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Vying for Good

Ethical Challenges in Evaluating Interreligious Peacebuilding

Faith-based peacebuilding has a long history. While the nomenclature of peacebuilding may be recent – its contemporary deployment often attributed to Johan Galtung (1976) – many pioneers who engaged in the peace activism, research and practice that shaped and produced contemporary peace and conflict studies programs and peacebuilding were faith-based actors motivated by their convictions. Looking at the 20th century, this ranged from early contributions by Leo Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi, to mid-century voices such as Martin Luther King Jr., and later scholar-practitioners like Elise Boulding, John Paul Lederach, and the list goes on (e.g. see Boulding 1998, Miller 2000). Yet in the late 20th century, it seemed that faith-based peacebuilding was either radically new or not credible. Research and practice in mediation, negotiation, alternative dispute resolution, problem-solving workshops and other conflict resolution and transformation expanded and the religious or faith dimension of such work faded. In the 1980s and 1990s it became a small part of textbooks in peace and conflict studies, typically with respect to principled nonviolence, peace movements and just war theory (Barash and Webel 2002), religious militancy (Crocker, Hampson, and Aall 1996), or as part of understanding the cultural context in which an intervention occurs (Avruch 1998).

Then came the 21st century, with its rising spectre of religiously motivated terrorism and conflict that crossed borders. Explorations of the relationship between religion and statecraft, heralded by the work of Doug Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (1994), expanded. The rise in attention to religious peacebuilding was concomitant with concerns about religion and violent extremism. It included scholarly and practitioner work exploring fundamentalism (e.g. Appleby 2000, Juergensmeyer 2000), excavating particular religious traditions and their contributions to peacebuilding (e.g. Sampson and Lederach 2000, Abu-Nimer 2003, Bamat and Cejka 2003, Schreiter, Appleby, and Powers 2010) as well as broader synthetic reviews of the literature and practice (e.g. Little 2006, Omer, Appleby, and Little 2015).

Note: Thanks to co-panellists and participants who commented on an earlier version of this chapter presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention in March 2016. Thanks also to Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Renata Nelson and Khaled Ehsan for comments on the chapter and helping to sharpen the argument.

Over the last decade or so, calls for accountability accompanied the increased attention to, and spending on, religious and interreligious peacebuilding. It was no longer acceptable to be solely motivated by faith, it was important to demonstrate the effects of one's work. Concerns that faith-based peacebuilding was fluffy, unnecessary or even harmful were brought to the fore. For example, people critiqued high-level interfaith dialogues as superficial window dressing for political negotiations (e.g. Micklethwait 2007). There were also concerns that religious peacebuilding was understood simplistically as producing unidirectional, positive change (Omer 2015). Taking a strong stand, Susan Hayward argued:

There is a pressing need for greater monitoring and evaluation of religious peacebuilding work—and peacebuilding generally—to understand better which interventions, led by whom, and in which situations, have the greatest effect. The lack of evaluation to demonstrate the value of religious peacebuilding work has fueled skepticism about its effectiveness, particularly among secular-biased peace organizations and diplomats, and being able to show that religious peacebuilding works will help the field better integrate with other sectors.... it is possible, and a moral imperative to ensure that religious peacebuilding efforts constructively affect societies. (2012, 8)

Religious peacebuilders were to demonstrate the value of their work by showing it produced constructive change.

In response to the call, new resources emerged in 2016 and 2017. These resources identified the unique challenges of monitoring and evaluating faith-based peacebuilding, and then offered guidance for how these efforts could be better designed, monitored and evaluated (Steele and Wilson-Grau 2016, Woodrow, Oatley, and Garred 2017). This volume too is part of the larger effort to evaluate faith-based peacebuilding, focusing on interreligious peacebuilding and dialogue.

I review this history to note variations over time, in terms of the relative activity of and prominence given to faith-based peacebuilding, as well as to signal the tensions that exist with calls to evaluate interreligious peacebuilding and dialogue. Most recently, the calls to account and demonstrate effect suggest that well-intentioned religious or faith-based peacebuilders must look beyond their intentions and beyond faith in the supernatural to assess human-based effects. This seems a reasonable and important call given the rise in attention to religious actors in peacebuilding and the problem of unintended negative effects. Yet there are also concerns about instrumentalising religion, about taking a reductionist approach and using religion as the means to a peacebuilder's end (Thomas 2005). Here the problem is that religious and interreligious peacebuilding are used for particular purposes, outside of faith traditