and Chapman (1995) emphasize that "the nature of the relationship that has formed is likely to be the strongest predictor of how the negotiation ensues" (p.178). They explain how a relationship can affect the negotiation process: "People are likely to seek out interaction differentially with those with whom they feel a positive bond. This leads to repetitive interactions and the deepening of relationship ties" (p.178). Repetitive interactions, in turn, can lead to a sense of trust based on the ability to predict and understand the other party's actions (Polzer, Mannix, & Neale, 1995). Expectations of future interaction can give rise to a greater feeling of "involvement" which can be defined as "the extent to which a negotiator cares about a particular situation" (Thompson, Peterson, & Kray, 1995, p.15). On the other hand, expectations of future interaction with the other party may also cause negotiating individuals to be less anxious about achieving their interests during the present negotiation. The "shadow of the future" allows for reciprocity and can give negotiating parties the possibility of "trading off support over time" (Polzer, Mannix, & Neale, 1995, p.129).

### Information Processing in Negotiations

The likelihood of arriving at a mutually satisfying agreement during a negotiation is related to the goals of the parties involved and also to their willingness to share information about their own preferences and priorities (Thompson,

Peterson, & Kray, 1995). An inhibiting factor to divulging information about one's own goals or aspirations is the fear of appearing self-serving, impolite, or uncharitable. Thompson, Peterson, and Kray (1995) explain that "such self-presentational concerns may be heightened when negotiations involve parties who are friends or who are in other long-term relationships....In other words, trust between parties may increase information provision, but self-presentation concerns may decrease it" (p.13).

In addition to direct disclosure, information about the other party in a negotiation may come from previous experience, knowledge of their reputation, or implicitly from stereotypes and assumptions about roles. Furthermore, through a process called "encoding," negotiators will interpret and make judgements about information based on their initial expectations. Information that is incongruous with expectations may be ignored or even rejected (Thompson, Peterson, & Kray, 1995).

### Characteristics of the Negotiation Process

The nature of the relationship between negotiating parties, and their attitude or posture toward one another, help determine whether they will have a competitive or cooperative orientation to the negotiation process. A cooperative orientation arising from a positive relationship will lead to a wider set of options and a greater number of potential moves (Polzer, Mannix, & Neale, 1995). This makes an integrative bargaining situation more

likely. Elgstrom and Riis (1995) define integrative bargaining as "search processes involving creative problem-solving. The search is for new options with the hope of mutual gain. Such behaviour is often linked to positive, problem-solving attitudes, stressing joint gains, common interests and non-confrontational techniques" (p.102). In contrast, distributive bargaining is associated with a competitive orientation among the negotiating parties where the negotiating process "contains elements such as high initial demands, threats, manipulation and a win-lose approach" (Elgstrom & Riis, 1992, pp.102-103).

A cooperative or competitive orientation is also related to the reward structure of the negotiation situation. If the reward structure is such that both parties may win (i.e., positive-sum as opposed to constant-sum when the interests are strictly at odds), then the negotiating process will be more cooperative and less competitive (Elgstrom & Riis, 1992).

The negotiation process can also be characterized by the goals of the negotiating parties. Elgstrom and Riis (1992) provide three categories for the nature of the goals guiding actors during a negotiation:

Some actors are **target-oriented**. They dislike the status quo, and know what they are looking for. They strive to attain certain specific goals which are very clear to them....Other actors are **departure-oriented**. They want to get away from the present situation, but do not know their target, their desired objectives. In a negotiation where some actors are target-oriented and others are departure-oriented, the former stand in an advantageous position.... There are also **status quo-oriented** actors, who do not want to move from the existing situation. They do not want to negotiate, but may sometimes be forced to do so by orders

from higher levels. In that case, their goal is to retain as much as possible of the original status. (p.103)

### Applying the Negotiation of Meaning Perspective

In its broadest sense, planning is the guidance of future action. The perspective developed here is that planning includes the negotiation of meaning. Due to the socially interactive nature of planning activities and the relationships of interdependence that planners participate in, "decision-needing issues" often lead to voluntary and non-prescribed negotiations within organizations (Ebert & Wall, 1983). The negotiation of meaning happens along two dimensions: as the focus of the negotiation discussions (meaning as text) and as the set of interpretations and assumptions underlying the negotiations themselves (meaning as sub-text). Therefore, a plan - which is the product or outcome of planning - comes both from working through what something means and from working with the meanings that make sense of what should be done to reach a negotiated agreement. People involved in planning negotiate meaning and they deal with meaning in the course of negotiating.

In order to provide an organizing frame to take to the data presented in subsequent chapters of this dissertation, this section draws together the various elements in the negotiation of meaning perspective on planning developed above. The organizing frame, together with its categories and sets of related questions, is presented below in Figure 2.1.



**FIGURE 2.1: FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING NEGOTIATION OF MEANING EPISODES**

<b>PLANNING ACTIVITY</b>	What planning activity included the negotiation episode?
<b>DECISION-NEEDING ISSUE</b>	What is the specific decision-needing issue that will be addressed as a result of the negotiation process?
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CULTURAL CONTEXT</b>	What are the characteristics of the cultural context? Consensus, consistency, and clarity? Conflict and inconsistency? Ambiguity, confusion, and paradox?
<b>NEGOTIATING PARTIES</b>	Who are the negotiating parties?
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RELATIONSHIP</b>	What are the characteristics of the relationship between the negotiating parties? Degree of trust? Frequency of interaction? Distribution of power? Shared interests? Divergent interests?
<b>NEGOTIATION OF MEANING EPISODE (THE STORY)</b>	What is the series of connected events and interactions related to the negotiation?
<b>MEANING AS TEXT</b>	What meaning of what is being discussed? What is the subject matter of the negotiation?
<b>MEANING AS SUB-TEXT</b>	What are the underlying questions concerning different meanings surrounding the negotiation that are being considered?
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS</b>	What stance is being taken by each of the negotiating parties? What are the negotiating parties' goals? What strategies are used throughout the negotiation?
<b>NEGOTIATION OUTCOME</b>	What was the outcome of the negotiation episode? What plan has been produced?

## Context as Culture

The literature review revealed a wide range of features of the context that are considered to be somehow relevant to the planning process within the field of adult education. These include: physical and social aspects (e.g., office layout and personalities); formal and informal practices (e.g., organizational structure and networks); constraining and enabling forces (e.g., resource limitations and skill mastery); and external and internal aspects (e.g., official policy and underlying assumptions). Some of the authors (Cervero & Wilson, 1994, 1996 for example) also stress the importance of seeing context as the outcome of planning, not just as the shaper of planning.

I am using the root metaphor of "culture" to interpret "context" in this study (Jelinek, Smircich, & Hirsch, 1983). This allows me to view organizational life "in expressive, ideational, and symbolic - as well as material and economic terms" (Martin, 1992, p.41). This also implies a generalist approach which includes "study of all kinds of cultural manifestations, including formal and informal practices....facilitating exploration of linkages with other domains of organization theory" (Martin, 1992, p.42)

By viewing the planning context as culture, I am also able to allow for a reciprocal relationship between the planning process and the context. The context is "both actual and symbolic; it is a *matrix* for action and a textual *medium* that

gives meaning" (Seddon, 1995, p.395; italics in the original). I am using Morgan's (1989) definition of culture "as an enacted or socially constructed domain that is as much the consequence of the language, ideas, and concepts through which people attempt to make sense of the wider world as it is of the 'reality' to which these social constructions relate" (p.91). This incorporates the idea that planners act both *within* their context and *upon* their context (Cervero & Wilson, 1994, 1996). This "processual view of culture as the continuous recreation of shared meanings.... legitimates attention to the subjective, interpretive aspects of organizational life" (Jelinek, Smircich, & Hirsch, 1983, pp.335-336).

### **Martin's Three Perspectives Framework**

What is an organizational culture? Is it a source of harmony? Is it an arena for conflict? Is it a confusing paradox? Or, is it all three? Martin's (1992) framework for analyzing cultures in organizations provides a "way out of the conceptual chaos caused by conflicts among these perspectives....[and] also brings an integrative, interdisciplinary perspective to the study of cultures in organizations" (p.vi). Martin asserts that it is possible to view a single organization from three perspectives: integration, differentiation, and fragmentation. The advantage of adopting this multi-perspective approach to analyzing culture is based on the fact that "the blindspots and distortions associated with each of the three perspectives are complementary. Often one

perspective's blindspot is another's focus, so that one's 'strength' is another's 'weakness'....When any single organization is viewed from all three perspectives, a greater understanding emerges than if it were viewed from any single perspective" (Martin, 1992, p.4). Martin's framework is summarized and presented below.

## 1. Cultural manifestations

Three kinds of cultural manifestations are frequently studied in the analysis of cultures: forms, practices, and content themes. Martin's (1992) definitions for these manifestations are given below.

### 1.1 Cultural Forms

Cultural forms can supply important clues as to what people in organizations are "...thinking, believing, and doing. The most commonly studied cultural forms include: rituals, stories, jargon, humour, and physical arrangements (i.e., architecture, interior design, and dress codes)" (Martin, 1992, p.37).

### 1.2 Practices

Practices can be formal or informal. Formal practices include: "organizational structure, task and job descriptions, technology, rules and procedures, and financial controls" (Martin, 1992, p.37). Informal practices include "unwritten norms, communication patterns, and standard operating procedures" (p.37).

### 1.3 Content themes

Content themes are "common threads of concern that are seen as manifest in a subset of forms and practices" (Martin, 1992, p.37). Content themes can be external, which means they are "deliberately espoused to an external audience" (p.37) Or, they can also be internal, emerging "as tacit, deeply held assumptions" (p.37).

### 2. A Cultural Puzzle

Combining content themes with forms and practices results in a type of cultural puzzle. "The next step is to put them together. The manifestations of a given culture can be arranged in the form of a matrix" (Martin, 1992, p.37). Martin's matrix framework is presented below in Figure 2.2. This blank matrix shows what it is and is also available for readers to use or copy in order to make their own notes as they read through the data chapters (Chapters Four - Six). The matrix is presented again in Chapter Seven - this time filled in with data from this study. The cell entries correspond to specific practices or forms that are relevant to certain content themes at Global Faith. I use Martin's matrix framework as a type of cultural map laying out the manifestations of cultures at Global Faith. I then use the map to search for patterns of interpretation according to each perspective.

**FIGURE 2.2: MARTIN'S MATRIX FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING CULTURES**

<b>CONTENT THEMES</b> External/Internal	<b>PRACTICES</b> Formal/Informal	<b>FORMS</b> Stories/Ritual/Jargon/Physical Arrangements

Integration Perspective: consensus, consistency, and clarity  
 Differentiation Perspective: conflict and inconsistency  
 Fragmentation Perspective: ambiguity, confusion, and paradox

(adapted from Martin, 1992)

### 3. The Three Perspectives

Cell entries are made according to the guidance provided by each perspective: integration, differentiation, and fragmentation. One matrix can be filled out incorporating all three perspectives or different matrices can be prepared for each content theme or for each perspective. In this study, I chose to organize the matrix entries around content themes corresponding to the five tenets of NGO behaviour discussed in Chapter One and gathered from the findings presented in Chapters Four, Five, and Six. The completed matrices are presented in Chapter Seven accompanied by a discussion of the cultural contexts at Global Faith from within each of the three perspectives. These three perspectives for studying organizational cultures - integration, differentiation, and fragmentation - are summarized below.

#### 3.1 Integration Perspective

According to this perspective, "all cultural manifestations mentioned are interpreted as consistently reinforcing the same themes, all members of the organization are said to share in an organization-wide consensus, and the culture is described as a realm where all is clear. Ambiguity is excluded" (Martin, 1992, p.12). Consistency, consensus, and clarity are the defining features of organizational cultures within the integration perspective. There are three types of consistency: action, symbolic, and content. Action consistency is between themes and practices. Symbolic consistency is between themes and forms.

Content consistency is across the various themes. According to the integration perspective, "a leader is the source of a cultural vision that generates an organization-wide consensus, enabling the firm to maintain itself successfully, survive difficult crises, and reorient itself to changed environmental circumstances" (Martin, 1992, p.63). An example of the integration perspective view of culture is provided by Schein (1992):

Culture somehow implies that rituals, climate, values, and behaviors bind together into a coherent whole. This patterning or integration is the essence of what we mean by 'culture.' (p.10)

### 3.2 Differentiation Perspective

The differentiation perspective "describes cultural manifestations as sometimes inconsistent (for example, when managers say one thing and do another). Consensus occurs only within the boundaries of subcultures, which often conflict with each other. Ambiguity is channeled, so that it does not intrude on the clarity which exists within these subcultural boundaries" (Martin, 1992, p.12). Harmony and homogeneity are replaced by a concern with conflict and difference. This perspective allows for the existence of a "series of overlapping, nested organizational subcultures. These subcultures co-exist, sometimes in harmony, sometimes in conflict, and sometimes in indifference to each other. The differentiation perspective unveils the workings of power in organizations, acknowledges conflicts of interest between groups, and attends to differences of opinion" (Martin, 1992, p.83). Three kinds of inconsistency are apparent from this



perspective: action, symbolic, and ideological. Action inconsistency is between themes and practices. Symbolic inconsistency refers to an inconsistency between espoused content themes and cultural forms (for example, juxtaposing egalitarian rhetoric against privileged seating arrangements). "Symbolic inconsistencies can also point to deviations from official organizational policy" (Martin, 1992, p.87). Ideological inconsistencies occur when content themes conflict with each other. An example of the differentiation perspective view of culture is provided by Young (1991):

...organizational culture emerges as sets of meanings constructed and imputed to organizational events by various groups and interests in pursuit of their aims...meanings are constructed and imposed in order to mobilize interest group support. (p.91)

### 3.3 Fragmentation Perspective

The fragmentation perspective focuses on ambiguity as subjectively perceived, as inescapable, and as the essence of organizational culture. Consensus and conflict form around specific issues and are constantly changing. Stable organization-wide consensus - or even subcultural consensus - is absent and clarity is rare. Within the fragmentation perspective, content themes are viewed as "sources of confusion, a variety of interpretations of any cultural manifestation seems plausible, and uncertainty is pervasive" (Martin, 1992, p.118). Ambiguity relates to perceived lack of clarity, complexity, or a paradox. An example of the fragmentation view of culture is provided by Meyerson (1991):

...cultures can embody ambiguities. Members may still share an overarching orientation and purpose, they may face similar problems and experiences, but how they interpret and enact these may vary so radically as to make what is shared seem vacuously abstract. (p.132)

### Applying Martin's Framework

This study uses Martin's framework in two ways. At the beginning of Chapter Seven, I present completed versions of Martin's matrix filled out with examples, quotes and excerpts from the findings surrounding the five "articles of faith" for NGOs first discussed in Chapter One. These matrices then serve as a basis for understanding the cultural contexts within Global Faith. I look for consistency and inconsistency, consensus and conflict, and clarity and ambiguity. The different interpretations of Global Faith cultural contexts are then overlaid with specific episodes illustrating planning as the negotiation of meaning.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Qualitative inquiry finds its ultimate strength in the vast opportunity that the holism of being there makes possible . . . .researchers tend to look again and again, and they look, moreover, in the varying moods and times of both researcher and researched. It thereby gives credence to the contextual nature within which both researchers and their research phenomena abide. . . .In these facts are its efficacy for capturing the surprise, disorder, and contradictions of a phenomenon. (Peshkin, 1988b, p.418)

### An Ethnographic Approach

Due to the emphasis on the situational and interactive aspects of planning in the conceptual framework, this research is based on the qualitative style of inquiry. In order to shed light on the relationship between the process of planning and the cultural context, it is necessary to understand the social meanings that guide the behaviour of planners (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983); an understanding that is achieved through cultural interpretation. I am adopting Geertz' (1973) approach<sup>14</sup> to cultural interpretation, the point of which is "to aid us in gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live so that we can, in some extended sense of the term, converse with them" (p.24). Or, as Geertz (1975) has also said, "the trick is to figure out what the devil they think they are up to" (p.48). Specifically, I chose to use ethnography as the methodology for this research.

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<sup>14</sup> Geertz (1973) refers to culture as "interworked systems of construable signs" (p.14) which helps to illuminate the semiotic aspect of his approach and his orientation toward symbolic anthropology.

What is ethnography? Unfortunately, "there is not a single definition of ethnographic research that is wholly illuminating or fully satisfactory....There is, however, an ethnographic sensibility, a body of work, and a respectable tradition upon which to draw and with which to interact" (Ayers, 1989, p.11). "Ethnographic sensibility" is reflected in the intent of the research and can help distinguish it from other methodologies (e.g., case study research)<sup>15</sup>. I am assuming, as does Wolcott (1985), that the "purpose of ethnographic research is to describe and interpret cultural behaviour" (p.190). The *process* of ethnographic research (which includes the data collection methods of participant observation, indepth interviewing, and document analysis) and the *product* of ethnographic research (the written account) are both called *ethnography*. However, as Wolcott (1990) states, "the research process deserves the label ethnography only when the intended product is ethnography" (p.47). Hence, culture

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<sup>15</sup> All ethnographies are case studies but not all case studies are necessarily ethnographies. Common assumptions underlying case studies and ethnographic research include the following: "human behavior is integrally related to the context in which it occurs, and that this behavior cannot be understood without knowing its meaning for the participants. Such assumptions determine the ways in which data are collected and analyzed. To begin with, the primary instrument for data collection and analysis is the researcher...each usually involves field work" (Merriam, Beder, & Ewert, 1983, p.261). Yin (1989) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (p.23). The distinguishing feature of ethnographies is the underlying rationale of *cultural interpretation* which means a commitment to "looking at, and attempting to make sense of, human social behavior in terms of cultural patterning" (Wolcott, 1990, p.48).

is the orienting concept both for "doing ethnography" and for "writing ethnography."

Given the cultural orientation of the conceptual framework, ethnography makes sense as the methodology for this research. An ethnographic approach can incorporate Martin's (1992) multi-perspective view of cultures in organizations presented in Chapter Two. Ethnography "is replete with - and does not shrink from - ambiguity" (Peshkin, 1988b, p.418) and as such, ethnographic research can be conducted from the *fragmentation* perspective. Ethnography can also be considered as "a description of the multiple and nested contexts of meaning which a group of individuals creates for itself" (Schwartzman, 1983, p.186) which is compatible with the *differentiation* perspective's concern with subcultures. Finally, ethnography is also well-suited to the *integration* perspective through receptiveness to how an entire pattern of thinking and acting fits together within an organization. The ethnography presented in this dissertation draws on all three perspectives and focuses on each in turn in the discussion analyzing different manifestations of Global Faith cultures presented in Chapter Seven.

The view of planning as the negotiation of meaning presented in this dissertation is located within a frame of shared experience. I spent seventeen months as a frequent participant in, and observer of, daily work life at Global Faith. I conducted 25 formally scheduled interviews and, on many other occasions, I asked questions, listened, and exchanged ideas with the people of

Global Faith. Therefore, this ethnography is a product of the "strange interplay" between my own consciousness as a participant observer and the consciousness of the people of Global Faith (Northey & Tepperman, 1986, p.58). This means that another researcher studying the same group of people and the same events "with equal care, skill, and honesty may evaluate, recall, and interpret what happens differently" (Martin, 1992, p.13). The process of conducting this ethnography was based on two sets of judgments: those made by the people of Global Faith about their world, their convictions, and their actions and those judgments I made as a researcher about what to attend to, what to leave out, and what to make of it all (Schwartzman, 1983).

The product of the ethnography - this written account - takes into consideration yet another set of judgments: those of the readers. Peshkin (1986) recognizes that readers' judgments should be based on an awareness of the researcher's judgments: "as I increasingly come under conviction...about the relationship between who I am, what I see, and what I conclude about what I see, I feel increasingly inclined to reveal enough about myself so that readers can make their own judgments about what I saw, what I missed, and what I misconstrued" (p.15). The next section of this chapter involves such a "revealing." It is an exploration of the issues raised by the subjective nature of the research process: how my attention and interpretations were influenced mainly by my religious orientation and experience in the field of international development. The following sections of this chapter

then describe the details of the research methodology<sup>16</sup> by providing answers to these questions:

- How did I select the research site?
- How did I negotiate access?
- What roles did I occupy during the fieldwork?
- How were the data collected and analyzed?
- How are the criteria for judging an ethnography addressed?

### **Where Self and Subject Join**

In ethnography, the researcher is the research instrument. Data are collected through the methods of everyday inquiry: looking, listening, asking, joining in and hanging back, and developing ideas and testing them out. These "methods of mundane practical understanding" - made self-conscious - become the methods of research in an ethnography (Atkinson, 1992, p.3). An implication of the researcher as research instrument is that the personal equation becomes crucial and, as such, must be made explicit (Fine, 1993). This can be achieved through a process of "disciplined honesty" which involves "identifying the sources of bias and subjectivity in the researcher's own makeup" and which is "critical to the quality of the work done" (LeCompte, 1987, p.43). Peshkin (1986) also calls for a self-conscious auditing of the researcher's own subjectivity. He describes this subjectivity

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<sup>16</sup> The term "research methodology" is used here to refer to the research design. The term "research methods" refers to data collection and analysis tools. This is consistent with the distinction between methodology and methods made by Borg and Gall (1989).

as "an amalgam of the persuasions that stem from the circumstances of one's class, statuses, and values interacting with the particulars of one's object of investigation" (Peshkin, 1986, p.17). This interaction between self and subject and the importance of a candid disclosure for the readers' benefit are explained elsewhere by Peshkin (1988a) as follows:

When researchers observe themselves in the focused way that I propose, they learn about the particular subset of personal qualities that contact with their research phenomenon has released. These qualities have the capacity to filter, skew, shape, block, transform, construe, and misconstrue what transpires from the outset of a research project to its culmination in a written statement. If researchers are informed about the qualities that have emerged during their research, they can at least disclose to their readers where self and subject became joined. (p.17)

In my case, the subset of personal qualities that emerged during the research came from three main sources: my socio-economic and physical attributes (class, race, age, and gender), professional interests, and religious beliefs. I will discuss each of these in turn.

I am a white, university-educated woman in my early thirties<sup>17</sup>. The sample of people that I interacted the most with at Global Faith<sup>18</sup> was predominantly male, educated at Bible

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<sup>17</sup> This age corresponds to the time of my fieldwork at Global Faith.

<sup>18</sup> I am including the people that I observed and interviewed (as opposed to the people that I only observed) in this sample. Please see Figure 3.1: Global Faith Organizational Chart for the positions corresponding to the people in this sample. Nine of the people in this group are men, three are women. The Executive Director also has a Master's degree from a well-known North American university. Two people in the group are African and one is Chinese.



College or an institution with a religious orientation, older than me, and also white. How did these aspects of my identity shape my interactions with the people of Global Faith? One way to approach this question is with another question: if I could have magically transformed these characteristics in order to increase rapport and reduce discomfort on both sides, what would they be? I would have wished to be male, middle-aged, and well-versed in the Bible because then I would have been "the rule" as opposed to the "exception." Also, I would have wished to be from a country in the "Third World" - preferably a country where Global Faith has their projects - so that I could have contributed my first-hand knowledge of daily life *there* to the discussions taking place *here* about program priorities. On the other hand, being who I am also had its own advantages. As Punch (1986) points out, "personality, appearance, and luck may all play a role in exploiting unexpected avenues or overcoming unanticipated obstacles in the field" (p.24). In my case, the fact that I happen to be the "spitting image" of the Executive Director's sisters when they were younger was apparently instrumental in his decision to give me permission to do my research at Global Faith. Even though I was a stranger - to him, I was a familiar face.

My professional interests provided another realm where self and subject became joined during the research. I have spent many years studying and living among other cultures and I have worked

in the field of international development.<sup>19</sup> My work experience has included a position with a local consulting company coordinating CIDA Industrial Cooperation programs in China and working on a research project in Nepal funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). While I did not have any previous experience working directly for an NGO, my time overseas and past involvement in international development efforts helped me to imagine the challenges facing Global Faith's regional staff overseas. I could also relate to the difficulties experienced by staff in Global Faith's Head Office dealing with funding organizations, proposals, deadlines, and report writing. In this realm of professional interests, we shared a common language but our work-a-day particulars were different; the insider world of NGOs was new to me. Fieldnotes written up after my first visit to Global Faith mention my excitement at the prospect of understanding more about how NGOs function because "my own career might lead me down a similar path one day. I was hoping I would find people that I could respect and look up to and learn from." As it turned out, I did learn from many of the people of Global Faith. Kleinman and Copp (1993) describe this student-teacher dynamic in fieldwork research as follows:

For our purposes, participants are the teachers and we are their students. Sometimes we exaggerate the student role to ensure that they continue to teach us. But many of us feel like beginners and wonder if the people we study think we are slow learners. In addition, we usually feel so grateful

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<sup>19</sup> I have a Bachelor's degree in East Asian Studies and a Master's degree in Agricultural Economics. I speak Mandarin Chinese and I have lived and worked in Taiwan, China, and Nepal.

to participants for letting us hang around that we feel and act humble rather than superior. (p.29)

I did feel grateful to them for their patience in responding to my questions and for letting me "hang around." I also felt humble. As I had hoped at the beginning of the fieldwork, I also eventually found people that I "could respect and look up to" at Global Faith. My feelings of admiration were especially strong during the time of the Somalia famine in the summer of 1992 (after about six months of fieldwork). Global Faith launched an emergency fundraising campaign and put together shipments to Somalia of medical supplies and skim milk powder. In my fieldnotes, I wrote about the increased activity around the office and the surety of their response to the crisis in Somalia:

I was surprised that it was all mobilized so quickly. I was impressed by the resonance between their caring and their actions. They weren't hollow actions and they weren't "ungestured feelings." There was follow-through. There was a crisis and they were serious and they were making decisions and they were helping people.

I was also impressed by the apparent willingness of some of the staff to continually remind themselves of the "plight of the poorest of the poor" and to include their work, their religion, and their life all in the same embrace. Their circle of concern seemed to me to be large - larger than my own - and to be based on a fusion of work, beliefs, and one's personal life that I could not accomplish. The following excerpt from my fieldnotes about one senior staff member shows that while I respected the intensity of his commitment, I also felt that I was different from him in this regard:

[Richard] strikes me as a real thinker. His work is his life. His life is his work. He doesn't leave it all in the office - it is carried over to church and praying and all his private musings. I couldn't be like that. I would have to turn it off sometimes. I couldn't continually drive the thoughts of other people's misery home to my head and heart over and over the way that he seems to....

Peshkin (1988a) suggests looking for "the warm and the cool spots, the emergence of positive and negative feelings, the experiences I wanted more of or wanted to avoid" (p.18) in order to catch a glimpse of subjectivity in action. While the realm of professional interests was mainly a "warm spot" during my fieldwork at Global Faith, the arena of religious beliefs was mostly a "cool spot." Global Faith is a Christian organization, unaffiliated with any specific denomination yet made up almost exclusively of evangelical Christians<sup>20</sup>. I am also a Christian; which is to say that my parents and grandparents were Christian, and I was baptized as a child, married in a Christian church and arranged to have my own children baptized. But I am not an evangelical Christian - I belong to the United Church. Also, I am not a regular church-goer - I attend church on Christmas, Easter,

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<sup>20</sup> The denominations represented at Global Faith include: Baptist, Mennonite, Brethren and Pentecostal. Most of the people of Global Faith would describe their denominational affiliations as Evangelical but not as Fundamentalist. What is the difference? Both come from the revivalist tradition in conservative Protestantism and as such, both accept a "theology that affirms the divinity of Jesus, the reality of his resurrection and miracles, and the sure destiny of human beings in either heaven or hell....Fundamentalists are considerably more sure that every word of scripture (often as found in the King James Version) is to be taken at face value. Evangelicals are more comfortable with the ambiguities of translation and interpretation that arise when the scripture is subjected to critical analysis" (Ammerman, 1987, pp.4-5).

and only sporadically throughout the rest of the year. I am not comfortable with, nor well-versed in, the "vocabulary of belief" (Peshkin, 1986). Until my fieldwork at Global Faith, I had never been called upon to pray publicly, out loud, in turn, in front of a group. I have never been to Bible College nor to a Bible Camp in the summer. Even though I call myself a Christian, I am aware that I am not a Christian the way the people of Global Faith consider themselves to be Christian. For example, I am not comfortable with the total and exclusive acceptance of a monolithic doctrine. Rose (1988) describes this contrast in world views as follows:

The conflict for some of us may lie in our commitment to diversity and pluralism and in our contrary desire to curtail any ideology that proclaims that there is 'One and Only One Truth.' The conflict arises between those who see the world in absolutist terms and those who see it in relativist terms. (p.xxii)

While I do not wish to "curtail" the strong evangelical Christian ideology of Global Faith, I am not able to embrace it as my own. I accept and respect their level of commitment, but I do not feel moved to follow their example.

Were the people of Global Faith aware of my views and the differences between us? The fact that I am not an evangelical Christian was not a hidden secret. Yet, it was not a frequent or casual topic of discussion either. My religious background drew attention mainly with respect to the process of negotiating

access through a type of "progressive initiation."<sup>21</sup> Progressive initiation is described by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) as follows: "The fieldworker may find him- or herself being 'tested' and pushed towards disclosure, particularly when the group or culture in question is founded upon beliefs and commitments (such as religious convictions, political affiliations, and the like)" (p.84). I experienced this as the people of Global Faith endeavoured to find out a little more about my religious beliefs each time I visited the site. By the second visit, they learned that I was "Christian." By the fourth visit, I had to make it clear to the Executive Director that I was not an evangelical Christian the way they were. The following excerpt from my fieldnotes recounts how I presented myself at the end of the first interview with Gerald, the Executive Director:

I was worried about how he was interpreting my being "Christian." I wanted him to know my situation so there would be no doubt about misrepresentation or bad feelings down the road. I told him that I was baptised and married in a church and that I had gone to Sunday school as a very young child but I didn't remember anything and I wasn't familiar with the Bible though we were thinking of maybe having our baby baptised and I enjoyed the few times that I

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<sup>21</sup> Gerald commented on this section of this dissertation during the process of respondent validation. According to Gerald, there was not as much concern at Global Faith as I suggest here about whether I was an Evangelical Christian or not. Gerald said that he thought my Christianity "was not an issue" for the people of Global Faith and it was not a factor in their decision to grant me access. Gerald explained that although the Evangelical label aptly classifies the denominations represented within Global Faith, the people of Global Faith themselves are "not comfortable with that label and are not happy with being called Evangelical Christians." According to Gerald, because of their own common desire to somewhat distance themselves from the Evangelical church community, the people of Global Faith would not choose to distance someone else who was not also Evangelical.

went to church with my mother-in-law and I liked the liberal views of the United Church where we had gone together. When I told him, it all came out in one big run-on sentence just like this. I was worried about offending him and losing access to Global Faith and yet I wanted to be honest and to have everything out in the open. I asked him if he felt o.k. with all that and if he would be comfortable having me around Global Faith. He said "no problem" and didn't show much of a reaction either way.

After several more months, I realized that my religious beliefs were still a source of curiosity for some of the staff. The story below - taken from my fieldnotes - shows how one staff member pushed me towards disclosure. At the time, I was worried that any difference in our belief systems would be interpreted as criticism or a type of rejection and that they might decide to close their doors to me and put an end to the research. But the result of my disclosure was just the opposite; it created closeness rather than distance (Kleinman & Copp, 1993). The scene is the annual Global Faith Retreat, in the evening, just after the guest speaker finished his lecture on "spiritual health."

After the talk was finished, I was confronted by one of the staff. "How much of what [the guest speaker] talked about did you understand? I mean it all makes sense to us and I was just wondering..." I answered: "Well, I go to church pretty often so I understand the general concepts, but I am not so good with the specifics. I can't quote the Bible..." He asked which church. I told him and he said that he had been wondering about my religious background. I told him about my intermittent involvement with the United Church and the recent christening of our baby and subsequent increase in attendance. "I have been going pretty regularly the last while but I'm a relative newcomer and I still don't know very much."

What a hard thing to be under someone else's scrutiny like that. I guess he was worried that I was scrutinizing them and wanted to know where I stood. I tried to be honest and yet unoffensive - a very thin line.

He then said: "Being a newcomer may be to your advantage."

You don't have any baggage. You can be more open." I asked him what he meant by "baggage." He told me about his fundamentalist parents who saw things "in black and white" and forced him "to toe the line."

I asked him what parts of [the guest speaker's] talk he thought I wouldn't have understood. He said: "Well, his world view is based on the Bible...I was asking more for my own reassurance. I thought if you were not a Christian, you would have thought 'what a crazy bunch of people!' or you might have been uncomfortable. I have spent a lot of time wondering how the world sees Christians." I told him any discomfort I had was mainly due to my role as a researcher among them - not having a specific job or function - and also being worried about being asked to pray out loud. I confessed that public speaking made me nervous. He said: "For someone who has come through university, you sure came out sweetly... most people at a university are on a rampage. There is a lot of anger. They're not sweet like you. You're different. You're a learner just like me."

While the people of Global Faith seemed to accept me as a "learner," the basic differences in our world views meant that I would always be an outsider in their midst, no matter how warm their welcome.<sup>22</sup> In one sense, my outsider status as a non-evangelical Christian may have helped in the process of gaining entry to Global Faith because of their "need to have a person on the outside legitimate them as ordinary people (rather than as religious fanatics)" (Kleinman & Copp, 1993, p.46). In another sense, feeling like an outsider but being included on the inside created a kind of useful anxiety. The following excerpt from my

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<sup>22</sup> During the process of respondent validation, Gerald commented on this section of the dissertation draft. According to Gerald, at the time of the field research, the people of Global Faith did not think of me as an "outsider in their midst." Gerald said: "You saw yourself as an outsider, but we saw you as part of us. The fact that you are not an Evangelical Christian was not an issue and was not discussed. Our only concern was whether you were feeling comfortable [e.g., during the prayer sessions]. There was no one there that didn't like you. There was no one who didn't like you there [i.e., doing research at Global Faith]."



fieldnotes describes the tension of participating in a morning prayer meeting at Global Faith and the resulting increase in "ethnographic awareness:"

I wished I wasn't in the circle but outside of it instead - not only so I could observe and record what was happening in greater detail but also so I wouldn't have to say anything when my "turn" came up....I didn't want them to think of me as very different from them or as un-Christian. I suppose that is from an innate desire to fit in and not offend and also because I wanted to be able to come back....My antennae were working overtime trying to find categories for these people. They didn't seem to be fundamentalists or fanatics and yet they weren't "typical" people going about their daily work either.

The joining of self and subject during the research influenced the course of the analysis. My position on the periphery helped me to realize that Global Faith is an organization where the distinction between insiders and outsiders is emphasized (Adler & Adler, 1987) and where the boundary is actively managed and defended (Gilmore, 1982). My discomfort with an absolutist ideology meant that the religious foundation of Global Faith stood out in sharp relief - no matter what I was looking for, this is what I saw. This increased sensitivity ultimately helped me understand more about the importance of values and motivation - and their variation across individuals - in decision-making, which again pointed me in the direction of the negotiation of meaning.

This section has shown how "a researcher's own background may affect that researcher's choice of what to attend to, what is remembered, or what interpretations are seen as plausible" (Martin, 1992, p.7). The next section describes how Global Faith

came to be the organization selected as the site for the research.

### **Pilot Study and Selection of Research Site**

In the winter of 1992, an opportunity arose for conducting fieldwork at an organization as part of the requirements for a university course in ethnographic research. I decided to look for an organization involved in international development as the site for this mini-ethnography<sup>23</sup> because of my longstanding interest and professional experience in this field. Also, I hoped that this same organization would be a suitable site for the longer-term research necessary for my dissertation. I started my search by looking through a published list of organizations currently executing CIDA contracts. Global Faith was among those listed and seemed like an attractive candidate because their overseas projects included adult education and training activities (as opposed to just a focus on relief work) and because they were located within striking distance of my home.

The mini-ethnography carried out for the course actually became the pilot study for the dissertation ethnography. I was able to determine that Global Faith had the essential qualities of an ideal site as described by Marshall and Rossman (1989). They had already given me permission to do a long term study there so I knew entry was possible. There was a rich mix of

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<sup>23</sup> The pilot study fieldwork was carried out between January and March of 1992 and included two observation sessions and two interviews.

planning cases and people involved in planning<sup>24</sup>. I was able to continue my presence there as a volunteer - taking minutes during committee meetings and helping in the Overseas Programs Department - with minimal disturbance to the staff. Finally, I was given permission to interview and observe staff as well as to analyze organizational documents which would improve the quality of the research through data-source and technique triangulation.

The pilot study was also valuable because this early fieldwork helped to uncover some useful questions that provided focus for later data collection. Examples of these questions include: Where is the line drawn between "good works" and "God's work" in a religiously oriented NGO? How are program realities translated into reporting requirements for funding agencies? Do CIDA requirements help shape the actual implementation of the programs or do they just influence how the reports are written? An additional benefit of the pilot study was beginning the lengthy process of negotiating access on a positive footing.

### **Negotiating Access**

The process of negotiating access to Global Faith was only just begun during the pilot study. While I did receive permission to conduct long-term research at Global Faith during the pilot study, negotiating access extends far beyond the initial opening of a door. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) emphasize, "the

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<sup>24</sup> Global Faith had 70 projects operating overseas and there were nineteen staff members in the Head Office.

problem of obtaining access....persists, to one degree or another, throughout the data collection process" (p.54).

In addition to receiving formal approval from gatekeepers at the site, negotiating access also involved clarifying the purposes and procedures of the research - making sure that all those involved were informed of my presence and the nature of the research. As soon as formal permission was granted to conduct a long-term study at Global Faith, the Executive Director and I agreed that a memo should be sent to all the staff and members of the Board explaining my presence, the goals of the research and my anticipated role while at Global Faith. Dan, the Director of Human Resource Development, drafted the memo based on information in my resume and Gerald, the Executive Director, signed it and had it distributed to a list of 38 people (Board members, staff in the Head Office, Provincial Directors, and staff posted overseas). The memo read as follows:

Cathie Dunlop will be spending time at [Global Faith] over the next six to eight months.<sup>25</sup> Cathie is working on her dissertation research for a Ph.D. in Adult Education at UBC. [...background information on previous education and work experience]. Cathie will also assist [Global Faith] in our Overseas Program Department, working with [Richard]. We welcome Cathie's presence and we look forward to her time with us beginning April 21, 1992. (dated April 7, 1992)

This memo is significant not so much for what it says but for what it does not say. First, it is different from a memo that was distributed not too long after announcing the hiring of a new secretary/receptionist at Global Faith. That memo included the

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<sup>25</sup> At the time, we thought the fieldwork would be finished by December 1992. Instead, it continued until May 1993.

following statement: "We welcome (so and so) and pray God will bless her as she carries out her responsibilities" and also mentioned that she is a member of a Baptist church. Blessings and information on church affiliation were both missing in the memo concerning my research - subtle signals to the readers of my permanent outsider status.<sup>26</sup> Second, the memo did not include a description of the goals or methods of the research. While I had explained my research intent at every opportunity to Gerald and Dan - in conversations and in written communication<sup>27</sup> - for whatever reason, this information was not included in the memo. As a result, I had to explain the research through a "process of unfolding rather than a once-and-for-all declaration" (Spradley, 1979, p.36). Every time I sat down with someone for an interview, we talked about the research, their rights as participants in the research process, and I gave them a copy of a consent form to sign establishing and protecting those rights. Because I did not interview everyone that I observed, there were some staff members that were still asking me to describe my research six months into the field work. Finally, at the annual three-day Retreat for all the staff, Gerald surprised me by asking me to stand up and

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<sup>26</sup> During the process of respondent validation, Gerald commented on this section of the dissertation draft. Gerald explained that the difference between the two memos in terms of the blessings and information on church affiliation was due simply to the fact that they were written by different people with different styles. Dan wrote the memo concerning my presence and Gerald wrote the memo concerning the new secretary/receptionist.

<sup>27</sup> Copies of the protocol documents and consent forms are in the Appendix.

explain, yet again, my presence and my purpose to the gathering (about 25 people). Gerald said: "Some people have been asking me why Cathie is taking so many notes. Cathie would you take a minute or so and explain what you are doing here?" I took a deep breath and launched into a brief description of my program at the university and the requirements for course work and original research. I emphasized that I was not evaluating Global Faith - instead, I was using a "how" question and I was interested in learning about the process of planning at Global Faith: how were the nonformal adult education programs that are part of overseas projects chosen and designed? How did the particular context of Global Faith influence the decision-making process? I also stressed that I was not looking for something that I did not already mention - I did not have any secret agendas.

While my research agenda was in no way secretive or underhanded, I still found it difficult to communicate clearly what my findings were during the fieldwork. When asked on several occasions what the research had revealed to date, I told them "I have learned so much but I still don't know anything." This reluctance to pin down a succinct statement of the findings before leaving the field was not an attempt to conceal what I already knew. Rather, it was due to a desire to keep searching, to remain consciously naive and open to surprises. As Fine (1993) emphasizes, "good ethnographers do not know what they are looking for until they have found it....Not only are we unsure of the effects of explaining our plans but often we do not know what we

want until well into the research project" (p.274).

Another aspect of negotiating access involved the discovery of obstacles to data collection and deciding whether and how to manoeuvre around them. Types of obstacles that I encountered included those deliberately erected to protect "sacred" occasions and those that existed due to the structure of the organization. The protective barriers surrounded sensitive settings with either a religious focus or meetings concerning the finances of Global Faith. I was not interested in actual numbers or dollar amounts and therefore, I did not make a special effort to be included in the financial discussions. On the other hand, I was interested in learning more about how the religious motivation of the organization was actualized through the planning process, and so I did negotiate entry to the weekly staff meetings, the annual retreat on spiritual health, and the Directors' retreat on the vision of Global Faith. During the pilot study, after interviewing Richard, Director of the Overseas Programs Department, I asked him if I could come back another day and observe some sort of regularly scheduled staff meeting. Richard was hesitant to invite me to Monday morning weekly staff meeting. He said: "Well, you know we have a prayer session as part of that meeting and if you are not a Christian, that may be a problem..." When I told him that I was indeed a Christian, he said I would be welcome to come to the staff/prayer meeting. Entry was possible once I had given the right "password" by saying that I was a

Christian.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to the obstacles protecting sensitive situations, I also encountered difficulties during the early months of fieldwork in gaining access to informal or spontaneous meetings around the office. While I was invited to regularly scheduled meetings (e.g., bi-weekly committee meetings) and special events (e.g., fundraising banquet), I often arrived at Global Faith for a day of fieldwork only to discover that several key people were already in a meeting behind closed doors. I did not feel comfortable interrupting these meetings and yet I felt anxious that I was missing important planning interactions. I realized that it can be tricky observing in an office setting and that it was particularly hard at Global Faith because of the office layout (many private offices and lack of shared spaces) and the structure (specialized jobs requiring coordination across departments) - hence, the many informal meetings in private offices. I used my knowledge of the structure to come up with a strategy for gaining access to these meetings. First, I went to Dan, the Director of Human Resources, for help and advice. I told him that I was a little worried about people not realizing what I was interested in and not thinking that I might want to sit in on

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<sup>28</sup> Gerald commented on this section of the dissertation draft during the process of respondent validation. Gerald emphasized that saying that I was indeed a Christian was not considered as a "password" by Richard allowing me entry to the prayer meeting. Gerald said that Richard's positive reaction to my saying that I was Christian was only related to his concern that I might feel uncomfortable during the prayer session if I was not a Christian.



meetings that might be boring to them but that were fascinating to me. I asked Dan how should my being informed of meetings happen? Should I take an active stance and ask people to update me every week? Should I sit back a bit and let time pass until I fit in better and wait for people to naturally think of me and invite me to participate as they feel comfortable doing so? Or, somewhere in the middle of these two options? Tell people what I am interested in, remind them now and then and hope they will remember me? Dan seemed to understand right away. He offered to talk to "people" for me. I said that maybe it will just resolve itself - it takes time for people to get used to having me around. He commented on the importance of building relationships and he said "You're part of [Global Faith] - try not to feel like an outsider." I followed up on Dan's advice by tagging along more often on lunch outings to the coffee shop next door and by spending more time chatting with people about topics that did not relate directly to my research interests - for example, our families and our children. I tried to do more of what Bernard (1994) calls "hanging out" - a process that "builds trust and results in ordinary conversation and ordinary behavior in your presence. Once you know, from hanging out, exactly what you want to know more about, and once people trust you not to betray their confidence, you'll be surprised at the direct questions you can ask" (p.152). Several days later, I asked Richard, Director of the Overseas Programs Department, if he thought people were uncomfortable when I sat in on meetings. Richard said: "No,

you're part of the woodwork now. That is not a problem." We were slowly building rapport and getting to know each other better. Their expressions of inclusion increased even more after I participated in the three-day summer retreat with all the staff.

Even though the intent to include me in informal meetings was eventually established, logistically it was still difficult to accomplish. I realized that most of the meetings taking place around Global Faith included Gerald, the Executive Director, and that this could be another route for negotiating access. If I could spend an entire day at his side and observe all the meetings that he took part in, then I would not have to wait for people to remember to invite me along. I spoke with Gerald about this idea of "shadowing" him for a day. He seemed cooperative but we did not set a date. Finally, in September, I started wondering if the people of Global Faith sensed my lingering awkwardness with their religious foundation because I had only been to one of the Monday morning staff/prayer meetings. It became clear to me that in order to be considered one of the group, it was important to demonstrate allegiance by participating in this meeting. I decided to change my regular schedule of visits to Global Faith (usually Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays) in order to attend. The day that I went to the staff/prayer meeting, another layer preventing access seemed to fall away. Gerald was especially friendly and open to my spending the rest of the day with him. On that first day of shadowing, I sat with Gerald as he conducted five different meetings with staff members - receiving updates

and providing guidance - and one meeting with representatives from a film and music production company about the possibility of recording a "musimentary" to be played at Global Faith fundraising events. After that first day, I shadowed Gerald on three other occasions and was able to observe many more meetings and informal interactions (including a meeting with the Board of Directors and a visit to the Doctor's office with Gerald's mother) and to learn more about Gerald's central position as a leader and a motivator.

Shadowing the Executive Director proved to be a very useful strategy and revealed the link between negotiating access and the researcher's role in the field. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) emphasize, negotiating access "also refers to the much more wide-ranging and subtle process of manoeuvring oneself into a position from which the necessary data can be collected" (p.76). My role as Gerald's shadow affected who I interacted with and what data I had access to. The next section examines the various roles I had during the fieldwork, and the implications of the different roles for the nature of the data collected and for fulfilling the research exchange.

### **A Fishbowl of Roles**

Heath (1993) uses the phrase "the fishbowl of multiple and conflicting roles and values" (p.261) to refer to the swirling mixture of responsibilities and allegiances contained in the transparent and often precarious work of ethnographic research.

While I was doing the fieldwork at Global Faith, my fishbowl of roles included: academic researcher, participating member and donor of Global Faith, and mother of a young child. Each of these roles suggests that "a particular I was present in the collection and analysis of these data" (Peshkin, 1986, p.287). This section looks at each of these roles in turn.

### **Academic Researcher**

My role as a researcher at Global Faith was established in the context of potential recruitment as a staff member. During the pilot study, Richard, the Director of the Overseas Programs Department, mentioned that Global Faith was considering hiring someone to assist with coordinating a CIDA funded program. Once Richard learned that I was Christian (he initially assumed that I was not), he excitedly "offered" me the job.<sup>29</sup> He mentioned later to Gerald that I was interested in part-time work at Global Faith. In the meantime, I talked with my Research Committee and we agreed that there was potential for an interesting long-term study at Global Faith and that it would not be advisable to work there and do research at the same time.

When I returned to Global Faith to interview Gerald several weeks later, the topic of a job came up again. Gerald said he heard from Richard that I was interested in working part-time at

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<sup>29</sup> Gerald commented on this section of the dissertation draft during the process of respondent validation. Gerald said that Richard's informal job offer was not based on my saying that I was Christian. Rather, Richard thought of me as a "nice person" with the appropriate experience and "personality" for the job.

Global Faith and he thought they could use me to help out in the Overseas Programs Department. I quickly told him that I had wanted to talk about the possibility of working there as well because the situation had changed since I had a chance to talk with my Research Committee. I explained that my first priority was to my research and to finishing my degree. I then asked him if it would be possible to carry out a longer-term study at Global Faith. Gerald said he had no problem with that and suggested that I work for them while doing my fieldwork. I said that I would prefer to just be a researcher but that I would like to help out with writing or editing if they needed that. He said he understood that I would not want to have divided loyalties by being both a staff member and a researcher and they would like it if I could help out. He then added: "We would make sure you were compensated financially for your work, of course." I emphasized that I did not want to be paid by Global Faith while doing the research. We agreed that once the research was finished, we would talk about the possibility of employment again.

### **Participating Member**

Because my first priority was to my researcher role, I resisted recruitment as a complete member of Global Faith. Instead, I took a mostly peripheral membership role while conducting the fieldwork. Peripheral membership still implies an insider's perspective through direct, first-hand experience, but it is achieved and maintained through marginal participation and

a certain level of detachment (Adler & Adler, 1987). Some degree of detachment was inevitable in my case because of the differences in our world views and our expressions of Christianity. While I tried to develop empathy with the people of Global Faith, I would never be able to fully grasp emotionally the evangelical motivation and meaning behind their work. However, some detachment can be beneficial. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) have said, "there must always remain some part held back, some social and intellectual 'distance.' For it is in the 'space' created by the distance that the analytic work of the ethnographer gets done" (p.102).

While I maintained a detached stance throughout the fieldwork, I was eventually drawn in from the periphery to become more of an active member of Global Faith. Alder and Alder (1987) stress that "peripheral membership is often a transitional role, serving as a point of entry for people who will ultimately move toward closer, more involved roles" (p.43). My initial responsibilities as a member of Global Faith coincided with my main activities as a researcher: listening, note-taking, and writing. I was the designated minute-taker for some formally scheduled external committee meetings that Global Faith members were involved in. I also took the minutes for a regional meeting of an NGO consortium (a Global Faith member was chairing the meeting), and for the annual regional CIDA consultation with the local NGOs. These meetings all involved people from outside Global Faith and usually took place outside of normal office

hours - in the evenings or on a Saturday. I also took notes and wrote summaries within Global Faith, in accordance with their requests (e.g., I wrote up the summary of a meeting between a senior CIDA official and Global Faith's Executive Director and seven departmental directors). My role as note-taker served a minor, yet useful, function; if I had not been there and, in some cases, willing to come in outside of office hours, someone else from Global Faith would have been assigned to the job. I also helped with photocopying, buying refreshments, and setting up a small reception for visiting CIDA officials and representatives from the local NGO community.

As I took part in more of the core activities of Global Faith (e.g., the weekly staff/prayer meeting), my role as a participating member changed and I became more actively involved out of "situational necessity" (Adler & Adler, 1987, p.53). Because of the sharp insider/outsider distinction that characterized the setting of Global Faith, my position on the periphery was not sustainable. As Gerald was fond of reminding the staff of Global Faith: "either you're in or you're not." Once I had participated in the annual three-day retreat in July and returned more often to the weekly prayer/staff meeting, my status changed from a researcher allowed only limited access to the inside to more of a trusted colleague engaged in a joint endeavor with the people of Global Faith (Alder & Alder, 1987). The nature of my responsibilities expanded in two directions: 1) helping with fundraising efforts and, 2) providing written input for a

proposal for CIDA funding. Each of these functions is described below.

My help with fundraising revolved around two of Global Faith's special yearly events - the fall Walkathon and the spring Banquet. While I was attending one of the weekly staff/prayer meeting in mid-August, I discovered that I had been assigned to the "Public Relations Committee" for the Walkathon. This involved sorting through boxes full of sweatshirts and t-shirts with the Global Faith logo in preparation for their sale at the Walkathon in October. I also helped with registration on the actual day of the walk. I greeted the walkers and took in sponsor sheets and money and stamped people's maps. There were many people coming and going that I did not know that all seemed to know each other. All the staff members from Global Faith were there, as well as their friends and relations and many former participants in Global Faith's summer youth programs. The annual spring fundraising Banquet is another occasion where the participants all seemed to know each other or to have acquaintances in common. Gerald expressed his expectation that I would be able to recruit some of my friends to attend and that I would "host" several tables. He joked in front of other staff members that I would be hosting four tables at the Banquet. Much to my chagrin, they believed him and congratulated me on bringing in so many potential donors.<sup>30</sup> I had to assure them that it was not true -

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<sup>30</sup> Gerald commented on this section of the dissertation draft during the process of respondent validation. Gerald said that the other staff members would have known that he was joking



I would not be hosting any tables. I did, however, attend the banquet (bringing only my husband) two years in a row. During our second Banquet, we were seated at a table that was to be hosted by Richard, the Director of the Overseas Programs Department. Richard was late arriving, so I was the only person there directly connected with Global Faith. I answered the other guests' questions and filled in for Richard until he arrived. Richard told me afterwards that he knew he could depend on me to represent Global Faith in his absence. In both cases - the Walkathon and the Banquet - my role as a participating member of Global Faith included interacting with outsiders. I was trusted to serve as a faithful lieutenant and to act on behalf of Global Faith in an appropriate manner (Adler & Adler, 1987).

The other area of expanded responsibilities in my more active role at Global Faith involved drafting a section for a written proposal to CIDA. In late April 1993, I received a last minute, urgent phone call from Elizabeth, Director of International Relations at Global Faith, cancelling our second research interview which was scheduled to take place the next day. Elizabeth explained that she did not have time for the interview because she was working on a submission to CIDA. Elizabeth stressed how important this proposal was to Global Faith and then asked me to help out by drafting a section of the proposal dealing with institutional linkages. Elizabeth suggested

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about me hosting tables and their congratulations were part of a joking response.

that this would be easy for me because of my university perspective. My portion of the draft had to be ready by the next day. When I expressed surprise at the short notice and also dismay because my husband and I were planning to go out for our anniversary dinner that evening (when would I have time?), Elizabeth remained unimpressed. She said she was writing other parts of the proposal and that others were busy contributing additional sections. I was expected - like the other staff members - to contribute my part. I did do as Elizabeth asked and delivered the draft the next day. This experience helped to underscore the high level of interpersonal commitment and pressure applied to members of Global Faith. As Adler and Adler (1987) point out, "doing 'membership work' forces the researcher to take on the obligations and liabilities of members. In repeatedly dealing with the practical problems members face, researchers ultimately organize their behavior and form constructs about the setting's everyday reality in much the same way as members" (p.34).

A few days later, Gerald, the Executive Director, thanked me for my help with the proposal and said to me: "you're very kind." Providing my services - even in very small ways - definitely enhanced my relationships with Global Faith staff and increased my access to data in a wider variety of settings. Gerald told me: "you are nice and that is why doors are opened to you."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> During the process of respondent validation, Gerald commented on this section of the dissertation draft. Gerald said that the people of Global Faith did not view my helping out as a

Helping out as a participating member was also a way to reciprocate for the opportunity to do my research at Global Faith. As Wade (1984) emphasizes, "observers cannot expect to be only on the receiving end of the participant observer process" (p.213). I wanted to be able to offer something back to the organization in exchange for their patience with my questions and their tolerance of my presence.

In addition to showing gratitude, acting as a participating member of Global Faith also served as a basis for understanding what it is actually like to be a staff member at Global Faith. "Our feelings while in a particular role might mirror those who hold a similar role in the setting....Thus our feelings suggest hypotheses about how others, members of a subgroup in the setting or perhaps outsiders, feel about themselves and each other. If we examine our uncomfortable feelings rather than dismiss them, we can gain insights into how others feel and why" (Kleinman & Copp, 1993, p.31). My "uncomfortable feelings" while in the role of a participating member of Global Faith were linked to my perception that I could never do enough for "the cause." My volunteer services were appreciated but I always felt pressure that no matter how much I contributed, I should be doing more for the organization. I also sensed their high expectations of unwavering and undivided loyalty to the organization. I experienced this directly during a conversation with Gerald, the Executive

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necessary exchange for access. He emphasized again that doors were opened to me because of my "personality."

Director. Gerald called me into his office to talk about my help with note-taking at a Program Review Committee meeting on the previous Saturday. My infant son was sick that Saturday but I came anyway to fulfill my promise to take notes for Global Faith. During the meeting break, I talked with one of the visiting committee members (who also happened to be a doctor) about my son's strange rash and my worries about his health. The following excerpt from my fieldnotes describes Gerald's reaction to my predicament:

[Gerald] was concerned that they did not have a back-up note-taker arranged for the day that I came in to do the minutes and Geordie [my son] was sick at home. He was worried that if I had stayed home because my baby was sick, what would they have done? He asked me if I thought they should always have a back-up in place for me. Was he testing my loyalty? I said no, that was not necessary - that there would always be someone else there for my baby and I would be there for [Global Faith]. [Gerald] said their other concern was that maybe I should have been at home with my baby and they were taking me away from him. Afterwards I had mixed feelings about this part of our conversation. I felt put to the test by [Gerald] as though he was challenging my commitment. I am a volunteer, not an employee. I am sympathetic to "the cause" but not a convert. And I am the mother of young baby. All of these can be seen as potential threats to any loyalty I might feel towards [Global Faith].<sup>32</sup>

Taking on the role of participating member raises the question of a researcher's impact or influence on the activities of an organization. As Fine (1993) says, "recognizing that the

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<sup>32</sup> Gerald commented on this section of the dissertation draft during the process of respondent validation. Gerald said he remembered our conversation that day about what to do in the future if I was the designated note-taker and my son was sick. Gerald recalled that he saw the need to discuss the situation because he thought of it as a "predicament" and not as an opportunity to test my loyalty.

researcher should not direct a scene, one might also wonder whether competent, active observers do not and should not have influence" (p.281). I had little or no impact on planning at Global Faith. At the end of in-house meetings at Global Faith, Gerald usually asked each person in turn if they had any thoughts, questions or suggestions for the group to consider. When I sat in on meetings, Gerald included me as well in this sweep for ideas. Often I simply said I had nothing to add. On several occasions, however, I did suggest minor changes to written documents (e.g., adding an author reference) and they were implemented. In one instance only, I offered an idea without being asked first and it was not acted upon. It was several days before the annual Retreat and I was nervous about participating. I imagined the Retreat would include opportunities for brainstorming on topics like new fundraising options and I wanted to test one of my ideas out on Gerald first. My idea and Gerald's reaction are described in my fieldnotes as follows:

My idea was to combine a cultural evening (dinner, music, information on a country or culture) with fundraising so that people would feel as though they had been on a journey and would feel close to the people they were ultimately helping. The money given would in part be a thank-you for the journey and also a vehicle for helping. [Global Faith's] profile would be very low - so low that the Christian orientation would be hard to see. I was trying to find a way to make [Global Faith] and their activities more mainstream. [Gerald] listened patiently but without enthusiasm. He said that the idea was "tricky but not impossible." The main stumbling block to him was what I saw as the strength: the fact that the religious focus would be fuzzed out or toned down.

A final aspect of my role as a participating member of Global Faith involved friendship with some of the other members.

For example, I was invited to attend an engagement party for one staff member at the home of another (not all the staff members were invited). I was also invited to attend the Executive Director's Christmas party for family, friends and staff. On several occasions, I went with some Global Faith people to the cafe next door for a snack or a coffee after work. During the last six months of my fieldwork at Global Faith, I was pregnant with our second child. He was born in July after I had officially left the field. For several months afterwards, I stayed in touch with Global Faith through telephone calls and when they had news of our baby's safe arrival, they sent us a large fruit basket. I felt very fond of many of the people I encountered while doing research at Global Faith and I was often touched by their kindness and their efforts to include me in their world.

### **Donor**

After donating money to Global Faith during the first fundraising Banquet that I attended with my husband, I was put on the donor mailing list. Throughout the fieldwork and for many months afterwards, I received monthly and emergency appeal letters from Global Faith. I responded to the emergency appeal for the famine in Somalia and I also gave money at the second fundraising Banquet. I realize that by Global Faith standards I was not a substantial or "important" donor. I gave only a small amount and on an irregular basis. I decided to donate money to Global Faith in the same fashion that I have decided to donate to

other charitable organizations: I was impressed by an earnest appeal, ample background information, and a sense of urgency.

### **Mother**

My role as a mother was the basis for closer relationships with some Global Faith staff. Bernard (1994) points out that in the context of fieldwork "being a parent helps you to talk to people about certain areas of life and get more information than if you were not a parent" (p.155). Because we had parenthood in common, casual conversations were easy to initiate and maintain. We always had something pleasant - or perplexing - to talk about: our children. Being a mother also served as a type of "escape route" from the intensity of ethnographic fieldwork. My family responsibilities and part-time childcare arrangements meant that I could not come in to Global Faith every day and some weeks, I could not come in at all. Adler and Adler (1987) point out that periodically withdrawing from the field helps researchers to "realign their perspective with those of outsiders in order to analyze the setting critically" (Adler & Adler, 1987, p.51). My mother role also affected Global Faith's expectations of me; both in terms of frequency of participation and also in terms of continued involvement beyond the end of the fieldwork. Ultimately, leaving the field and the possibility of employment behind was not seen as a defection from Global Faith but as a choice made by a mother of a growing young family.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

Three data collection techniques were used in this research: participant observation, interviewing and document analysis. This made it possible to check the validity of constructs as the research progressed through technique and data-source triangulation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Sanday, 1979). Before describing the data collection and analysis procedures, the next section first reviews the time frame for the fieldwork.

### **Time Frame**

My first contact with Global Faith was in January, 1992. The pilot study (two observation sessions and two interviews) was carried out in February and discussions concerning the longer-term study and my potential role at Global Faith were conducted in March. I began taking notes and minutes on behalf of Global Faith in April. I also attended the fundraising banquet and started interviewing the departmental directors. I continued to interview the directors and to take notes at meetings during May. My visits to Global Faith increased in June (to two or three days a week) and I started participating in the Training Program - a series of interviews with a senior staff member responsible for orienting new members. I attended the three day Retreat in July and the Board Meeting and the Walkathon in October. In April 1993, I was invited to attend another retreat - this one for the senior staff only to discuss the vision of Global Faith. I continued interviewing, observing, and participating at Global



Faith throughout the fieldwork until May 1993. The fieldwork phase - including the pilot study - lasted for seventeen months (January 1992 - May 1993). My withdrawal from the field happened gradually after I realized that I was not really discovering new things and that I needed to devote all my available time to taking a closer look at what I already had learned. Given the intensity of their commitment, I found it very hard to leave Global Faith - whether it was leaving at the end of the day or leaving at the end of the fieldwork. I maintained contact with Global Faith for several months after the fieldwork was finished. We talked on the phone and I brought our newborn son out to visit in August. In September 1993, our family went overseas for nine months for my husband's sabbatical. During that time, I exchanged cards and letters with the Executive Director of Global Faith. Upon our return in the summer of 1994, we talked again on the telephone and agreed to re-establish contact when I had a draft ready to send for their feedback.

### **Participant Observation and Fieldnotes**

Participant observation - first-hand involvement combined with systematic observation - was carried out one to three days a week at Global Faith over a seventeen month period. Days for visits to the site varied from week to week depending on the scheduling of meetings or other events to observe, the timing of interviews with Global Faith staff, and my arrangements for childcare. I usually arrived after they did each morning (because

of the long drive from my home), though on several occasions I came in early for a special morning meeting. My flexible hours did not seem to be a source of disturbance or distraction for the people of Global Faith. They themselves kept varied hours and some staff worked part-time from their homes. With short-term volunteers coming and going and the numerous trips made by staff across Canada and overseas, my frequent appearances and disappearances fit into the rhythms of daily life at Global Faith. Also, as Bernard (1994) notes, "as you become less and less of a curiosity, people take less and less interest in your comings and goings" (p.141). When I worried about the irregular scheduling of my visits, I was reassured by one staff member: "You just do your own thing. You're part of the woodwork now."

"Doing my own thing" as a participating observer at Global Faith transpired in a variety of ways. On some visits, I spent most of the time at a desk in an open hallway area reading organizational documents, writing up notes, listening to conversations going on around me, and chatting with the staff. During other visits, I sat in on agency meetings - either as the designated note-taker (e.g., for a meeting with a high-ranking CIDA official) or as an observer (e.g., for the agency's internal planning meetings). While observing the meetings, I wrote shorthand fieldnotes on a clipboard on my lap. If the conversation turned to financial specifics or if they indicated that a certain part of the conversation was confidential, I would stop writing and put my pen and clipboard on the table in plain

view. During the meetings, I remained quiet unless it was my "turn" to offer a prayer or to respond to one of Gerald's questions. I was told that my style observing meetings was good; "you're so quiet that no one realizes you're there."

In order to keep a record of what I was observing, I wrote informal, condensed (Spradley, 1980) notes throughout the day and included descriptions of what I saw, who said what, and what we all did. These scratch notes were the basis for the fieldnotes which were written up as soon as possible after each visit to Global Faith. No matter how detailed, fieldnotes cannot completely reconstruct everything that happened or even everything that was observed; rather, they are "approximations, signposts, and minidocudramas" (Fine, 1993, p.278). In addition to descriptions of behaviour and snippets of conversations, the fieldnotes also contained my reflections on what it all meant, what still did not make sense and a record of decisions about who to interview, and what, when, where to observe. Completed fieldnotes were printed and filed chronologically in a binder and also stored on diskette.

Atkinson (1992) makes the point that the "field" of fieldwork is produced, not given. Boundaries of the field are "the outcome of what the ethnographer may encompass in his or her gaze; what he or she may negotiate with hosts and informants; and what the ethnographer omits and overlooks as much as what he or she observes" (p.9). Over the course of the fieldwork, the focus of my "gaze" changed. During the first few months, I concentrated

mainly on how the people of Global Faith described the planning process for specific overseas projects.<sup>33</sup> I asked them to talk about the sequence of events and the allocation of responsibilities across Head Office and Regional Office staff in program planning, their view of "successful" and "unsuccessful" programs, and how the religious orientation of the agency might influence decisions about which programs to support. As I spent more time at Global Faith and was able to negotiate access to more activities at the core of the organization, I realized that I was having difficulty separating the process of program planning at Global Faith from the broader framework of organizational decision-making. For example, I needed to understand more about how the organization obtained resources (from government and general public donors) and whether and how the source of revenue would affect planning strategies. I therefore decided to include fundraising, marketing and institutional relations in my "gaze." I also realized that an understanding of organizational decision-making at Global Faith would need to be based in an investigation of Gerald's leadership. Shadowing Gerald changed the boundaries of the field

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<sup>33</sup> I initially focused only on overseas projects that included nonformal adult education programs. I used the following description of nonformal education as guide for selecting these projects. "Nonformal education encompasses a wide range of educational and developmental activities that aim to relate to the immediate needs of the target population. The content of the program tends to be practical and functionally oriented. It is usually intended to bring specific skills or changes in attitude among clientele. Hence, the gain for nonformal education programs is usually short-term and tangible" (Dejene, 1980, p.19).

yet again and gave me access to meetings that were previously beyond my reach.

As a participating observer, I had to choose what to focus on and what to leave out. Recognizing that my ability to be observant varied throughout the day and from visit to visit, I realize that what is depicted in my fieldnotes is not the complete picture. Fine (1993) emphasizes that "for reasons of space, events are excluded, but much is excluded because it passed right under our nose and through our ears and because our hands were too tired to note the happening" (p.280). Kleinman and Copp (1993) also stress that "compiled fieldnotes are hardly final drafts of what went on in the setting or group.... unrecorded memories or headnotes dispute the notion that fieldnotes can ever be complete" (p.25).

### **Interviews**

Interviews were conducted concurrently with participant observation over the seventeen month period at Global Faith. Twelve Global Faith staff members were involved in a total of 25 interviews, 18 of which were audio-taped and 7 of which were recorded through hand-written notes. Figure 3.1 presents Global Faith's Organizational Chart and the positions and titles of the people in the interview sample. Table 3.1 lists the names of the interviewees<sup>34</sup> and the dates of the interviews.

How was the interview sample chosen? The pilot study

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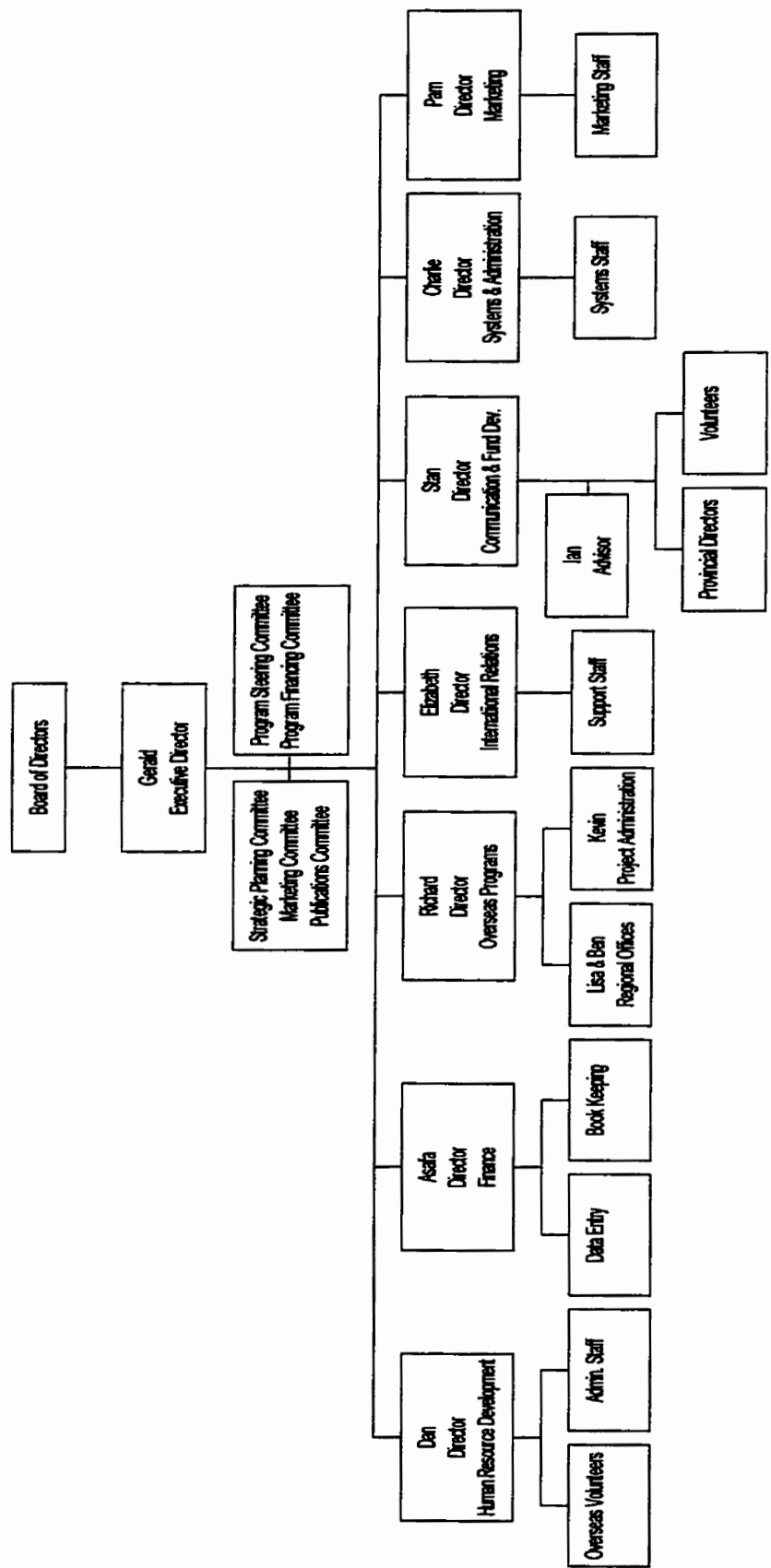
<sup>34</sup> These names are all pseudonyms.

interviews were conducted with Richard, Director of Overseas Programs, and then with Gerald, Executive Director. Richard was selected initially because of his direct involvement in the management of overseas programs and he was interviewed a second time (almost a year later) because the fieldwork raised more questions that were relevant to his area of responsibilities. I decided to include an interview with Gerald in the pilot study after meeting him and observing his style running the Monday morning staff/prayer meeting. His charisma, influence, and central role in the organization were apparent early on in the fieldwork. Consequently, I decided to interview Gerald on two other occasions (for a total of three interviews). All seven departmental directors (Dan, Asafa, Richard, Elizabeth, Stan, Charlie, and Pam) were eventually interviewed because this group - along with Gerald - met regularly and acted as a cohesive unit directly involved in all aspects of planning and organizational decision-making. This collection of central decision-makers is called "the Group of Eight" at Global Faith. In addition to the Group of Eight, the interview sample also included four other staff members: Lisa, Ben, Kevin, and Ian. The first three were interviewed because of their involvement in the Overseas Programs Department. Lisa, Ben, and Kevin all had experience representing Global Faith overseas and coordinating the regional programs in India and Ethiopia. Lisa left Global Faith shortly after our interview (to pursue full-time graduate studies) and Ben went back overseas to the Ethiopia office. Kevin

had just returned from Ethiopia in the early days of my fieldwork and remained at the Global Faith Head Office throughout the remainder of my term there. Ian is a senior staff member working part-time for Global Faith as an Advisor to the Communications and Fund Development Department. Six interviews were conducted with Ian as part of the Global Faith "Training Program" for new employees. This program consisted of a series of one-on-one sessions with Ian and covered the history, mission, goals, overseas programs and marketing strategies of Global Faith. The sessions were based on a rough course outline but were conducted as interviews with me asking clarifying questions and Ian, as the "instructor," elaborating on the course material by adding his own collection of stories (each with a moral or lesson learned).

Seven people out of the sample of 12 were interviewed more than once. The decision to do multiple interviews with some Global Faith staff was based on a number of factors: 1) the discovery of new areas for investigation during the fieldwork - either through the analysis or through the observation of behaviours or events that needed further explanation (for example, with Gerald and Asafa); 2) the need for a follow-up interview after the first interview because of time constraints and unexplored avenues (for example, with Dan and the Training Program interviews with Ian) and 3) the potential for an indepth, insightful conversation because of a key informant relationship

**FIGURE 3.1: Global Faith Organizational Chart**





**TABLE 3.1: Record of Interviews**

<b>NAME OF INTERVIEWEE</b>	<b>DATE OF INTERVIEW (TAPED)</b>	<b>DATE OF INTERVIEW (NOT TAPED)</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Gerald	92/07, 93/05	92/02	3
Dan	93/04	92/04	2
Asafa	92/10, 92/12	92/04	3
Richard	92/02, 93/01		2
Elizabeth	92/09		1
Stan	93/03	92/05	2
Charlie		92/04	1
Pam	93/02		1
Lisa	92/09		1
Ben	92/06		1
Kevin	92/09	92/06	2
Ian	92/06, 92/07 (2), 92/08 (2)	92/06	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25</b>

with the interviewee (for example, with Kevin and with Richard).<sup>35</sup>

The group of people interviewed have positions across three layers on the organizational chart: Executive Director, Departmental Directors, and administrative and advisory staff. A diverse group is desirable because of the "importance of allowing for differences in the meanings people attach to cultural manifestations....different cultural members have different opinions" (Martin, 1992, p.7). While I did have informal conversations with support staff about their backgrounds and how they joined Global Faith, I did not interview any support staff. The support staff realm of responsibilities included word processing, data entry, telephoning donors, and receptionist and no direct involvement in organizational decision-making or planning. Given more time, I would have liked to have conducted interviews with everyone in the Head Office, as well as the Provincial Directors<sup>36</sup> across Canada, and the Board of Directors. But, realistically, I knew that I lacked the resources to conduct such a large and long-term study.

All the interviews were conducted away from other Global

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<sup>35</sup> An additional factor was the availability of the staff member. I had a second interview scheduled with Elizabeth which she cancelled at the last minute. We were never able to reschedule another interview because of sudden health problems facing Elizabeth.

<sup>36</sup> The Provincial Directors are responsible for coordinating development education and fundraising activities in regions across Canada. The local Provincial Director worked out of the Head Office but was often travelling throughout the province for speaking engagements at churches and community halls.

Faith members. We either went off-site to an uncrowded restaurant or, if we stayed at Global Faith, we held the interview in an office with the door closed to ensure confidentiality and a feeling of security. Eighteen interviews were recorded with audio-tape and then fully transcribed, printed and stored on diskette. Seven interviews were not taped and were recorded through hand-written notes. These notes were also typed, printed and stored on diskette. The interviews that were not taped were conducted during the first few months of the fieldwork and were mostly set up by Dan, Director of Human Resource Development, as "orientation meetings" rather than formal interviews. Given a choice, I preferred to tape the interviews for the following reasons: 1) taped interviews run more smoothly without awkward lapses for note-taking; 2) I could concentrate more on the other person (their reactions and unspoken signals) and direct the conversation accordingly; 3) a transcript from a taped interview is more complete than what comes out of piecing things together from rough notes and memory (I would rather have a record of their exact choice of words, inflections and even pauses); and 4) with a tape, I could relive and critique the interview experience and learn where it is necessary to improve my interviewing style. The main disadvantage of taping the interviews is that, on some occasions, the sight of a tape recorder and attached microphone seemed to make people feel self-conscious and even slightly anxious. I tried to put them at ease before each interview by emphasizing that there were no "right answers" and that our

conversation would be informal and relaxed.

Each interview began with a discussion of the interviewee's rights (e.g., the right to confidentiality and the right to withdraw from the research project at any time without prejudice). They were then given a consent form to read and sign.<sup>37</sup> After making sure they were comfortable, I usually started the interviews by asking how they described the work that they did to other people and how they came to Global Faith. I made several pages of notes beforehand with specific questions or topic areas that I wanted to pursue and I would refer to this guide throughout the interview. I also made brief notes during the taped interviews and reflected on this condensed version through an expanded account in the fieldnotes. I started the time-consuming process of transcribing each of the taped interviews in its entirety in January 1993 and had seven interviews transcribed before leaving the field in May.

Interview questions were general, exploratory, and open-ended in order to "uncover the participant's meaning perspective" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989. p.83). Some questions were also more specific and asked the respondents to talk about activities which were observed during the fieldwork. The interview questions were also a way of investigating categories or constructs that were generated through ongoing analysis of the data. Examples of these types of interview questions are as follows:

1. How do you describe your work to other people? What do

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<sup>37</sup> Copies of the consent forms can be found in the Appendix.

you like the most/least about your work?

2. Can you describe what happened during the planning meeting this morning? What do you think it meant when...?
3. Who do you think your organization is/should be accountable to? How does private/government funding affect your programming?

In addition to asking open-ended questions, I also relied on another interview technique: use of metaphors and analogies. For example, during one interview with Gerald, I asked him to imagine that if the organization was a body, what part would he choose to be? Gerald's response was: "If I could pick a part of the body, I would hope it would be the heart, but I wouldn't want to be that exclusive. The fear I have in saying that is that nobody else would be the heart. So I don't know. I am certainly not the mind." The analogy strategy helped Gerald to articulate the high priority given to compassion as a motivational force at Global Faith. Another technique that proved to be useful during several interviews was to match the individual staff members at Global Faith with their counterpart characters on a popular television show. For example, in the second interview with Dan, we discussed the different personalities and the allocation of responsibilities and compared the Global Faith Departmental Directors to the main characters on *Star Trek: The New Generation*.<sup>38</sup> This strategy was intended as a playful exercise

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<sup>38</sup> For those readers familiar with this television show and interested in how we assigned the characters, the agreed upon match was as follows: Gerald = Jean-Luc; Dan = Counsellor Troy; Asafa = Worf; Richard = Riker; Elizabeth = Dr. Crusher; Stan = Data; Charlie = Geordi; Pam = Wesley.

that would also help Dan feel comfortable sharing his perspective on the nature of social interactions and working relationships at Global Faith.

Spradley (1979) points out that "ethnographic interviewing involves two distinct but complementary processes: developing rapport and eliciting information" (p.78). The interviews that I conducted at Global Faith did contribute to a deeper sense of rapport and mutual trust. Some staff mentioned another advantage of our interviews: deliberate and constructive introspective analysis. For example, Asafa told me: "I enjoy talking to you. It is fun to talk to you because it makes me think why I do things and how I view things. As I said, I don't sit down and say 'well, we're like this because of this and this' unless somebody asks me and forces me to think."

### **Documents**

Documents - such as policy papers, project completion reports, annual reports, memorandums, meeting minutes, bulletins, newsletters, prayer calendars, Strategic Plan, and correspondence - were collected from Global Faith. Some documents were mailed to me after I made the first contact with Global Faith over the telephone in January 1992. Other documents were photocopied and passed on to me by Global Faith staff members when they thought I might be interested in something or when I explicitly asked if I could photocopy something myself. After participating in the annual Retreat in July, I was given a mailbox at the Head Office.

I was also put on the distribution list for committee meeting minutes and the monthly "Prayer Calendar." I checked my mailbox every day that I spent at Global Faith after that and was often delighted to find it overflowing with material. Collecting documents was an unobtrusive way to better understand how the people of Global Faith communicate with each other and how they present themselves to the outside world. It was also a way to access historical information from the preentry period of my study. For example, I was given permission to look through several file cabinets full of reports and correspondence relating to completed overseas programs. Though the people of Global Faith were very generous in their offers to provide me with written materials, I realize that I was not given the same access to in-house documents as senior staff members. I did not push this limit either because I wanted to see only what they felt comfortable showing me. For example, I did not receive and did not ask for a copy of the binders given to the Board of Directors before their meeting. While I was permitted to observe this meeting and to take notes for my own purposes, the formal documentation was reserved for the Executive Director, the Director of Finance, and the members of the Board.

Friedmann (1973) draws attention to the fact that much of planning is done "on the run" and is not formally recorded. As such, "planning is, to a large extent, an ephemeral process that leaves its traces primarily in telephone conversations, the minutes of meetings, and floating memoranda. Formal documentation

appears to be important only in connection with retrospective official reports and the need to obtain resources..." (p.64). I had access to both the formal and informal traces of planning at Global Faith.

## **Analysis**

In keeping with the overall reflexive design of ethnographic research, analysis of the data was not carried out as a distinct phase separate from data collection. Instead analysis was ongoing and fed back into decisions regarding sampling and the focus of the interviews and observation sessions. Analytic strategies during data collection included repeatedly combing through fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and documents with new questions and writing memos to my Research Committee about what I discovered as a result of examining the data.<sup>39</sup> Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) describe this early stage of analysis as follows:

At this stage, the aim is to use the data to think with. One looks to see whether any interesting patterns can be identified; whether anything stands out as surprising or puzzling; how the data relate to what one might have

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<sup>39</sup> Analytic memos also contained a record of methodological decisions. For example, the idea of continuing the dissertation research beyond the ethnography at Global Faith with a second phase was explored - and eventually abandoned - in a series of analytic memos to the committee. The initial strategy for Phase II was to determine the degree to which the characteristics of planning at Global Faith also held in other NGOs. The findings from the ethnographic research (Phase I) were to be the basis of interviews with experienced planners of international development projects at other Canadian NGOs. We eventually agreed that Phase II was not necessary - because an ethnography can stand alone - and that taking the ethnographic findings to other organizations for a type of comparison was better left up to other researchers conducting follow-up studies.



expected on the basis of common-sense knowledge, official accounts, or previous theory; and whether there are any apparent inconsistencies or contradictions among the views of different groups or individuals, or between people's expressed beliefs and attitudes and what they do. (p.178)

For example, in one analytic memo to my committee (dated August 1992), I identified "contradictions in context" as an initial theme. Within this category I listed pairs of potentially conflicting sets of interests or intentions, as follows:

- autonomy from CIDA (CIDA is not considered a partner) **vs.** reproduction of CIDA (partnership agreements are modelled on CIDA format);
- fundraising to perpetuate the organization **vs.** fundraising to "help the poorest of the poor;"
- sponsoring programs to benefit the poor **vs.** sponsoring programs that have fundraising appeal;
- donor expectations of evangelizing (development is viewed as a means) **vs.** CIDA restrictions on evangelizing (development is viewed as an end in itself).

The idea of "bounded intentionality" was then explored with the following set of questions:

- How are conflicting intentions/interests negotiated?
- Which intentions are realized without constraints?
- Which intentions are bounded or never realized?
- Which intentions act as a constraint on others?
- What is the hierarchy of intentions?

The view of planning as the negotiation of interests (Cervero & Wilson, 1994; Cervero & Wilson, 1996) served as a sensitizing concept in the ongoing process of analysis. "Sensitizing concepts are an important starting point, they are the germ of the emerging theory, and they provide the focus for further data collection" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p.181). Negotiation theory then helped me to apply ideas about relationships of the

negotiating parties, information about the other party's goals, and competitive or cooperative orientations to the process of planning at Global Faith (Kramer & Messick, 1995).

In addition to writing analytic memos while still in the field, I also kept a personal fieldwork journal in order to keep track of the nature of my involvement as a researcher and to air my concerns and musings. I used the journal most intensively in the early weeks of fieldwork and then again toward the end of the fieldwork phase during the process of disengagement. I needed an outlet - separate from my fieldnotes - to release worries and to examine feelings of disorientation and discomfort. Sanday (1979) emphasizes that "in addition to the time required, participant observation saps one's emotional energy. The ethnographer who becomes immersed in other people's realities is never quite the same afterward. The total immersion creates a kind of disorientation - culture shock - arising from the need to identify with and at the same time to remain distant from the process being studied" (p.527). The personal fieldwork journal was a "safe place" for dealing with my own case of "culture shock."

The process of analysis continued after I left the field through the development of a coding system and the practice of timed writings. According to Bryman and Burgess (1994), "coding represents the gradual building up of categories out of data" (p.5). This was accomplished by first organizing and re-reading all the data (fieldnotes, interview transcripts, documents).

Then, I closed all the binders full of notes and transcripts and started a series of timed writings,<sup>40</sup> each one beginning with the phrase: "what I think I know about [for example, Gerald's leadership] is...." The purpose of the timed writings was to use my intuition to nurture ideas about I what learned, without trying to prove everything or even anything. These ideas then formed the basis for opening up figurative "folders" or "baskets" that contained groupings of initial sub-stories. These stories helped me to articulate clusters of seemingly related concepts. For example, in a cluster revolving around Gerald's leadership, I included the notions of "influence" and "exchange" and "family." The next stage in the analysis was to go back to the data with an evolving list of codes. Using "The Ethnograph"<sup>41</sup> I first re-printed all the fieldnotes and transcripts in a format with a wide right margin and numbered lines. I then read through every single page and looked for anything in the texts that struck me as about "something." These "somethings" were then labeled with a code and the lines containing them were noted in the right-hand margin. The code labels were all ten letters or less and were used as handles for the containers of meaning. I kept track of all the codes and added new ones when necessary. The next stage in the coding was to enter all the code names with the

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<sup>40</sup> The use of timed writings in analysis is based on Allison Tom's approach which draws on Goldberg's (1988) guide for writing.

<sup>41</sup> "The Ethnograph" is a software program for computer assisted analysis of text based data. For more information on "The Ethnograph," please see Tesch (1990, pp.251-268).

corresponding lines of text and file names into "The Ethnograph." I then asked "The Ethnograph" to print all the pieces of data corresponding to each code. These printed code sets were organized alphabetically and stored in two large accordion files. I then had access to two sets of data: 1) the complete data set (fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and documents) organized chronologically and, 2) a subset of coded data organized alphabetically by code.<sup>42</sup> I referred to both sets of data throughout the final stage of the analysis - which was writing the draft. When necessary, I tracked sections of coded data back to the original text which then provided the context for the excerpts or I searched through multiple codes applied to specific sections of original text.

### **Writing the Ethnography**

The ethnographic process yields more than the product - the ethnographic account - can contain. As Wolcott (1990) says about ethnographic writing, "you cannot get it all. You will do well to get enough of the 'right stuff' even after you decided what the right stuff is" (p.59). Writing an ethnography inevitably involves choices about what to feature and what to forget. I

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<sup>42</sup> All the data texts were read for the coding, but not all of each text was actually coded. In other words, some portions of the fieldnotes and the transcripts did not receive a code because I did not think they were significant or relevant (e.g., comments on the weather). Other portions of the data actually had as many as six codes overlapping because they contained thick descriptions or complex references to different issues. The documents were coded and sorted by hand into loose folders and stored in a large basket.

chose to include enough descriptive detail in order "to illuminate, to give readers a sense of being there, of visualizing the people, feeling the conflicts and emotions, and absorbing the flavor of the setting" (Adler & Adler, 1995, p.21). I chose to omit detail that added only weight and shed no light on the research questions. I also left out any detail that jeopardized confidentiality by revealing the identity of an individual or the organization.

In addition to conveying a sense of "being there" at Global Faith, the detailed descriptions in this account provide a basis for applying the interpretive frame presented in Chapter Two. Ayers (1980) emphasizes that the written account must go beyond merely presenting information by creating a frame for analysis and interpretation:

An ethnographic account, then, analyzes information formally, rigorously, and explicitly. An ethnographic account, the product of the fieldwork, must be more than recordings of observations and interviews, and it must be more than one's own feelings of what makes sense about something new or strange. The report must reflect an attempt on the part of the ethnographer to bring the data under control, so to speak, to create a frame through which information can be understood. (p.14)

Pseudonyms for individuals and for the organization are used throughout the text.<sup>43</sup> Descriptions of ongoing states and practices at Global Faith are referred to in the present tense in this account (corresponding to the "ethnographic present" which

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<sup>43</sup> I chose the pseudonyms myself according to my own sense of what names would be suitable and easy to remember. The people participating in this study were given the opportunity to change them.

is the time of the fieldwork). However, since the time of the fieldwork, some things may have changed and views of the participants may now be different. The past tense is used when describing events that happened only once or when referring to something that people told me.

### **Addressing Trustworthiness Criteria**

This section is organized around the criteria set out by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for judging the trustworthiness of qualitative research. The four methodological criteria are: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. While these criteria have been criticized for resting on assumptions that were developed for an empiricist philosophy of research (as opposed to the "constructivist" or "interpretivist paradigm"), I believe they can still be usefully and selectively applied to certain qualitative studies. Lincoln (1995) states "their primary use now...is to help students understand that interpretivist inquiry requires as serious a consideration of systematic, thorough, conscious method as does empiricist inquiry....These criteria act as reminders that seeking out multiple constructions of the world by multiple stakeholders has to be marked by serious, sustained searches for, and prolonged engagement with, those stakeholders and their constructions" (p.226). Each of the criteria is described and the strategies I used to improve the trustworthiness of my study are presented below.

## **Credibility**

The credibility of a study is related to the truth value which "establishes how confident the researcher is with the truth of the findings based on the research design, informants and context" (Krefting, 1991, p.215). In this study, I used four strategies to ensure credibility of the findings: 1) an extended time period for fieldwork allowing for submersion in the research setting; 2) reflexivity; 3) triangulation; and 4) respondent validation.

### Submersion in the Setting

Seventeen months of fieldwork provided ample time for rapport to develop with the people of Global Faith and for them to become accustomed to my presence. "This extended time period is important because as rapport increases, informants may volunteer different and often more sensitive information than they do at the beginning of a research project" (Krefting, 1990, pp.218). Long-term participant observation conducted within Global Faith also provided opportunities for early data analysis to guide further data collection.

### Reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to a process of researcher self-monitoring, also termed "disciplined subjectivity" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p.43). Earlier in this chapter, I included a section titled "Where Self and Subject Join" in order to discuss the influence

of my background, experience, and interests on the ethnographic research process. I have also carefully described the multiple roles I played while engaged in the research. Use of a personal fieldwork journal and timed writings also contributed to the credibility of this study by helping me to reflect on my feelings of affinity and alienation and to alter my data collection strategy accordingly.

### Triangulation

Triangulation is a strategy for improving credibility through the convergence of multiple data collection methods and data sources "to ensure that all aspects of a phenomenon have been investigated" (Krefting, 1991, p.219). This ethnography achieved triangulation through the use of three data collection methods: participant observation, interviewing, and the gathering of documents. Three data sources - fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and documents - provided different slices of data all contributing to a more complete understanding of the planning process at Global Faith. Furthermore, the long-term nature of the fieldwork, contact with a wide range of people, and my participation in a variety of core activities at Global Faith helped to capture any variation across time, seasons, settings, events and people.

### Respondent Validation

Respondent validation is one type of triangulation and refers to



a process of checking with informants to see if they recognize their experiences in the research findings as presented by the researcher. This "member checking" (Krefting, 1991) can occur throughout the fieldwork phase or near the conclusion of the study, or both. I conducted member checking periodically throughout the fieldwork phase by following up on tentative ideas and interpretations during interviews with Global Faith staff to see whether and how the same ideas made sense to them.<sup>44</sup> I also carried out a terminal member check near the conclusion of the study to give the people of Global Faith the opportunity to react to and comment on the near final presentation of the ethnography. I put more emphasis on the terminal member check for the reasons outlined by Miles and Huberman (1984) below:

There are good reasons for conducting feedback after final analysis instead of during data collection. For one thing, the researcher knows more. You also know better what you know - are less tentative, have more supporting evidence, and can illustrate it. In addition, you can get feedback at a higher level of inference: on main factors, on casual relationships, on interpretive conclusions. Finally, the feedback process can be done at this point in a less haphazard way. You can lay out the findings clearly and systematically, and present them to the reader for careful scrutiny and comment. (p.242)

The final member check took place over a period of five weeks in the summer of 1997. In early June, I sent a copy of the

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<sup>44</sup> For example, in an attempt to understand why Global Faith had been consistently successful in obtaining increasing amounts of CIDA funding, during several interviews with different staff members, I asked whether their success was due to a strategy of "mirroring CIDA's vagueness."

first full draft<sup>45</sup> to Gerald, as the central gate-keeper, with the following explanation included in a covering letter:

As we discussed, I am making the dissertation available to you while it is still in draft form. The purpose of sharing the draft with you at this stage is twofold: 1) to ensure that the final text accurately reflects the experiences and viewpoints of you and your colleagues; and 2) to include your reactions to my interpretations as another source of data and insight. Questions that I would like you to consider as you read through the draft are:

1. How well do you feel the draft captures your understanding of the process of planning and the cultural contexts of Global Faith that existed during the time of my research?
2. Do you feel confidentiality has been adequately respected? Specifically, do you feel that any individual or the organization itself could be put at risk by the eventual public release of this document? Are you comfortable with my choice of pseudonyms for the organization and the people?

The covering letter sent with the draft also emphasized that "ideally, everyone that participated in the research should have a chance to read the draft and provide comments. However, as this is a large document and many of the staff may not have the time to read it, I understand that this may not be possible." I offered to send additional copies of the draft for Gerald to distribute if he felt it was necessary. I telephoned Gerald several days after mailing the dissertation draft and we agreed to meet over one month later in mid-July to discuss the comments from Global Faith. During our meeting on July 15th (held away from Global Faith in a coffee shop on the other side of town), I

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<sup>45</sup> All the chapters were in place in this draft, but some sections in Chapter Eight concerning the conclusions and implications of the study were only included in note form.

learned that Gerald and one staff member (Dan) had read the entire draft. Two other staff members (Richard and Asafa) were read excerpts of the draft over the telephone by Gerald because they were away from the Head Office for an extended period of time.

During our meeting, we first discussed our families, changes at Global Faith since the time of my fieldwork (e.g., who retired, who moved away), and then the draft itself. Gerald identified two main areas of divergence in our interpretations. First, Gerald told me that he thought there was not as much exclusionary or protective feelings directed against me by the people of Global Faith - because I was a non-Evangelical Christian - as I had interpreted. Gerald said my Christianity was "not an issue" for them. Second, Gerald said he thought that I had attributed too much control to his position as a leader of Global Faith. Gerald explained his view that he represents, rather than controls, the staff: "In general, the people don't do what I say. I do what they say." As we went through the various pages of the draft where Gerald had comments, these two general areas - my role and his role - were repeatedly mentioned. In order to address his concerns over our divergent interpretations, we agreed that I would include Gerald's reactions and comments to specific passages as footnotes throughout the text. Most of these footnotes appear in Chapter Three and to a lesser extent, in Chapter Seven.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) point out that "respondents'

reactions to the ethnographer's account will be coloured by their social position and their perceptions of the research act" (p.197). Applying their observation to this case, I can see how Gerald's "social position" affected his reactions to the draft. Gerald said that the people of Global Faith "all had in common that they were hurt easily." He explained to me that he thought the essence of his position as Executive Director of Global Faith was "to make sure that no one gets hurt." Therefore, Gerald may have been concerned about the people of Global Faith feeling hurt when they read my comments about feeling uncomfortable or like an outsider. Gerald's perceptions of the research act - in this case, ethnographic fieldwork - also influenced his reactions to the draft. Gerald was not familiar with the usage of terms found in the methodology literature, such as "negotiating access," to describe fieldworker strategies. Therefore, when Gerald read the section on negotiating access, he interpreted my use of the term as implying that they were actively, deliberately, and directly negotiating with me and this did not fit with his own view of their position toward me as being an open welcome devoid of protectionist feelings and even of discussion. Also, Gerald's concern about my view of having "outsider status" at Global Faith may be due to the fact that Gerald was not aware that feelings of "not belonging" and a sense of alienation are artifacts of fieldwork involving participant observation and are a necessary part of ethnography, no matter where the setting.

In addition to Gerald's feedback regarding my role and his

role, we also discussed several passages in the draft where Gerald thought I had included information about Global Faith that was too detailed or specific and could be used by a reader to guess the identity of the organization. I have deleted these passages. Gerald also commented that one of the Chapter titles and one section heading were, in his view, misleading. I have taken his suggestions into account and provided a new title and a new heading name. Overall, Gerald said that reading the draft was a "valuable exercise" - especially the material relating to my interpretations of their view of non-Evangelical Christians. Gerald said that it is always "interesting to see how others see oneself" and while he disagreed with certain interpretations I had of their behaviour, he emphasized that it was my "camera." Because I did not set out to do a collaborative ethnography at Global Faith, my goal was not to arrive at a mutually agreed upon picture of reality. Consequently, the respondent validation process was geared more toward gathering general reactions and addressing confidentiality concerns than it was toward the possibility of building theory together.

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the applicability of the research findings to other contexts or groups. Transferability is "more the responsibility of the person wanting to transfer the findings to another situation or population than that of the researcher of

the original study" (Krefting, 1991, p.216). However, it is the responsibility of the researcher to provide enough detail with respect to the findings and the methodology to allow others to make comparisons and transferability judgements.

This ethnography provides dense background information on both the people and the setting of Global Faith (contained in Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven). I have tried to go beyond the superficial in portraying scenes and behaviours and to "display empirical 'richness'....[and] vividly flesh in the details" (Adler & Adler, 1995, p.21). As Geertz (1973) has emphasized, "ethnographic findings are not privileged, just particular.....What generality [an ethnography] contrives to achieve grows out of the delicacy of its distinctions, not the sweep of its abstractions" (p.23-25).

### **Dependability**

The criterion of dependability is related to the concepts of internal and external reliability which are concerned with the potential for replicability. "External reliability addresses the issue of whether independent researchers would discover the same phenomenon or generate the same constructs in the same or similar settings. Internal reliability refers to the degree to which other researchers, given a set of previously generated constructs, would match them with data in the same way as did the original researcher" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p.32). The notion of

dependability changes when applied to the context of ethnographic research. As LeCompte and Goetz (1982) make clear, "no ethnographer can replicate the findings of another because the flow of information is dependent on the social role held within the studied group and the knowledge deemed appropriate for incumbants of that role to possess" (p.37). The idea of replicability is replaced instead with concern for consistency and the ability to track any variability across methods or sources.

The specific methods of data gathering and analysis have been described in detail in previous sections of this chapter. I have left a type of "decision trail" (Krefting, 1991) for other researchers to follow. I have also discussed my roles and changing status within Global Faith and reflected on how my relationships with informants may have influenced the research process. This ethnographic account is rich in primary data including quotations from the interviews and excerpts from the fieldnotes in order to "substantiate inferred categories of analysis" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p.41) further improving the dependability of the research.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is related to the concept of neutrality of the findings. "Neutrality refers to the degree to which the findings are a function solely of the informants and conditions of the research and not other biases, motivations, and

perspectives" (Krefting, 1991, p.216). In ethnographic research, researcher neutrality is not seen as always possible or even desirable (Peshkin, 1988). Lincoln (1995) emphasizes that "detachment and author objectivity are barriers to quality, not insurance of having achieved it" (p.280). Confirmability becomes an issue of value explication rather than value freedom.

Ensuring that the research process is "auditable" is one strategy for addressing the criterion of confirmability (Krefting, 1991). By providing dense detail on the methodology used in this study and by making primary data and analytic memos available to my research committee, I have tried to clarify the progression of events during the fieldwork and to explain how and why methodological decisions were made.

### **Learning from the Outside In**

Ethnographic research involves a process of going "into the field to learn about a culture from the inside out" (Schwartzman, 1993, p.3-4). However, learning about a culture also occurs on the journey from the outside in. In my own case, the movement from a state of ignorance (I was initially unaware of even the existence of Global Faith) to a state of understanding from the inside did not occur in a single giant step. Being in the field did not mean that I was instantly or even automatically on the inside. Rather, as a fieldworker, I encountered various layers on my journey from the outside in.

Upon initial contact with Global Faith and throughout the



early days in the field, I was suspended at an outer layer - what I call "the public shell." I had access to the same types of information that a member of the public would if he or she came in off the street expressing an interest in the organization. After several more months of fieldwork, I took part in Global Faith's Training Program for new employees. During this same period, I participated in Global Faith's annual staff Retreat held over three days at a resort several hours out of town. I was the only participant who was neither a staff member nor a Board member. Both the Training Program and the Retreat marked the passage through another layer of Global Faith - what I call "the corridors of commitment." After many more months in the field, I was finally drawn into the heart of the organization by being invited to participate in another three day retreat, this one only for the exclusive group of eight Directors and the senior staff member who conducted the Training Program. The purpose of this retreat was to discuss the vision of Global Faith and how this vision related to each individual's personal vision and commitment to the organization. It was an emotional gathering with intense moments of personal exposure and vulnerability. After participating in this Vision Retreat, I realized that I had come to yet another layer of the organization: "the inner sanctum."

The purpose of the next three chapters is to take you, the reader, on the same journey that I travelled from the outside in. This journey moves from an outside view of the "public shell" of

Global Faith (Chapter Four) to an awareness of how the organization operates based on both the official version and the unofficial stories gathered while in the "corridors of commitment" (Chapter Five) and finally, on to a level of understanding gained through familiarity with the people of Global Faith and time spent in the "inner sanctum" (Chapter Six).

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE PUBLIC SHELL

I'd like to believe that each NGO is, in its own way, the results of thoughts, and minds, and desire for action by a small group of people to do a specific and distinct task overseas. And each one is different than the next one in that way. (Gerald, Executive Director of Global Faith)

### Good Works or God's Work?

My first encounter with Global Faith occurred while browsing through a list of agencies printed in a document prepared by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The list gave the names and addresses of all the organizations that were currently executing CIDA contracts. The list also included the sectoral focus and major activities of the CIDA funded projects. I decided to contact Global Faith first because their CIDA project focused on agro-forestry and included education and training activities and also because they were located within an hour's drive from my home. I telephoned the organization, feeling very nervous making a cold call and also feeling hopeful that this might be an appropriate site for my research.

On the phone, I was transferred to the Director of Human Resources and Volunteers, a man with a gentle voice named Dan. Dan suggested that we talk again after I read the package of information that he promised to send. The package contained Global Faith's Annual Report, a few issues of the organization's quarterly newsletter and a single typed page with several paragraphs describing Global Faith. Upon reading the first paragraph of this single page, I learned that Global Faith is 15 years old and that their "mandate is to provide alternate

technological and educational support to people in developing countries where environmental, economic and/or social circumstances have interfered with the ability of local communities to sustain themselves by using traditional methods. All projects are initiated by requests from local representatives." The second paragraph described their overseas projects as being "people-centred" in that Global Faith "uses local people to implement the projects and Canadian compassion and resources to fuel them." So far, what the organization was saying about itself made sense to me.

The third paragraph, however, quickly changed my perception of who they were..."the founders of [Global Faith] are Christian people, and resources for its initial projects were obtained primarily from the Christian community; but [Global Faith] is not affiliated with any specific denomination." Global Faith's donors were described as people who "extend a hand to helpless people of the world so that they may once again stand and take charge of their lives, or in some cases, may simply stand." I wondered what the significance of having Christian founders would be. Did this mean the organization had a missionary agenda? I realized that my own bias against proselytization, especially under the guise of international development work, might be fueling my scepticism and slight sense of wariness.

The Annual Report contained a list of commencing programs, ongoing programs, and completed programs in countries throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The program descriptions revived

my interest in the organization. Phrases like "training and forming of poultry rearing cooperatives" and "income generation programs" and "community rehabilitation of degraded land" were familiar to me and therefore, comforting. The focus of their development work was described as "improving water systems, food production and storage methods, education, health and nutrition, community development and income generating opportunities" (Annual Report, 1991, p.4). I was also pleased to see an emphasis on long-term development projects as opposed to relief work (although it was noted that they do provide food and medical supplies during "crisis times") and I was surprised to read that Global Faith received well over \$2 million from CIDA in 1991 and raised over \$2.4 million in donations from the general public<sup>46</sup>. From these impressive dollar amounts and the familiar international development jargon, I was ready to believe that this organization did good work.

I searched through the Annual Report for any clues about the Christian orientation of Global Faith. In the middle spread of the four page tabloid style report, I found quotes from the Bible: "He changes the wilderness into a pool of water and a dry land into springs of water...and there He makes the hungry to dwell" (Psalm 107:35) and "Whoever is kind to the needy, honours God" (Proverbs 14:31). The back page of the Annual Report referred to the organization as an "autonomous Canadian Christian

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<sup>46</sup> These figures indicate that Global Faith is bigger than most NGOs in Canada and yet still small on the international scene.

agency" and contained the following paragraph titled

"Motivation":

[Global Faith] believes it is God's intention that the earth's resources be used wisely to sustain life for all people. [Global Faith] believes in the worth of mankind as created by God. Accordingly, [Global Faith] is motivated by the mandates for justice and compassion as demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ and seeks to be of service, through its ministry, to the people of the developing world. [Global Faith] believes that Scripture teaches that the gift of creation should be shared. Our responsibilities as stewards of God's gifts begin with those that are in need, and extend to all who are our neighbours.

Several phrases within this passage made me feel uncomfortable. The work of Global Faith is referred to as a "ministry" which once again seemed to point to a missionary agenda and "our responsibilities as stewards of God's gifts" seemed to carry a self-righteous, "we know best" tone. The newsletters contained stories emphasizing the positive effects of various programs, fundraising appeals, more quotes from the Bible, and an entire page dedicated to prayer with suggestions of who and what to pray for during the weeks and months ahead. Again, the question of whether Global Faith was actually doing "good works" (according to my personal view of successful international development projects) or "God's work" was still not resolved. In my mind, at that time, it had to be one or the other.

I carried the question of where the line is drawn between good works and God's work with me the first day that I went out to visit Global Faith along with a tangle of other questions related to the Christian orientation of Global Faith. The following excerpt from fieldnotes about this first visit reveals

my concerns, fears, and biases:

What does it mean to be a Christian organization? How does the religious orientation of the founders and staff affect the nature of the organization, the programs they are involved in, and the people in other countries that participate in the programs? I believe everyone has a religious orientation (including atheists), but what does it mean to put this orientation up-front as a descriptive term for the agency? Are the staff all Christians? Do they have to go to church or can they be passive/private Christians? If they are all Christians, are they all from the same church or the same denomination?

The term "Christian" embraces a wide variety of visions and practices - what would happen if the staff were from different denominations with conflicting views and approaches? Whose view would prevail? Who chooses the quotes from the Bible that are sprinkled throughout the newsletters? Do the people in other countries that receive program support have to be Christians? Do the programs carry a religious message, either directly or indirectly? For example, would the participants (i.e., Hindu farmers in India) planting trees in a reforestation program know that the program was funded through a "Christian organization?" Would the people at Global Faith want to know if I go to church regularly? Would they judge me as unfaithful, ungrateful, or somehow unsuitable? Would they want to "save" me? Would reason or an intellectual approach take a backseat to religious beliefs in their development work? I realize that these concerns come from some ridiculous stereotypes I have been carrying around about publicly religious people - that they are judgemental, evangelical and unreasonable.

### **A Tour: There's no Place Like Home**

These questions contributed to my sense of nervousness on the long drive out to visit Global Faith. The first of several surprises came before I even went in the door...

After getting out of the car, I stood on the sidewalk scanning the buildings across the street to find the one that housed Global Faith. My eyes kept skipping over two homes in the middle of the block to search for the numbers on the commercial buildings on either side. Something was not right -I couldn't see any signs or numbers indicating Global Faith's office. I started over again looking at the bottom of the block...THERE, that small dreary-looking house has the right number and there's the sign. I crossed the

street and as I got closer I saw that the house next door also has a Global Faith sign. Both houses are two-storey and appear to be at least fifty years old....The houses are about 15 feet from the sidewalk and about 20 feet apart. There are low evergreen shrubs in front of one house, giving it a homey feel. This building has a sign with "Head Office" on it. The other house, with a sign saying "Global Faith Development Education Centre," has a scruffy lawn and looks slightly less cared for.

I was not expecting Global Faith to have offices in two old homes.<sup>47</sup> I suppose because their address indicates that this is their "Head Office" I imagined space in an office building with big glass doors and an elevator.

Once inside the front door, I stood in a small entrance hall simply furnished with a receptionist's desk and two plastic and metal chairs for visitors. The dull brown carpet exuded a musty smell. The pale walls were practically bare. I noticed a few black and white framed photos on the wall showing agrarian scenes and people in straw hats. My first impression of the office/home was of a muted, slightly scruffy and even spartan environment - though it did look more like an office than a home. I saw evidence of office type activities: a computer and a phone with multiple lights on the desk and the expectant face of a receptionist regarding me.

I introduced myself to the woman seated behind the desk and

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<sup>47</sup> I learned the rationale for being in these two houses several weeks later from the Executive Director: "it helps us to stay humble. We don't forget who we are." Another staff member pointed out an additional advantage of not having their office in an elegant or expensive building: "I like it. When I was out doing fundraising activities, this was a real plus because I could tell people that our head office is a house and we own it. So it is a way of keeping overhead to a minimum."



explained that I had an appointment with Richard, the Director of Overseas Programs. She smiled and picked up the phone to let him know that I was there. I sat down on one of the two chairs to wait and while I waited I looked at her. She had short wavy brown hair and glasses and appeared to be in her late fifties. She was wearing a pullover sweater and looked tidy but not very sophisticated or professional. I wondered if this woman went to church every Sunday. I wondered if she was kind and compassionate. I wondered if my lack of regular church-going showed through to her somehow.

I heard energetic footsteps and then Richard appeared, smiling and extending his hand. We had talked on the phone several weeks earlier and together agreed that I would come today to talk to him to learn more about Global Faith and to discuss the possibility of doing research there. We went into his office which was modestly furnished - desk, chairs, file cabinet, and no computer. I saw a world map and black and white photos of farmers and children in what looked like an Asian country on the walls. We sat down and chatted about the weather, my studies, his educational background, and our various travels overseas, and learned that we had both lived in Nepal during the same eight month period. We talked more about the structure of Global Faith and the staff. As Richard described the various departments in the organization, it occurred to him that a quick tour of the offices was the best way to explain who worked together.

We started on the top floor of the "Head Office" building

where Richard's office was located along with two other offices<sup>48</sup>, both belonging to staff who work in the Overseas Programs Department (a Programs Officer and an Administrative Assistant). On the main floor, we poked our heads in a large office with a fireplace, a large meeting table and an uncluttered desk with a black leather swivel chair which belongs to the Executive Director, Gerald. Next door to this, Richard indicated the closed door of the office belonging to the Director of Human Resources and Volunteers, Dan (the gentle voice that first talked to me about Global Faith on the phone). Across the hall, there is another office with a desk, a photocopier and some file cabinets for the Executive Director's Administrative Assistant, Joanna. We proceeded into an open area at the back of the house. I noticed a sink, cupboards, a coffee pot, a small refrigerator, a table with a fax machine and stacked in-baskets for various staff members on it, a bulletin board, and a closet with a glass door that housed a big antiquated-looking computer. There are no chairs in this common area so it does not have the feel of a lounge or a place where staff would gather to relax. Coffee is made here and faxes are sent and the bulletin board is browsed for the latest news clipping, cartoons, minutes from a committee meeting, memo or postcard. We went down the stairs leading off this area into the basement.

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<sup>48</sup> Several months later, all three offices were moved to the other building next door after the basement renovation was completed and the top floor of the Head Office was rented out to another organization.

Richard referred to the basement as the "dungeon" and I could see why. Books and documents are piled in the hallway. The damp, musty smell of the house is even stronger downstairs. Three more Directors who often work together have their offices down here - the Director of Marketing (Pam), the Director of Funds and Communication (Stan), and the Director of Systems and Administration (Charlie). They have elaborate titles but the surroundings are modest with minimal furnishings and only a few pieces of folk art and photos of rural Asian areas on the walls.

The tour continued in the building next door - the "Education Centre." The inside of this building looks brighter and newer. There is a large open area with a receptionist's desk near the front door, a boardroom style oval table in the center and a fireplace in the side wall. At the far end, there is library-style magazine shelving and regular bookshelves. Along the left side of this main room, there are three offices with glass walls enabling the occupant to look out into the library area (or vice versa). Two of these offices have computers on the desks and they belong to the Director of Finance, Asafa, and his Assistant.

At the time of my first visit to Global Faith, the basement of the Education Centre was being renovated so that area was not included in my initial tour with Richard. Nevertheless, I will continue the tour here in order to present a complete picture of the setting and the layout of the offices.

Wide, freshly carpeted stairs at the back of the building

lead downstairs to the basement. At the bottom of the stairs, there is an open area with a desk and a door leading to several steps going up outside towards the back lane. There is a long hall with two offices and a very small office/storage room down one side and a large meeting room with two doors on the other side. A long rectangular table with 15 to 20 chairs fills the meeting room. The walls are empty except for a white board mounted on one of the end walls. There are two small high windows. The offices across the hall also have small high windows and practically empty walls. One office belongs to Richard, the Director of the Overseas Programs Department (it was originally on the top floor of the Head Office building). The other office is smaller and belongs to another member of the Overseas Programs Department, Kevin, and contains only a desk, chair, a small file cabinet, and two guest chairs. The walls in this office are empty. There is a new computer on the desk. Finally, the back room has several large file cabinets in it and a small desk and lamp. There are no windows in this room. It is basically a storage area with an added desk for visitors or volunteers. Occasionally, the Director of International Relations, Elizabeth, would use this office when she chose to work on the premises - otherwise, Elizabeth worked at home and only came in to Global Faith for meetings.

Throughout the course of the fieldwork, I spent most of my time downstairs in this basement area. When I had writing (e.g., meeting minutes, fieldnotes) or reading (e.g., project files,

CIDA reports, Strategic Plan) to do, I sat either at the desk in the open area at the bottom of the stairs or in the small back office filled with file cabinets. On several occasions, I also sat at the large table in the meeting room when the other two desks were occupied (by part-time volunteers or visiting overseas staff returning from a posting). The office doors were open and no matter where I sat in the basement, I could hear Kevin and Richard chatting back and forth, each still sitting at his own desk. Because my volunteer work related to Kevin's area within the Department, I was often in his office asking questions. Richard travelled a great deal while I was at Global Faith. Before a trip, he was often distracted and too busy to answer questions. When he returned from a trip, however, he seemed energized and more willing to sit and talk. During the early days of fieldwork, I learned about Global Faith mostly through my discussions with Kevin and Richard and through the documents that they passed on to me. Therefore, at this point, I learned mostly about the Overseas Programs Department.

### **Meat and Potatoes**

The Overseas Programs Department is often referred to as the "meat and potatoes" of Global Faith by senior staff members - the basic nourishment that keeps the organization going. Gerald described the overseas program as "our raison d'être." Richard explained the importance of their overseas projects:

Projects are necessary for our survival - for development education, and for public awareness. Their stories become

our stories. We need that relationship [with overseas partners] to maintain our own excitement and to become part of our corporate culture.

Global Faith supports activities in 16 countries throughout Asia, Africa, and the Americas. The bulk of Global Faith's overseas projects are part of six different core programs receiving funding from CIDA and operating in Ethiopia, Honduras, Dominican Republic, India, Bangladesh, and Nepal. While the specific projects in each may differ, these core programs are all intended to address "poverty at the village level through community development that emphasizes land use and management, food production, water resource development, income generation, and human resource development" (CIDA multi-year program submission, January 1993). Richard stressed that the focus of the overseas programs is "to work at longterm solutions. Even in the midst of a natural disaster, we're not looking at a charity or a relief mentality." Gerald, Executive Director, was very pleased that CIDA had decided to increase Global Faith's funding level and yet he was hesitant to link their success with CIDA to "good planning:"

A lot of stuff happens by the Grace of God.<sup>49</sup> Things happen not because we're good or perfect. For example, with CIDA, everyone else is getting 10% cuts and they increased ours by 12%. How do you explain that? I don't think you could call that good planning. I don't think we're better than [other competing NGOs] but they all got cut.

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<sup>49</sup> During the process of respondent validation, Gerald commented on his use of the phrase "by the Grace of God." Gerald said that he was using the phrase in the sense of "unmerited favor" - which points to mystery or unexplainability surrounding CIDA's actions - not in the sense that Global Faith was more spiritually deserving.

In addition to the core programs, Global Faith also supports overseas projects through their membership in an umbrella organization called the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) and in various NGO coalition groups (e.g., South Asia Partnership, Philippines Development Assistant Program, and Partnership Africa Canada). Involvement with coalitions is not considered to be "a strategically critical piece of the puzzle" at Global Faith. Richard maintains that "core commitments come first, and coalitions are additional." However, in most cases, coalition work complements the core programs at Global Faith. Organizational membership within a coalition is also viewed as an opportunity for staff to travel to Ottawa to interact with other Canadian colleagues.

Overseas projects are mostly managed through a partnership mode<sup>50</sup>. Global Faith has established long-term relationships with organizations (local NGOs or churches) in the core program countries. Global Faith provides financial, managerial and technical support and the local organizations are responsible for the actual implementation of the project. Relationships with the partner organizations are maintained through contact with Global Faith's two regional offices (in Ethiopia and India) and visits from head office staff in the Overseas Programs Department.

The beneficiaries of Global Faith's overseas projects are

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<sup>50</sup> There are exceptions to the partnership mode. Global Faith has also had direct responsibility for project implementation as an executing agency for the Bilateral Branch of CIDA. In another case, Global Faith has worked with a larger NGO as a sub-contractor on a project.

described as "the neediest of the needy" or "the neglected poor." Success stories written up in the newsletter or monthly project bulletins often focus on women and children from rural areas - usually widows struggling to support a family or young girls yearning for a better education.

A new overseas program was also being planned while I was doing research at Global Faith. This program is based on a sponsorship model with monthly commitments from donors - except that instead of sponsoring a child, donors are linked with an entire family within targeted communities in India and in Ethiopia and there is no letter exchange (donors receive a profile of the family only and reports on the progress of the community). This linkage program is not eligible for funding from CIDA and is based completely on general public donations. It is assumed that the linkage program will cover its own administration costs. The expectation at Global Faith is that this program would generate funding from general public donors who have not given recently, encourage existing donors to give consistently on a monthly basis, and also attract new donors. Elizabeth, Director of International Relations at Global Faith, explained the connection between fundraising needs and the rationale for the new linkage program:

We seem to have a core of donors that will give under any circumstances but that core doesn't seem to be expanding at the rate of our needs in terms of what we want to do overseas and so on and so forth. So we have to find a way that would bring other people to become involved in what we are doing overseas and maybe getting back some people who have fallen off or getting new people that we can't attract in a normal way.



In addition to increasing fundraising capacity, this linkage program is also intended to help Global Faith's partner organizations plan community programs on a longer-term basis because the flow of funding would be constant and not dependent on the whims or requirements of CIDA.

### **Beyond the Shell**

This chapter has provided a package of background information and first impressions of Global Faith based on an outsider's perspective. The reader, like an interested member of the general public, has been given the opportunity to leaf through some of Global Faith's literature, to tour the offices, and to learn the basics about Global Faith's overseas programs.

The next chapter takes the reader a step deeper and tracks some of the questions that might have surfaced as a result of this initial encounter. How did Global Faith evolve? What does it mean to be a Christian organization - both here and overseas? What drives the organization: commitment to praying, planning or both? How does Global Faith deal with the pressures to raise money? What is the nature of the relationships Global Faith has with the Board of Directors, with CIDA, and with their overseas partner organizations?

## **CHAPTER FIVE: THE CORRIDORS OF COMMITMENT**

Each NGO has a history, an impetus, an experience, and a structure, including a funding base, that reinforce the basic activity in which it is engaged. This is a strength; it is also a limitation. (Murphy, 1991, p.184)

### **Going Back in History**

The history of Global Faith can be traced back to 1975 when it existed under a different name and as a type of branch office for an American NGO. Elizabeth, the Director of International Relations, was one of the founders of the original organization. She remembers: "the organization was started for some wrong reasons and for some right reasons. The right reasons have prevailed." According to Elizabeth, the right reasons for starting the organization included a concern that in the early 1970s, overseas work focused on relief or sponsorship programs and not enough was happening to promote long-term development or to establish lasting relationships with groups overseas. Elizabeth explained that "if you are in a relief situation, something happens - once the donor organization or the donor country is finished doing its thing, the problems are still there. So a group of us got together and felt that it was important to fill that gap at this point in time because nobody was into longevity." The "wrong reasons" for starting the organization included the American NGO's objective of establishing a branch office in Canada in order to access Canadian government money and donations from the general public and channel them back to the head office. The American NGO wanted

to continue with relief activities, while the Canadian Board of the branch office wanted to focus on long-term development.

The period between 1975 and 1980 is seen as particularly unsavory and therefore not referred to often or with ease by the staff of Global Faith. The official line about this time is that the organization here focused on building up partnerships and relationships with other organizations overseas through small projects. However, the "inside" story about this time in Global Faith's history, according to Elizabeth, is as follows:

There were a couple of Board members and our accountant at the time who were doing a few things that perhaps were not on the up and up and [Gerald] became Treasurer to change that....[the American NGO] definitely were interested in having a support entity that would raise money in Canada but would not have any say in how that money was spent....Revenue Canada started looking closely at organizations that were channelling funds to U.S. organizations. And it just became impractical to do that....So it was coming from both sides. The Canadian entity here wanted more say in how the money was spent....And it was just inevitable that there would be a separation because our goals were not the same anymore.

When Gerald became Executive Director of the organization in 1980, there were only three staff members. He said that when he became Executive Director, he "didn't know anything about anything" and that he was "a do-gooder." Gerald was working as a minister of a Baptist church when he was invited to move from being Treasurer of the organization to Executive Director.

Gerald inherited a very difficult situation. According to Ian, a senior staff member who first had contact with the organization in 1982, "in the early days of the organization - at about the time that [Gerald] came on stream - this organization

had an absolutely terrible reputation with CIDA because of mismanagement and squandering of money." Ian stressed that they were not involved in anything illegal; they were just inefficient. CIDA threatened to cut them off from funding but Elizabeth managed to prevent this by being persistent and asking CIDA repeatedly: "What steps exactly do we have to do to get back in your good graces?" Ian said: "and she kept hammering at whoever it was until they finally got the series of steps and the deadlines and so on."

While the problems with CIDA were eventually overcome, the organization continued to have conflicts with the American NGO of the same name. Ian explained the developing rift as follows:

We had a different approach to the matter of overhead and the percentage of money that would go directly into projects. There were conflicts and it kind of ended up that the money that we were raising here was going to fund projects that the American organization had - they spent all the money and didn't have enough money to do their projects. We wanted to do ours. There were many conflicts. It just was not a good thing. So, obviously, separation had to occur - which it did.

Global Faith changed its name and finally became totally independent from the original organization in 1985.

Another difficult time in Global Faith's history occurred in 1987-1988 when Gerald was away on a sabbatical leave pursuing a Master's degree at an American university on the east coast. That year, there was a substantial drop-off in donations. Ian speculated that this might have been due to the scandals with T.V. evangelists that were then in the news. Gerald told me about his experience at the time: "I drove across the country [coming

home from his sabbatical] and was told [by the Treasurer] 'You're insolvent'....What happened last time when I was away was we didn't do anything until we got to the bottom of the trough and then we went zonkers trying to pick up the pieces."

As a result of the financial crisis, some staff salaries were cut on a volunteer basis (the staff were paid back later for the cuts) and payments to some of the operations overseas were delayed and rescheduled. Letters to overseas partners explained the need for the rescheduling of payments: "for the first time in our 15 year history, we have experienced economic strain in our organization." In the summer of 1988, Gerald decided to hold the first annual staff retreat as a motivational event to raise morale after the difficult year and to talk as a group about how to improve their financial situation.<sup>51</sup> Global Faith then underwent an institutional evaluation in 1989 (conducted by independent consultants) which resulted in significant changes in the organization including: further cuts in administrative expenses, increased fundraising efforts (with two senior staff given full-time responsibility to raising funds), development of a new organizational structure (financial control made separate from project management), projections as to when commitments will be completely met, creation of the Program Steering Committee for project approval and monitoring, implementation of new fund flow

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<sup>51</sup> Over the years, the annual staff retreat has gradually evolved to become more of a religious or spiritual gathering. Gerald wryly commented that the first retreat did not have a strong religious focus, though they were "religiously searching after money."

reports for management information, and placement of regional directors in India and Ethiopia (Executive Summary, Strategic Plan, 1991).

By 1989, the crisis had passed. Funds increased, communication systems with overseas partners improved and a five year Strategic Plan was developed and implemented. Ian thinks that the financial troubles of the sabbatical year will never return. "It was the one and only financial crisis that we have had and will ever have. Because they have got so many safeguards built into the structure of the organization now, it won't happen again."

#### **A Christian Ideology**

Throughout the turning points in Global Faith's history - becoming autonomous from the American organization, surviving the financial crisis of the sabbatical year, undergoing an institutional evaluation, and implementing a Strategic Plan - one aspect of the organization has remained constant: a strong Christian foundation. In 1975 and still today, promotional material describes Global Faith as an "independent Canadian Christian development organization" that is "not affiliated with any specific denomination."

What does it mean - both here and overseas - for Global Faith to be a Christian organization? In simple terms, it means that money comes from, and goes to, Christians. Global Faith's donors are "99 percent Christian" and most of the overseas

partners are church organizations or are run by a local Christian leader<sup>52</sup>. It also means that the staff at Global Faith are all Christian. During one of my first visits to Global Faith, Richard commented on this: "Being small, that's sort of part of our personality here." Gerald explained the rationale behind hiring only Christians:

And the reason we do that is how are they compatible with the rest of us? Right? Because if we make a lot of the decisions by consensus, I mean it becomes a real problem if that is not there. Or, if they are going to feel uncomfortable with it if Monday morning we read the Bible and stuff and you feel it offensive, well, we're really starting on different streets together....And the other thing is this responsibility and accountability to donors. By and large our donors are of that kind. Then what we do is decide to be offensive to them. Right? What if it offended our donors that we had all Hindus working here?

Global Faith staff belong to a variety of Christian denominations - Baptist, Mennonite, Charismatic, Pentecostal, Assembly of God, Evangelical Free - all with an evangelical orientation. Kevin, in the Overseas Programs Department, explained to me that I was "unique" at Global Faith because I was from a "mainstream church" (United Church) and the staff all belonged to "evangelical churches." Gerald joked on several occasions that "United Church people aren't really religious."<sup>53</sup> Ian also emphasized that "the subject of denominations never

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<sup>52</sup> Not all of the participants in Global Faith's overseas programs are necessarily Christians themselves.

<sup>53</sup> During the process of respondent validation, Gerald commented on this joke. Gerald said that he was using the joke to comment on the Evangelical community in general and to show that he disapproved of their "narrowness" and their judgemental attitude toward non-Evangelical Christians - a view that he himself did not share.

comes up in the organization except for a bit of good-natured kidding<sup>54</sup> and if we can't survive that, our faith isn't very strong."

While the evangelical ideology is a unifying theme across the different denominations represented at Global Faith, there is still the possibility of variance across individual staff member's interpretations and expressions of their faith. Consequently, Global Faith adopted a Statement of Faith that lays out the collectively acceptable elements of evangelical Christian beliefs.

#### Statement of Faith

[Global Faith] believes in:

1. The Holy Scriptures as originally given by God, divinely inspired, infallible, and the only supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
2. One God, eternally existent in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. Our Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, His Virgin birth, His sinless human life, His divine miracles, His bodily resurrection, His ascension, His mediatorial work, and His personal return in power and glory.
4. The salvation of lost and sinful man through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith apart from works, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>54</sup> For example, Mennonites are called "Menno's" and are teased for being conservative and private thinkers. Charismatics were singled out at a slide show put on during a staff party: a photo of staff playing volleyball leaping around awkwardly and waving their arms was referred to as "a meeting of Charismatics who had just seen the light." The staff in the photo were themselves not all Charismatics but everyone seemed to think the joke was very funny.



5. The Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the believer is enabled to live a holy life and to work out a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. The Unity in the Spirit of all true believers, the Church, and the Body of Christ.
7. The resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

I asked Ian during one of the Training Program sessions how this Statement of Faith was developed at Global Faith. He explained:

I think there are all kinds of different statements of faith around and I think this is just sort of a standard one that a lot of different churches have accepted and I suspect that our people looked at it and said "well, that's got the basic need and we are avoiding the controversies [about Communion and speaking in tongues, for example] and that is great."

The fact that divergent denominational viewpoints are not routinely debated is the result of Gerald's preference to minimize such discussions. I asked Gerald during our first interview about the different denominations at Global Faith and whether the variety "helps to enrich things" and "Do people think of the differences much?" Gerald replied:

Well, the Pentecostal people might want more pizzazz in stuff. I try to limit the time spent discussing religious questions or issues because we have a job to do. These discussions are different from their job. I don't want them to think that God solves all their problems.

While religious debates are discouraged, time is put aside every Monday morning for the staff to all meet to listen to readings from the Bible and to pray together. The purpose of the meetings, according to Gerald is "to challenge them to think." During my first visit to Global Faith, Richard mentioned this "Monday morning staff meeting" and I asked if I could observe the meeting

on a return visit. Richard said "Well, you know we have a prayer session as part of the meeting, and if you are not a Christian, that may be a problem [for you]...." I assured him that was not a problem - though later I was almost dreading going back out to Global Faith to observe the meeting. What did he mean by a "prayer session?" Would I say or do the wrong thing? I felt as though I had accidentally uttered the secret password ("Christian") and now I was being admitted into a club where I didn't know the rules. The following excerpts from my fieldnotes describe the meeting that morning:

My first impression as I stepped inside was of a sea of faces arranged in a circle around a big table all looking seriously in my direction. I stuttered an apology about being late and something about having to wait for the babysitter and I heard [Gerald], the Executive Director, say in a joking voice "Ph.D. students are always late." Everyone laughed...

Once I was seated [Gerald] introduced me to the group. There was a pause after the initial introductions and people around the table looked at [Gerald] expectantly. He pulled the big book in front of him in closer and opened it up to a marked page while he started to speak. He said "I'd like us to talk about forgiveness today. I hope you'll find this choice interesting - though I have more say about it than you do." Laughter all around...

I was waiting for [Gerald] to explain why he had chosen the topic of forgiveness for discussion but he never did. I thought maybe there had been a rift between some of the staff members and he was trying to help people make up and get on with their work. I expected the discussion of forgiveness to be a preamble to the "real" business of the staff meeting but it wasn't. [Gerald] continued speaking about forgiveness while thumbing through the pages of the book in front of him.

By now I realized that the book was a Bible. No one else had a copy in front of them. Only [Gerald]. He read a quote from the Bible and then summed up in his own words: "The real issue of forgiveness is that they wrong you, but the onus is on you to forgive." He stressed how important forgiveness

was in a marriage and that forgiveness was not the same as forgetting.

I didn't know anything about these people - I was completely in the dark in terms of his motivation for choosing this topic and all the hidden meanings and innuendos behind his remarks. I was in their circle around the table, positioned as one of them and I had no idea what was going on. It was very nerve-racking.

My own anxiety level climbed a notch when Gerald stopped his musings about marriage, forgiveness, and forgetting and asked: "What is forgiveness?" He looked around the table. Silence. A few people lowered their heads or studied the coffee cup in front of them. Finally, an older man spoke up: "It means you stop making an issue of something. You stop being resentful or angry." [Gerald] nodded and said something approving back. It seemed that the meeting had moved into a different gear. [Gerald] had said his initial piece and now it was lesson time.

[Gerald] directed the conversation for the next 30 minutes almost like a traffic cop - releasing and halting, encouraging and ignoring comments from the people around the table. All remarks were channelled through him. The staff did not build on each other's comments - instead they waited for [Gerald] to respond....The "lessons" continued with another silence-provoking question from [Gerald]: "How is this all related to Jesus on the cross?" I found myself avoiding his glance in case he decided to call on me - because I had no idea how to answer.

My discomfort level reached its peak when [Gerald] said: "O.K. now we'll say our prayers. We'll go around the table this way. If you don't want to say anything, we'll just go on to the next person." By the time the woman next to me said her prayer, my heart was pounding and my face was probably bright red. What should I do? No one else had skipped their turn - even though [Gerald] had said they could - there seemed to be pressure on people to say something, anything. For example, one man said simply "I pray for peace in this world." I began my prayer rather abruptly: "Thank you for letting me come into the world of [Global Faith] and for letting me learn from these people. I hope I can contribute something back." I stopped.

There seemed to be a long pause and then the person next to me said his prayer. The spotlight moved on around the table. After everyone had their turn, people seemed to breath out and relax. Someone began gathering the coasters under the coffee cups and stacking them in a little box. Gerald closed the big Bible in front of him. I could see signals that the

meeting was ending. That was it? No discussion of agency business? Why did they call it a staff meeting? It was really a prayer meeting that started with a little sermon.

The language of prayer is prevalent in other activities of the organization as well. Board meetings, fundraising banquets, staff parties, the annual staff retreat (the mornings and all the meals) are all "blessed" with prayers at the beginning by a selected "volunteer." For example, at a Board meeting, the opening blessing included Bible verse and an expressed hope "that God will guide our thoughts today." At the Vision Retreat for the Directors, Gerald began the morning session by praying to God for "clarity in thinking" and at the end of the day, Charlie offered the following prayer: "Lord, thank-you for allowing us to plan." Planning and praying are viewed as compatible and equally necessary. Dan elaborated on this during an interview:

I think it is true [that things happen by the grace of God]. But God does give us a brain and we have to use that. I certainly wouldn't minimize the God power in that but I think it is a combination of both. Relying on Him - we pray for our projects every Monday morning. You know, we pray for people. It is extremely important. But then we have to go upstairs and use our brains and try and make sure we do things in the right way....I don't think we can get confused and say that "God is going to do everything." He did create us with intelligence and He did create us as people who can make decisions and we do that day by day.

The staff are also expected to contribute personal "prayer requests" or "praise items" to the monthly Prayer Calendars (there is an entry for each day and for each week of that month). The Prayer Calendars are circulated to all staff, Board members, and volunteers. Some examples of entries in the Prayer Calendars are given below:

It's a New Year. [Gerald] says 'Let us pray together that in 1992, we will never lose sight of the fact that we exist for the poor and oppressed, that we are only stewards of what has been given to us and we are servants of God' (December 31, 1991).

Pray for [Dan] who was in the Dominican republic in August, that he is able to catch up on office work without too much difficulty (September 4, 1992).

[Global Faith's] prayer request for the fifth week in September is: India - Pray for our newest staff member and her family as they encounter the daily challenges and blessings of working in the rural areas of India (September 1992).

Please pray for a number of proposals for programming in the drought areas of Southern Africa and Bangladesh for which we are requesting institutional funding (March 13, 1993).

Praise God for all our faithful volunteers, those that come both weekly and monthly and on special occasions (June 9, 1993).

The Prayer Calendars, the Monday morning staff meetings, the Statement of Faith, and the homogeneous nature of the staff's individual church affiliations are all manifestations of Global Faith's Christian foundation - as seen here in Canada. What about overseas? The question that immediately comes to mind is: Is proselytization included in Global Faith's overseas projects? In our first interview, Richard gave his answer to this question:

You know we're an autonomous Christian Canadian organization. So, obviously, we have religious values which fire our compassion or service in the work we do. But, given that, we're not into proselytization. We'll work with all kinds of people because that's the group of people we wanted to work with.

During one of the training program sessions, Ian also emphasized that Global Faith is not involved in proselytizing overseas.

Our mission - our type of ministry to people is basically to keep them alive and give them a fighting chance to make it on their own and to show that God's love is real, it is not

just a bunch of talk. We are out doing it. We're not out essentially to educate them theologically. Bible teachers can do that.

Gerald commented as well on the lack of proselytizing in overseas projects:

I think [Global Faith] is unique within evangelical circles for sure in that there is no other organization within evangelical circles that is willing to say "we do development work and that is sufficient." That is what we do.

I asked Gerald whether CIDA's policy that government funding is not provided for proselytization has influenced Global Faith's decision to abstain from evangelizing in overseas projects. He answered:

Even if we had all our own money, hopefully - at least from my perspective - we wouldn't go out and be evangelists. You know I don't think that is how we are supposed to be helping....I'm not sure who would or wouldn't agree with me here. But I think we have a task to fulfill. It is very Christian and I think we need to do that. We should never get caught up in trying to be evangelists. It would be a mistake. If we're going to do that, we might as well be with Billy Graham or Campus Crusade or some other religious organization that just does that.

### **From Praying to Planning**

Global Faith's Christian orientation is an integral part of the organization's Strategic Plan. In 1989, Global Faith staff participated in a strategic planning exercise which resulted in a Board approved Strategic Plan document for 1990-1994<sup>55</sup>. The double purposes for the Strategic Plan - measuring efficiency and obeying God's command - are given below:

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<sup>55</sup> A new Strategic Plan was intended for 1994-1999.

As a Christian development organization, [Global Faith] recognizes the need for an effective strategic plan in order to measure the progress and efficiency of the organization. [Global Faith] also recognizes that its purpose is in obedience to God's command to reach out to the poor. Accordingly, compassion continues to play an active role in all [Global Faith's] decision making processes. (Strategic Plan 1990-94, Introduction, p.2)

Pam, Director of Marketing, explained during an interview that Gerald initiated the strategic planning exercise after the financial crisis of 1987-1988 in order to "know ahead when you are getting into problems. Way, way, way before it would ever become a problem. So if you can track it, then you would be able to know: 'We are not getting enough in. Are we going to increase advertising? How are we going to do this before it gets into major, major problems?'" According to Pam, another reason Gerald encouraged strategic planning is that the bulk of the information about donors and fundraising was in Stan's head and that made Gerald "nervous." Pam explained that the Strategic Plan "is just an element of control that was necessary and to document it on paper so that if [one of us] is not here someday, somebody can fill their place or we have some kind of tracking in the past to know what works and what doesn't in the future."

Before the Strategic Plan was developed, Global Faith staff relied on a Mission Statement - written in the early 1980s - as a reference point in decision-making. This Mission Statement is also related to the Christian orientation of the organization in that it fills a gap left by denominational differences. Kevin, from the Overseas Department, explained this to me over lunch one day.

We're not proselytizing in the field, so we don't need to pretend that we are identical in our faiths. It is important that we subscribe to our mission statement because the staff have to have a common belief in something.

Global Faith's **Mission Statement** is as follows:

[Global Faith] exists to improve the supply of basic human necessities for the neediest of the needy in the Third World through self-help activities, and to challenge, educate and involve North Americans regarding development issues (Strategic Plan, 1990-94, p.7).

The Vision Statement, which was articulated in 1989 through a group process that involved all the staff and Board members, is more general and more of a motivating phrase than the Mission Statement. Global Faith's **Vision Statement**<sup>56</sup> is as follows:

[Global Faith], a development agency extending Christ's compassion to the neglected poor.

The motivational component of the Vision Statement is described as "our love of God and our desire to be obedient to Him" (Strategic Plan 1990-94, p.3). It is emphasized in the Strategic Plan that the Vision Statement is intended to act as "a motivator, a common bond to encourage all [Global Faith's] staff and associates to work not only to the best of their ability but also to work unselfishly together as a team" (Strategic Plan 1990-94, p.1).

The Vision Statement contributes to the value-basis of decision-making at Global Faith. One staff member explained that decisions about overseas programs are made according to whether

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<sup>56</sup> The story of the development of the Vision Statement is discussed in detail in Chapter Seven.



they are an expression of the Vision Statement:

We are not limited by getting results [in overseas programs]. If this is not going to bring results, do we still go and try to express our love to these people? I feel our role is one which requires us to still continue to express love to these people whether that brings about tangible results or not....Our action is not determined by expected outputs. So, if the output is not going to be very, very positive, it is not necessarily the thing that is going to keep us from acting in some way because there is a humanitarian element in there. People are suffering.

I followed up on this comment at a later date with Gerald, the Executive Director. I asked Gerald: "Would you still do an overseas program in order to express neighbourly love, if there weren't tangible results?" Gerald replied: "Would we? Oh yeah. I don't think there would be a problem with that. In fact, we would probably create tangible results for the benefit of our funders." I asked Gerald to clarify: "Do you mean create as in fabricate? Or actually get them to happen?" Gerald explained:

No, get something on paper. Not lie, but find something that is a result just to appease the funders so that we can continue with the things that aren't as measurable. And because the non-measurable things are often more important to us....So we are result-oriented but not in the sense of wanting to say we planted 13 trees. We're result-oriented in thinking that we have got to know that we are having a positive impact in helping those people.

In addition to the Mission Statement and the Vision Statement, the Strategic Plan 1990-1994 also lays out a lengthy declaration of Global Faith's philosophy. Portions of this section in the Strategic Plan 1990-1994 are used often in the organization's promotional materials. Excerpts from the **Philosophy** of Global Faith are given below:

[Global Faith] believes that all people, regardless of their geographical setting, have basic rights and should be given

the opportunity to achieve their God-given potential. Basic needs such as clean water, food, shelter, health, work, recreation, socio-economic independence and basic education are seen by [Global Faith] as being fundamental human rights upon which growth can occur. [Global Faith] is dedicated to working alongside the poor, helping set up programs which enable the poor to cultivate their skills and knowledge, taking advantage of existing resources (when available) to develop self-reliant communities....Following Christ's example, [Global Faith] extends its assistance to the poorest of the poor without discrimination as to the religious beliefs of the beneficiaries. [Global Faith's] development programs represent a tangible expression of the organization's religious values (Strategic Plan 1990-94, pp.7-8).

The first point - about universal rights regardless of geographical location - is vague enough for flexible interpretation. Global Faith's overseas programs are spread throughout Africa (mostly eastern Africa), Asia and Latin America. This statement in the Philosophy section is another way of explaining the wide scattering of their overseas efforts. The second point emphasizes the importance of basic human needs and provides justification for projects that focus on water, agriculture, and income generation as opposed to evangelizing. The third point highlights a partnership mode and the goal of self-reliance in development work. Finally, the last two points clear the way for the participants in Global Faith's projects to be non-Christian. The rationale for this is given in an internal memo related to the Strategic Plan titled **Evangelism**:

Adhering to the view that God commands us to reach out to the needy without regard to religious affiliation, [Global Faith] sees no problem reaching out to groups outside the Christian realm. (Due to anticipated objection from supporters, [Global Faith] tends to steer away from publicizing target groups of varying beliefs, i.e., Moslem, Athiest.) It is important that we see our image from the perspective of the needy non-Christians. When asked by

supporters why [Global Faith] would help [them], we should simply be stating, "If not us, then who?"...Furthermore, most Christian relief and development organizations seek out the needy who are similarly Christian in their beliefs. Consequently, most relief and development agencies give aid to the same geographical areas. Recognizing this, [Global Faith] sees great value in focusing on people who may not share in [Global Faith's] Christian beliefs, and on areas which are neglected by the bulk of Christian relief and development agencies.

The bulk of the Strategic Plan 1990-1994 document is dedicated to a presentation and elaboration of seven specific Objectives<sup>57</sup> which "are deemed to be attainable through hard work, strategic planning and efficient use of resources" (Strategic Plan 1990-94, p.1). Each Departmental Director is responsible for setting the objectives for their own areas of responsibility. The **Objectives** given for 1992-1994 are as follows:

1. Increase income from \$11.8 Million to \$16 Million.
2. Increase the number of overseas programs by 61%.
3. Increase the percentage of water and agriculture programs to 80% of overall costs.
4. Encourage Christian values through the use of 12 Pro-Tech volunteers.
5. Increase the number of persons informed about Third World needs by 14,000.
6. Improve and increase the financial control of the organization.
7. Increase the efficiency of the organization (Strategic Plan Update 1992-1994, p.6).

Each objective is clarified with the following sections:

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<sup>57</sup> Objectives 1, 2, and 5 were revised in 1991. The objectives given here are from the Strategic Plan Update 1992-1994.

numerical breakdown, basis for objective, major activities enabling achievement of objective, assignment of responsibility, and income and expenses. For example, the numerical breakdown of Objective 3 shows that 74 water and agriculture projects are planned for 1994 in order to total 80% of overall program costs. The basis for this objective stresses the past success of these types of programs and "commits the organization to expend the majority of its energies to the area of its expertise" (Strategic Plan 1990-1994, p.28). The major activities enabling the achievement of this objective are presented in point form on a yearly basis and mention specific overseas programs that are being planned, initiated or continued. The assignment of responsibility section features the Director of Overseas Programs (Richard), the Director of International Relations (Elizabeth), the Director of Finance (Asafa), and the Director of Communications and Funding (Stan). The final section related to this objective presents yearly projections for income and expenses for water and agriculture programs.

The Strategic Plan was revised at the end of 1991 and the Strategic Plan Update 1992-1994 was produced. Quarterly Strategic Plan updates are prepared by Pam, the Director of Marketing, for the Board. Each departmental Director gets a weekly financial report for their own department and Gerald, the Executive Director, receives copies of all of these. The reports compare actual income with projected income as outlined in the Strategic Plan and help each Director to monitor their department's

progress. Pam explained that when the Directors see that an area of income is lower than expected, "it forces us to make the extra effort to meet our goals."

All the departmental Directors and the Executive Director are members of the Strategic Planning Committee (also known as "the Group of Eight") which meets every Friday afternoon for "the weekly coming together of everything." Each Director presents a report giving an overview of what has happened during the past week and points out any issues or decisions that need the group's attention. Topics and issues discussed during the Group of Eight meetings include delegating jobs while staff are travelling, analyzing projections and explaining shortfalls, revising budgets, planning for fundraising events, reporting on projects, organizing CIDA proposal writing, and coordinating volunteers. Personnel issues involving confidential personal problems or personality conflicts are not brought before the Group of Eight meetings. However, Dan acknowledged that the Group of Eight meetings are also a forum for Gerald to communicate delicate issues (e.g., coming to work on time) to the group without singling out an individual. The weekly meetings are usually held in the Executive Director's office around a large table. On occasion - when the Executive Director decides that a more relaxed setting would be beneficial - the Group of Eight meets in the lounge of a nearby restaurant.

## **Fundraising: An Industry and a Ministry**

"The one essential thing in order to exist at all is obvious: money. Without it, we cannot exist - however noble the cause." This observation was made by Pam, the Director of Marketing during a Group of Eight meeting dedicated to revising the Strategic Plan. Pam put the Mission Statement and the Vision Statement on the overhead projector and then asked the group: "If we, as directors, believe this is why we exist, what is the best way to achieve this goal?" Pam then outlined the main ways that Global Faith makes money: grants from NGO consortia (2.6%), donated commodities (46.4%), funds raised for travel and living expenses for overseas volunteers (0.6%), CIDA grants (18.5%), provincial government grants (1.2%), and donations in cash from the general public (21%).<sup>58</sup> The last three categories are linked in that government grants are based on, and cannot exceed, the amount raised from the general public. Pam made a distinction between government as donors and the general public as donors. Whereas government grants can help the organization meet the mission statement, the rules associated with government funding (e.g., concerning proselytization overseas) inhibit realization of the vision statement. General public donors, on the other hand, are the only efficient way of achieving the vision statement. Pam emphasized the importance of increasing general

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<sup>58</sup> The percentages are from the 1991 Annual Report, page 4. When the fund balance at the beginning of the year is added (9.7%), the percentages total 100%. Total income in 1991 was almost \$12 million.

public income and pointed out the relationship between Global Faith's image and how much donors are willing to give. She elaborated on this using another overhead with the following well-known statement: "They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel."

The need for fundraising and the circular connection between people's perceptions of the organization and fundraising strategies together put pressure on Global Faith. Ian commented on the pressure of fundraising during one of the training program sessions:

Once again, it becomes a matter of survival.... We've come to the state of mind that we realize that fundraising is an industry. Because if we don't raise the money, there aren't any projects. So it is a vital part of us. And it is ministry because people here have to learn to give. Most of them don't know how.

Viewing fundraising as an industry is not uncommon in the voluntary sector. Considering fundraising as a ministry - where an organization claims responsibility for disciplining the soul of the giver - is an attitude uniquely related to the evangelical foundation of Global Faith. This section explores both dimensions of fundraising at Global Faith.

Global Faith has a donor base of 4000-6000 people with a "phenomenal rate of consistent monthly giving." Global Faith's success at fundraising is attributed to a strategy of "being personable." This means that donors are acquired through personal contact and direct mail campaigns only go to people who are familiar with Global Faith. Pam refers to this strategy as "friendship marketing" and describes it as "taking a prospective

donor and being personable enough to have them commit to the vision of [Global Faith]." Gerald also equates donations with allegiance. During an interview, he made the following observations:

We don't make our philosophic statements out of what the donors say. Right? The donors buy into our philosophic statements. Right? I mean to some degree - in theory that is what is true. You may bend and so on. But when a donor comes to give money to this organization, they - to one degree or another - will agree with what we are philosophically.

Approximately 3000 appeal letters - written in Gerald's name and with his picture in the letterhead - are sent out to donors each month. The appeal letters include a form and a return envelope for sending back donations. The forms contain words of encouragement such as:

Your gifts to these people will be multiplied 4 times by Canadian Government grants, an opportunity to change the lives of at least 12 families! Your investment of:

- \$36 becomes \$144  
(skills training for 12 family bread-winners)
- \$12/month plus grants transforms 48 families/year...

Enclosed with the letters are monthly reports written by overseas staff or volunteers who are posted overseas. The reports focus on a particular project or, in rare cases, on an emergency need like the Somalian famine. They are written in an intimate voice mixing project statistics in with emotion and urgency. This intimacy is achieved through direct and frequent contact between Global Faith staff and overseas partners. Richard explained how the close relationships with their partners influence fundraising:

Direct involvement is very important for Canadian NGOs because we need stories of what is going on in the field for us to both educate Canadians and raise more money. And if you've got a bunch of intermediaries, how do you fundraise



from a bureaucratic report that you have received that has been sort of sanitized three times? It doesn't work.

The reports also contain an appeal to the religious motivation of most of the donors. Some closing remarks from the monthly reports are included below:

Your prayers and gifts are a great encouragement to [Global Faith's] field-workers, and to me personally. You are the reason [Global Faith] can touch the lives of so many in such a Christ-like way.

May God richly reward you for doing whatever you can do.

Our many Christian brothers and sisters here send their greetings and their thanks for all that has been done through [Global Faith].

In addition to an intimate tone with educational and religious elements, the reports also contain a sense of urgency. Stan, Director of Communications and Fund Development, expressed his amazement that letters and reports can move people to donate and called it a "wonderous, phenomenal act of compassion." He provided the following explanation of how this happens:

It is pretty phenomenal that somebody would give money in response to a letter to begin with. They just get something in the mail. They didn't see anybody but they are actually moved to write out a cheque and give of themselves in response to this written information. There is nothing that is going to come back to them in return. It is quite a phenomenon. But it doesn't happen easily so there has to be certain elements. There has to be a sense to the person that they can't wait. If they can wait and you make it too easy to wait, people will wait and when they do that, they forget that the need is there. And the longer they forget about it, the less they are motivated because they forget what was in the letter. And the moment is gone and they won't give.

If donors request it, they will also receive a newsletter from Global Faith four times a year. The newsletter is also

available for distribution at various fundraising events. Global Faith's newsletter is an eight page tabloid style paper containing black and white photographs, a section titled "Thoughts from the Executive Director," letters from overseas volunteers, reports on special circumstances in various areas (e.g., the drought in Namibia), one page titled "Pray for the World" (with suggestions for prayer corresponding to specific events or projects), and requests for donations. Quotes from the Bible are interspersed throughout the newsletter, such as:

He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will reward him for what has done (Proverbs 19:17).

...be generous and willing to share. In this way...they may take hold of the life that is truly Life! (1 Timothy 6: 17-19)

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth (1 John 3:17, 18).

In addition to appeal letters, monthly reports, and the quarterly newsletter, donors are also sent an annual "Christmas Catalogue." Donations are presented in the catalogue as gifts that can be given "in honour of a friend who shares your compassion for the poor" (e.g., one gift is "Clean Safe Water - Ethiopia \$8.50"). The "friend" receives a letter advising them of the gift and the name of the giver.

Global Faith staff also conduct telephoning and visiting campaigns. Gerald visits certain donors - selected on the basis of duration and amount of giving - and has mixed feelings about asking for money. He addressed this at the Group of Eight's

"Vision Retreat." Gerald said to the group: "Where is my integrity in asking for money from old folks with none?....Some of us are called to be beggars. My comfort zone is handled by saying I'm begging for someone else." Gerald also recognizes that his visits are a way of giving back to the donors - giving his time, his attention, and his willingness to listen - and that donors' reasons for giving money go beyond supporting projects in the Third World. In Gerald's words:

They are often simple people giving a lot. I feel guilty and I wonder if they can afford it. I think of my own mother who gives \$250 a month to the church. They all want to talk about being lonely, getting older, their kids growing up. It is very hard to talk about the issues [i.e., Third World issues]. People may not give money to help the Third World. The money they give does help the Third World, but there are other things going on.

Global Faith also relies on a series of banquets organized by dinner coordinators (they are paid \$1000 for organizing a dinner) across the country for fundraising. The main banquet is held in April in the ballroom of a large downtown hotel. People are personally invited by table hosts (staff, associates, established donors) to attend. The invitation reads: "This will be an evening of inspiration and information regarding the ministry of [Global Faith]. Your involvement at this event can make a difference in the lives of hurting people in the world. Please join us!" I attended the main Banquet in April 1992 and again in April 1993. White linen table cloths covered approximately 50 large round tables adorned with flowers and candles. At each place setting, a pile of literature on the evening's agenda and on the background of Global Faith was neatly

arranged. The people attending were mostly elegantly dressed and appeared mainstream. There was no wet bar - no alcohol served at all - and this was a clue to the evangelical orientation of many of the guests (Global Faith avoided serving alcohol for fear of offending many donors). The evening was a series of speeches (by the Executive Director, by the Chair of the Board, by the head of an overseas partner organization, by a local politician), with a devotional led by a Minister, hymn singing and an audio-visual presentation on one of Global Faith's programs in India. There was also time for writing cheques and filling out donation forms which were placed in silver bowls in the center of the tables. The main Banquet raises approximately \$40,000. Additional fundraising events at Global Faith include the annual Walkathon (the \$6000 raised was applied to the costs of shipping milk powder to Somalia in 1992) and the Christmas tree display at a local shopping mall (50 - 60 trees on display raised approximately \$7000 in 1992).

Global Faith also carries out a development education program which involves presentations in churches (all denominations), schools, and service clubs. The purpose of Global Faith's development education is "to provide Canadians with the resources to better understand the issues surrounding poverty and development in developing countries" (1991 Annual Report, p.4). Another aim of development education is to promote Global Faith's overseas programs and to raise money. Stan, the Director of Communications and Fund Development, describes the close fit

between development education and fund raising:

Fundraising is letting people know what the program is so they can decide whether to give to it or not. And development education is letting people know what the program is so they can decide whether to give to it or not [chuckles]. It is the same thing.

Fundraising is the production of money and inevitably there are costs involved. Approximately 2.9% of total expenditures<sup>59</sup> at Global Faith are from administration and fundraising (Annual Report 1992, p.4). Due to the recession, Global Faith has been spending more at fundraising in order to raise the same amount. Gerald commented on the contradictions inherent in fundraising:

Money is a big issue for us - a mammoth issue. We're always caught on the horns of a dilemma and the dilemma is money. We're spending more on Somalia than we are raising. And at the same time that we are talking about raising money, we are talking about cutting costs. Everything we do contradicts everything.

Richard also sees money as a "mammoth issue" and one that is at odds with a people-centred approach: "[Global Faith] cannot afford to lose sight of people [in the Strategic Plan], but money is the bottom line in order for the organization to exist. I will always struggle with the interplay between the two." Another difficult aspect of fundraising is that "you need disaster in the world if you want to raise money." Gerald mentioned this paradoxical relationship at a Group of Eight meeting while they were reviewing the budget.

We're short about \$200,000 in government funds. It is a yucky way to look at it, but the situation in Somalia could turn it around in no time. People have to die by the zillion

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<sup>59</sup> Other expenditures were "in and for development" (94.1%) and "development education" (3%) (Annual Report, 1991, p.4).

to get people to donate money - which is a rather strange paradox.

Suffering in the world not only motivates the general public to donate money but also provides a focal point for the staff while they are caught up in fundraising efforts. Gerald stresses the importance of including a focus on suffering along with the concern for raising money and compares this deliberate attitude to a type of method acting:

Certainly I know it is true here and I know it is true for some other organizations, the biggest issue is one of money, right? I mean you do nothing without money so you're trying to address that all the time. The problem with addressing it all the time is you forget why you're doing it....So somehow you can never think of the problems overseas without thinking about the money. But because you always have to think about the money, you have to continually remind yourself to think about the thing overseas, right? And perhaps it is a bit like method acting. You know, when you're fighting for money, you've got to also be able to remember that instant when you saw the child die [of starvation in Ethiopia]. Because if you can't bring that to your mind, you might end up laughing and saying it is all a farce....Every night when you go to bed and every morning when you get up, you've got to be able to say to yourself: "this is why I do it."

### **External Relationships**

In order to understand the organizational behaviour of Global Faith, it is necessary to include a description of how Global Faith relates to other actors or organizations in its environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978/1990). In addition to the many relationships established with individual donors, Global Faith is also involved in, and influenced by, relationships with Board members, with CIDA, and with overseas partners. I consider these all to be external relationships because they span

organizational boundaries.<sup>60</sup>

### The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors at Global Faith is made up of nine men and one woman, all of whom share an evangelical Christian background. The denominations of Board members are Baptist, Vineyard Church, and United Brethren in Christ. Gerald commented that in general, the Board members are "more conservative" in their theological perspectives than most of the staff at Global Faith. The professions of the Board members include a Member of Parliament, Executive Vice President of a large land development company, former Chief Executive Officer of a hydro-electric corporation, lawyer, chartered accountant, pastor, Director of an aviation institute, pilot, and retail entrepreneur. Asafa, Director Finance, commented that the Board is made of up of "a high number of business people. We need technocrats, Third World people, and there is another woman I guess they have been thinking about." The Chair of the Board is a Minister (United Brethren of Christ Church), and a business woman. She also used to be a provincial director for Global Faith in the early 1980s. The Chair is elected by the Board every year for a term of one year. The term for serving on the Board is two 3 year sessions

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<sup>60</sup> I am using Pfeffer and Salancik's (1978/1990) interpretation of organizational boundary which "...can be defined by the organization's control over the actions of participants relative to the control of other social entities over these same activities. Control is the ability to initiate or terminate actions at one's discretion" (p.147).

(maximum 6 years) which means there is a turnover every two or three years. Board members are elected by the Society and they are not salaried. Gerald, as Executive Director, is not a member of the Board, though he reports directly to them. Gerald explained this by pointing out that "my responsibility is to support the people here [the staff]" and that "the Board doesn't want everybody accountable to them. They want a hierarchy of accountability."

While most of the Board members are well-established in their fields and a few are extremely wealthy, they are not considered to be generous donors. According to Gerald, "the Board is there because of control, not because of money. They are capable of giving a lot but they are not giving it." The Board is functional; they are not in place for fundraising. The administration of Global Faith answers to the Board, though Board members are not involved in the day-to-day operations of the organization. At one Board meeting, a Board member stressed that "it is important that Board members are compatible and that they are on the same wavelength. For example, that they all agree to stay arm's length away from administration. It is easier for [Gerald] that way." The Board's "arm's length" approach is viewed differently by some of the staff. One staff member commented on the Board's low profile at Global Faith:

The Board of Directors are a bit disappointing to me. I don't know who the Board of Directors are. I have met some of them and I know some of them but I don't see them around here. Maybe that is not their role but I would like to see them around here talking to staff and finding out exactly how programs are going. You know, taking a more ground view



of what is happening at [Global Faith]....I don't really know how they feel about what we are doing.

Gerald recognizes that his relationship with the Board is complex and at times, even problematic. The Board's involvement in the day-to-day operations of Global Faith is as much of a problem for Gerald as their lack of involvement. Gerald describes these dynamics below:

It is a struggle not to be defensive when the Board has their own ideas about how things should be going. It is a struggle for me when the Board wants to get too involved here. And it is a struggle for me when the Board is not involved enough here. And so in that way the Board has said in prior times that I'm supposed to be the link between them and the organization and I'm not sure every Board member would buy into that. I'm the only one here who has nine bosses. Right? And that is its own struggle. Sometimes that means that nobody really comes forward as the boss. Sometimes it means that everybody is. But these guys being mainly business people will therefore be a Board of that for-profit kind. They don't want to be in here everyday. They just want to know what the results are at the end of each month. If the results are O.K., they're not worried.

The Board meets quarterly and the Executive Committee meets once a month. Richard explained to me that "the Board meetings are to educate them and give them an update." I asked Richard if they were also for decision-making. Richard said: "No, they are for ratifying decisions already made." Board members receive a report every Board meeting on what expenditures the Department Directors have approved. Every month they get a financial report on monthly and year-to-date income levels, and on projections and future commitments. The Board also receives a yearly report from the Audit Committee.

Board approval is required for overseas projects \$200,000 and over or for projects involving \$25,000 or more of General

Public Income. Board approval is conditional on funds being there (i.e., CIDA approval). The Board is also responsible for approving the Strategic Plan, departmental budgets and any capital expenditures.

Gerald distinguishes between the Board and the staff at Global Faith by who holds the guiding vision for the organization.

I don't think our Board has a vision. The textbooks say the Board should develop a vision and hire people to carry it out. The vision for our organization comes out of administrators - it is not coming out of the Board. Planning is approved by the Board but done by the staff. Because of who they are, the Board sees things from a for-profit type of perspective. They approve plans, they don't design them.

#### Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

CIDA support to Global Faith began in 1975 on a project-by-project basis. One Year Program grants have been received since 1986 from the NGO Division of CIDA. These grants are based on an indicative planning figure (IPF) which is a yearly funding ceiling related to an analysis of institutional management capabilities. Proposals for the One Year Program specify countries, sectors, and overseas partners and cover all the individual projects that are to be supported by the CIDA grant and the general public donations. Reporting to CIDA is required twice a year and includes all of the activities of the One Year Program. Proposals, interim reports and final reports are not required for every single project. The One Year Program is also called Responsive Programming, because the funds from the NGO

Division at CIDA match the NGO's initiative and their publicly raised finances. Global Faith has also implemented three country focus programs as an executing agency for the Bilateral Branch of CIDA.

In January 1993, Global Faith submitted an application for a multi-year program (1993-1996) for funding from CIDA with an additional amount from Global Faith to support core programs overseas and to expand Global Faith's development education activities in Canada. Global Faith also receives CIDA funding for emergency relief programs, through involvement in various NGO consortia (e.g., South Asia Partnership).

Funding from CIDA for Global Faith is provided through the following windows:

- Responsive Programming (NGO Division)
- Decentralized Funds
- Coalitions
- Country Focus Programs (Bilateral Branch)
- International Humanitarian Assistance
- Reconstruction and Rehabilitation
- Food Aid

While the various funding outlets at CIDA have allowed Global Faith to keep expanding and accessing more money, they have also contributed to a sense of confusion or a murkiness in NGO dealings with CIDA. Kevin, in the Overseas Program Department at Global Faith, describes CIDA as "...such an octopus. You know, it is slippery. There are so many arms that it is hard to get a handle on it."

CIDA may be an elusive bureaucracy, but Global Faith staff also recognize that CIDA is not a faceless institution. As Gerald

says, "CIDA isn't only rules, it is also people" and "when you deal with CIDA, you deal with individuals - CIDA doesn't have a soul but the individuals do." Personnel changes at CIDA have an impact on Global Faith's strategy in their dealings with CIDA. Richard emphasizes the importance of flexibility and maintaining strong relationships with a variety of people at CIDA:

Our ability has to be to change and to access funding where we can in CIDA and to keep up the relationships with people because it is not this institution with no personality. It is a thousand individuals.

Global Faith's relationship with CIDA is actually a combination of many individual relationships. However, in the context of funding, CIDA is considered as one entity, one force. Gerald describes CIDA as Global Faith's "biggest donor." Like a donor, CIDA holds Global Faith accountable for how the money is spent. While CIDA funding has the advantage of matching general public donations (with ratios as high as nine to one), there is also the disadvantage of government restrictions placed on how the funding is spent. Ian discussed the tension inherent in receiving CIDA funding during one of the Training Program sessions:

CIDA is not involved in every project. And this is by choice for a number of reasons. I suppose number one is that the person who puts up the money can tell you how to spend it. We don't necessarily want to have our total policy of what we do overseas to be dictated by Canada's current foreign policy which can be subject to change. And we make a commitment to an area and our commitment is to the people, not to the politics. If we became involved in any kind of a situation where evangelism becomes very prominent, there is no way we can use any CIDA money for anything like that....We don't want them funding everything. What if they suddenly decide to cut our allotment in half? What if they do it before we have finished a project and we have made a

commitment on the basis of the money that they are going to pay?

CIDA's presence in the corporate consciousness at Global Faith is shaped mainly by uncertainty. Kevin, who deals with CIDA on a daily basis, said:

There are huge changes at CIDA and no one knows what they are. There are rumours....CIDA people are nervous. Part of it is political. There has been a bringing together of the aid and trade issues.

The facts that CIDA is a government instrument and that decision-making is related to political imperatives is only part of the uncertainty. Another contributing factor has been the infamous "Secor Report," a management review of CIDA carried out in 1991. The Report was in limbo for several years leaving everyone unclear as to how the recommendations would be applied.

Commenting on this, Richard said:

It has been a year and a half and they haven't decided what they are going to do and that affects the whole structure of CIDA....We can't wait around for a year and a half to see what the changes are. We have to just keep hustling.

The climate of instability has led Global Faith staff to conclude that CIDA funding itself is precarious or uncertain. When asked how the uncertainty surrounding CIDA affects Global Faith's work, the Director of Overseas Programs insisted that Global Faith's survival is not conditional upon CIDA funding:

The uncertainty only affects the amount of programming we could do with our partners, our core partners, and that is about it. Because at the core, what we raise from the public, we program with that. If that is all we had, we'd be much smaller and much more limited but [Global Faith] would still be around.

Another aspect of Global Faith's relationship with CIDA is

the lack of reciprocity in urgent requests for information. Richard was expressing his frustration that Global Faith was required to submit a proposal to CIDA by a certain deadline but "there is no way we could say: 'We have to have a response from you in two weeks.'"

It is an interesting relationship. Because, on the one hand, CIDA can demand of us things and we have to do it - but we really can't demand anything of them...though we can influence over time what they demand from us...Now, we get money from them to do what we want to do, so, in a way, we'll bite our lips and apologize and walk away.

The one-way direction of reporting and accountability is a consequence of the donor-recipient relationship between CIDA and Global Faith. Global Faith is on the other side of that dynamic with their overseas partners. In that context, Global Faith is the funding agency. However, the relationship between Global Faith and their overseas partners bears little resemblance to the CIDA - Global Faith relationship.

### Overseas Partners

Virtually by definition as an NGO, Global Faith does not consider its relationship with CIDA to be that of partnership. Instead, Global Faith feels the need for "an arms length relationship from CIDA." On the other hand, Global Faith considers its "Third World relationships" as partnerships. This is evident in the very name used to categorize these organizations: "overseas partners." Richard describes Global Faith's approach to their work with overseas partners:

We do have a relationship focus in the work we do rather

than a program focus in the sense that we really do want to work together and in concert with local organizations. So, in India we want to find Indians in an Indian-run organization who have developed a strategy for working with the poor in their place and we want to work together with them. And we want - as an organization - to build a relationship with them over time out of which grows the work that they're doing and we're supporting. So, I'm not going to - uhh, we don't want to tell people what to do which is very easy to do when you're signing the cheques.

Another characteristic of Global Faith's relationships with their overseas partners is trust. These relationships are "based more on the trust established through a history of working together than on rigorous formal working agreements" (Evaluation Report, p.11). Richard also commented on the role of trust in spite of the donor-recipient relationship:

What I find encouraging is the degree of trust building with the people that we work with. We have access to tremendous resources and with that comes tremendous power. Yet we have a whole number of quality relationships.

Kevin also brought up the issue of trust in a donor-recipient relationship during an interview:

If you have a donor-recipient relationship, the issue is getting beyond the point of the relationship hinging on finances. Right? Now, you can't totally get away from it because you have resources that your partner wants. Right? You can't say that is not an important part of the relationship because it is. So the issue is to get to the point of trust where what they want to do is based on their needs and not your priorities....I think as an organization, our goal is to get to the point where we have built up a trust relationship with a partner strong enough to do joint long-term planning.

Another aspect of Global Faith's power as a funding agency is their desire to "shield" instead of control their partners. Richard reflected on Global Faith's role as follows:

We're a facilitator or bridge [between technical or financial resources and overseas partners]. And also a

shield. Because I think donors - people who give money, people who have resources - do try to exert control often times. I mean there's responsibility that goes with financing which is legitimate. But there can also be control - especially western organizations - we don't separate responsibility of resources and control very well. So, in a way, we try to be a shield on behalf of both the NGOs implementing overseas and the people they work with so that all the reporting requirements on all levels don't hinder them in their work....Our role is to translate what is happening in the program in a way that addresses - that fits into - the categories that are defined over here....

My own philosophy and the philosophy of our organization and in our department is that our job here is to generate the reports in the format required for us and our variety of donors so that we allow the local organization with limited time and resources to primarily do the implementation of the fieldwork - not to primarily keep their donors happy. And that is a significant problem for a lot of national organizations because they're usually not working in their first language. They have different administrative styles or accounting styles or reporting formats that they use in their own environment. And when they are forced externally to do something different to keep the donor happy, generally it takes up a huge amount of their time.

In contrast with the Board of Directors or CIDA, overseas partners contribute to and also implement Global Faith's vision. A memo to the Group of Eight that was circulated after a retreat for the departmental Directors said: "Regarding [Global Faith's] partners, it must be emphasized that the partners are the hands and feet of [Global Faith's] vision statement. The partners are the critical link between [Global Faith], [Global Faith's] vision, and the poor." Overseas partners are granted this instrumental status because of who they are and how they are chosen. During one of the training program sessions, Ian explained that Global Faith applies a priority framework for choosing partners for overseas work. The list is as follows with the most preferred choice at the top:



1. Indigenous Christian NGO
2. Indigenous Evangelical Church
3. Mission group
4. NGO with Christian leadership
5. NGO (non Christian)

Choosing to work with Christian groups over non-Christian groups is based on Global Faith's emphasis on the importance of inner motivation - as opposed to a professional interest in the field of international development. Richard provided his view of who Global Faith's overseas partners should be:

We do work with people who somehow in their heart care about the poor and the marginalized and the vulnerable in their countries and work together with them. And on that level, we obviously share something both in a philosophical and one may call it a spiritual sense because I think you do have to have some kind of inner motivation to continue to work at it because there continues to be more that needs to be done.

Gerald compared the selection of an overseas partner to a search for a soul mate and stressed the importance of feeling kindred with the head of the organization:

You have to be able to look [the Director of the overseas partner organization] in the eye and say "Is there some match? Can we be soul mates?" If not, why would we even move an inch toward them?

I asked Richard to explain why Global Faith would prefer to work with a Christian NGO before an Evangelical church overseas.

We're non-denominational so we will not work very often with churches overseas. We would prefer to work with organizations like us that are registered as sort of service development organizations. In fact, my own personal experience is that if you work specifically with church organizations, even if they have development arms, you get caught up in church politics and it is very hard actually to serve and work with the poor because you get caught right up in church politics.

Most of Global Faith's overseas partners are in relationships with other funding agencies as well - they do not

depend solely on Global Faith for resources and support.<sup>61</sup> Richard explained the advantages of a partner organization having a diversified funding base: "I would think that implementing organizations - voluntary organizations in Third World countries - are better off having a diversified support or funding base because it allows them to maintain their own institutional integrity and independence....Even as a small supporter, you can find a strategic way to be involved significantly in the [partner] organization without necessarily signing the biggest cheques."

#### **What Makes Them Tick?**

This chapter has delved deeper with a more intimate look at the workings of Global Faith. I have included both the official stories and also the unofficial descriptions of how things happen at Global Faith and why. While I was learning about the people of Global Faith, they were also trying to learn about me. Gerald told me: "We're examining you to see what makes you tick. There is a process of indoctrination whether it is conscious or not. It is the cultish nature of an agency like this. We can't get away from it." It is time now to take another step - into the "inner sanctum" - to examine the people themselves, their backgrounds,

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<sup>61</sup> For example, one of Global Faith's partner organizations in India has a staff of approximately 600 people and receives funding from the Canadian Hunger Foundation, Foster Parents Plan, the Swedish government, and the British government, among others. Global Faith has a special role with this organization by providing programs for institutional strengthening and training of staff.

roles, motivations, and interactions. The next chapter looks at what makes them tick.

## CHAPTER SIX: THE INNER SANCTUM

Each one of us has a unique contribution to make. The name of the game is to take the unique contributions and put them together and realize that the organization has a unique cause. It comes together like a collage. There are parallels to a family. We couldn't raise money if we were all the same. We are like a peg board. The scary part is when you pull one of the pegs out or put another peg in, you change the picture forever. (Gerald, Executive Director of Global Faith)

### A Collage of People

There are 19 people working in the Head Office of Global Faith and additional representatives are based in other provinces across Canada and overseas. This section presents brief profiles of twelve of the people in the Head Office - the Group of Eight and four other senior staff members.<sup>62</sup>

#### Gerald, Executive Director

Gerald joined Global Faith's Board of Directors in 1977 and became Executive Director in 1980. Before coming to Global Faith, Gerald worked as a university chaplain and a youth minister at a Baptist church. In addition to pastoral experience, Gerald also has a business administration background with a Master's in Applied Behavioural Science (Human Resources Development). During 1988, Gerald took a sabbatical leave and completed a second Master's degree - this one in International Public Policy.

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<sup>62</sup> Interviews were conducted with each one of the people described in this section. Please see the Data Collection and Analysis section in Chapter Three for more information on how this sample was selected.

Gerald has a kindly face with crow's feet around his eyes, a double chin, and tousled grey hair. He speaks in a soft "library voice" which sinks almost to a whisper at times. People focus and strain to hear him. As he sits back comfortably in his chair, they lean forward, alert and attentive. When Gerald speaks, he often plays with an elegant fountain pen and his folded reading glasses lying upside down on the table. Gerald chuckles frequently and teases his colleagues constantly. As a leader, he seemed to me to be domineering in a "father knows best" kind of way and definitely a central figure at Global Faith. Gerald pondered his pivotal role during one of our interviews:

The question intrigues me about being the centre of this thing. Why am I the centre? And I noticed when I was away - after coming back from being away in 1987-88, I would prefer to see it (and maybe I am saying this with a little more humility than I really feel) at least like a puzzle where if you took a piece of the puzzle out and the picture didn't look very good. I was the piece of the puzzle that was removed. So, in that sense, maybe I am the centre. But it wasn't - or isn't - because I do it all or make all the decisions.

Gerald seems to be highly regarded and admired by the staff. They told me they feel loyal to him and they sense his loyalty being returned to them. One staff member described Gerald as a leader whose "commitment is stronger to people than to the institution - which can be both good and bad for the organization. Even if 15 people at [Global Faith] say that a person should be fired, [Gerald] would never do it. He would stick with him....With [Gerald], it all comes down to relationships. Everything he does is influenced by that." Other

staff members also commented on Gerald's commitment to people and his focus on relationships. The remarks below are all excerpts from separate one-on-one interviews with different staff members, yet they are all similar:

[Gerald] is the best motivator I have ever seen because he is fairly even-keeled....His door is always open. He is the type of guy that you want to work for because he'll do anything for anybody....It is not just the people overseas that he cares about. It is the people here that he cares about.

I know that to a large degree his own personality is such that he gets involved in people's personal lives. So if I come to work depressed, he'll ask me what the problem is. So it is almost like a very good HRD person who is into counselling. I think his abilities in leadership, to me, are based on his orientation to people. He is very much a people-oriented person. Very, very much....So I go and I sit down and I talk to him and I come out of there feeling that he is on my side. And somebody else feels that he is on their side. And if two conflicting people go in there at the same time, they still feel like winners when they leave even if they are there at the same time.

He is very much a people person. And he is incredibly sensitive to everybody in the organization as well as to the people overseas. He carries a terrible load. So, he is friendly but firm. Very loving. He is emotional. Compassionate. Tries very hard to hide it with his humour and jokes but it comes through every now and again. Sometimes it comes through very, very strong. He is a special person. Very special.

Gerald's compassion, as perceived by the staff, is partly related to a tragic story from Gerald's past. Gerald referred to this story during our first interview and mentions it on occasion at fundraising events. Below is a quote from another staff member who decided to tell me more details about the tragedy during an interview:

I have seen him come through some pretty tough times. Even

he will see how to turn this so that it becomes a plus for the ministry, for the organization: a very, very tragic thing quite a few years ago. I guess it was before he was with [Global Faith]. But he had a little son that was born - their second one I guess it was - with a very severe birth defect and he only lived about two months. And it came pretty close to tearing [Gerald] completely to pieces. He - it was one thing that he just about couldn't handle. It was very very hard but he came through it. And when he was in Ethiopia at the time of the big famine - he has talked about this even at dinners on occasion. He saw a mother holding her child and her child died in her arms of starvation. The anguish. And he said he could look at that and he could understand maybe why God had this happen to his own family because he knows the pain of that. Just to keep him from ever forgetting why this organization exists. And he has never really gotten over that. So that is there. That is part of the driving force of the organization.

Gerald refers to himself as a "schizo" with his interest in working with people and his concern for business always in conflict. He also recognizes his own emphasis on relationships as a characteristic of his leadership. According to Gerald, "management is not something that you read about in a book. For me, it is always about relationships. I put a weight on myself that doesn't need to be there." Gerald's analysis of his own motivation for working at Global Faith is: "I have a strong belief that my goal in life is to help people....working here gives me an avenue for doing that."

#### Dan, Director of Human Resources and Volunteers

Dan started at Global Faith in 1982. He had contact with the organization through correspondence and several meetings with Gerald. Then, his current job (in the public sector) ended on the same day that Gerald - not knowing that Dan's job had just come to an end - contacted him about a job at Global Faith. Dan

recalls his decision to accept Gerald's offer: "In my mind, it was an act of God that happened and an opportunity that I couldn't refuse." Dan was hired to develop a procedure for handling volunteers, complete with a process for recruitment and raising funds and preparing them to go overseas. In 1984, Dan became more involved in the administrative aspects of Global Faith. Then, in 1989, he was stationed in Ethiopia as the Africa Program Coordinator for Global Faith. Dan is currently involved in hiring new staff, recruiting and placing long-term overseas professional-technical volunteers, managing the comprehensive benefits plan, sorting out inter-personal problems, and coordinating the overseas summer team of youth volunteers. Dan also issues memos on Gerald's behalf and more recently has begun producing a newsletter issued to all staff and volunteers. Dan holds a weekly staff meeting (modelled on the Group of Eight weekly meeting) with the people that are responsible to him (long-term office volunteers and support staff).

Dan is a gentle, accommodating, and unpretentious man. He was kind and helpful throughout my fieldwork at Global Faith (making me a set of keys, inviting me to a staff party, etc.). He has a slight build, glasses, and thick greying hair. His office, which is next door to Gerald's office, is simply furnished with only a desk and a spare chair for guests. He is "the last on the list" for a computer at Global Faith, but he said he doesn't really miss one because he can use other people's computers when they are free.



Gerald respects Dan. He told me that he "would listen to [Dan's] advice, on a private and informal level, more than anyone else at [Global Faith]. [Dan] anticipates what is going on without saying anything. It is a gift he has." Gerald's trust in Dan is evident in his unwritten role as "Assistant to the Executive Director." For example, Dan comes up with the list of guests for Gerald's Christmas party, he has personal power of attorney on Gerald's bank account, and he automatically takes care of Gerald's mail. Gerald describes Dan as "the most determined person at [Global Faith]. He is very, very strong and yet he would appear to be very passive. He is also the most altruistic at [Global Faith]. He wants to help people and he doesn't ask for much in return."

During an interview, Dan commented on his job at Global Faith: "I love the type of work I am doing so I think it is easy for me to make my personal goals line up with the agency goals." Dan described his motivation for coming to Global Faith and for staying many years: "I believe very strongly in the principle of being my brother's keeper or brother's brother - that is a better way of putting it. That is originally why I came to [Global Faith]. From my visits overseas, I can see that the poor truly are poor. I am striving to live a Christ-like life....[Global Faith] is a channel for me to use whatever abilities I have to help the poor and to raise them above the poverty level."

### Asafa, Director of Finance

Asafa, born and raised in Ethiopia, started out as a volunteer at Global Faith doing painting and research work. Asafa's father, a high ranking official in an African based church, first met Gerald and introduced Asafa to the organization. Asafa has a Business Administration degree from a religious college and is a registered CMA. Asafa was hired in 1986 as Assistant Director of Personnel and Administration. His current job as Director of Finance includes safeguarding Global Faith's assets, adhering to internal and external policies, implementing a formalized mechanism for approval of expenditures and being accountable to the Board and funding bodies. Much of Asafa's time is spent preparing regulatory reports (for Revenue Canada, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Canadian Council of Christian Charities), financial statements (for the Board), and weekly income reports and monthly expense reports (for Departmental Directors).

Asafa is in his mid thirties. He has a beard, a friendly smile, and elegant clothes (tie, blue blazer and loafers). Asafa jokes a lot about his African heritage. On one occasion, he slipped a note under Gerald's closed office door during a meeting and labelled it "African fax."

Asafa seems to feel really comfortable with Gerald and speaks of him as a friend and a colleague in addition to a supervisor. Dan described Asafa and Gerald's relationship: "I think they are very close. When you talk about right-hand people,

I would think that [Asafa] would be his right-hand person." Together, Asafa and Gerald set the tone of Group of Eight meetings with their banter and teasing of others. Asafa explained this dynamic and their use of humour in groups: "I use [Gerald] as sort of a - if I make fun of somebody, I tell [Gerald], right? So I am saying it out loud to him but attacking somebody else or making fun and he does the same thing with me."

While Asafa was always polite to me during the fieldwork, he seemed to be the most guarded of all the people at Global Faith. This is partly due to his role as a "security officer" for Global Faith (making sure the financial crisis of the late 1980s doesn't happen again) and also due to his cautious nature. Asafa seemed to take delight in the cases when it was obvious that I didn't understand something during a meeting - either an inside joke or an unfamiliar acronym. During one Group of Eight meeting, Asafa, with a very serious expression, said "CHDT" to the group. He then explained, to everyone's amusement, that this meant "Cathie is Here, Don't Tell." I found it easier to be with Asafa one-on-one. He was more relaxed and refrained from the constant jokes and teasing remarks.

Gerald described Asafa as "the most politically astute in the organization" and he continued to say "If I was leaving today, if the Board was wise, they would choose [Asafa] to replace me." Another staff member commented on Asafa: "[Asafa] is imposing. You know, he speaks with authority. But he is a bit of a comedian too.... [Asafa] is the custodian of the organization."

Gerald thinks that Asafa's motivation for working at Global Faith comes through "a responsibility laid on from his father. He gets to be an accountant and also he wants to help."

Asafa does not see his own job as being restricted to just financial matters. "My interests are not limited to finance. My abilities I hope are not limited to finance either....I have a lot of input. Or I find myself trying to give input anyway in areas outside of finance." Asafa describes his own motivation for working at Global Faith as follows: "My commitment to [Global Faith] begins with the commandment of Jesus Christ of loving thy brother and neighbour. [Global Faith] enables me to do that. [Global Faith] is a vehicle. [Global Faith] is unique for me because it provides me with the opportunity to share a vision with other people. I would leave [Global Faith] when that vision is lost....My focal point is service to God. We're here because we're committed to a commandment made by Jesus Christ."

#### Richard, Director of Overseas Programs

Richard joined Global Faith in 1985, with previous experience working in international development for the Mennonite Central Committee. Richard has a Bachelor's degree in Development Studies from a religious university in the United States, and a diploma from a local Bible college. In his current job, Richard travels a great deal - both overseas and to Ottawa - and is responsible for the administration of overseas programs which involves report and proposal writing and frequent contact with

CIDA and Global Faith staff posted overseas.

Richard is a tall serious man in his late thirties. He has pale blue eyes, a square jaw, thick blond hair, and a mustache. He often wears a tie and a blazer around the office even when he does not have to dress formally for a meeting with someone from outside the organization. Richard seems proud of his extensive experience living overseas and of his ability to speak Nepali and Bangladeshi. His knowledge of languages was apparent in many of our conversations when he would roll a few exotic phrases off his tongue with great pleasure. The following excerpt from my fieldnotes is one example:

I told [Richard] my research proposal had been approved and that it was "all official now" He said "Good! So, you're a thesis-walla now!" I laughed because I thought he said something about "wallowing in my thesis" but it didn't quite fit so I asked him to repeat what he had just said. He said "thesis-walla" again. I didn't understand and looked stupid. He said something quickly about being a "thesis-expert" and that in India they use the term "walla" that way.

During my time at Global Faith, I admired Richard for his understanding of other cultures and his dedication to his work. Because of his grueling travel schedule and the consequent pile up of work between trips, Richard often seemed preoccupied and distant. His colleagues attributed this type of behaviour to the pressure Richard seemed to be feeling in his job:

[Richard] is an interesting guy. It is not that he doesn't have a sense of humour but I think he has a hard time laughing at things sometimes. But he works under this enormous pressure. I don't know how he gets it all done when he has to do so much travelling and everything. I don't know how he gets all his work done here. So he comes back every time to ten times the work to do. So that puts pressure on people. Still, he is very much a part of the group and we enjoy having him around.

The staff also seem to respect Richard. One staff member said: "One thing about [Richard] is that he is a paper-pusher deluxe. So he really keeps on top of projects....[Richard] is very tied up with what he is doing. Very dedicated to the task. And loyal." Gerald appreciates Richard's loyalty and dedication. He told the Board of Directors: "I won't desert [Richard] and he won't desert me. We will stick with each other." Gerald also said: "When I sit down with Richard, I don't have to make sure that he has dotted the i's and crossed the t's." Gerald's analysis of Richard's motivation for working at Global Faith is: "He is quite committed to walking and talking with the poor. His sense of worth is tied to helping the poor."

Richard describes his own commitment to Global Faith as follows: "As an anarchist, I can't commit myself to an organization but I can commit to a cause and to sharing deeply with other people....At the Banquet during the audio-visual presentation, I started to cry during one of the village meetings scenes. I wasn't in Canada, I was in the video. That typifies my own struggle with the issues." I asked Richard during an interview about how he feels about his work during his trips to their overseas project sites. He replied:

I think it is incumbent on me to find a way to somehow make people feel comfortable that just because I'm from the outside with resources, they don't have to treat me special. They don't have to garland me forever and feed me forever and do that. Somehow in spite of the resources that we have, we are trying to support them, we are trying to work together with them....I have a Santa Claus tie just to in humour remind myself that when I go overseas I'm the Santa Claus carrying the bag of presents. If you take that seriously, you're in trouble. You have to be able to laugh

about it and say 'No, that's not right.'

### Elizabeth, Director of International Relations

Elizabeth has been at Global Faith the longest - since the beginning of the original organization. Richard is currently doing Elizabeth's "old job" (administering overseas programs) and Elizabeth is now responsible for finding institutional funds for overseas programs, acting as a liaison with government agencies, coordinating inter-agency collaboration, developing NGO consortiums, and planning and evaluating overseas projects. Elizabeth has a certificate in Business Administration.

Elizabeth is in her late forties. She speaks carefully and eloquently in a high voice with a restrained British accent. Elizabeth's success at raising government funds almost has folklore status at Global Faith. One staff member described Elizabeth as:

A very special person. Tremendous abilities and over the years has built a network of important people in high places in the governments of many countries. Very highly regarded. She has personally raised millions of dollars for this organization. I mean millions.

Another characterized Elizabeth as follows:

Very formal in her approach to things. She is intelligent. Independent in some ways. Very confident. A caring person....She is able to say things to [Gerald] that probably a lot of us couldn't do.

Elizabeth's success is attributed to her skills as a "political operator." One staff member told me: "[Elizabeth] is a master of cultivating relationships. All the stuff coming down the pipe [from CIDA] is because of her....The good news about [Elizabeth]

is that while she has an unorthodox style, she can squeeze money from a rock." Gerald described Elizabeth's strategy with people as being "compliant and willing to please" or acting "giving, submissive, and passive and that gets her whatever she wants with CIDA." During an interview I asked Elizabeth: "Where did you learn this skill - of moving things forward, of getting people to agree, of building consensus? Where does that come from?"

Elizabeth answered:

It is very, very difficult for me to talk about myself. I can talk about a number of other people but it is difficult to talk about myself. I think you should ask [Gerald] that question. I am not a negative person. I tend to look at things from the perspective of what we can do, not what we can't do. I tend to say to people: 'Oh, I'll think things through.' I mean I don't react quickly to anything. I tend to think about things a lot and I tend to be very quiet about things until I have an answer. I would work at something for a long time until I got a positive response.... Somebody once said to me that I was tender and tenacious....And somebody just recently said my style was an iron hammer in a velvet glove. But I wouldn't say that and I don't know where it comes from except that with working with the government, I will not take no for an answer. There has to be a way. But that is not just with the government, it is with everything.

Gerald's analysis of Elizabeth's motivation for working at Global Faith is as follows: "I don't think [Elizabeth] goes to church. This is her Christianity." I asked Elizabeth about her own motivation and she replied:

It might sound idealistic but I don't believe that I have any option to do any other than what I am doing....I don't see how we can not try and do something to help.

At the Directors' Vision Retreat, Elizabeth also commented on her motivation:

It is important for me to know that I am where God wants me to be. We should ask: What steps can we take to be in a



better position to benefit the poor? Christ will always be there and the neglected poor will always be there. We are the link between the two.

### Stan, Director of Communications and Fund Development

Stan started with Global Faith in 1981. He has a business background mainly in sales and has always been active in churches. While Elizabeth is responsible for raising money from the government, Stan is responsible for fund raising with the general public. This involves "looking after" donors through telephone calls and letters (appeal letters, thank-you letters, pledge reminders, and receipts), mailing out project reports and updates to interested donors, and acting as liaison with Global Faith's Provincial Directors. The appeal letters that go out every month are signed by Gerald and drafted by Stan. More recently, Stan has been spending less time on writing letters and more time on raising money through presentations and banquets across the country for a new program at Global Faith that involves linking families in Canada with communities in India (this program is not eligible for CIDA funding because it is basically sponsorship).

Stan is in his early forties and exudes energy and intensity. He walks quickly, with determination, rattling the spare change in his pocket. He is called a "character" by his colleagues. One staff member said that Stan is "probably the busiest man in the whole organization. He works absolutely incredible hours. He is totally, obsessively dedicated to the

mission of [Global Faith]."

Stan is often interrupted and teased good-naturedly during presentations at the staff retreat or at weekly Group of Eight meetings. One staff member explained the concentration of teasing on Stan as follows:

[Stan] is intense....He doesn't have the same sense of humour because he is so intense. I think he is focusing not necessarily on what we happen to be talking about at the moment, but he is focusing on what he thinks is important at that particular point.

Stan spends more time in meetings with Gerald than the other Directors (three to four hours each week) because his fundraising work is so public and things going out in Gerald's name need to be scrutinized and carefully checked. Gerald is impressed by the strength of Stan's "commitment to the cause" and his ability to buy into an organizational strategy or a new program idea even though he disagrees with it. Gerald described this as "...a phenomenal trait. I have never met the equivalent of that: being able to hate something and yet realize the consequences of hating it and therefore, be able to buy in and go with it. He can do that. I don't know anybody else who can do that."

Gerald also described Stan as "a big person who loves the world." According to Gerald, Stan's motivation for working at Global Faith is: "He likes his job because he helps the poor and he can be a 'suffering servant.'"

Stan commented on his own motivation at the Directors' Retreat:

Loving my neighbour - that was my vision when I came to [Global Faith]. I was sponsoring World Vision kids and I had

a concern to do something significant with my time. I wanted to spend my working hours doing something significant. I tried prison ministry and hospital visitation but I didn't have a gift for that. In my job at [Global Faith], I am helping people here and overseas. I have a ministry in both places.

#### Pam, Director of Marketing

Pam started at Global Faith in 1989 as a summer volunteer. She then worked part-time on graphics for fundraising materials. Pam was hired full-time in 1990 to write up a Strategic Plan and put it into action. At that time, Pam's title was Assistant to the Executive Director. Pam was subsequently promoted to Director of Marketing. Pam has a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Religious Studies and also a Diploma in Graphics and Visual Design. Pam went to a local Bible college as well. It was through a friendship that started at the Bible college that Pam first heard about Global Faith and their need for someone with graphics skills. Charlie, described in the next section, was Pam's classmate and her contact at Global Faith. Pam's parents are missionaries (Mennonite) with experience working in Africa. As Director of Marketing, Pam is responsible for producing Global Faith's newsletter, designing the Christmas gift catalogue, writing public service announcements, advertisements, inserts, and mail in magazines. Pam described this work as "development education" and "being in charge of the organization's image." Pam is also still involved in graphics design and writing a Marketing Plan as a companion to the Strategic Plan.

Pam is in her early thirties and is poised and well groomed.

She is quiet during meetings and is rarely the target or source of teasing. Pam is the most recent addition to the Group of Eight.

Gerald is impressed with Pam's ability to always meet deadlines. Other staff appreciated her organizational skills in putting together the Strategic Plan:

[Pam] coordinated the whole thing on the Strategic Plan and did all of the many, many, many revisions and contacting people and back and forth. [Pam] was the brains to get it all down to something that we could work with and live with. Because if all the people in the organization had their way, it probably could have ended up being a yard thick.

Gerald described Pam's motivation for working at Global Faith as follows: "She is more and more feeling good because she has helped people. She used to view it as just a job."

Pam said "I believe that God led me to [Global Faith]....What is my own contribution to the big picture? I want to use my God-given talents to make the Strategic Plan user-friendly and something that can be updated and monitored. I'm motivated by the people that we work for and also by my personal vision. If [Global Faith] changed its vision, it would become closer to a nine to five job for me and I would end up putting my extra energies in elsewhere."

#### Charlie, Director of Systems and Administration

Charlie has a background in computer programming, systems design and business communication. He has a Diploma in Computer Science and also a Diploma from a local Bible college. Charlie started part-time at Global Faith in 1987. His current

responsibilities include administration of the Head Office buildings (renovations and repair), helping to make systems more automated, personalizing automated letters, tying the accounting system to the donor tracking system, and phasing out the old computer system.

Charlie is in his late thirties. He has a full, friendly face with dark brown straight hair which is short on top and longer in the back. Charlie moves quickly and purposefully through the offices but he does not have an air of nervous energy like his colleague, Stan. Charlie is a casual dresser - mostly khakis, cotton shirts and rarely a tie or coat. Charlie is comfortable with the banter produced by Gerald and Asafa (and usually aimed at Stan or Dan) and he often joins in in a cheerful way (he is never malicious in his teasing).<sup>63</sup> Charlie decided to call me "Cath" early on in my time at Global Faith - which felt welcoming and relaxed to me.

One staff member described Charlie as "the computer genius that locates or designs programs for us for all the specialized stuff that we need and he is into all that and administration and running the office. An incredible handyman." Gerald told me that Charlie "is closest to [Dan] in terms of being altruistic. He has a lot of compassion."

Charlie characterized his own motivation for working at Global Faith as follows: "I grew up in a church. I wanted to work

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<sup>63</sup> For example, Charlie once joked about putting bar codes on return envelopes by hand so that they would look personalized instead of automated.

for a Christian organization in order to use my talents for the Lord."

### Ian, Advisor

Ian was invited to the Directors' Vision Retreat even though he is not a member of the Group of Eight because he has the status of an "elder" at Global Faith. Ian is retired now but he is still involved in developing an orientation program, and for training new people coming into the organization (including me). He is developing a course for the Provincial Directors to use when training representatives and banquet organizers. Ian first had contact with Global Faith by being a donor in 1982. In 1983, Ian was hired fulltime at Global Faith as Director of Church Relations. Ian remembers: "It was a scary time. The job description was not complete. [Gerald] gave me a pat on the head and said 'there's [the province] - go tell them.'" Ian's background is in sales, advertising, and Bible teaching. He was also a music teacher (accordion).

Ian is an earnest man in his mid-sixties with glasses, and neatly combed hair. His clothes are tidy and casual with a mid-western flair (string ties). Ian talks slowly and deliberately in a calm, almost wistful, voice. He seemed to me like a wise man in a small town. Ian is not a target of teasing. He is confident in his knowledge of the Bible and he seems to be respected by the others. He does not have enough authority to be like a father figure - he is more like a well-regarded "uncle figure."

Gerald describes Ian as "very sensitive. His feelings are hurt easily. Being sensitive also means that he can pick up on nuances in meetings which is very valuable. He is an 'elder.' He has a lot of experience."

Ian calls himself "a fanatic. I get heavily involved in anything I do...I go all out. That's my nature....[Gerald] knows that I can preach and he knows I can sell. He knows that I love to teach. So he gets me doing that kind of stuff."

#### Kevin, Overseas Programs Manager

Kevin has a Diploma in Building Technology from a technical institute as well as a Diploma from the local Bible college. Kevin first had contact with Global Faith through his wife's Baptist church - Gerald was the Youth Minister there and suggested in 1980 that Kevin contribute some time as a volunteer. Kevin became a full-time staff member in the Overseas Programs Department in 1985. He had no prior experience in international development or working overseas. Kevin has since been posted overseas with his family twice: in 1986-1987 and again in 1990-1992. While both postings were in Ethiopia, the goals and challenges of the job were different in each term:

In 1986, structures were in place to make sure I had the support I needed. The program that I went into there was well-managed. There were technical people in the field. The program was functioning and my job was basically to manage the program administratively. And that is my strength. Administration. When we went back in 1990, the situation was different. We had new staff. We had a less stable environment. There was a dual job function: in addition to managing the Ethiopia program, we were starting a regional office. So, it was a growing step for the organization and

we sort of felt our way....I am very task-oriented so I was fairly methodical in my approach.

Kevin had just returned from his position as the Africa Regional Representative when I began my research at Global Faith.

Kevin is in his early 40's. He speaks slowly and deliberately, weighing each word and wearing a thoughtful expression. Kevin - in addition to Richard, Pam, and Charlie - was born a Mennonite. Kevin once told me: "I am very proud of my heritage and I suppose the fact that there are a number of Mennonites in this organization makes me feel happy. We're taking over" [laughing]. Kevin's role in the Overseas Programs Department meant he was fairly self-contained but when he had dealings with other staff, he seemed to prefer the company of the other "Menno's" (their term). Because of my volunteer work with his department and because of Kevin's fresh perspective on the people and work of Global Faith (due to his recent return), I developed a type of key informant relationship with Kevin. I made a point of checking in with him every time I visited Global Faith - either to discuss how I could help with work or to simply chat and learn his views on various issues.

Kevin was valuable as a key informant partly due to the fact that he seemed to always keep a part of himself separate from his "membership" in the Global Faith family. Gerald described this as being "...compartmentalized. There is only so much room in his life for [Global Faith]." "He has got a pie and everything has a piece of it. A piece of it is his family. A piece of that pie is work. A piece is his religion. A piece is his church. A piece of



it is his friends." Gerald explained that this is why he has not asked Kevin to join the Group of Eight: "He could never be part of that group unless those things somehow were stew. You can't have separate pieces." Gerald's view of Kevin's motivation for working at Global Faith is: "He wants to help the poor from 9:00 to 5:00, but he can't do it past 5:00. He likes his job because he gets to travel and deal with [Secretariat] people."

### Ben, Africa Regional Representative

Ben was born and raised in Ethiopia. He worked for a Christian voluntary agency in Addis helping street children learn income-generating skills before coming to the United States to complete a degree in Development Studies at a religious college. Ben's initial contact with Global Faith came through one of the Board members who knew him while he was still in Ethiopia and recommended him for a position in the Overseas Programs Department. Ben came to work for Global Faith in 1981. From 1982 to 1984, Ben was the Central Africa Coordinator (based in Canada). He traveled frequently to Africa to monitor and evaluate projects, to research development needs in the region, and to identify organizations that "we could trust and that we could develop a relationship with." In 1985, Ben was stationed in Addis to set up a well-digging program and returned in 1986 when Kevin was sent over to manage the program. In the summer of 1992, Ben was on his way back to Ethiopia (to take over from Kevin's second term overseas) as the Africa Regional Representative. Kevin

commented on the difference between his own style and Ben's style in their postings overseas:

The people who filled that role [in Ethiopia] have very different approaches. If you compare [Ben] and myself, for example, we're night and day. I'm very task-oriented and he is people-oriented. And each has, obviously, its strengths and weaknesses. So, in that sense, the organization is very dependent on the people that are there. And particularly because the organization is that person for those people over there.

Ben considers his role as a representative of Global Faith overseas as "a dream come true....There is something so magnetic about being there [in Ethiopia] that is so attractive. It is satisfying to you. It is healthy. It is real....Every little thing you can do for people there - whether it is a project or whatever - is very rewarding....You give a person some hope and try to help him go from there."

#### Lisa, India Program Coordinator

Lisa, originally from Hong Kong, grew up in the United States. Lisa has a Bachelor's Degree in Linguistics and a Diploma in Christian studies from a local college. Before being posted overseas, Lisa helped organize the educational resource materials at Global Faith and designed curriculum materials for schools and churches focusing on international development issues. From 1989 to 1992, Lisa was stationed in India as Program Coordinator of Global Faith's CIDA-sponsored agro-forestry project there. Lisa was responsible for overseeing the work of 25 local voluntary groups that were involved in the project. This entailed setting up accounting systems, disbursing funds, reporting to Global

Faith's Head Office and to CIDA, designing and delivering training programs, and encouraging networking and information exchange among the 25 local NGOs. I met Lisa in July 1992 at the staff retreat right after she returned from India and I interviewed her in September. Lisa left Global Faith a few months later. Gerald referred to tensions between Lisa and many of the staff and explained that he and Lisa had finally had a "war" which resulted in her leaving the organization. During our interview, Lisa only alluded briefly to this tension in a comment about feeling isolated during her posting in India: "I received very little feedback and there was very little going back and forth from the field to the Head Office." Gerald attributed the tension surrounding Lisa in the Head Office to the fact that her motivation for working at Global Faith was different from the other staff: "[Lisa] did a superb job in India - they love her there....[Lisa] sees [Global Faith] as a stepping stone in her career path. Which isn't bad in itself but it means that she doesn't fit in."

I asked Lisa during our interview: "What led you to do this kind of work? Especially the overseas work?" Lisa replied:

A real mixture. Partly because I think we feel, as a [nuclear] family, that God has said something about helping the poor. So, this is one way that we can do that and we have felt it a little bit more directly there than here. Part of it is an interest in other people and other cultures so going to live overseas is a very exciting thing so it isn't just motivated by Christian issues. So, we didn't go because we felt God is calling us and all the usual sort of jargon that you hear, but it is an area of work that we are interested in.

### The Workings of the Peg Board

The profiles presented above help provide a snapshot of the "collage of people" at Global Faith. But, as Gerald said, the people also come together like a peg board with moving pieces. This section examines the structure of Global Faith, the resulting roles and interactions, and the nature of decision-making.

The organizational structure of Global Faith is essentially flat with seven departments directly under the Executive Director, Gerald<sup>64</sup>. The seven departmental Directors and Gerald together make up the elite Group of Eight. Gerald describes the Group of Eight as one layer in the organization and the rest of the staff as another layer. "We have two layers in the organization. And the one layer has eight people and most every decision involves just about every one of those eight people." There is a close relationship between all the departments and each department also has direct dealings with the Executive Director. Richard explained: "I relate on a level to all the other people dealing with the various departments in the organization....and then I basically deal directly with the Executive Director." The weekly meetings of the Group of Eight provide a forum for all the Directors to interact. Beyond these meetings, there are clusterings of roles or "couplets" [Gerald's term] among the Directors related to overlap in their areas of

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<sup>64</sup> Global Faith's organizational chart can be found in Chapter Three in the "Data Collection and Analysis" section.

responsibility. According to Gerald, these couplets are: Pam and Stan, Elizabeth and Stan, Elizabeth and Richard, Dan and Richard, Asafa and Richard, and Asafa and Charlie. An example of one of these couplets is Elizabeth and Richard where Elizabeth is responsible for raising funds from government and Richard is responsible for reporting back to government. These parallel responsibilities within an overlapping area can lead to tension or "panic" as Gerald describes below:

[Richard] is really responsible for the administration of programs. [Elizabeth] is responsible for finding funds for programs. Obviously, it leaves a gap. You have administration over here and finding funds there. Who decides on the programs? That is where the wheels grind together. That is where the panic comes in.

In cases where there is tension from overlapping roles, Gerald sees himself as a "negotiator" between the two people in the couplet. Asafa explained that Gerald's participation as a negotiator can have a motivating effect on the people involved:

He is also able to use positive tensions very well in the organization as motivators. So if there is tension between you and I, he is able to harness that tension for a positive end...for example, if you and I have job descriptions which conflict - no, I should say which overlap - then in that overlapping area, if we are having a lot of difficulties, he is able to divide that up by getting us to realize what I am stronger at and what you are stronger at. So there is sort of a level of mutual respect that is gained out of that and also sort of a win-win type of situation. And therefore, because you are stronger at that area of the overlapping area, you tend to try and work harder and continue to prove that.

Three of the departments (Marketing, International Relations, and Systems and Administration) contain only the Director of that department and yet there does not seem to be an ethos of isolation or segregation. Even the staff posted overseas

feel a strong connection to the organization.<sup>65</sup> Kevin described this feeling as "comforting:"

Organizationally, it is interesting that even though roles are defined here, what we do is always seen as part of the whole of what we are organizationally....The whole is always placed before the individual....In terms of being overseas for the organization, that is of some consequence because you realize that even though you're over there and at times can feel disconnected, there is an underlying knowledge and comfort in the fact that you are connected and that every diverse part of the organization is part of the whole.

Ian compared Global Faith to "the body of Christ with all different parts and no one part has all the truth. Everything is working together. It is beautiful to see it in action." While no one "has all the truth," many staff commented that Gerald was the only one "who sees the whole picture" or "who is on top of everything." Gerald accomplishes this through mechanisms such as the following order issued in a memo to all the staff (dated June 26, 1990): "Please note, for the 60th time, that a copy of all correspondence both external and internal must come to me. Don't forget."

Gerald's awareness of the whole picture does not necessarily mean that he is involved in every decision down to the last detail. Pam described Gerald's role in decision-making as follows:

Certainly as far as stuff affecting [Global Faith], [Gerald] would definitely have a grip on whatever is going on. But I mean the smaller things that the Directors are responsible for, he usually knows all about them but he probably wouldn't need to be involved. He usually tries to get to see it once....So with some of the stuff, he says: 'I trust you.

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<sup>65</sup> Lisa's description of her posting in India as isolated is an exception to this feeling of connection.

You decide. You make a decision.' But other than that, he does have a very good grip on what is going on.

Gerald expects the Directors to know what their own responsibility is without having to tell them. He told me: "I don't enjoy babysitting. I have tried to foster inter-dependencies, but not dependencies." However, he does get involved in decision-making to a greater or lesser extent depending on the department and on the Director. Gerald explained:

In overseas programming, I make no decisions....I wouldn't allow myself to make those decisions that I don't have to. We have incredibly competent leadership in that department and that is what we're about so we'd better have that. [In other cases], I would certainly ask a way more questions.... Just my own guts questioning why....So I would follow the Strategic Plan quite closely and ask the questions.

Richard, Director of the Overseas Programs Department, confirmed Gerald's lack of involvement in his department: "On the administrative side of things in the Overseas Programs Department, I basically have a blank cheque to operate." Stan, Director of Communications and Fund Development, commented on his interactions with Gerald describing a situation of greater involvement: "Sometimes, [Gerald] won't give you enough rope. He'll be asking you every second day to come to a meeting to account for what you are doing and you don't have any time to do anything because you're busy in meetings explaining what you are doing."

The role of Executive Director gives Gerald greater responsibility and hence, more authority. However, Gerald also insisted that everyone is "equal:"

A textbook would say don't ever get caught saying everyone is equal, because they're not. I have no doubt that we are equal. I also have no doubt that we have roles in this organization. My role indicates that I am responsible. I don't think that I am more important than [the secretary], but I sure as heck have a different role. I can't pretend that I don't have more authority.

Gerald uses his authority in group decision-making situations, which occur often at Global Faith. In addition to the Group of Eight (the Strategic Planning Committee), there are four other committees that meet regularly: the Program Steering Committee, the Finance Committee, the Publications Committee, and the Marketing Committee. Gerald chose the Chair and the members of each committee himself.

The Program Steering Committee is chaired by Richard and consists of Gerald, Asafa, Dan, and Elizabeth. This committee meets fortnightly to review current and completed overseas projects and to recommend new projects for approval.<sup>66</sup> New projects are written up in report format and are circulated for approval to all the members of the committee. Asafa explained that "usually everyone [on the Program Steering Committee] does approve it because by then, it has already been worked through. When it comes to the paper-flow situation, it is usually a formality because there is consensus and there is agreement that people are going to approve the program."

Asafa chairs the Finance Committee and Gerald, Dan, and

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<sup>66</sup> Recommendations go to the Executive Director, Gerald, who has the authority to approve projects that are under \$200,000 (or use less than \$25,000 of general public funds). Otherwise, Board approval is required.



Richard are the members. This committee looks at the amount of money expected to be coming in (e.g., from CIDA for programs) and the amount that will be spent on overseas programs before year end. According to Gerald, calculating future bank balances is important because the Board wants to see a healthy bank balance even though it is committed money.

The Publications Committee is chaired by Elizabeth who also acts as Gerald's designate on the committee. Other members are Dan, Pam, Richard, Stan, and two other people who are not part of the Group of Eight (one is a secretary who has been given more responsibility in writing the monthly appeal letters and the other is the local Provincial Director). Richard was asked to be on this committee to confirm that the contents of the newsletter and the monthly reports are factual (with respect to overseas programs). Pam is responsible for graphics and design. The Provincial Director is in close contact with the churches of the region and Stan gives the fundraising perspective. Dan sits on this committee as another designate of Gerald or an alternate Chair. Drafts of the material to be considered by the Committee are circulated before the meeting and comments are returned to the Chair, Elizabeth. One of the criteria for approval that is considered by committee members is whether there is enough "Christian content" in the material. Meetings are scheduled to coincide with various publications or mailouts during the year.

The Marketing Committee is chaired by Pam, Director of Marketing. Gerald, Stan, and Ian are also members of the

committee. This committee looks at projections for what the Provincial Directors are expected to raise from the general public. They also discuss various options for advertisements in magazines and newspapers (e.g., *Faith Today*) weighing that against a concern that donors might think they were spending too much on publications.

Gerald views his role in the Group of Eight and on the various committees as the person with the authority to determine whether there is enough agreement to proceed with a decision. The content of the decision is worked out by the group as a whole and then Gerald "ratifies" the decision or "makes sure that we don't make a decision" if there is not enough consensus.

When a group of people sit around, one of the decisions that I have to make is the decision regarding whether there is consensus in the room or not. I know that when there is consensus, it usually isn't based just on money. Money might kill it. No money might kill it right up front. But once you get into discussions about everything and sundry and in the end, there will be a decision based on whether they think it will be a good idea. You know or something. I don't know how you word that. But it is there.

It is important to Gerald to proceed only if there is consensus among the group because without it, "you end up destroying each other and you destroy the program." Gerald defines consensus as "pretty darn close to unanimous....Each and every one has to own the whole copy....So it is not just one piece of a plot of land that each of you are going to buy. Each of you are buying the whole plot of land." Asafa also explained to me the importance of consensus in decision-making at Global Faith: "In a team situation, when you want minimal disruption and you want maximum

support for the decision that has been made, you have to go by consensus....We can't afford to have disruption here. When you cultivate a relationship with people, you cultivate a team. And once you have cultivated the team, you want the team to be happy and stay together." Asafa pointed out the relationship between the framing of issues that come before a group and success at achieving consensus:

There are areas which are not within reach of the Group of Eight [e.g., sensitive personnel issues]. However, with whatever is within reach and I guess that maybe that is the key: if you define it properly, then you would have no problem getting consensus decisions because those with which you have conflict, you have separated them. Maybe that is the key to our success. Maybe that is our uniqueness. I don't know.

Gerald attributed the high level of consensus decision-making at Global Faith to the cohesive nature of the group and to their similar visions. "The wind blowing is always in the same direction. There is a non-orchestrated energy. If we had no Strategic Plan and no organized plan of attack, we would still be going the same way." This "non-orchestrated energy" comes from a commitment to the same cause:

We're a group of people here who seem to have a strong enough commitment to a cause and I hate to make it corny and use 'compassion' and all those terms, but there is something - I can't compare it to others, but I know that it is here. And I know that the people, by the grace of God both to me as well as out there, would do right....If you lose your sense of compassion, you then are up the creek and you are just doing it for the money so you have a nine to five job....In many of the organizations, you'd be there nine to five. That is your job. You're in a union and you go home. And that is your career path. You know, you quit this one and you go to that one and then you go to that one. I don't think that is the way to operate. I think there has to be enough of a commitment to the poor that you see this as a vehicle to have that fulfilled. And therefore, you are

[Global Faith] and [Global Faith] is you.

Elizabeth echoed Gerald's view: "We always have our raison d'être in mind. We have a commitment to something other than just having a job." An entry in the Marketing Plan puts it in even stronger terms:

As Christians we believe God has a hand in what we do. Our motivation is God's compassion. If you don't think this is where you should be, you shouldn't be here.

During one of the training sessions, Ian explained to me:

"[Global Faith] does not pay good wages. We want people with compassion. Not people who are after the money. Salaries here are below market value."

Gerald is wary of staff viewing their work at Global Faith as just a nine to five job or a stepping stone on their career path because he wants to avoid high turnover of staff. When people leave the organization, "you lose the synergy every time. It doesn't mean you shouldn't expand or allow new thought in, but you lose the sense of common task and morale and being able to deal with each other honestly."

With the exception of Pam, the members of the Group of Eight have all been at Global Faith for ten or more years. Asafa pondered why most of the staff have stayed so long at Global Faith: "I think people stay because at least there is one common denominator. It may not be the sole motivator of everybody but that common motivator is as Christians coming together and saying: 'Look, let's help these people.'"

## **A View from the Inside**

This chapter and the two preceding ones have traced the journey that I took at Global Faith - learning from the outside in. Now, with a view from the inside, it is possible to imagine the organization, its people, their concerns and interactions. Descriptions of the history, ideology and operations of Global Faith have provided clues about the complex interplay between the identities of the staff as Christians, the congruence between their personal and organizational goals, the central role of the Executive Director, and the organization's affiliations with a variety of stakeholders with potentially conflicting interests. I have addressed the first research question concerning the essential characteristics of Global Faith as a context for planning nonformal adult education programs in overseas development projects. I have also dealt with the second research question by providing a general description of the planning and decision-making processes and the nature of the interactions of the people involved in planning. While the third research question concerning the intentions, interpretations, and strategies of the people involved in planning has been foreshadowed in the preceding three chapters, it is time to push the investigation further by focusing on specific examples or episodes of planning and by examining variations across these episodes.

The next chapter draws on the conceptual framework laid out in Chapter Two in order to make sense of the descriptive accounts

given in Chapters Four, Five and Six. In addition to drawing together the fundamental attributes of the Global Faith context through the use of Martin's (1992) "cultural puzzle" matrix, specific episodes of planning illustrating the negotiation of meaning are presented and analyzed. The fourth research question concerning the relationship between the NGO organizational context, the process of planning, and planners' perspectives is also examined.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: GLOBAL FAITH CULTURES AND THE NEGOTIATION OF MEANING

It is perhaps well to remember that NGOs also have institutional interests to protect, conflicting internal views to reconcile, and a difficult task of striving for organizational coherence while remaining responsive to a multitude of needs and pressures. (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley, 1988, p.70)

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section integrates the descriptions woven throughout the three previous chapters and summarizes the data through the use of Martin's (1992) matrix framework.<sup>67</sup> The completed matrices, which are organized around content themes corresponding to the five tenets of NGO behaviour, provide a basis for thinking about "context" in a variety of ways. The context of Global Faith is analyzed as "cultures" and is examined through three different lenses: 1) the integration perspective focusing on consistency, clarity, and organization-wide consensus; 2) the differentiation perspective highlighting contradictions and conflict; and 3) the fragmentation perspective revealing confusion, ambiguity and paradox.

The second section of this chapter focuses on planning at Global Faith whereby planning is viewed as the negotiation of

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<sup>67</sup> Martin's (1992) matrix framework for analyzing organizational cultures is presented in the Conceptual Framework section of Chapter Two.

meaning. Specific planning episodes<sup>68</sup> illustrating the negotiation of meaning at Global Faith are presented using the organizing framework developed in Chapter Two. These episodes involve negotiations with CIDA, general public donors, the Board of Directors, overseas partner organizations, and the staff of Global Faith. Each episode occurs within and enacts a cultural context that corresponds to one of the three subjectively perceived "ideal types" of organizational cultures (Martin, 1992).

Finally, the third section of this chapter uses the organizing framework again for a comparison and analysis of the negotiation of meaning episodes.

### **A Cultural Puzzle**

To this point I have described Global Faith in terms of its public documents, physical layout, overseas programs, history, Christian foundation, formal and informal decision-making practices, fundraising strategies, and external relationships. I have also presented profiles of Global Faith people involved in organizational decision-making and discussed the nature of their interactions. So far, the data have been organized along a path travelled from the outside to the inside, from the official to the unofficial, and from the simple to the complex. The structuring of the data chapters around a journey travelled from

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<sup>68</sup> I am using the term "episode" to refer to "an incident or series of related events in the course of a continuous experience" (The Oxford English Dictionary, 1989, p.337).



the outside in paralleled the evolution in my own thinking about context and the process of planning. Through my increased awareness of the dynamics of planning at Global Faith, I came to see "context" as "cultures" and the "process of planning" as including the "negotiation of meaning."

In this section, I assemble all the data pieces into a "cultural puzzle" (Martin, 1992, p.37) according to a different organizing scheme: one that focuses on the content themes revolving around the five tenets of NGO behavior discussed in Chapter One. The tenets of autonomy, altruism, cooperation, participation, and efficiency are commonly held and deliberately espoused by NGOs. Global Faith content themes relating to these tenets and the corresponding cultural practices and forms are presented using Martin's (1992) matrix framework in the five tables below. These matrices are not meant as a complete set of manifestations of Global Faith cultures. There are more themes than the five that have been included and more details concerning forms and practices could have been added to the themes that were included. It is also important to note that application of the three perspectives - integration, differentiation, and fragmentation - yields subjective interpretations of Global Faith cultures. These interpretations are based on what I saw and heard and did at Global Faith and on what the people of Global Faith showed me and told me and assigned to me. The various cultural contexts are "real" in the sense of being perceived as such by me and by the people of Global Faith. Furthermore, our perceptions

may not necessarily completely coincide. I may interpret manifestations of Global Faith cultures in ways that they were not aware of or in ways that they would not all agree with.

The five matrices are presented below. Then, the cultural contexts of Global Faith are described three times: according to the integration perspective, the differentiation perspective, and the fragmentation perspective. Each view of Global Faith cultures interprets the patterns of cultural manifestations within each of the five matrices. In other words, each of the five matrices is discussed from within each of the three perspectives (resulting in 15 sub-sections).

#### **Global Faith: An Integration View**

The defining characteristics of an integration perspective of organizational cultures are as follows: "all cultural manifestations mentioned are interpreted as consistently reinforcing the same themes, all members of the organization are said to share in an organization-wide consensus, and the culture is described as a realm where all is clear. Ambiguity is excluded" (Martin, 1992, p.12). Patterns of consensus, consistency, and clarity can be found both within and across the matrices. Each matrix revolves around one of the five tenets of NGO behaviour: autonomy, altruism, cooperation, participation, and efficiency. These are discussed in turn below.

## Autonomy

Themes related to Global Faith's relationship with CIDA and declarations of autonomy from government (Table 7.1) are echoed in Global Faith's practices such as initiating a new sponsorship program without relying on government funds. The internally espoused theme of "we get money from them to do what we want to do" is consistent with the practice of continuing with core programming with the long-term partners overseas regardless of how much CIDA funding is available. Symbolic consistency is also evident in Table 7.1: the uncertainty of CIDA funding is reflected and reinforced through stories and rumours about "huge changes" at CIDA.

## Altruism

The content themes grouped around the tenet of altruism (Table 7.2) are all linked to the cohesive Christian ideology<sup>69</sup> of Global Faith. This ideology serves as a type of social cement; ensuring organization-wide consensus on values and basic assumptions. The set of basic assumptions underlying the evangelical Christian beliefs help define for the people of Global Faith "what to pay attention to, what things mean, how to react emotionally to what is going on, and what actions to take in various kinds of situations" (Schein, 1992, p.22). The Statement of Faith - and the discouragement of religious

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<sup>69</sup> Ideology here refers to a system of thought or belief rendering "an emotionally charged orientation that provides a basis for taking a position" (Weiss, 1995, p.575).

**TABLE 7.1: MANIFESTATIONS OF GLOBAL FAITH CULTURES - AUTONOMY THEMES**

<p><b>CONTENT THEMES</b> External (Internal)</p>	<p><b>PRACTICES</b> Formal (Informal)</p>	<p><b>FORMS</b> Stories/Ritual/Jargon/Physical Arrangements</p>
<p>"government funding inhibits the realization of Global Faith's Vision Statement"  (CIDA is GF's "biggest donor")  (sense of confusion or murkiness in dealings with CIDA)  (CIDA funding is uncertain)  ("we get money from them to do what we want to do")</p>	<p>initiated a sponsorship/linkage program which is not eligible for CIDA funding  CIDA funding determines the amount but not the nature of core programming overseas  CIDA is not involved in every project - "we don't want them funding everything"  (access funding where we can in CIDA and keep up the relationships)</p>	<p>"CIDA is such an octopus - it is hard to get a handle on it"  "CIDA isn't only rules, it is also people"  rumours: "there are huge changes at CIDA and no one knows what they are"</p>

**TABLE 7.2: MANIFESTATIONS OF GLOBAL FAITH CULTURES - ALTRUISM THEMES**

<p><b>CONTENT THEMES</b> External (Internal)</p>	<p><b>PRACTICES</b> Formal (Informal)</p>	<p><b>FORMS</b> Stories/Ritual/Jargon/Physical Arrangements</p>
<p><b>GF "seeks to be of service through its Ministry to the people of the developing world"</b></p> <p>"compassion fuels overseas projects"</p> <p>"We are not into proselytization"</p> <p>"We show that God's love is real"</p> <p>(disagreement about whether GF should "go out and be evangelists in overseas projects")</p> <p>(confusion about meaning of "the neglected poor")</p> <p>(fundraising is a "ministry" - to teach people how to give)</p>	<p>Statement of Faith, Vision Statement, Prayer Calendars</p> <p>Executive Director a former Minister</p> <p>Board/staff all evangelical Christian</p> <p>(overseas projects for "needy non-Christians")</p> <p>(fundraising focused on Christian communities)</p> <p>(steer away from publicizing that target groups have "varying beliefs")</p> <p>(religious debates are discouraged)</p> <p>("not limited by results")</p>	<p>"A lot of stuff happens by the Grace of God" (story re increase in CIDA allocation)</p> <p>"Lord, thank-you for allowing us to plan"</p> <p>yearly Retreat with strong religious focus</p> <p>Monday morning staff meeting: prayer session for "our projects and people," reading from the Bible, mini-sermon</p> <p>regularly scheduled events (Banquets, Board meetings, etc.) all "blessed" with prayers</p> <p>three senior staff: "the Holy Trinity"</p> <p>"I don't want them to think God solves all their problems"</p> <p>"Whoever is kind to the needy, honours God"</p> <p>"my goal in life is to help people - working here gives me an avenue for doing that"</p> <p>"I am striving to live a Christ-like life"</p> <p>"I don't see how we can not try and do something to help"</p>

**TABLE 7.3: MANIFESTATIONS OF GLOBAL FAITH CULTURES - COOPERATION THEMES**

<p><b>CONTENT THEMES</b> External (Internal)</p>	<p><b>PRACTICES</b> Formal (Informal)</p>	<p><b>FORMS</b> Stories/Ritual/Jargon/Physical Arrangements</p>
<p><b>overseas projects are "people-centred"</b></p> <p>(overseas projects are necessary for survival of the organization: "meat and potatoes")</p> <p>(overseas projects: "raison d'être")</p>	<p>partnership mode</p> <p>staff visits abroad</p> <p>Regional Offices: support/liaison</p> <p>projects are initiated by requests from local representatives</p> <p>(relationship with partners based on trust)</p> <p>(relationship with partners "to maintain excitement" and to access stories to help with fundraising)</p> <p>("shield" instead of control partners)</p> <p>(priority to Christian groups)</p>	<p>"their stories are our stories"</p> <p>"partners are hands and feet of Vision"</p> <p>beneficiaries are "the neglected poor"</p> <p>"we exist for the poor and oppressed"</p> <p>"dedicated to working alongside the poor"</p> <p>to partners: "can we be soul mates?"</p>

**TABLE 7.4: MANIFESTATIONS OF GLOBAL FAITH CULTURES - PARTICIPATION THEMES**

<p><b>CONTENT THEMES</b> External (Internal)</p>	<p><b>PRACTICES</b> Formal (Informal)</p>	<p><b>FORMS</b> Stories/Ritual/Jargon/Physical Arrangements</p>
<p><b>"challenge, educate and involve North Americans regarding development issues"</b></p> <p>GF's development education is "to provide Canadians with the resources to better understand the issues surrounding poverty and development in developing countries"</p> <p>("donors are the only efficient way of achieving the Vision Statement")</p> <p>(fundraising is an industry and a ministry)</p> <p>(fundraising and development education are "the same thing")</p>	<p>country profiles and project reports are included with appeal letters</p> <p>"encourage Christian values through Pro-Tech volunteers"</p> <p>"increase the number of persons informed about Third World needs"</p> <p>(friendship marketing strategy in fundraising)</p> <p>("donors buy into philosophic statements")</p>	<p>"Canadian compassion and resources fuel projects"</p> <p>"they may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel"</p> <p>to donors: "you are the reason GF can touch the lives of so many in such a Christ-like way"</p> <p>banquet an "evening of inspiration and information regarding the ministry of GF"</p> <p>"you need disaster in the world if you want to raise money"</p>

**TABLE 7.5: MANIFESTATIONS OF GLOBAL FAITH CULTURES - EFFICIENCY THEMES**

<b>CONTENT THEMES</b> External (Internal)	<b>PRACTICES</b> Formal (Informal)	<b>FORMS</b> Stories/Ritual/Jargon/Physical Arrangements
<p><b>("Money is the bottom line")</b></p> <p>("Without money, we cannot exist - however noble the cause")</p> <p>("paradox: we need disaster in the world to raise money")</p> <p>("We talk about raising money and cutting costs at the same time - everything we do contradicts everything")</p> <p>("when there is consensus, it usually isn't based just on money")</p>	<p>changed structure to separate financial control from project management</p> <p>initiated Strategic Plan (to be able to anticipate financial problems)</p> <p>cut back salaries and delayed payments to partners during crisis</p> <p>("fundraising is an industry")</p> <p>("method acting" to remember why "you're fighting for money")</p>	<p>story about sabbatical year financial crisis</p> <p>story about first Retreat which was organized to talk about how to improve the financial situation</p> <p>spartan, scruffy office environment</p> <p>offices in two old houses "to keep overhead low" and "to stay humble"</p>



debates - helps people at all levels of Global Faith to agree (or avoid disagreements) about potentially divisive denominational issues. Group identity is also strengthened through the recruitment of an all Christian staff and Board. This selective recruitment means that socialization for roles within Global Faith has already been accomplished outside the organization through membership in evangelical churches. The "preparatory socialization" reduces the amount of socialization that Global Faith itself must address and increases the likelihood that Global Faith staff will stay morally committed to the organization (Etzioni, 1961).

The distinction between personal vision and organizational vision is diminished by the overarching Christian ideology. As Elizabeth said: "I have a hard time separating a vision of [Global Faith] from my personal vision. I'm not saying this lightly or facetiously. If [Global Faith's] vision wasn't my vision, then why would I be here?" Global Faith's Vision Statement is carried out through informal practices such as deciding to implement an overseas program in order to "express love to these people" even if there were no expected "tangible results." Gerald explained how the Christian foundation of Global Faith focuses their work and holds them together:

It all comes down to: stick to your knitting and that knitting we stick to is what we believe we're called to do. And secondly, we stick together.

The cohesive nature of the group is fostered through the language of prayer (symbolic consistency) and commitment to a common

religious cause of "extending Christ's compassion." Gerald commented on this cohesiveness: "there is something bred in us as a group. We understand each other. We are not unknowns."

### Cooperation

Patterns of clarity and consistency are also found in Table 7.3 which focuses on themes relating to the tenet of cooperation. The espoused theme of "people-centred projects" is consistent with the practice of a partnership mode overseas and with the expectation that projects are initiated by requests from local representatives. Visits and postings abroad further reinforce this theme through face-to-face interactions among Global Faith staff members, overseas partner organizations staff members, and representatives of beneficiary populations. Jargon such as "we exist for the poor and oppressed" and "we are dedicated to working alongside the poor" show a concern for people and a grass-roots approach to development. Relationships with partners are based on trust and a feeling of affinity: partners are considered to be "soul mates."

### Participation

The tenet of participation refers to the involvement of Canadians in NGO activities as volunteers, donors, or as participants in development education programs. Table 7.4 shows action consistency for this theme; appeal letters include educational material such as country profiles or excerpts from

project reports. Professional-technical ("pro-tech") volunteers are placed overseas and opportunities are available for Canadian youth to participate in and contribute to overseas projects through summer trips abroad led by Global Faith staff. Jargon such as "Canadian compassion and resources fuel projects" also reinforces the theme of involving Canadians.

### Efficiency

Finally, Table 7.5 on the tenet of efficiency also contains patterns of action and symbolic consistency. The recognition that "money is the bottom line" is reflected through the organizational structure of Global Faith (financial control and project management are separate) and the implementation of a Strategic Plan. The financial crisis story, the first Retreat story, and the spartan and low cost surroundings, show symbolic consistency with the theme of efficiency.

### **Global Faith: A Differentiation View**

The differentiation perspective takes apart the mask of "apparently seamless unities" of the integration perspective to uncover a "series of overlapping, nested organizational subcultures. These subcultures co-exist, sometimes in harmony, sometimes in conflict, and sometimes in indifference to each other" (Martin, 1992, p.83). The workings of power, inconsistencies, and differences of opinion can be acknowledged from within this perspective as essential elements of Global

Faith culture. Returning once again to the five tables with the lens of the differentiation perspective, different patterns come into focus. Each matrix is discussed in turn below.

### Autonomy

In Table 7.1, CIDA's role as Global Faith's "biggest donor" leads to a power imbalance in its dealings with Global Faith. As Richard said, "CIDA can demand of us things and we have to do it - but we really can't demand anything of them....though we can influence over time what they demand from us." There is ideological inconsistency between the theme of autonomy from government and the reliance on CIDA as the biggest donor.

### Altruism

Ideological inconsistencies are also visible in Table 7.2 on altruism: there is disagreement about whether Global Faith's role overseas - as a "Ministry" - should include proselytization or not. The fact that religious debates are discouraged and the reference to three senior staff members as "the Holy Trinity" reveals a potential "underbelly of conflict" (Martin, 1992, p.87) beyond the rhetoric of cohesiveness.

While the integration perspective focused on the cohesive nature of Global Faith's Christian foundation, the differentiation perspective points to the exclusionary, protective nature of Global Faith as a Christian organization. In addition to the policy of recruiting only Christian staff, there

is an implicit attitude of intolerance toward anyone who chooses to hover at the circumference. A clear illustration of this was Gerald's evident displeasure when one of the summer staff members chose not to attend a Monday morning prayer meeting even though he was on the premises. Gerald commented critically on his absence and said to the rest of the staff seated around the table: "Either you're in or you're not." Furthermore, the principle of pluralism espoused through statements about the non-denominational status of Global Faith can be seen as an essentially utilitarian construct benefitting the powerful.

Murphy (1991) explains this aspect of pluralism:

It promotes a norm of tolerance and mutual existence among a self-defined majority. Its purpose is to maintain the strength and survival of the defined group by tempering internal conflicts. It does not reflect a commitment to the participation of those who do not share membership in, and the values of, the majority group. Pluralism sustains and defends an implicit common denominator, such as economic interests, ideology, ethnicity, birthplace, or gender, it rarely promotes an openness to other experiences, backgrounds or beliefs. The limits to pluralism are defined by the most powerful, and the commitment to pluralism rarely survives divergence among, or a challenge to, the self-interests of those who espouse it. (p.198)

### Cooperation

According to the differentiation perspective, the Group of Eight could be seen as a type of "enhancing subculture" within Global Faith made up of a hand-picked team of "true believers" (Martin, 1992, p.89), while the staff excluded from this elite group, such as Kevin or Lisa, would belong to a counterculture of resistance. Consensus is encouraged as a decision-making norm at

Global Faith, but not consistently across the organization. Consensus and cooperation are expected mainly within the Group of Eight and in interactions with partner organizations.

### Participation

The espoused theme of providing Canadians with "the resources to better understand the issues surrounding poverty and development" could be seen as inconsistent with the practice of "encouraging Christian values" in the volunteer programs. Development education and fundraising are viewed as "the same thing" and fundraising is considered to be a "ministry." This means that development education programs are also considered to be a "ministry." Disciplining the soul of the giver is a different emphasis than increasing understanding of the issues surrounding poverty.

### Efficiency

Contradictions are also apparent in Table 7.5 on the theme of efficiency. Whereas "money is the bottom line," consensus decisions within the Group of Eight about which overseas programs to implement are "not based just on money." The goal of cutting costs can contradict the goal of raising money. Effort put into raising money can also contradict the altruistic mindset. As Gerald said: "You can do nothing without money so you're trying to address that all the time. The problem with addressing it all the time is you forget why you're doing it."

## **Global Faith: A Fragmentation View**

The shortcomings of the oppositional mode of thinking inherent in the differentiation perspective are uncovered through the fragmentation perspective. Interests are not always clearly conflicting in a polarized fashion, and interactions are not necessarily based on unequal power distributions. With the fragmentation perspective, the manifestations of Global Faith cultures can be seen as multifaceted, complex, and ambiguous with "their meanings hard to decipher and necessarily open to multiple interpretations" (Martin, 1992, p.132).

### Autonomy

In Table 7.1 on autonomy, a paradox is apparent within the content themes. On the one hand, "government funding **inhibits** realization of Global Faith's Vision Statement" and yet, on the other hand, government money **enables** Global Faith "to do what we want to do." In addition to this ambiguity, there is confusion and "murkiness" in Global Faith's dealings with CIDA. The label of "octopus" further reinforces the sense of slipperiness surrounding the interpretations of CIDA regulations and relationships.

### Altruism

Table 7.2 on altruism contains examples of symbolic ambiguity within Global Faith. The story referring to the increase

in CIDA funding due to "the Grace of God" can have multiple meanings depending on who is telling the story. One person could tell the story implying that Global Faith received an increase in funding - and other NGOs did not - because they were more "deserving" in the spiritual or religious sense. Another interpretation could be that they were "deserving" in the eyes of CIDA because of good planning - planning that was "allowed" to happen through the "Grace of God."

### Cooperation

Another example of ideological ambiguity can be found in Table 7.3 on cooperation. It is not clear whether overseas projects are in place to perpetuate and nourish the organization ("meat and potatoes") or whether the organization is in place because of the overseas projects ("our raison d'etre"). Relationships with partners are needed for the implementation of overseas programs. Relationships with partners are also seen as necessary for producing material to be used in fundraising. While not contradictory, there is confusion about which role is more important. There is also confusion underlying the practice of trying to "shield" partner organizations from funding agency requirements by helping them with report and proposal writing together with the practice of encouraging partners to initiate projects. If Global Faith is doing the paper work and the paper work is a vehicle for initiating projects, how are projects being "initiated by requests from local representatives?"



## Participation

Table 7.4 on participation also contains elements of confusion. The story about donors and how "they may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel" puts an emphasis on the emotional impact of fundraising and development education. It is not clear how a heightened level of emotional awareness contributes to the goal of "providing Canadians with the resources to better understand the issues surrounding poverty and development." Is emotional engagement a necessary component of "understanding?"

## Efficiency

Another paradox appears in Table 7.5 on efficiency. Money is necessary to address the cause of "the poor and oppressed" and yet, the poor and oppressed and disaster are necessary in order to raise the money. What is "the bottom line" at Global Faith: money or compassion? Both? Neither? The fragmentation perspective acknowledges that questions such as these may not have clear and simple answers. One staff member summed up this paradox: "[Global Faith] cannot afford to lose sight of people but money is the bottom line in order for the organization to exist. I will always struggle with the interplay between the two."

This section presented views of Global Faith cultures from within the three perspectives and has shown that "the idea that any organization has a single culture, understood in the same way by all its members, seems oversimplified" (Martin, 1992, p.5). A

deeper understanding of organizational cultures can be obtained by crossing and going beyond each perspective's boundaries. The people of Global Faith themselves spoke and acted in ways that can be seen as congruent with any or all three perspectives. For example, in the group settings that I observed, Gerald frequently focused on what is agreed upon within Global Faith. On other occasions, Gerald would point to a perceived paradox and pose questions that had no clear answers to the group. I also heard Gerald acknowledge inconsistencies across Global Faith practices and refer to personality and role conflicts. While Gerald's perceptions, interpretations, and actions - and indeed those of all the people of Global Faith - varied to the extent that they can not be completely "captured" by looking through the lens of a single perspective, it is still possible to associate the characteristics of a primary perspective with specific interactions and episodes of planning at Global Faith. Any given episode may be interpreted from within all three perspectives. However, if the actors involved in the episode themselves highlight or focus upon consensus or consistency, their own interpretations of the cultural context would be congruent with the integration perspective. The perceptions of the people involved and the ways that they interpret and act upon these interpretations together constitute the cultural context for that particular episode. The section below describes different planning episodes at Global Faith - each occurring within and acting upon a different cultural context.

## **The Negotiation of Meaning at Global Faith**

The brief look at Global Faith cultures through the lenses of the three perspectives in the previous section sets the stage for a closer examination of the relationship between the cultural contexts and the process of planning at Global Faith. A deep understanding of this relationship can be achieved by viewing the process of planning as the negotiation of meaning. Five episodes of the negotiation of meaning at Global Faith are presented illustrating the links between the characteristics of the cultural contexts and the relationship between the negotiating parties, the two dimensions of meaning (as text and sub-text), and the negotiation process and outcomes. Four of these episodes include Global Faith's interactions with forces outside organizational boundaries - each with their own set of demands - that control resources necessary to Global Faith's survival:

1. **CIDA** (provider of financial resources - matching funds and grants);
2. **general public donors** (providers of financial resources - donations);
3. **the Board of Directors** (provider of human capital resources - approval of policy, budgets, and project plans);
4. **overseas partner organizations** (provider of human capital resources - implementation of projects, and link between donors and beneficiaries).

Gerald often talked about the various pressures from these four groups and used phrases like "putting up with all the crap and manipulations" which points to his perception of the difficult nature of NGO work. Gerald also commented on the interdependencies within the relationships between Global Faith

and each group.<sup>70</sup> While each group provides resources that Global Faith needs, Global Faith also provides resources or services needed by the groups themselves. For example, CIDA needs Global Faith as a capable NGO that has the capacity to manage and implement overseas programs with the funds provided by CIDA. The general public donors need Global Faith as an organization that can execute their desires and make their feelings of compassion concrete. The Board of Directors needs Global Faith as an organization that can implement their policy. Overseas partner organizations need Global Faith as an organization that can provide financial and technical resources. This interdependence and the potential for reciprocity means that power is shared between Global Faith and each of the groups and that the interactions described below can be properly characterized as negotiations.

The fifth episode focuses on Gerald's style of leadership and how it affects negotiations both within and outside the organization. Gerald also sees the relationships among staff within Global Faith as being interdependent. For example, Gerald talks about "couplets" and overlapping roles and the fact that he has "tried to foster interdependencies" among the staff.

The episodes presented in this chapter are organized according to the framework for understanding negotiation of meaning episodes discussed in Chapter Two. The categories in the

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<sup>70</sup> Gerald provided these comments on the interdependent nature of these relationships during the process of respondent validation.

framework provide the sub-section headings for each episode and are as follows:

- Planning Activity
- Decision-Needing Issue
- Characteristics of the Cultural Context
- Negotiating Parties
- Characteristics of the Relationship
- Negotiation of Meaning Episode (the Story)
- Meaning as Text
- Meaning as Sub-Text
- Characteristics of the Negotiation Process
- Negotiation Outcome

### **Episode Number One: Negotiating with the Canadian International Development Agency**

#### Planning Activity

The planning activity related to this episode is the process of securing and maintaining government funding through the submission of a proposal and completion of final reports.

#### Decision-Needing Issue

In the process of carrying out the planning activity, the decision-needing issue became: How should Global Faith deal with the confusing process of submitting "adequate" reports and proposals to CIDA so that CIDA funding for Global Faith's core overseas programs would be released as soon as possible?

#### Characteristics of the Cultural Context

The cultural context for this negotiation episode is mainly characterized by ambiguity, confusion and paradox (fragmentation) but there is also an undercurrent of inconsistency and potential

conflict (differentiation).

The ambiguity prevalent in Global Faith's interactions with CIDA stems from policy and personnel changes at CIDA and also from the elusive, slippery nature of the CIDA bureaucracy. As Gerald pointed out during a meeting with two visiting CIDA officials: "CIDA is not an inanimate object. It is people and personalities. Each individual [at CIDA] has a different view and deals with us differently. We're not sure what the meter stick is you're measuring us by."

In addition to variations across individual officers at CIDA, there are also different approaches taken by sub-units within CIDA. Richard described the contrast between their dealings with CIDA people in the Bilateral Branch (regarding their agro-forestry project in India) and the people in the NGO Division (regarding the responsive One Year Program):

The Bilateral Branch people leave us alone....They've got hundreds of millions of dollars in other programs [in India]. So, if ours is going well, they just leave us alone. And also, because the relationship is one that at the beginning of the five year program, you have a fairly detailed agreement and the negotiations all have to do with that. And once the agreement is signed, then you just do the program and CIDA will evaluate it at the end of five years. In the interim, there is not much looking at you. In the NGO Division - which is supposed to be responsive to NGOs - there is a sort of constant analysis and looking at you.

The "constant analysis" comes through in CIDA officers' reactions to Global Faith reports and proposals for new programs and is another source of confusion in the eyes of Global Faith staff. Lisa stressed that "CIDA has never been very clear as to what they are looking for in reporting." Dan linked the lack of

clarity surrounding CIDA interactions with the episode discussed in this section:

I mean I think there are some things we don't understand in dealing with CIDA. I guess probably the Three Year Program proposal is a great example. You know, you think you prepare a good document and then you find that there are sixty things that weren't done the right way or exactly the way they wanted. And you have to make all kinds of changes. And it is a frustration.

Confusion over CIDA's reporting and proposal submission requirements matters because reports trigger payments (usually with a three to five week time lag) and so their acceptance is crucial. Proposals for one year or multi-year agreements lay down the geographic and sectoral parameters of the projects to be carried out with Global Faith's core overseas partners. Their acceptance is also critical. They provide a basis for long-term planning and a continued source of income for Global Faith and their overseas partner organizations. A Three Year Program is considered to be preferable to a One Year Program because it is a longer guarantee of support and once it is signed, it cannot be endangered by personnel changes within CIDA. Elizabeth explained: "It would be good for us to get a three year deal in CIDA's system because I don't see [the current Project Manager] being around for three years. For us, going into a new relationship would be much better if we had a blanket of the Three Year Program in the system for protection."

CIDA's "constant analysis" of NGO's like Global Faith is also related to accountability. CIDA officers - as "stewards of the people's money" - are answerable to their constituents, and

as such, are more demanding and are less likely to compromise in negotiations (Thompson, Peterson, & Kray, 1995). Gerald described this dynamic as follows:

There is confusion because CIDA doesn't know it but they don't have any money of their own. They only have money from the general public. They don't have a cent. They've never come to realize that they are no different from us. Right? They get all their money from the general public too.... However, CIDA is also nervous so they demand a lot and so we are accountable to them in that regard. And they are stewards of the people's money.

### Negotiating Parties

The parties involved in this negotiation episode are as follows: Richard, Elizabeth, and Gerald from Global Faith; and Janet, William, and Edward from CIDA. William is the Program Manager at CIDA dealing with Global Faith. William's supervisor, Edward, was recently replaced by Janet.

### Characteristics of the Relationship

The interests shared by both groups of negotiating parties are that CIDA provide final payments for completed programs and new funding for the proposed Three Year Program to Global Faith. Dan described the interdependent nature of the institutional relationship between Global Faith and CIDA as follows: "CIDA is always looking for organizations that do good programs. It is not easy to come by. So we satisfy that for them."

Divergent interests between the negotiating parties include: while Global Faith wants time to sit down and plan and to control the purpose, significance, and content of the proposed Three Year



Program, CIDA wants the reports and proposal completed as soon as possible. CIDA also wants to decide the worthiness of the Global Faith and its overseas programs.

Global Faith's relationship with Janet's predecessor, Edward, was positive and comfortable. Dan explained how Gerald's focus on relationships affects Global Faith's interactions with CIDA as well. "You know, with [Gerald's] way of dealing with people, we build up friendships with people in CIDA and we get to know them really well. And that pays off too because they obviously feel comfortable with us, in part because of that." The cultivation of friendly relationships with CIDA officers helps Global Faith staff to feel more comfortable with CIDA as well. As Dan explained:

I used to think that CIDA people were quite impersonal - the bureaucrats, you know. But there are good people at CIDA too. When you sit down and meet some of them face-to-face, you find that they do have interests that are very similar to what [Global Faith's] interests are. And the same concerns for people.

However, when Edward was "shifted" (transferred to another section), Global Faith had to start all over again with a new relationship with another CIDA officer, Janet. Due to lack of familiarity, neither party had come to the point of trusting the other. Elizabeth described the frequent personnel changes at CIDA as a "big problem - because you work with a number of people at CIDA and then they end up moving."

### The Story: "Three Backflips"

The story begins in December of 1992 at Global Faith's

Christmas staff luncheon. I overheard comments about tension around the office and making it through a "crisis" with CIDA. I decided to ask Richard what had happened with CIDA during an interview with him after the holidays in January 1993. Richard explained the crisis:

All hell broke loose. What happened was that our final report to CIDA on the 1991-92 One Year Program was overdue. We had submitted an interim report on the 1992-93 One Year Program. Based on the acceptance of that report, \$150,000 from CIDA was due to come to us to continue to support the program. And I had left the country and was on a trip.

At CIDA, [William] is our Program Manager. His boss, supervisor or the director of that section was [Edward]. [Edward] was shifted. [Janet] was put in that position. She had just come from an overseas posting in Africa with CIDA. She basically took a more - she got more involved with the work of her program managers. Whereas [Edward] sort of let his program managers be. So [William] knew us and had been dealing with us. [Janet] looked at what [William] was doing. She didn't know [Global Faith] or a lot of the other organizations so she started looking through [Global Faith's] files [in Ottawa]. She saw that our 1991-92 program report was overdue. She didn't like the quality of the interim report. She was confused about the 1992-93 Program. She thought it was a Three Year Program, not a One Year Program. So, she basically said: "No money is going to [Global Faith] until they get these reports in. They've got lousy reports. What are they doing? They obviously don't know anything about what they are doing." So when I was in Bombay and Calcutta, I got these voice messages saying all hell had broken loose.

So, when I came back, what we had to do - and that was started on even before I got back - was we had to generate final reports for all the projects we did in 1991 and 1992. We had to totally redo the 1992-93 interim report. The style of report that I sent to [William] was a style that would have been accepted by him and accepted by [Edward] in the past. [Janet], however, didn't like it. But what she liked, nobody knew.

And because [Janet] was confused about the One Year/Three Year thing - because [William] had said we wanted to put together a Three Year Program and it was supposed to happen in November or December but he hadn't done anything on it. So, in the course of this discussion with [Janet], [Gerald]

had promised [Janet] that we would have a Three Year Program submission to her before she came here. So that means concurrently, we did a final report on fiscal year 1991-92. We did an interim report on 1992-93. We did a Three Year Program submission for 1993-94 to 1996-97. So we all went nuts....

Three draft versions of the Three Year Program proposal were eventually sent to CIDA according to mutually agreed upon deadlines. According to Richard, the changes made in each draft included: "some formatting, structure, some information - not a lot - and a little more detail on the budget. So that is fine. If they want us to do three backflips instead of two and a half, that is what we'll do. I don't care."

#### Meaning as Text

The subject matter of the discussion between Global Faith and CIDA was the meaning or content of the reporting requirements and the meaning or purpose of the Proposal. After hearing from Janet that their reports were not adequate, Global Faith had to determine the meaning of "adequate" - according to Janet - as it applied to their own store of information related to the project. Richard described this part of the negotiations: "The big thing is to find out - O.K., there is a new person. What does this new person need to approve something? What does [Janet] need to see so that things are acceptable to her because we have tons of information. What do they need to know? It is very difficult to get from them because there are no hard and fast rules."

In the meantime, Global Faith also had to explain to Janet the meaning or purpose of their first proposal (i.e., that it was

applying for another One Year Program, not a Three Year Program as Janet had initially assumed). According to Gerald, Janet thought Global Faith was already on a Three Year Program so "she was talking about something different than what we were working on."

### Meaning as Sub-Text

While negotiating the meaning of the reporting requirements and the Three Year Program Proposal with CIDA, Global Faith was also working through other meanings underlying the negotiations. Global Faith staff were asking themselves, and each other, the following questions concerning meaning as sub-text.

**1. What is the significance or meaning of the process of negotiating with CIDA in order to receive funding?**

The negotiation process with CIDA was meaningful or significant due to the tension between adjusting to CIDA demands and maintaining the integrity and autonomy of Global Faith. Gerald said "no matter what I tell you about being independent from government, inside I can never deny the fact that we get money from government. Right? So that has to be in my thinking. What do they require of me?" One staff member described the situation of trying to satisfy CIDA expectations - without giving up Global Faith's mandate - in order to get funding as follows:

I think the issue for an NGO is for their mandate not to be clouded by what CIDA will give money to. You see some groups that bend over backwards and do things just to get CIDA money and that really destroys what the organization was intended to be. Now, who is to say where [Global Faith] is in that continuum. We go through the hoops just like anyone else to get money.

**2. What do the reports and proposals mean to us? What is their functional value?**

Gerald made the following distinction between the means and their goal in negotiating with CIDA: "Our goal doesn't change. That is our programs with our partners. Means to the goal changes depending on what these [CIDA officers] want. They're like a donor. They're like my mother [a demanding and whimsical donor]." By negotiating the meaning of writing acceptable reports and proposals to be a mean, not a goal in itself, Global Faith staff were willing to commit to CIDA's requirements. They could do the "three backflips" for CIDA and still maintain that they were not giving anything up. Dan's comments on the frustrating process of revising the drafts of the Three Year Program proposal also illustrate this means/end distinction in Global Faith thinking:

And I suppose you could throw your hands up and say "Forget it! We're not going to bother with it." But, again, if you believe that the program is worthwhile funding, then you do what you are asked to do - if you don't compromise yourself.

**3. What do the reports and proposals mean to CIDA? What is their functional value?**

Richard posed this question out loud to himself and provided the following answer:

I think realistically speaking, CIDA is wanting to push organizations who have the capacity into three year programs because they [CIDA officers] don't have the capacity administratively to deal with all the organizations on project funding and one year program funding. It is so much work and they [CIDA] don't have the people and the government is trying to downsize.

**4. What are Janet's intentions? Is she well-meaning with respect to Global Faith?**

Richard interpreted Janet's intentions as follows: "[Janet] did show that she is in charge and maybe that is what she was trying to do too." Gerald's interpretation of what happened with CIDA and in particular, with Janet, is: "she doesn't trust her predecessors. They said we're good, so she thinks we're bad."

### Characteristics of the Negotiation Process

**Stance.** Because of a lack of familiarity between Janet and Global Faith, Janet was inclined toward a competitive orientation during the negotiations with Global Faith about their reports and proposals. Global Faith, on the other hand, chose a non-confrontational stance. Richard said: "Once she came here, we apologized and bent over backwards and said we'll do whatever she wants and then she was happy." Both Richard and Gerald agree that a non-confrontational attitude is the most productive in negotiations with CIDA. Richard said: "We have never felt that it is that useful to be shouting and screaming at CIDA [like other NGOs]. They phone up Ministers. They phone up MPs. They phone up people and get pressure to bear on these people. That just antagonizes people." Gerald commented on their stance: "[Global Faith] is more passive and we still do what we want - as opposed to other NGOs that deal with CIDA in an attack mode."

**Goals.** Initially, the goal positions of the Global Faith and CIDA negotiating parties appeared to be divergent, but the area of disagreement - the substance and style of CIDA reports and

proposals - actually had different meanings to the two parties. While there appeared to be a disagreement, it was based in misconceptions and confusion, not in a fundamental opposition in goals. Janet appeared to be target-oriented in her goal. She disliked the status quo of incomplete reports and inadequate or confusing proposals. While it may have been clear in her own mind how the reports and proposals could be improved, it was not immediately apparent to the staff of Global Faith what was required. In one sense, the nature of Global Faith's goal in this situation was also target-oriented: to receive CIDA funding. In another sense, however, Global Faith's goal may be seen as departure-oriented. They wanted to get away from the present crisis situation but because of the uncertainty inherent in a new relationship, they had to wait for Janet to tell them what was required before they could accomplish this. Because of asymmetrical information, Janet was in an advantageous position as the target-oriented actor compared to Global Faith's departure-oriented approach. While Global Faith was also trying to reduce the risk of depending on CIDA funding by diversifying their support base,<sup>71</sup> their target was still to maximize CIDA money in order to continue with core programming with their partners.

We wouldn't purposefully try and have programs that don't have CIDA money. The reason being that we don't want to minimize the money we have. We want to maximize it. So, we wouldn't say: 'Well, we'll take less money so we can prove

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<sup>71</sup> For example, the new community linkage program discussed in Chapter Four, and also below in Episode Number Four, is not eligible for CIDA funding. Financial support for this program is based completely on general public donations.

that we're independent.' I think we've got to just say:  
'We'll take what there is and do what we want to do.'

**Strategies.** To accomplish the goal of maximizing CIDA funding, Gerald advises Richard and Elizabeth to put CIDA proposals in draft form, "so we have room to manoeuvre and so they can't refuse us." Gerald admitted that "our drafts of the Three Year Program Document are basically just rearrangements and embellishments. There are no changes really."

Elizabeth emphasized that when negotiating with CIDA, strategies can change depending on the preferences of the individual at CIDA.

There is no set strategy because you are dealing with people. What works with one person doesn't work with another person in government....It shouldn't be personalities but in many respects, it is personalities. But when you are working with personalities, you have to work with what will work. And maybe what is a hang-up for you is not a hang-up for somebody else. And you find the common ground that you can work with....It is as much intuition as anything else. You're adapting - but with a goal. Because you always have your own goal in mind, right?

Richard stressed the importance of acquiring information about individual CIDA officer's preferences and priorities and mentioned Elizabeth's relative skill in this area:

They may have a policy but if I know the person who is sitting on the Bangladesh desk and we get along well and we talk and there is an area of programming needs they have and we can meet that, we may be able to do something regardless of all the big policy differences that set that up. So that is where [Elizabeth] comes in. That is [Elizabeth]. I mean [Elizabeth] is on the phone - she has her ear to the ground - "What the heck is going on in CIDA? Where? With whom?" And you just find your way through the maze.

Elizabeth has a reputation for successful negotiations with CIDA. Elizabeth told me: "There is rarely something that we have



gone after with CIDA that we have not got." One of Elizabeth's strategies is to mirror CIDA's vagueness and avoid commitment to a position until she knows fully what CIDA wants. Gerald describes how she operates below:

[Richard] is very much a straight line person. So, [Richard] gives CIDA all the facts. And [Elizabeth] doesn't give anybody facts. So, when that is happening, [Elizabeth] is better at dealing with CIDA because CIDA doesn't give us any facts. That is the best way because then you don't make any commitments ....[Elizabeth] would go around the horn fifty times and get to know what you think and give you that as an answer....She ignores what you're saying and goes on with her squiggly line - not a straight line - and first thing you know, she is back for another angle. And she has got great determination in that regard.

Richard's strategy in negotiating with CIDA is also based on a flexible approach:

I think if we believe that we are going to change CIDA, we are deluded....That doesn't make me negative about CIDA, it just says we have to be really entrepreneurial in a way. We have to be willing to completely change. We'll put together a project proposal in whatever way, in whatever format, with whatever it takes, that CIDA wants.

Another strategy articulated by Elizabeth is related to a willingness to be flexible on the means, but not on the goal itself. "You search out where the best opportunities are to get funding from the government but you don't compromise what you want to do as an organization overseas because you still have your own objectives in mind." Pruitt (1983) describes this strategy as "firm flexibility:"

One must be firm with respect to one's ends (i.e., one's interests), giving them up only if they are clearly unobtainable. Otherwise, the solution will be one-sided in favor of the other party rather than represent a true integration of the two parties' needs. Yet one must also be flexible with respect to the means to these ends, continually seeking new alternatives until a mutually

acceptable one can be found. (p.43)

Global Faith was flexible in meeting CIDA requirements with respect to the **means** (drafts and reports) of their goal, but they were firm with respect to the **ends** or the goal itself (to maintain core programming).

### Negotiation Outcome

As a result of negotiating meaning with CIDA and dealing with meaning in their negotiations with CIDA, Global Faith was committed to a course of action whereby they completed the reports and submitted an acceptable proposal for a Three Year Program. Richard described the outcome of the negotiation process as follows:

I mean it was a pain, but very helpful for us. Very good for us to do it. Great exercise. Very important. It is something that we would have had to do somewhere along the line. It forced us to do it. It forced us to think about "What do we want to do for three years?" Let's put this together in a format that we can live with that meets CIDA's needs. It was done on time so that tells them that we are competent and professional. We can get the job done that they wanted.

Additional outcomes of this negotiation episode included Global Faith's lack of compromise on organizational goals and increased understanding of their new relationship with Janet. Richard said: "What this last two months' relationship with CIDA has shown us is that again, they are changing and the individuals that we happen to be dealing with at CIDA at this point in time have a few specific things that they are really concerned about."

## **Episode Number Two: Negotiating with General Public Donors**

### Planning Activity

The planning activity related to this episode is the process of securing and maintaining general public donations through fundraising.

### Decision-Needing Issue

In the process of carrying out the planning activity, the decision-needing issue became: How should Global Faith deal with conflicting expectations and demands from CIDA and from the general public donors regarding proselytization overseas? How can Global Faith satisfy both groups and still do what they want to do themselves?

### Characteristics of the Cultural Context

The cultural context of this negotiation episode is mainly characterized by conflict and inconsistency (differentiation), and to a lesser extent, by ambiguity and confusion (fragmentation). Gerald compared negotiating with CIDA to negotiating with a donor. There are indeed some similarities between CIDA and general public donors. Global Faith is dependent on funding from each "as a matter of survival" and funding is conditional upon satisfying demands and meeting expectations. The more substantial donors, especially, will give money to Global Faith with certain conditions. The result, according to Gerald, is similar to the tension between integrity and dependency that

Global Faith experiences with CIDA: "You are caught trying to be yourself and trying to get the money." The difficulty facing organizations who must attempt to satisfy competing demands is laid out clearly by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978/1990):

The fact of competing demands, even if correctly perceived, makes the management of organizations difficult. It is clearly easier to satisfy a single criterion, or a mutually compatible set of criteria, than to attempt to meet the conflicting demands of a variety of participants. Compliance to demands is not a satisfactory answer, since compliance with some demands must mean noncompliance with others.  
(p.150)

### Negotiating Parties

The parties involved in this negotiation episode are as follows: Stan, Richard, and Gerald from Global Faith; and many individuals from the general public, mostly from the Evangelical Christian community.

### Characteristics of the Relationship

The interests shared by both groups of negotiating parties are that Global Faith continue to "extend Christ's compassion to the neglected poor." As Gerald said: "When a donor comes to give money to this organization - to one degree or another - they will agree with what we are philosophically."

Divergent interests between the negotiating parties are related to Global Faith's adherence to CIDA regulations restricting proselytization overseas in government funded programs.

Many of the donors feel they have a personal relationship

with Gerald and they trust him. Gerald once read aloud to me a letter from an elderly donor in the Maritimes who sent along with the letter a present of some handmade cross-shaped book marks for Gerald, his wife and children. Gerald commented: "I don't doubt that she thinks that we're personal buddies so there is a profile issue....And so in that way, I am an integral part of the link with the donors." Gerald's former career as a Minister may also help to shape donor expectations of evangelizing overseas.

### The Story: "A Struggle for Integrity"

While the pressure from donors and CIDA is similar - both provide funding necessary to the survival of Global Faith - the actual content of the demands made by each are different and even conflicting. The Christian orientation of Global Faith is an issue at the centre of clashing expectations held by CIDA and general public donors.<sup>72</sup> Gerald recognizes the difficulty of dealing with different audiences and describes the situation as "a struggle for integrity."

Global Faith's donors are mostly evangelical Christians. Gerald believes that the donors' Christian orientation increases their expectations as to what will happen as a result of donating to Global Faith: "My experience with Christians is that they may need more of an exchange than other people perhaps." Many donors

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<sup>72</sup> The pressure from donors is not necessarily all directed towards proselytizing overseas. For example, one person donated several drilling rigs to Global Faith. As a result, they "were forced into implementing" a well-drilling program in Ethiopia.

consider international development as a means to the end of religious conversion or religious education and they are expecting that Global Faith's projects are for Christians only or for converted Christians. Gerald explained to me: "I am not ashamed of our motivation. Our goal is not proselytization." While Gerald does not want to hide their Christian orientation, he also does not agree with money being used to give children overseas a "Christian education." When faced with the donors who are expecting that their donations would go toward a Christian education, Gerald described his dilemma as follows: "You are trying to deal with all of that and at the same time, trying to do what you believe."

I asked Stan, Director of Communications and Fund Development, about donor expectations regarding proselytizing overseas during an interview:

Some might think that [we are proselytizing] although we have not said that and we have written them and told them that it is not happening except - we have told them that we leave that up to our partners overseas. Our partners can do the proselytizing. That is what they are good at. If they are churches, they will have people that are good at that, but we are not good at that and our mandate isn't that. And we have told people that but some of them will still think that they are giving money for proselytizing. But they do that in spite of what we tell them...And they may see it as friendship evangelism too. We're helping the churches to care for people and they know that is important and they want to do that. They're compassionate people. But in their own mind, they also realize that the church is putting out the good word. So they would say: "That is assisting. It is giving credibiity to a church so when they do put out the gospel, people will respond because they will see that this is a holistic ministry. Which is fine." That is fine by me too.

These donors' expectations clash with CIDA's restrictions on

evangelizing. CIDA's only concern with the religious foundation of an NGO is with regard to their overseas activities. Government funding is not provided for proselytization. Realizing this, Gerald made a point of assuring a visiting CIDA official: "We're not proselytizers. The people we work with overseas are a wide cross-section of people. Our motivation is different from what we do. We don't want to confuse what you believe with what you do. We don't want to apologize for who we are but we don't want hidden agendas either." Yet, on the other hand, Gerald admitted to me during an interview that "there is a misconception in the minds of many donors that all of [Global Faith's] projects are for poor Christians. I don't fight this misconception." This story is about the fact that without actually lying, Global Faith is able to confirm the expectations of each party through the negotiation of meaning.

### Meaning as Text

The subject matter of the discussions between Global Faith and various donors from the general public is the meaning or purpose of Global Faith's overseas programs.

### Meaning as Sub-Text

While negotiating the meaning of overseas programs with the general public donors, Global Faith was also working through other meanings underlying the negotiations. Global Faith staff were asking themselves, and each other, the following questions

concerning meaning as sub-text.

**1. What is the significance or meaning of the process of negotiating with general public donors in order to receive donations?**

Ian posed the question of how Global Faith was serving the people "here" (as opposed to overseas) through the ministry of fundraising. His answer is as follows: "We are trying to teach them how to part with some of their money and start loving enough to even sacrifice a bit and help others that need it because they haven't faced up to what love is all about either. We have a very important message here." This means that the act of giving itself is considered to be more important than the intentions behind the decision to give. Therefore, it may not matter if donors' intentions behind giving do not line up with Global Faith's intentions in their projects.

**2. What do the donations mean to us? What is their functional value?**

Richard commented on the need to minimize Global Faith's dependence on government funding and that Global Faith "being able to raise money in Canada from Canadians to have resources that are independent is critical."

**3. What do Global Faith's fundraising efforts mean to the general public donors? How are they interpreted?**

In describing Global Faith's interactions with the donors, Gerald recognized the potential for multiple interpretations of Global Faith statements: "It is not what you say, it is what the donors hear that matters. What we like or don't like isn't crucial. It



is what the donors think." What the donors think is apparent through feedback to Global Faith staff. For instance, Stan read aloud a letter from a donor praying for them and praising their work to the entire group of Global Faith staff assembled at the annual Retreat. Stan's view of Global Faith's fundraising in this case was: "She is freed up because we touched her life. She is freed up to touch others and she will do it through [Global Faith]." Kevin's interpretation of what donors are concerned about when they are making a donation to Global Faith is as follows: "We have a very conservative donor base. People don't care about the environment or CIDA's gender and development policies - they think a woman's place is in the home. They just want to feel good when they give their \$10."

**4. What are individual donor's intentions? Are they well-meaning with respect to Global Faith?**

Donors are considered to be well-meaning and trusting. Richard emphasized: "We're dependent on our survival in a way on public goodwill. People are not going to support a charitable organization unless they have some degree of trust in it."

Characteristics of the Negotiation Process

**Stance.** Because of an existing level of trust and the friendship marketing approach in Global Faith fundraising, both parties had a cooperative orientation during negotiations over the meaning or intent of Global Faith's overseas programs with regard to proselytizing.

**Goals.** Both parties had status-quo goal positions: Global Faith wanted to continue receiving donations and the donors wanted to continue believing that they were helping to support proselytization efforts overseas.

**Strategies.** Global Faith's strategy involves a deliberate framing, highlighting, or downplaying of the information communicated to donors and CIDA. It is like a form of "impression management"<sup>73</sup> where Global Faith is in a process of constructing different 'selves' depending on the expectations of the audience and the demands of the context. Pam, the Director of Marketing, elaborated on this strategy: "It is common sense. We don't talk about things in the Gospel Church that might offend them [the donors]. We can be intelligent and selective and talk about other things that won't offend them."

This highlighting of information occurs in the written reports produced by Global Faith as well. For example, the Three Year Program proposal submitted to CIDA did not make a single reference to Global Faith's Christian orientation and did not include the agency's vision of "extending Christ's compassion to the neglected poor." In fact, the goals and objectives given in the CIDA proposal represented a selective re-writing of the mission statement, philosophy and overall goals given in Global

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<sup>73</sup> The term "impression management" is borrowed from Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) who use it to describe an ethnographer's efforts to gain and maintain access to a research site.

Faith's in-house Strategic Plan. There was no mention of "God-given potential" or "Christian principles" or "Christ's example" or "God's intention" in the CIDA proposal - all examples of phrases that are found in the Strategic Plan document and in the literature sent to donors. Asafa explained how the audience dictates the focus of the report:

You are dealing with the need for producing different reports which highlight different aspects of the program. Enabling the church or strengthening the church may be an issue to one group, whereas helping the poor may be an issue to another group or achieving certain things may be an issue to another group....None of them are a lie. I mean all of those things have been achieved but what you highlight is the issue....I mean we have never made it a secret that we have worked with churches with CIDA because when we apply for funding, we talk about the partner, right? So it is not a secret that we work with churches. It is not a secret that we are a Christian organization. But it is not something that is relevant to them, so we don't necessarily bother reporting that.

Global Faith's attention-shaping strategies in the face of external control seem to line up with Pfeffer's and Salancik's (1978/1990) predictions from the resource dependence perspective:

Organizations attempt to avoid influence and constraint by restricting the flow of information about them and their activities, denying legitimacy of demands made upon them, diversifying their dependencies, and manipulating information to increase their own legitimacy. (p.15)

Another strategy used by Global Faith in coping with conflicting demands from CIDA and the donors - also discussed by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978/1990) - is structural differentiation which involves establishing different groups or subunits within the organization to deal with various coalitions in the environment. This is the case at Global Faith where different people have contact with different audiences. Richard explained

that he interacts with CIDA and not the donors so he does not worry about donor expectations:

I won't deal with the public very much. [Stan] and the Provincial Directors do that. So we can all blame everybody else - "I didn't say that! [Stan] said that. [Stan] you're full of it." And [Stan] can say: "Oh, [Richard], he screwed up. I mean he is dealing with CIDA. He didn't tell the truth about what we are doing." I mean it is not that bad. But it is different people dealing with different groups of people.

Kevin also commented on the structural differentiation at Global Faith:

In this stratified corporation, we [in the Overseas Programs Department] don't have to deal with what comes out in public. We deal with CIDA, the government donor. For all other donors, there is the donor relations group. They get information from us and they package it as they need to....Hopefully, what comes out at the other end bears some resemblance to, let's say - is not in opposition to - what actually is happening.

### Negotiation Outcome

As a result of negotiating meaning with the general public donors and dealing with meaning in their negotiations, Global Faith was able to continue receiving general public support, predominantly from the Evangelical Christian community. Both CIDA and general public donors were satisfied and felt that their demands had been met.

### **Episode Number Three: Negotiating with the Board of Directors**

#### Planning Activity

The planning activity related to this episode is the process of articulating and implementing Global Faith's vision statement.

### Decision-Needing Issue

In the process of carrying out the planning activity, the decision-needing issue became: How should Global Faith deal with conflicting interpretations held by staff and the Board of Directors over how to define and carry out Global Faith's vision statement? Should Global Faith initiate new programs in Eastern Europe as suggested by the Board of Directors?

### Characteristics of the Cultural Context

The cultural context for this episode is characterized mainly by conflict and inconsistency (differentiation) and to a lesser degree, by confusion and paradox (fragmentation). Gerald makes a clear distinction between Global Faith itself and the Board of Directors. "The problem is our staff does not work for the Board...the vision comes from the staff and the volunteers, not from the Board." The episode described in this section focuses on the vision of Global Faith and is a clear illustration of this perceived disjuncture.

Before presenting the actual episode, it is first necessary to provide some background information as to how the vision statement evolved and how it is interpreted differently by Global Faith staff and by the Board. The cultural context for this episode includes outcomes of previous negotiations between the staff and the Board of Directors regarding the vision statement.

The vision statement, "[Global Faith], a development agency

extending Christ's compassion to the neglected poor,"<sup>74</sup> was articulated in 1989. Gerald remembered the difficulty the staff and the Board had in agreeing on the vision: "When we were trying to come up with a vision statement, we fought and argued over it. The Board fought and argued over it." Pam described the long and involved process of trying to finalize the vision statement:

It was probably the hardest thing to actually establish in all the pages and pages from the Strategic Plan - this vision statement which was one line. It was amazing....We had input from everybody....We had a lot of input from volunteers that had been with us and had been loyal for a long time. And Provincial Directors. And friends of [Gerald] that give to [Global Faith]. And [Gerald]. And the Board.

Ian also described the process and stressed the amount of work that went into developing a statement that everyone was happy with.

What we went through to come up with this. Pages and pages and pages of stuff and fax messages back and forth to everybody that was in the organization all over the world and ideas coming back and so on. And it finally kept boiling down and boiling down....We finally ended up with it and I think it is beautiful....It took an incredible amount of work to come up with this.

The freshly drafted vision statement then went into the Strategic Plan which still had to be presented at a Board meeting for their approval. The new vision statement turned out to be the area of "most interest and most defense" during that meeting. Pam remembered the meeting and the tension surrounding the vision statement.

It was funny. I was at the meeting when [Gerald] presented the Strategic Plan to the Board. And it was funny in that

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<sup>74</sup> See the section "From Praying to Planning" in Chapter Five for more information on the vision statement.

they needed to sign off - which meant that they agreed with all the objectives, all the money goals, with everything - but that whole evening meeting, we couldn't get off the vision statement. Partly because [Gerald] was so defensive about it and partly because the Board wanted semantics. They were concerned about semantics and actual words and what they meant. It was just incredible....It had so much input even before it went to the Board that we felt - [Gerald] and I - we felt so attacked because you can always change it and nobody is ever happy. But to us, by the end it was almost watered down. It is like: "What do you want it to be? We'll do whatever you want. Just tell us. We don't care anymore." Well, not quite, but that is the point we were getting to.

The equivocality of the vision statement, in particular the phrase "neglected poor," allowed both the Board and the staff to be satisfied with the final wording. This same ambiguity, however, led to even greater conflict and confusion over how to implement the vision statement at a later date.

### Negotiating Parties

The parties involved in this negotiation episode are as follows: Gerald together with the rest of the Group of Eight, and the Board of Directors.

### Characteristics of the Relationship

The interests shared by both groups of negotiating parties are that Global Faith continue to implement the vision statement. Divergent interests between the negotiating parties are related to staff commitments to the "cause" which is expressed through adherence to different interpretations of the vision statement. As one staff member, pointed out: "the staff are not at Global Faith because of the Board. They're at Global Faith because of

the vision, the cause, and their commitment."

The relationship between Gerald and the Board of Directors is complex and at times, problematic. Gerald reports directly to the Board and admits that he is often "defensive" in his dealings with the Board. While the Board is not involved in day-to-day operations - they have agreed to stay arms-length away from administration - they do have considerable power. It is up to the Board to make policy and to approve the Strategic Plan (which includes the vision, mission statement, and budgets) and also to approve overseas projects over \$200,000 (or projects using more than \$25,000 of general public money).

#### The Story: Vision Test

This episode, which became known around Global Faith's Head Office as "the Eastern Europe debate" or "the Eastern Europe thing," is about negotiating with the Board over how to implement the vision statement, or as Dan said: "We're into a pretty serious discussion about the pros and cons of going to Eastern Europe." The discussions unfolded over the course of a year during the time that I was conducting my research at Global Faith.

It all started at a Board meeting in the Spring of 1992, when one of the Board members asked Gerald to consider initiating some programming in Eastern Europe, an area where Global Faith had no previous experience and no established partnerships with local organizations. The Board member's request surfaced again at



a Group of Eight meeting in July during a discussion about how to handle the upcoming Board meeting scheduled for the Fall. Gerald asked Richard and Elizabeth to work together on a "statement" for the Board on why Global Faith should not become involved in Eastern Europe. Richard consented and agreed with Gerald on the importance of being prepared for the Board meeting: "It will be good to have our ducks in line." Richard and Elizabeth then wrote up a statement titled "Sarajevo or Somalia?" and Richard presented it to the Board at the formal dinner gathering the night before the Board meeting. The next day, at the Board meeting, Gerald mentioned that Global Faith was shipping medical supplies to a church in the Ukraine, hoping that this information, along with Richard's written statement, would put an end to Board pressure. One Board member said: "Maybe we can exploit the fact that we are in the Ukraine. People in Eastern Canada may give more." Gerald replied: "The difficulty with that is it would encourage those people to want us to do more work there. We'd be trapped." The Board member said: "Good point. O.K. Could you still have your people mention what you're doing when you're speaking in the parts of the country with Ukrainian descent?"

I did not hear much more about the Eastern Europe debate again until March 1993. Gerald had just been to a meeting of the Board Executive and he was telling the assembled Group of Eight that one particular Board member was putting pressure on again about starting up programming in Eastern Europe. Gerald suggested

to the Group of Eight: "If there was consensus among ourselves, it would be good to put a paper together and to say there is consensus amongst the staff. Also, we need to sit down before the next Board meeting and talk about these issues."

The next step in the Eastern Europe debate was another pooling of ideas through the preparation of a draft document based on some of the comments made during that Group of Eight meeting. Then, in April, at another Group of Eight meeting, Gerald asked the group for feedback on the draft document. There was consensus that the document expressed what they wanted to say and that it explained what Global Faith was about. Gerald's comments on the process of pooling their ideas into a document for the Board were as follows:

It is good because it has helped us to focus. I didn't have to load any guns. I only asked people to think and there was consensus around the table. It is interesting that we are more involved in this and yet, we are dealing with this more objectively than the Board.

Gerald was concerned that the Board might interpret the document as a policy statement which would be inappropriate because it is up to the Board, not the staff, to set policy at Global Faith. Elizabeth reassured Gerald: "We're trying to stay within our policy. If the Board wants to change it, that is their option. But they need to be aware of the implications of that." Asafa followed up on Elizabeth's comments with an even more confrontational stance toward the Board: "As [Elizabeth] said, the people at [Global Faith] have gathered together because they believe these things about [Global Faith]. The issue of Eastern

Europe changes who [Global Faith] is and what [Global Faith] is all about. Perhaps it will change the level of commitment the people here have to [Global Faith]." Gerald answered: "That is what the Board is afraid of - it is a subtle threat of: 'you change it and you'll lose our commitment.' We are within the [Global Faith] mandate which is bigger than the Board and they are asking us to go against it."

The Eastern Europe story continued through the Spring of 1993. At another Group of Eight meeting in late April, 1993, Gerald reported back to the group on the recent Board meeting. Gerald said that the Board member that had been pushing for Eastern Europe assured the Chair of the Board before the meeting that he and Gerald had "called a ceasefire." During the meeting, the Board member said "I wouldn't want to put forward a motion and have it be defeated." Gerald considered this as a signal that "the message was coming through" and that this Board member was now "consensus oriented." Gerald and the staff were pleased.

#### Meaning as Text

The subject matter of the discussions between staff and the Board of Directors is the meaning or significance of Global Faith's vision statement.

#### Meaning as Sub-Text

While negotiating the meaning of the vision statement with the Board of Directors, Global Faith was also working through

other meanings underlying the negotiations. Global Faith staff were asking themselves, and each other, the following questions concerning meaning as sub-text.

**1. What is the significance of the long and difficult process of articulating the vision statement?**

Pam commented that Gerald and all the staff still feel very defensive about the vision statement: "don't mess with our vision statement because it is our motivator." Pam summed up the significance of articulating the vision statement: "The vision really is embedded in us and it means something to us....The closer personal visions are to the organizational vision, the better....Everyone has their own snapshot provided by their own background and baggage that they bring to it. That is why the vision statement can be all things to all people."

**2. What does the vision statement mean to us? What is the symbolic value of the vision statement?**

Gerald explained that the phrase "neglected poor" actually means something different to the Board than it does to him and the rest of the staff.

The hidden meaning of neglected poor - there are two meanings to that phrase. I originally wanted us to write "the non-Christian poor." Right? But that was too offensive to our Board. They took me as having gone too liberal when I said that. So, neglected poor to me would mean "rural" but it would also mean those people that many Christian organizations don't touch. Like the rural Hindus or the rural Muslims. So a fair percent of our investment is going to those people because they are people that Christian organizations generally don't go near....They are neglected from a Christian perspective. Nobody is going to touch them with a ten foot pole because they don't have the same religious base. They don't have a church. They're "yucky."

Right? There is nothing pleasant about that from a Western Christian perspective....So, "neglected" is a softer word [than "non-Christian"] but it means - sometimes it means the same thing.

Pam also pointed out the hidden meaning or ambiguity in the phrase "neglected poor:"

"Neglected poor" means something very significant to us....For somebody who just reads it, it may not mean anything different [from other organizations' vision statements]. But for us, it does - because we know. We read between the lines because we know what went into it. So for us, I know that "neglected poor" means the poor that others don't get to. That CIDA may not care about. Or anybody else. This is for people that can't get help elsewhere and really need it. So that to us is significant.

### **3. What does the vision statement mean to the Board? What is the symbolic value of the vision statement?**

Pam's interpretation of the Board's concerns about the vision statement is as follows:

To the Board...the big issue was whether the poor that we help are Christian poor or whether they can be "pagan" poor....The Board didn't like it [the original phrase of "non-Christian poor"] because they said: 'Well, you're being biased. Two Christians are being biased against Christians!' Actually, probably they thought that we were being biased against Christians because we wanted to go to the secular poor. Not because we preferred them but because they usually don't get the funding that the Christian ones do. Because you don't get any flack from Canadian donors if you are going to a basically Christian country. But if you are going to a Hindu country [to do development work], you probably would. And therefore, those people aren't as apt to get funding. "Neglected poor" may mean different things for different people. But if it defines and motivates them, then it is worth it.

Gerald's interpretation of the Board's posture was that "either there is abysmal ignorance of some of the Board members as to why we exist or else there is tremendous understanding of why we exist and they are trying to change that." According to Gerald,

one Board member in particular, was interested in becoming involved in Eastern Europe because of the large number of evangelical Christians already active there and because of the potential for converting the "beneficiaries." Gerald said: "He [the Board member] is so close to evangelical circles and they're all running over there. People are all tripping over each other to become evangelical Christians. He has forgotten that this is not a goal of [Global Faith] in and of itself....He thinks that all need anywhere in the world should be included in our mandate." Pam added to this: "Thinking back to the Strategic Plan, it does seem to reinforce his thinking that we're biased against working with Christians. It gets us back to the 'neglected poor' issues."

**4. What would the meaning or consequence of going to Eastern Europe to initiate new programs be for Global Faith?**

Elizabeth explained: "If we were to move into Eastern Europe, it would require a philosophical change for [Global Faith]. In Eastern Europe, we wouldn't be dealing with water resources, we would be creating small businesses. We wouldn't be dealing with basic needs which is our raison d'etre. It is not what we were set up to do." Richard pointed out a potentially negative trade-off: "It is important not to deny that there are issues in Eastern Europe that need addressing. But I don't believe that we can afford to take from Third World programming to resource Eastern Europe....If it involves trading resources, then it reflects a moral failure on our part."

### Characteristics of the Negotiation Process

**Stance:** Gerald admitted to the rest of the Group of Eight that his relationship with the Board member that was pushing the hardest for Eastern Europe was tense and even competitive. Gerald said: "I tend to react against him." The "threats" made by Gerald and the staff - that they would lose their commitment to the organization if the Board used their power to insist on programming in Eastern Europe - show that the tone of the negotiations with the Board were distributive, not integrative (Elgstrom & Riis, 1992).

**Goals.** The Board was target-oriented; they wanted Global Faith to start up programming in Eastern Europe. Gerald together with the rest of the Group of Eight were status quo-oriented; they did not want to change or add to their current geographic areas of programming.

**Strategies.** Gerald's main strategy throughout the negotiations was to form a "united front" against the Board by involving the Group of Eight as a type of internal coalition in the negotiation process.<sup>75</sup> Thompson, Peterson, & Kray (1995) suggest that when

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<sup>75</sup> During the process of respondent validation, Gerald added the following comments to this description of negotiating with the Board of Directors: "The [Global Faith] staff wanted me to assure them that we would not give on the Eastern Europe issue. The Board had every right to ask me to examine the option to see whether it was possible. Some of the staff people felt that I was not strong enough in relaying the staff's position on the issue back to the Board."

"coalition members...pool their ideas about their interests and reach consensus about what they want....this will probably enhance feelings of solidarity and cohesion" (p.11). While Gerald was resisting Board pressure and fighting to keep the status quo, he was also framing the situation in a way that tightened group identity within Global Faith. The coalition of the Group of Eight gathered strength over the course of the entire Eastern Europe debate. Because the negotiations occurred over an extended period of time, there was an intermittent sharing of information. According to Polzer, Mannix, and Neale (1995), this "allows coalitions to originate and stabilize both at and away from the table" (p.136).

#### Negotiation Outcome

The final outcome of the "Vision Test" negotiation episode was the decision to not go to Eastern Europe to initiate new programs. Another outcome was increased staff commitment to the vision statement. This surfaced at the two-day Director's Retreat<sup>76</sup> at the end of April 1993. The focus of the Retreat was "vision" - what it was and how to keep it strong. Inevitably, Gerald brought up the topic of the "Eastern Europe debate" and linked it to a discussion of both organizational vision and personal vision. Gerald's comments below reveal how he interpreted the meaning surrounding the negotiations about the

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<sup>76</sup> This retreat was for the Group of Eight and one other senior staff member only. The Board of Directors were not included. I attended as a participant observer.



implementation of the vision statement:

The staff and volunteers aren't with us because of the Board. They're at [Global Faith] because of the vision of people, cause and commitment. The Board may think they're in charge, but they're not. This came out in the Eastern Europe debate. In a for-profit firm, the Board would have had their way with Eastern Europe....It is crucial that we as individuals examine what our personal vision is.... Hopefully, the Group of Eight can sit around and talk and all know that we are coming back to the same place and we put up with all the other stuff....We can only get into trouble if one or two people forget their vision and see this as a nine to five job or if the Board does it to us....It comes back to the importance of having the vision statement coincide with what you believe.

Staff members agreed with Gerald that the Eastern Europe issue was a "watershed" for Global Faith. One person pointed out: "Although you're ticked with [the Board member], maybe you have him to thank for people thinking clearly and taking to arms and defending the vision." And another commented: "The Eastern Europe thing became a way to clarify the cause and to move forward rather than trying to justify what we're doing today or in the past."

#### **Episode Number Four: Negotiating with Overseas Partner Organizations**

##### Planning Activity

The planning activity related to this episode is the process of collaborating with overseas partner organizations in decisions about which programs to offer overseas.

##### Decision-Needing Issue

In the process of carrying out the planning activity, the

decision-needing issue became: How should Global Faith deal with the expectations held by overseas partner organizations for a new overseas program based on the sponsorship model? Should Global Faith change their informal tradition of avoiding the sponsorship model in order to offer the new program?

### Characteristics of the Cultural Context

In contrast with the Board, overseas partner organizations are not viewed as a test or a threat to the vision statement of Global Faith. Rather, they are considered to be the means to its implementation. Summary notes from the Director's Vision Retreat prepared for the Group of Eight by Pam, Director of Marketing, included this quote: "The partners are the hands and feet of [Global Faith's] vision statement. The partners are the critical link between [Global Faith], [Global Faith's] vision, and the poor."

Global Faith's partners are selected on the basis of a priority framework<sup>77</sup> which puts Christian NGOs, evangelical churches, and NGOs with Christian leadership as the first three choices. Within those categories, partner selection is compared to a search for a soul mate and is based on a feeling of affinity between individuals from each organization. Richard explained:

A lot of how we decide on our ongoing partnerships are very personal decisions. It is like when [Gerald] travels, does he get along with the Director of the organization? If [Gerald] gets along with [the Director], that all filters

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<sup>77</sup> See the section on overseas partners in Chapter Five for more details.

through and then you can plan to do whatever you are going to do.

This supports Greenhalgh's and Chapman's (1995) claim that the nature of the relationship is a strong predictor of how the negotiation process will develop.

Even with the emphasis on affinity and mutual understanding, Global Faith may still have difficulties in interpreting their partner organizations' views.

We know when we get overseas, [our partners] don't even tell us what the universe looks like from there. [They don't want to tell us because] it might offend us....And that is going on all the time. And an analogy that is used in another way is sidewalk and subway. We think we're walking down the same street but we're on the sidewalk and they're on the subway. So we don't see the same sight. And that is part of the difficulty as well.

The cultural context for the episode described below is mainly characterized by consensus and cohesion (integration) and to a lesser extent, by ambiguity and confusion (fragmentation).

### Negotiating Parties

The parties involved in this negotiation episode are as follows: Gerald together with the staff of Global Faith, and the Directors of two of Global Faith's main overseas partner organizations.

### Characteristics of the Relationship

Trust is a defining feature of Global Faith's relationships with their main partners. It is viewed as a necessary condition for joint decision-making over the long-term. As Kevin said: "I

think as an organization, our goal is to get to the point where we have built up a trust relationship with a partner strong enough to do joint long-term planning."

Gerald's description of a good partnership also includes trust as a necessary condition: "Well, the primary characteristic [of a good relationship with an overseas partner] is trust. Out of trust, out of business." In addition to trust, Gerald emphasized that the nature of the relationship is "is dependent on what the percentages are in the partnership. If you are equal partners, you're going to have equal input into what you're going to do."

#### The Story: Selling Sponsorship

Ideas for new Global Faith programs generally come from the partners. Gerald said: "We want the area guys to initiate new programs - though we have a difficult time getting them to do that. They are afraid to make decisions. We keep talking with the partners and keep expanding from there. We want our partners to sell it to us and we buy into it." The episode described in this section is about Global Faith "buying into" a new overseas program that two of their main partners were trying to "sell" to them. It is a community linkage program<sup>78</sup> that is essentially sponsorship under a different name.

Gerald described the evolution of this program: "The

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<sup>78</sup> See the "Meat and Potatoes" section in Chapter Four for a more detailed description of this program.

Director of [Global Faith's partner organization in India] wanted us to do [a sponsorship program]. His agenda is for that. They thought that would be a good way of sustaining our involvement in that area. So we fought through and argued that for a couple of years." Global Faith "argued" and resisted the idea at first because of a negative view of child sponsorship in international development programs. Gerald especially, is critical of the sponsorship model.

Some staff at Global Faith participate in the child sponsorship programs of other organizations and do not agree totally with Gerald's criticism of this approach. Stan, in particular, is an advocate for using the term "sponsorship" in fundraising. Gerald will not permit this and does not even like to hear the word "sponsorship" used around the office. The staff call it the "s word." Stan provided his interpretation of the negotiation process leading up to the decision to offer the new program:

We talked about intensifying the donor's benefit - you know the donors' closeness to the work. And then we talked about child sponsorship. In fact, we have had people ask me - donors ask us - if we would do some child sponsorship so they could sponsor. They wanted to sponsor and they wanted to sponsor through [Global Faith]. But that didn't really move us too much....Child sponsorship in itself doesn't reflect what the organization is doing. It fosters a patronizing attitude towards people. So we've been looking for some way to duplicate that reliable flow of income from people who feel that close connection with their recipient - with the recipient of their compassion....

So, the donors started asking here and also at the same time, people overseas were asking: "Would you do some kind of sponsorship? We would like to work with you on that kind of level." Both in Ethiopia and in India. Some of our largest partners were asking us to do it. So that was

another pressure. As a group, that decision was probably affected by the fact that we had had encouragement from [overseas partner organizations]. The group is also affected by [Gerald's] advocacy. He advocated it so that has to have some effect on the group.

Gerald's description of how the negotiations with the partner organizations developed is as follows:

When [the Director of the partner organization in India] said to us "You need to do this business of helping families" [through the new linkage program], we know that he knows exactly at that point what is going on. Right? It is not like we have to run over there and hide behind some baloney about what we are doing. It is clear what we are doing. We're trying to find a way to get people to give every month to a thing. And he wants that and we want that. So we sit down and I ride along in his car and he says: "Here is what you should be doing." Right? With our partner group in Ethiopia, we have a thing that is similar but not identical.

### Meaning as Text

The subject matter of the discussions between Global Faith and overseas partner organizations is the meaning or symbolism of initiating a new program based on the sponsorship model.

### Meaning as Sub-Text

While negotiating the meaning of the new program with overseas partner organization, Global Faith was also working through other meanings underlying the negotiations. Global Faith staff were asking themselves, and each other, the following questions concerning meaning as sub-text.

#### **1. What is the meaning or significance of the process of collaborating with overseas partner organizations?**

Richard emphasized that their partners may not initially or even

automatically trust Global Faith to collaborate:

Organizationally, we have to earn the right to be trusted. We have to show over time that we're not going to dominate. There are things that interest us. There are things that interest them. Their agenda is most important because it is their country. They have to live with the political, social and economic implications of the work that they do.

Kevin also stressed the importance of getting "to the point of trust where what they want to do is based on their needs and not your priorities." Stan explained that Global Faith staff thought: "Well, if the partners want it, that is where the request should come from - from overseas. It has been initiated from the right place. Let's do what we can to make that happen."

**2. What does the new program mean to us? What is the symbolic value of a program based on a sponsorship model?**

Gerald explained that the biggest concern about a new program based on a sponsorship model from Global Faith's point of view was "probably consensus that we don't like sponsorship and child sponsorship. That would probably be our largest problem with it. If we don't like that, why are we doing this? What are we doing here? So, first we have to rationalize it for ourselves."

Gerald, especially, is against sponsorship. He points to the high overhead and tracking costs, and the inequities created within communities as a result of sponsoring only certain individuals. Gerald recognizes that general public donors in Canada like contributing to sponsorship programs because of the "good feeling" they get but he insists that the exchange is not equal. Donors get more out of sponsorship programs than the "beneficiaries." Stan is more in favor of a sponsorship model and

he pointed to the symbolic value of the new program in terms of fundraising: "It builds a point of contact for the donor and I think a better contact. It gives them more motivation to become educated. To become conversant with what is going on. To read the reports on the community. Why? Because they have linked with a family there."

**3. What does the new program mean to our overseas partner organizations? What is the functional value of a program based on a sponsorship model?**

Gerald explained that "our partners have been after us for years to come up with something to guarantee income from us so that they can work to support the communities." Stan also interpreted the functional value of the new program from the partners' point of view to be the fact that "it builds a steady income for the people overseas to complete the projects in the communities."

Characteristics of the Negotiation Process

**Stance.** Both parties had a cooperative stance throughout the negotiations.

**Goals.** Early in the negotiations with their main partners over the new community linkage program, Global Faith had a status quo orientation. They did not want to become involved in a program based on the sponsorship model. "Sponsorship" was jokingly considered to be a forbidden word. However, due to the nature of Global Faith's relationship with their partner and the ability of



Global Faith staff to recognize the functional as well as the symbolic meaning of the new program, Global Faith was able to adjust their goals to be target-oriented and in line with those of their partner.

**Strategies.** According to Kevin, dialogue leading to mutual understanding, delegation of decision-making to partners, and recognition of Global Faith's own criteria and priorities are the key strategies used by Global Faith for maintaining trust relationships with their partners.

This implies dialogue in terms of what they're currently doing and what they want to do. It implies discussion on development philosophy. It implies some level of your partner understanding [Global Faith] - understanding what it is and what it wants to do long-term. It implies that the donor - us at [Global Faith] allows some decision-making by the recipient [i.e., overseas partner organization] in terms of what they can do with that money. Now, it is very difficult to get to that point because we have criteria. We have priorities in what we want to do.

Gerald's descriptions of Global Faith's strategies for negotiating with partner organizations include an emphasis on mutual understanding and dialogue: "you know each other and that doesn't mean organizationally as much as it means individually. And, at the end of the day, when things aren't working well, you talk it over. If you're really partners, you don't walk away." Dialogue is especially important because "self-presentational concerns" often prevent partners from openly divulging information about their own preferences and goals (Thompson, Peterson, & Kray, 1995).

An integrative agreement with the overseas partner

organizations was made possible through a strategy called "bridging" in negotiation theory. Pruitt (1983) describes the bridging strategy below:

In bridging, neither party achieves its initial demands but a new option is devised that satisfies the most important interests underlying these demands....Bridging typically involves a reformulation of the issue(s) based on an analysis of the underlying interests on both sides....People who seek to develop solutions by bridging need information about the nature of the two parties' interests and their priorities among these interests....More often, higher-priority interests are served while lower-priority interests are discarded. (pp.40-41)

Because of the long-term relationships with partner organizations built on principles of mutual trust and dialogue, both parties were aware of each other's interests and the priorities among those interests. This awareness of each other's hierarchical "interest trees" allowed them to travel down the trees far enough to locate interests that could be easily reconciled with the interests of the other party (Pruitt, 1983).

### Negotiation Outcome

An integrative agreement was reached and the new community linkage program was finally initiated in the fall of 1992. Brochures were designed and distributed, photographs of families to "sponsor" were processed, and donors were informed of the new way to support Global Faith's work overseas.

### **Episode Number Five: Negotiating within Global Faith**

#### Planning Activity

The planning activity related to this episode is the process

of coordinating and managing the people involved in planning at Global Faith.

### Decision-Needing Issue

In the process of carrying out the planning activity, the decision-needing issue became: How should Global Faith staff be motivated in their work? How can Global Faith staff maintain their commitment to the "cause?"

### Characteristics of the Cultural Context

References to the family setting of Global Faith and the common emphasis on agreement and harmony suggest a cultural context characterized mainly by consensus and consistency (integration) and to a lesser extent, potential conflict and contradictions (differentiation).

### Negotiating Parties

The parties involved in this negotiation episode are as follows: Gerald, and the rest of the staff of Global Faith.

### Characteristics of the Relationship

The staff of Global Faith consider themselves to be drawn together like a family - with feelings of fellowship and also with the potential for discord.

When you are a close-knit family, the issues that divide you or that could cause conflict can be very, very strong issues and they can be very, very divisive. And I think in a strong, close-knit, small, working family, [Gerald] is very

much able to keep a balanced relationship with everybody. Pam also commented on Gerald's central role and the family setting at Global Faith.

I would see [Gerald] as somebody that pulls us together in discussions and everything....A lot of meetings and checks and balances. He does have a personal style. I would say that [Global Faith] is run more like a family setting in that you know, you have your squabbles. Not so much now as - I think it used to be worse. But it is more like a family in that you don't always get along.

In addition to the potential for conflict, there is also the element of mutual dependence in relationships at Global Faith.

Gerald told the Group of Eight:

We all live in the same reality. I believe I've been asked to do a job which makes me the same as everyone else in the room. The issue is trying together to get it done. I can't ignore what I have been asked to do, but I can't do it without you.

Mutual dependence together with the potential for conflict are the ingredients of a relationship engaged in negotiation.

### The Story: Leadership at the Hub

The four episodes discussed in the preceding sections show how Global Faith negotiates across organizational boundaries. This section looks at negotiations within Global Faith and focuses on Gerald's role as a leader.

Gerald occupies a central position at Global Faith. He has unlimited access to information which, according to Ian, is necessary because of his role as negotiator among the staff.

Everything reports back to [Gerald]. He is on top of everything. And the order is that every single piece of paper that goes out, every memo that is written - whether it is to somebody overseas or a letter going out or

interdepartmental or whatever - a copy of everything goes to [Gerald]. He glances through the whole thing so that he always has a total picture of what is going on.

Now, that is vitally important because you could relate it to a political situation that you see in government and they are constantly being badgered by the single interest groups. Each one has the most important problem in the world and they want you to finance it. And somehow, somebody has got to have the overall picture in order to place an evaluation on these things and know when to say no. And [Gerald] really is that person. He has that total picture. And we have all had sessions where we were really badgering him to get something done or to get something produced and he is the one that will have to say no. Which he does. And he still keeps us talking. We're still friends.

Gerald's role as a leader calls to mind the image of the hub of a wagon wheel. Gerald is at the center, interacting with each spoke or individual staff member in a "balanced" way so that the rim is supported and the wheel (i.e., the organization) remains intact. The staff at Global Faith view Gerald, the Executive Director, as having a central vantage point on the workings of the agency: "he is the only one who sees the whole picture" and "everything that goes in or out has to go through [Gerald] somehow."

Gerald deals both bilaterally with the departmental Directors and multilaterally with the Group of Eight and the various other committees. His control of the spokes (i.e., promoting consensus decision-making among the Directors) helps support the rim (i.e., continued survival of the organization). As Gerald said: "When a group of people sit around, one of the decisions I have to make is the decision regarding whether there is consensus in the room or not" because without consensus, "you end up destroying each other and you destroy the program."

This episode illustrates how Gerald's actions as a leader serve to maintain the wagon wheel configuration of Global Faith, which in turn affects how Global Faith negotiates across organizational boundaries. How does Gerald actually operate in a meeting with the Group of Eight? The following excerpt from my fieldnotes gives an indication of Gerald's style of interaction and leadership in a group situation.

[Gerald] ran the meeting much the same way that I have seen him do before. He directed the conversation, asked the questions, clarified responses, made jokes, and then closed the meeting by going around the room and asking each one by one if they were "happy" and if everything was all taken care of. He kept asking, one person at a time, until the group tide brought in acquiescence. Everyone nodded.

His style both bothered me and impressed me. He didn't sit back and let everyone work it all out without him - he kept a watchful and careful hand on the gear shift. The conversation went where he directed it. Spontaneity came in through the jokes and they were mostly initiated by him. It was not an environment that would foster creativity or risk taking.

I was impressed, on the other hand, by his seemingly sincere interest in everyone's level of agreement. He gave everyone a chance to say how they were doing. Thinking about this now: it seems almost patronizing; as if people won't say what they were thinking unless he asked them. Maybe they wouldn't. They might be sort of in awe of him - given his career as a pastor and the fact that many of them met him through the church.

Gerald also defines the experience of the staff at Global Faith through control of the issues brought up in conversations and during meetings. Gerald's rationale for this is as follows:

We do know that if we lose sight of the fact that we exist to share compassion with the neglected poor, all we are doing is raising money to sustain ourselves. Even that, I guess, leads to a bigger problem and that is the larger you get, the more difficult it is to remember why you do what you do because you end up being in meetings all day. You end up discussing this. You end up discussing CIDA. You end up

discussing an appeal letter. You end up discussing how much money came in from that appeal letter. And those things are all closer to home. It's a lot more difficult to discuss what is happening in Ethiopia when most of the people don't have a clue. If you took the people here, three quarters of them deal with everything but the direct dealing with Third World issues. Therefore, three quarters of the conversations, if we're not careful, will end up being about everything but the Third World.

Gerald frames the conversations at Global Faith by modeling a type of "method acting" (his term) for the group. Ian commented on Gerald's approach:

[Gerald's] compassion is there and it is very real. You could even see it this morning [during the Prayer Meeting] when he was reading that article about the incredible hardship in Somalia. Just wondering about people and the things that will occupy us. And I think he did that deliberately because he knows that all of us are reasonably normal people and we get our own agendas and we get interested in other things besides the ministry of [Global Faith]. You can get so used to hearing about hunger and starvation. It can become academic. It can become stuff that we just talk about. And it can become cold and it must not.

This framing or defining the experiences of others corresponds to Smircich & Morgan's (1982) view of leadership as the management of meaning:

Leadership as a phenomenon is identifiable within its wider context as a form of action that seeks to shape its context. Leadership works by influencing the relationship between figure and ground, and hence the meaning and definition of the context as a whole. The actions and utterances of leaders guide the attention of those involved in a situation in ways that are consciously or unconsciously designed to shape the meaning of the situation. The actions and utterances draw attention to particular aspects of the overall flow of experience, transforming what may be complex and ambiguous into something more discrete and vested with a specific pattern of meaning. (p.261)

These descriptions of Gerald's influence over Global Faith staff members call to mind Etzioni's (1961) description of "charisma" which is "the ability of an actor to exercise diffuse

and intense influence over the normative orientations of other actors....charisma, like authority, is a relational property" (p.203). Etzioni's (1961) view of charisma helps to explain the high level of commitment and moral involvement of Global Faith staff:

One generic function of charisma for organizations is well known: it serves as a major source of legitimation. In addition, it influences the need-dispositions of the participants in such a manner that their participation in the organization, in particular its symbolic activities (e.g., rituals), will increase their gratification and hence their positive orientation. It therefore builds up commitment....the more normative power is relied upon, the greater the need for moral involvement, and the greater the need for charisma. (p.210)

### Meaning as Text

The subject matter of the discussions between Gerald and the rest of the Global Faith staff is the meaning or significance of their work at Global Faith.

### Meaning as Sub-Text

While negotiating the meaning of working at Global Faith, Gerald and the staff were also working through other meanings underlying the negotiations. Gerald and the staff were asking themselves, and each other, the following questions concerning meaning as sub-text.

**1. What is the meaning or significance of Gerald's relationships and interactions with individual staff members at Global Faith, according to the staff members?**

Asafa attributes Gerald's ability to get people to buy into his



ideas to the custom-made influence that he exerts on each individual staff member.

One of the issues that I struggle with is that I think of how much is my view independent of [Gerald's] view because he does have tremendous influence on people, on thinking. His influence is not a dictatorial influence. It is almost as if it is an influence which comes by providing a person whatever type of influence they need. It is a very flexible type of influence....It is sort of custom-made influence, custom-made for each person.

Dan's interpretation of why Gerald is successful in getting staff to "buy in" is as follows:

For me, it is because of his past record. His experience and wise decision-making in the past telling me that this probably is a good idea and I should give it a try. And I don't think that I have ever questioned seriously anything he has suggested that way....[The other Directors] probably have their own reasons [for buying in]. Some do it just totally out of loyalty. I try to think of it in a logical way. I probably do it out of loyalty too though. If he has something to say, to me it is very important that I listen to it. And I see a lot of wisdom in what he says. I think most of our strategy and ideas come through him as opposed to sitting down and brainstorming and coming up with it as a group....And it is certainly not that people don't have ideas. We certainly do and that comes out when we do the Strategic Planning thing. But the really important stuff - like if you want to figure out how we are going to deal with a CIDA Institutional Evaluation, well, [Gerald] will have excellent ideas on how to do that.

Pam emphasized the importance of loyalty in the relationships between Gerald and the staff:

There is certainly a loyalty to people in the organization. There is loyalty to [Gerald] for sure, and I would see that in all the Directors [Group of Eight] and most of the other staff as well. There is real loyalty to [Gerald] and to the organization - [Gerald] being [Global Faith] as well. And I see a strong loyalty from [Gerald] to the people, the staff. And he doesn't like seeing conflict and that sort of thing.

**2. What is the meaning or significance of Gerald's relationships and interactions with individual staff members at Global Faith, according to Gerald?**

Gerald's view of management is that it "is always related to relationships. These are the people you are walking through life with....I can't ignore what I have been asked to do, but I can't do it without you. I appreciate all of you."

**3. What is the meaning of a job somewhere else compared to working at Global Faith?**

According to Gerald, working at Global Faith is not "just a job" - it is more of a calling.

In many other organizations, you would be there from nine to five, right? That is your job. You're in a union and you go home. That is your career path. You know, you quit this one and then you go to that one and then you go to that one. I don't think that is the way to operate. I think there has to be enough of a commitment to the poor that you see this [working at Global Faith] as a vehicle to see that fulfilled. And therefore, you are [Global Faith] and [Global Faith] is you.

Characteristics of the Negotiation Process

**Strategies.** What are Gerald's main strategies as a leader? I asked Gerald what he thought the most important lessons would be for other NGOs that might want to follow the same course as Global Faith. Gerald's first lesson for other organizations would be to focus on strengthening the perimeter or the boundary of the organization through a careful process of recruitment.

The first thing would be to choose the people who work within the organization very carefully....Are the people you work with soulmates? Now, as organizations like ours become more and more professional, they are losing more and more of that....They don't want to know about the soul of the

people. They don't have any interest in it. So how do you know whether you have a sense of cause anymore? I think those are the most important. The other thing is: are you willing to stick together? Or are you ready to go in there and leave in two years and wander off in some other area? Is there some synergy? And I would also warn people against going after highly trained, highly skilled professional whatevers. Because they will never stay. They are never committed to the cause. They are committed to what they think they can do well. And what you can do well is secondary to the cause.

Gerald then emphasized the importance of role assignment and letting staff find their own level within the organizational structure.

The second thing would be to throw out the organizational structure....It would come back into its own. You look at [Global Faith]. People find their own level. Right? And their jobs help them find their own level.

Very few of the staff at Global Faith actually came to the organization with experience in international development. Gerald has been able to see the "potential" in people and has used this assessment in decisions to send people overseas without prior experience (like Kevin or Dan, for example). Asafa commented on this characteristic of Gerald's leadership:

When you look at all the positions at [Global Faith] and all the roles that people play at [Global Faith], none of us started those or got to those positions because when we started we were the best qualified people for those positions. [Gerald] never looked at that paper qualifications that people have...that is not the critical and key issue. I imagine he would ask the question: "Is this guy a team player?" I think that would be a critical question for him. And, "Is this guy trainable or teachable?" And, "what are the person's motivations?" So he would really focus on the people.

Gerald explained that giving staff (especially the support staff) the opportunity to spend time overseas is "the only way you get them to buy into what we're doing."

Another characteristic of Gerald's leadership at Global Faith is his ability to promote a consensus norm of decision-making within the Group of Eight. Gerald explains how he is able to accomplish this:

My style probably sits well with all of these different people, the eight people - there are seven others, I guess, right? So I seem to be able to relate and that is where the bilateral things work. But it also works multilaterally. Because we can sit together and there is generally speaking, consensus. I do not have that particular style where I will go and bring people on side before every meeting and manoeuvre and manipulate bilaterally, before the multilateral meeting takes place. I would rather see what they feel and then be able to walk out of there and know that there wasn't consensus and we didn't make a decision. Maybe that is another thing that I do. Maybe I not only make decisions but I make sure we don't make decisions. Like if there is not consensus, I make sure we don't ever reach a decision. So that we can walk away and come back.

Another way to look at the promotion of consensus is as the valuing of conformity. Pfeffer (1982) points out that "groups tend to enforce conformity on their members. In return for belonging, a person is expected to comply with the behavioral and attitudinal norms of the group, particularly when such norms are considered to be critical" (p.103). The Christian foundation of Global Faith together with Gerald's style of leadership helped to ensure "attitudinal homogenization" (Pfeffer, 1982) within the Group of Eight.

### Negotiation Outcome

According to Gerald, the outcome of negotiations between Gerald and the staff of Global Faith concerning the meaning of their work at Global Faith is an "exchange" and "an incredible,

incredible impact."

We know that we can probably never do anything in life that is completely altruistic. I doubt that I can...Whatever I do, I always get an exchange. I always get something back. So I say I'm doing something for God and that type of pompous malarky. But the fact of the matter is I don't know how God feels about it, but I feel good about it. So, when we have all these various people, if we can jointly feel that way about each other and then reach out from there, we have an incredible, incredible impact.

According to Pam, an outcome of negotiations with Gerald concerning the meaning of work at Global Faith is increased commitment and low staff turnover.

I think [Gerald] has a style of managing that he is very proud of and will tell anybody about. When he compares himself to other non-profits that have a huge turnover of people, he sees his style of managing or directing as something that goes deeper because it is a commitment to the poor and that is why people stay so long. And that to him is a huge asset and a very positive thing for him whereas a lot of non-profits have a huge turn-around of staff. I think that helps in the stability of [Global Faith].

### **Comparison and Analysis**

The five episodes illustrating the negotiation of meaning at Global Faith were presented above using the framework developed in Chapter Two. This section applies the same framework for comparing and analyzing the five episodes.

### **Planning Activities**

The planning activities that involved the negotiation of meaning were:

1. securing and maintaining government funding through the submission of a proposal and completion of final reports,
2. securing and maintaining general public donations through fundraising,

3. articulating and implementing the vision statement,
4. collaborating with overseas partner organizations in decisions about which programs to offer overseas, and
5. coordinating and managing the people involved in planning within the organization.

What is noteworthy here is the fact that all of these planning activities had to be carried out with the participation and contributions of many individuals. Planning at Global Faith clearly involves a give-and-take among people, many of whom would not consider themselves to be involved in planning decisions. The pervasive and socially interactive nature of planning activities means that planning in organizations is an embedded process making it difficult to separate from other aspects of organizational decision-making.

### **Decision-Needing Issues**

The decision-needing issues that led to the negotiations were:

1. How should Global Faith deal with the confusing process of submitting "adequate" reports and proposals to CIDA so that CIDA funding for Global Faith's core overseas programs would be released as soon as possible?
2. How should Global Faith deal with conflicting expectations and demands from CIDA and from the general public donors regarding proselytization overseas? How can Global Faith satisfy both groups and still do what they want to do themselves?
3. How should Global Faith deal with conflicting interpretations held by staff and the Board of Directors over how to define and carry out Global Faith's vision statement? Should Global Faith initiate new programs in Eastern Europe as suggested by the Board of Directors?

4. How should Global Faith deal with the expectations held by overseas partner organizations for a new overseas program based on the sponsorship model? Should Global Faith change their informal tradition of avoiding the sponsorship model in order to offer the new program?
5. How should Global Faith staff be motivated in their work? How can Global Faith staff maintain their commitment to the "cause?"

The need for decisions around these issues and the interdependent nature of the relationships among decision-makers together provided the impetus for the negotiations. As can be seen from the above list, not all the issues had to do with specific programs but their resolution ultimately affected the offering of programs.

#### **Characteristics of the Cultural Contexts**

The main characteristics of the cultural context for each negotiation episode were:

1. ambiguity, confusion and paradox (fragmentation)
2. conflict and inconsistency (differentiation)
3. conflict and inconsistency (differentiation)
4. consensus, cohesion, and consistency (integration)
5. consensus, cohesion, and consistency (integration)

The cultural contexts provide the meanings that people use to make sense of what should be done to resolve the conflict or clarify the confusion or promote cohesion. The cultural contexts are also the product of what was done. Varying interpretations of the cultural context are related to previous negotiation experiences and outcomes. Past outcomes become present cultural

contexts; present outcomes contribute to the cultural contexts of future negotiations.

### **Negotiating Parties**

The negotiating parties involved in each of the negotiation episodes were:

1. Richard, Elizabeth, and Gerald from Global Faith, and Janet, William, and Edward from CIDA;
2. Stan, Richard, and Gerald from Global Faith, and many individuals, mostly from the Evangelical Christian community;
3. Gerald, together with the rest of the Group of Eight, and the Board of Directors;
4. Gerald, together with the staff of Global Faith, and the Directors of two of the main overseas partner organizations; and
5. Gerald, and the rest of the staff at Global Faith.

This list shows that with the exception of the fifth episode, the negotiations at Global Faith most often occur between and among groups of people as opposed to being contained to just two individuals. This adds another layer of complexity to the negotiation process that is especially apparent at the sub-text level.

### **Characteristics of the Relationship**

Trust - or lack of trust - is often a defining feature of relationships between negotiating parties at Global Faith. Familiarity and the degree of identification with the other party also affects the stance taken during the negotiation process. At



Global Faith, the case was that the greater the familiarity, trust, and degree of identification with the other party, the more likely it was that the negotiating parties chose a cooperative or non-confrontational stance. This supports Greenhalgh and Chapman's (1995) claim that the nature of the relationship is a strong predictor of how the negotiation process will develop.

### **Negotiation of Meaning Episode (The Story)**

In an effort to evoke the essence of each episode, the following story names were assigned:

1. Three Backflips
2. A Struggle for Integrity
3. Vision Test
4. Selling Sponsorship
5. Leadership at the Hub

Now that the details of the events and circumstances surrounding each of the episodes have been presented, it is possible to see the interconnectedness of all the stories. For example, negotiations with CIDA provided the focus of the Three Backflips story but CIDA's expectations were also a concern in the Struggle for Integrity story. Donors' preferences provided the focus of the Struggle for Integrity story but they were also considered in Vision Test and in Selling Sponsorship. Overseas partner organizations' priorities provided the focus of the Selling Sponsorship story, but they were also a factor in Vision Test. Gerald's expectations and preferences were considered in all of the stories.

## **Meaning as Text**

The subject matters of the discussions during the negotiations were:

1. the meaning or content of CIDA's reporting requirements and the meaning or purpose of the Global Faith's proposal,
2. the meaning or purpose of Global Faith's overseas programs,
3. the meaning or significance of Global Faith's vision statement,
4. the meaning or symbolism of initiating a new program based on the sponsorship model, and
5. the meaning or significance of working at Global Faith.

This shows that different aspects of meaning - content, purpose, significance, and symbolism - of various phenomena, activities, decisions, or states of existence at Global Faith are all negotiable. The fact that so much is open to negotiation does not mean that nothing matters. On the contrary, the negotiations are about what matters.

## **Meaning as Sub-Text**

While negotiating meaning (i.e., while trying to clarify or resolve unclear or conflicting issues), the parties involved were also working through other meanings underlying the negotiations.

Questions about sub-text meanings were:

- 1.1 What is the meaning or significance of the process of negotiating with CIDA in order to receive funding?
- 1.2 What do the reports and proposals mean to us? What is their functional value?
- 1.3 What do the reports and proposals mean to CIDA? What is their functional value?
- 1.4 What are the CIDA officer's intentions? Is she well-meaning with respect to Global Faith?

- 2.1 What is the meaning or significance of the process of negotiating with general public donors in order to receive donations?
- 2.2 What do the donations mean to us? What is their functional value?
- 2.3 What do Global Faith's fundraising efforts mean to the general public donors? How are they interpreted?
- 2.4 What are the individual donor's intentions? Are they well-meaning with respect to Global Faith?
  
- 3.1 What is the meaning or significance of the long and difficult process of articulating the vision statement?
- 3.2 What does the vision statement mean to us? What is the symbolic value of the vision statement?
- 3.3 What does the vision statement mean to the Board of Directors? What is the symbolic value of the vision statement?
- 3.4 What would the meaning or consequence of going to Eastern Europe to initiate new programs be for Global Faith?
  
- 4.1 What is the meaning or significance of the process of collaborating with overseas partner organizations?
- 4.2 What does the new program mean to us? What is the symbolic value of a program based on a sponsorship model?
- 4.3 What does the new program mean to our overseas partner organizations? What is the functional value of a program based on a sponsorship model?
  
- 5.1 What is the meaning or significance of Gerald's relationships and interactions with individual staff members at Global Faith, according to the staff members?
- 5.2 What is the meaning or significance of Gerald's relationships and interactions with individual staff members at Global Faith, according to Gerald?
- 5.3 What is the meaning of a job somewhere else compared to working at Global Faith?

This list of questions about the meanings underlying the negotiations shows that multiple and varying interpretations of relationships and related planning activities are not only possible but are factored in to negotiations themselves. Understanding at the sub-text level of negotiating meaning at Global Faith is related to the choice of strategy used during the negotiations.

## **Characteristics of the Negotiation Process**

The following strategies were used in the negotiation episodes:

- 1.1 acquire information about CIDA officers' preferences and priorities;
- 1.2 "find the common ground that you can work with;"
- 1.3 mirror CIDA's vagueness and keep proposals in draft form until CIDA's position is known;
- 1.4 firm flexibility (firm with respect to Global Faith's ends and flexible with respect to the means to these ends).
  
- 2.1 attention-shaping (framing, highlighting, or downplaying of the information communicated to CIDA and the donors);
- 2.2 structural differentiation (different subunits deal with various coalitions).
  
- 3.1 form a united front through internal coalition building;
- 3.2 intermittent sharing of information within coalition.
  
- 4.1 dialogue with respect to goals and philosophies;
- 4.2 bridging (reformulation of the issue based on analysis of the sub-text).
  
- 5.1 recruitment of "soulmates;"
- 5.2 let staff "find their own level;"
- 5.3 offering of rewards (time overseas) to encourage staff to "buy in;"
- 5.4 promote consensus norm of decision-making ("attitudinal homogenization").

This list reveals a wide variety of the strategies used in negotiation of meaning episodes at Global Faith. It seems that the choice of strategy is specific to each episode rather than to a type of cultural context.

## **Negotiation Outcomes**

The following outcomes were the results of the negotiation episodes:

- 1.1 completion of reports and submission of an acceptable proposal;
- 1.2 plan made for the next three years ("it forced us to

- think");
- 1.3 increased understanding of a new relationship with a CIDA officer.
  - 2.1 plan made to continue receiving general public donor support through fundraising aimed at the Evangelical Christian community;
  - 2.2 donors' expectations were met;
  - 2.3 CIDA's expectations were met.
  - 3.1 plan made to not go to Eastern Europe to initiate new programs;
  - 3.2 increased staff commitment to the vision statement and clarification of the "cause;"
  - 4.1 plan made through an integrative agreement with overseas partner organizations to offer the new program;
  - 4.2 overseas partner organizations and donors both satisfied.
  - 5.1 exchange fulfilled between Gerald and the staff and an "incredible impact" from "jointly feeling that way about each other;"
  - 5.2 staff plan to stay longer at Global Faith due to increased feelings of involvement and commitment.

Each episode included an outcome which was a plan for the guidance of future action - which makes sense because the product of planning is a plan. However, it appears that there are other products of the planning process as well; such as increased staff commitment and increased understanding of new relationships with stakeholders.

The next chapter concludes this ethnography of planning at Global Faith. I summarize the study and the results, and consider the contributions to knowledge, implications, and limitations of the research.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS**

Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete. And, worse than that, the more deeply it goes the less complete it is. It is a strange science whose most telling assertions are its most tremulously based, in which to get somewhere with the matter at hand is to intensify the suspicion, both your own and that of others, that you are not quite getting it right. (Geertz, 1973, p.29)

In this concluding chapter, I summarize the study and discuss the contributions to knowledge, implications, and limitations of the research. In closing, I offer suggestions for future research and end with some remarks dealing with the importance of learning in the process of planning.

### **Summary of the Study**

This section revisits the problem statement, research purpose, methods, and conceptual framework through a condensed synopsis of the most relevant points.

#### **Problem Statement and Research Purpose**

The research problem that this study addresses is two-fold. First, the persistence of poverty gives rise to a real world concern for improving the effectiveness of international development efforts. To address the link between the alleviation of poverty, adult education, and a grass-roots approach, this study focused on planning within an organization that offers adult education programs overseas, specifically an NGO. Planning within NGOs is complex - both in terms of the problems faced, and

in terms of the strategies needed to deal with them. An understanding of the dynamics of planning in such an NGO will help in articulating more effective approaches to planning practice in international development. As Herbert-Copley (1987) points out, if NGOs "are to retain and improve their relevance to the problems of international development, a move to new roles and new strategies is essential" (p.27).

The second aspect of the research problem is that the relationship between the planning process and the planning context seems not to have been fully explored in the literature on adult education program planning. There is a need for a more complete set of analytical tools that captures the complexities of planning and sheds light on the relationship between the planning context and the planning process.

The purpose of this dissertation is to address the main theoretical question raised by the problem statement: **How do NGOs plan so as to maintain themselves and be effective given the pressures on them?**

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework developed in Chapter Two builds on the negotiation approach to planning. The framework provides a set of related perspectives that serves as an orienting strategy for the analysis of the ethnographic findings presented in Chapters Four - Seven. The first part of the conceptual framework links two strands of research: leadership theory and the social

contextualist perspective in negotiation theory. Through this juxtaposition, I was able to examine the process of planning in a new light - as the negotiation of meaning.

The second part of the framework shows how a deeper understanding of the context of planning is accomplished by conceptualizing context as culture and by applying a subjectivist, multi-perspective approach to analyzing cultures in organizations. Martin's (1992) framework for analyzing cultures in organizations - which incorporates the integration perspective, the differentiation perspective, and the fragmentation perspective - was used to see Global Faith culture in three different ways. These same ways of viewing culture at Global Faith were matched with the varying interpretations held by Global Faith staff members in order to characterize the cultural contexts for specific episodes of planning involving the negotiation of meaning.

## **Methods**

I chose to use ethnography as the methodology for this research in order to uncover the social meanings that guide the behavior of planners. This sustained involvement in a single setting allowed me to tell the story of planning within Global Faith through the words, ideas, and habits of the people who participate in planning and decision-making there. I forged my interpretations of what went on at Global Faith out of how Global Faith people themselves viewed their work, their lives and their



world. Fieldwork - including participant observation, 25 interviews, and document analysis - was conducted at Global Faith over the course of seventeen months (January 1992 - May 1993). Through ethnographic fieldwork, I was able produce an account of planning that, as Forester (1989) suggests, does "do justice to the real, messy settings in which planning takes place" (p.10) and that embraces "the everyday experiences of planners and makes sense of their perceptions of the complexities, uncertainties, and ambiguities of daily practice" (p.11). The setting of Global Faith provided an intriguing and meaningful empirical base that helped to shed light on the relationship between the process of planning and the cultural contexts of an organization (Adler & Adler, 1995).

### **Summary of Results**

This section considers the findings in relation to the research questions posed in Chapter One. This research was originally designed to address four questions. The first three questions were open-ended descriptive questions dealing with: 1. **the Global Faith context** (e.g., administrative structure, resources, and relationships with funding bodies); 2. **the planning process** (e.g., pattern of decisions and nature of interactions); and 3. **planners' perceptions** (e.g., intentions, interpretations, and strategies). These individual questions were pulled together into a fourth question which served as the main question guiding entry into the research:

**4. What is the nature of the relationship between Global Faith's organizational context, the process of planning, planners' perspectives, and the shape of nonformal adult education programs offered?**

Because it was very difficult to isolate the planning of individual nonformal adult education programs from the broader work of articulating organizational goals, mobilizing government resources, raising money from the general public, maintaining relationships with overseas partner organizations, and motivating staff at Global Faith, I decided to broaden my focus beyond program planning to include organizational activities and decisions related to planning in a more general sense. I also came to see the process of planning at Global Faith as involving negotiation. Furthermore, I decided that a more useful way to view "organizational context" in this study was as "culture" which helped to draw attention to the subjective, interpretive nature of organizational life. The original four questions did not fully capture what I ended up investigating in this study and therefore, a fifth question was added:

**5. How does planning as negotiation occur within the organizational culture of an NGO?**

This ethnography of planning at Global Faith provides the following answers to this question:

- Planning at Global Faith involves the negotiation of meaning.
- People involved in planning at Global Faith both negotiate meaning and deal with meaning in negotiations. The two dimensions of meaning are referred to here as text and sub-text.

- The negotiation of meaning at Global Faith occurs within multiple, subjectively perceived organizational cultures.
- The occurrence of the negotiation of meaning at Global Faith can be analyzed as episodes whereby the links between the planning activity, decision-needing issue, characteristics of the cultural context, relationship between the negotiating parties, meaning as text and sub-text, the negotiation process, and outcomes can be revealed and understood.
- There is a recursive relationship between planning processes involving the negotiation of meaning and Global Faith cultures whereby the cultures are both precursors and products of the negotiation of meaning episodes.
- By including the negotiation of meaning in planning activities, Global Faith is able to deal effectively with confusing requirements, conflicting expectations, and diverse demands that they face in their interactions with CIDA, general public donors, the Board of Directors, and overseas partner organizations.
- By including the negotiation of meaning in planning activities, Global Faith is also able to motivate staff so that they remain at Global Faith and so that they remain committed to the cause of Global Faith.

### **Contributions to Knowledge**

There are two main contributions to knowledge made by this dissertation: 1) the development of a conceptual framework for understanding planning as a process that involves the negotiation of meaning; and 2) the application of this framework - together with Martin's (1992) matrix framework for understanding organizational cultures - to a particular NGO setting. The careful, in-depth examination of the dynamics of planning within Global Faith made it possible to address the following question: How do NGOs plan so as to maintain themselves and be effective given the pressures on them? The answer offered by this

ethnography of planning at Global Faith is that by including the negotiation of meaning in planning, NGOs are able to maintain themselves and deal with pressures effectively.

### **Implications**

This dissertation has shown how an NGO manages to survive and thrive through the negotiation of meaning. What are the implications of this new knowledge? This section first considers the theoretical implications of seeing planning as the negotiation of meaning and of seeing the planning context as multiple cultures. Then, some implications for practice are discussed.

### **Theoretical Implications**

#### Implications of Seeing Planning as the Negotiation of Meaning

The concept of planning as the negotiation of meaning implicitly links the planning process and the cultural contexts of planning in a recursive relationship. Cultures give meaning to individual behavior and organizational activities. When viewed as the negotiation of meaning, the planning process becomes both a source and a consequence of cultures in organizations. Planning as the negotiation of meaning is a process "through which organization members both create and sustain their view of the world and image of themselves in the world" (Smircich, 1983, p.56). This recursive relationship between the planning process and the cultural contexts is reflected in the findings of this

research whereby the cultural contexts, negotiation processes and outcomes are linked. This two-way adaptation between process and context occurs both within and across the negotiation of meaning episodes. The negotiation of meaning affects immediate decisions as well as expectations for future interactions.

Considering the findings of this study, it is clear that typical prescriptive models of program planning in adult education are not able to account for much of what actually happens in practice. Traditional program planning theory tends to focus on the technical aspects of planning and has for the most part failed to grasp the importance of the interpretive and symbolic side of planning activities. For example, the "generic planning model" (Sork & Buskey, 1986, p.89) discussed in Chapter Two focuses on naming objective tasks that should be completed while planning an adult education program as opposed to an emphasis on the multiple interpretations and necessary interactions that take place around the completion of each task. For instance, "formulation of budget and administrative plan" is listed as a recommended task. This study shows the variety of ways that such a task can be interpreted (i.e., as symbolically valuable or functionally valuable) and carried out, and the importance of the inter-dependencies among the people involved in such a task (see, for example, "Three Backflips" and "A Struggle for Integrity" in Chapter Seven).

Another implication of seeing planning as the negotiation of meaning is the potential for advancing the adult education

literature on the negotiation approach to planning spearheaded by the work of Cervero and Wilson (1994, 1996). Geertz (1973) points out that "a study is an advance if it is more incisive - whatever that may mean - than those that preceded it; but it less stands on their shoulders than, challenged and challenging, runs by their side" (p.25). The ethnographic approach of this research allowed me to "plunge more deeply" (p.25) into the study of planning as negotiation. Furthermore, by drawing on the rich body of concepts, data, and experience in negotiations theory, I am able to offer a more complete set of analytical tools that capture the complexities of negotiations. This study adds to our stock of terms and has expanded our ways of talking about planning in adult education.

I agree with the following basic premises supporting Cervero and Wilson's (1996) work: "programs are planned by real people in complex organizations....planning is always conducted within a complex set of personal, organizational, and social relationships among people who may have similar, different, or conflicting interests" (p.1). I also agree with their view "that the program planning literature has neglected significant aspects of practice....planning practice requires far more than the technical skills stressed in the literature" (Wilson & Cervero, 1996a, p.5).

While there is considerable overlap in our perspectives on planning, we differ in our understanding of the characteristic activity of planning and in our interpretation of the planning

context. Whereas Cervero and Wilson (1994, 1996) propose the negotiation of interests as the characteristic planning activity and organizational power relationships as the context of planning, I am suggesting that planning can be understood as the negotiation of meaning within the context of multiple, subjectively perceived cultures. Our views are not incompatible; they differ mainly in emphasis and in scope.

### Implications of Seeing Context as Multiple Cultures

A view of the planning context as multiple cultures underscores the importance of subjective interpretations in planning practice and research. It can also help sensitize researchers and practitioners alike to look beyond and behind a single perspective on culture. The findings showed that negotiations within different cultural contexts can lead to similar outcomes. For example, increased staff commitment was the outcome for the "Vision Test" episode (cultural context characterized by conflict) and for the "Leadership at the Hub" episode (characterized by consensus and cohesion). This implies that the nature of the outcomes are also related to the relationship between the negotiating parties, the meanings underlying the negotiations at the sub-text level, goals, stance and choice of negotiating strategies. In other words, cultural contexts provide the meanings that make sense of what should be done to resolve the conflict, clarify the ambiguity, or encourage harmony, but they do not provide a formula to be rigidly or

consistently applied in different situations.

Another implication of seeing the context as multiple cultures is an increased awareness of positive as well as negative outcomes of conflict and ambiguity. Conflict and contradictions can be divisive or they can be managed constructively, leading to an expanded understanding of the significance of organizational activities, increased feelings of group identity, and the mobilization of needed resources. Ambiguity and confusion over interpretations of the organizational environment can be debilitating or they can be managed effectively to bring about clarity concerning organizational priorities and goals.

### **Implications for Practice**

Accepting the view that planning can be understood as a process that includes the negotiation of meaning occurring within multiple cultures also has implications for planning practice. The findings revealed the importance of listening carefully to what other people are saying and meaning, of seeking and providing information about priorities and interests, and of being open to and seriously considering a variety of interpretations and perspectives (including those of the "opponent"). If planners use this knowledge to prepare for the planning process, they will be more effective planners. The knowledge contributed by this dissertation can be useful for practitioners when applied to "process planning" (Boothroyd,



1986). In other words, by applying the frameworks for understanding negotiation of meaning episodes and for understanding organizational cultures (Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2) to their own practice situations, planners will approach their practice with a greater awareness and understanding of both the processes and contexts of planning. The following set of questions is offered as a way to organize the "process planning" and can focus on past experiences or on future possibilities. Working through these questions, as an individual or in a group, will lead to more effective planning practice.

The first series of questions helps to establish whether this planning activity involves negotiation:

1. What is the planning activity under consideration?
2. What issue needs to be addressed as a result of this planning activity? How will we know when the issue has been addressed?
3. What other people or groups must be involved in the process of addressing this issue?
4. What is the nature of the relationships with the other people involved? Is there shared power? Does the relationship involve interdependency and the potential for reciprocity? Is there a possibility of future interactions?

The next series of questions helps to characterize the cultural context for the negotiation episode:

5. What general content themes are relevant to the planning activity?
6. What formal and informal practices are relevant to the planning activity?
7. What stories, rituals, jargon, and physical arrangements are relevant to the planning activity?

8. What is the relationship across the themes, practices and forms? Is there consistency, consensus, and clarity? Is there conflict and inconsistency? Is there ambiguity, confusion, and paradox?

The final series of questions helps to plan the negotiation process:

9. What is the series of connected events and interactions related to the negotiation?
10. What meaning of what is being discussed? What is the subject matter of the negotiation?
11. What are the underlying questions surrounding the negotiation that are being considered?
12. What stance is being taken by each of the negotiating parties? What are the negotiating parties' goals? What strategies are used throughout the negotiation?
13. What was the outcome of past negotiation episodes?

#### **Limitations of the Study**

Limitations of this study relate to the choice of the conceptual framework and to the methodology used to carry out the research. It is important to ask: "What does a cultural perspective let us do that other conceptual frameworks do not? What does the cultural approach leave out? What are the hazards of adopting a cultural perspective to the study of organizations?" (Jelinek, Smircich & Hirsch, 1983, p.337). The interpretive cultural perspective taken in this study does not account for the influence of broader social structures and political forces in the environment. A multi-perspective approach to analyzing culture can encompass a variety of ways of thinking about cultures in organizations, but the three categories of

integration, differentiation, and fragmentation, are "ideal types" and as such inevitably distort and simplify complex interpretations (Martin, 1992).

This study is not intended as an evaluative assessment of Global Faith's performance nor as a critical ethnography with an explicitly political agenda. As Peshkin (1988) said: "I am neither evaluator nor reformer. I come neither to judge whether they teach well or poorly, nor to make them better than they are" (p.20). The purpose of this ethnography is cultural description and analysis in order to better understand the dynamics of planning at Global Faith. My findings are descriptive and diagnostic, not evaluative nor predictive. They show what could happen, but not what should happen, nor what would necessarily happen under specific conditions. While this study makes no attempt to transfer the findings to other cases, adequate detail and primary data have been included to allow others to make comparisons and transferability judgments.

Other limitations of this study relate to data collection. Would my rapport with the people of Global Faith and access to data have been different if I were an evangelical Christian? Or, did my outsider status as "barely Christian" help to increase my level of "ethnographic awareness?" Also, this study presented five negotiation episodes all of which had positive outcomes for Global Faith. Of less visibility here are those cases where Global Faith was not able to negotiate an advantageous outcome - because I was not aware of any. While I did not set out to

identify only those planning cases that were considered "successful," the stories and episodes that I had privy to during my research at Global Faith all had positive outcomes. Because Global Faith was able to deal effectively with the pressures facing them, negative outcomes were not a common occurrence. The crises that I witnessed or heard about (e.g., the Three Backflips story and the financial crisis of the sabbatical year) eventually led to positive outcomes. A different approach would be needed to highlight the less frequent instances of negative outcomes, such as a structured, historical look at specific cases deemed to be unsuccessful through a type of "postmortem audit" (Sork, 1986). Finally, because the planning concerning the actual content of Global Faith programs takes place mostly overseas, I was not able to determine whether and how the negotiation of meaning takes place around issues related to curriculum design and instructional processes.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

The limitations of this research, and the tentative conclusions to be drawn from it, suggest some directions for further research. While I did look at the "intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics that often affect planning practice and...examine in the depth necessary the external relationships that planners form with other agencies in developing programs" as Cervero and Wilson (1994, p.12) suggested, I was not able to explore the external relationships from both sides. Additional

work might be productively focused here: carry out ethnographic studies of planning as the negotiation of meaning within the settings of CIDA and overseas partner organizations, supplemented with interviews with members of Boards of Directors and general public donors. Some additional analytic points of view that seem particularly productive include the investigation of different types of ambiguity (e.g., ambiguity of understanding versus ambiguity of intention as discussed in March & Olsen, 1976) and different types of conflict (e.g., latent conflict and false conflict as discussed in Brown, 1983).

### **Concluding Remarks**

This understanding of the everyday behaviour of the people involved in planning at Global Faith has provided new ways to think about the mechanisms and contexts of planning behaviours. The findings have shown that the ultimate content of a plan may not be as important as the learning that goes on during the planning process. In this final section, I would like to close with Gerald's thoughts on the importance of this learning. The following quote is an excerpt from our last interview. Gerald is talking about a huge, ancient tree on Vancouver Island and he is comparing this tree to "any issue or who we are."

The thing that always strikes me when I see that tree is I stand up next to it and I see how large it is. I have to walk around to the other side because what I see on one side of the tree is not what I see on this side of the tree. Therefore, the analogy that I am using is that I can never see the whole tree from where I stand. And people need to learn to walk around the tree.

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## APPENDIX

### PROTOCOL DOCUMENTS

Agency Permission Letter

Agency Consent Form

Interview Permission Letter

Interview Consent Form

Observation Permission Letter

Observation Consent Form



# THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Adult Education  
Department of Administrative,  
Adult and Higher Education  
5760 Toronto Road  
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1L2

## AGENCY PERMISSION LETTER

Telephone (604) 228-5881

Dear [Executive Director]:

I am a doctoral student in the Department of Administrative, Adult and Higher Education at the University of British Columbia. I am about to embark on my dissertation research which will focus on the process of planning programs for adult learners. I am interested in how adult education programs are shaped within the context of a non-governmental organization working in the field of international development. In particular, I would like to learn about the views of the people involved in planning and administering the rural development projects that your organization sponsors.

I am writing to ask for your permission to carry out my research at [Global Faith]. I anticipate spending one or two days a week at your organization over a period of approximately eight months. During my time there, I would like to be able to sit in on any meetings that are relevant and appropriate, interview you and other members of the staff (the interviews will take approximately one hour), analyze reports, correspondence and other materials documenting the planning and evaluation process, and somehow make myself useful to you without being a disturbance or a distraction.

The identity of your organization and of the individual staff members who agree to participate will be kept CONFIDENTIAL through the use of pseudonyms and summary reporting which guarantees anonymity. Any information that is indicated as off the record will not be used. Your organization has the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time without prejudice. If you decide to participate, please complete and sign the attached Agency Consent Form and send it to me in the enclosed return envelope.

Thank-you for considering my request. If you require further information or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 261-4559 or my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Thomas J. Sork, at 822-5881.

Sincerely yours,

Catherine Cunningham-Dunlop



Adult Education  
Department of Administrative,  
Adult and Higher Education  
5760 Toronto Road  
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1L2

Telephone (604) 228-5881

**AGENCY CONSENT FORM**

I have read and understand the purpose and procedures of the dissertation research on adult education program planning and agree to allow the researcher to observe relevant and appropriate planning meetings, analyze documents, and to invite individual staff members to participate in an interview.

I understand that:

- the interviews will last approximately one hour;
- neither the individual's nor the organization's name will be revealed to anyone other than the researcher;
- individuals and the organization have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time without prejudice;
- and, by signing this form, I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this form and the letter describing the project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

\_\_\_\_\_  
signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

# THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



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## INTERVIEW PERMISSION LETTER

Dear

I am a doctoral student in the Department of Administrative, Adult and Higher Education at the University of British Columbia. I am involved in my dissertation research which focuses on the process of planning programs for adult learners. I am interested in how adult education programs are shaped within the context of a non-governmental organization working in the field of international development. In particular, I would like to learn about the views and judgements of the people involved in planning and administering the rural development projects that your organization sponsors.

I am writing to ask for your permission to interview you about your experience at this organization. The interview will be semi-structured with open-ended questions and will take approximately one hour of your time.

The identity of your organization and your identity will be kept CONFIDENTIAL through the use of pseudonyms and summary reporting which guarantees anonymity. Any information that is indicated as off the record will not be used. You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time without prejudice. If you decide to participate in the interview, please complete and sign the attached Interview Consent Form.

Thank-you for considering my request. If you require further information or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 261-4559 or my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Thomas J. Sork, at 822-5881.

Sincerely yours,

Catherine Cunningham-Dunlop



Adult Education  
Department of Administrative,  
Adult and Higher Education  
5760 Toronto Road  
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1L2

Telephone (604) 228-5881

**INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM**

I have read and understand the purpose and procedures of the dissertation research on adult education program planning and agree to participate in an interview.

I understand that:

- the interview will last approximately one hour;
- neither my name nor the organization's name will be revealed to anyone other than the researcher;
- I have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time without prejudice;
- and, by signing this form, I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this form and the letter describing the project.

\_\_\_\_\_

name

\_\_\_\_\_

signature

\_\_\_\_\_

date

# THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



**Adult Education**  
Department of Administrative,  
Adult and Higher Education  
5760 Toronto Road  
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1L2  
Tel: (604) 822-5881  
Fax: (604) 822-6679

## OBSERVATION PERMISSION LETTER

Dear

I am a doctoral student in the Department of Administrative, Adult and Higher Education at the University of British Columbia. I am involved in my dissertation research which focuses on the process of planning programs for adult learners. I am interested in how adult education programs are shaped within the context of a non-governmental organization working in the field of international development. In particular, I would like to learn about the views and judgements of the people involved in planning and administering the rural development projects that your organization sponsors.

I am writing to ask for your permission to observe you while you are working at [Global Faith]. I would like to be able to write about your involvement in planning, monitoring and evaluating adult education programs. The observation sessions will not require a time commitment from you and will not distract or disturb you while you work. I will write fieldnotes on what I see after every observation session.

The identity of your organization and your identity will be kept CONFIDENTIAL through the use of pseudonyms (in the fieldnotes, dissertation, and any related publications) and through summary reporting which guarantees anonymity. Any information that is indicated as off the record will not be used. You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time without prejudice. If you agree to let me observe you, please complete and sign the attached Observation Consent Form.

Thank-you for considering my request. If you require further information or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 261-4559 or my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Thomas J. Sork, at 822-5881.

Sincerely yours,

Catherine Cunningham-Dunlop



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Adult and Higher Education  
5760 Toronto Road  
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1L2  
Tel: (604) 822-5881  
Fax: (604) 822-6679

**OBSERVATION CONSENT FORM**

I have read and understand the purpose and procedures of the dissertation research on adult education program planning and agree that the researcher can observe me while I work.

I understand that:

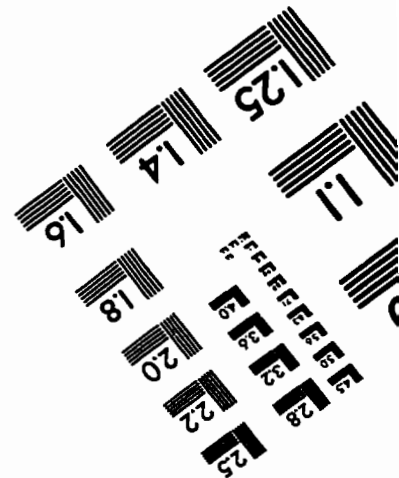
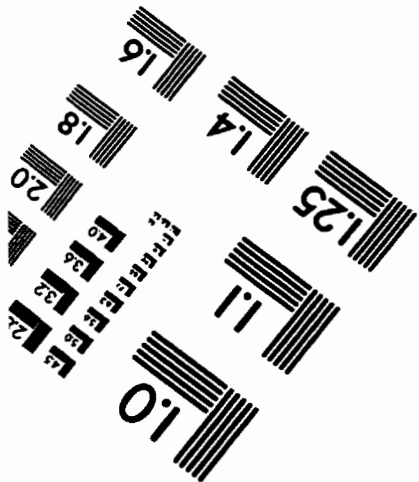
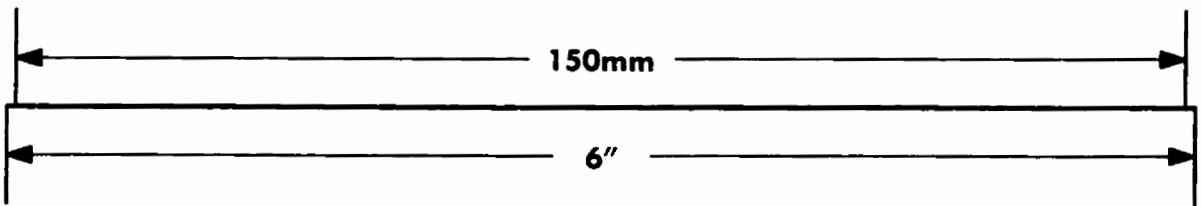
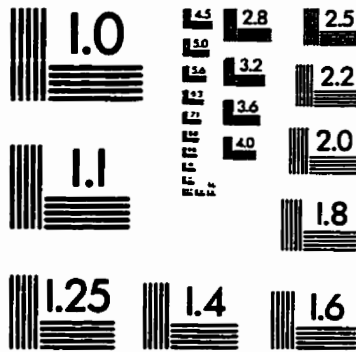
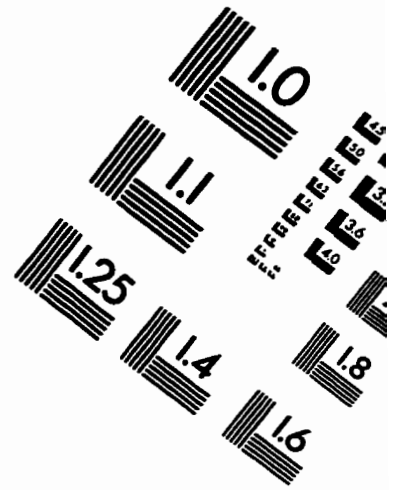
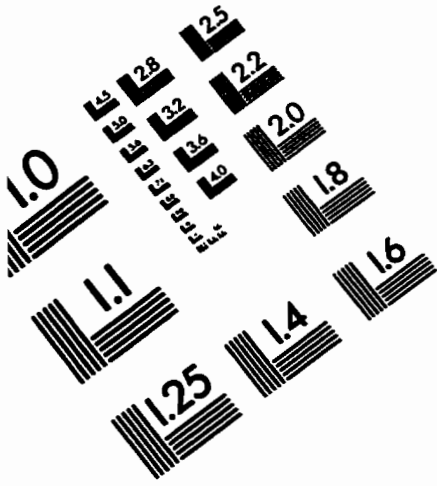
- neither my name nor the organization's name will be revealed to anyone other than the researcher;
- I have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time without prejudice;
- and, by signing this form, I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this form and the letter describing the project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

\_\_\_\_\_  
signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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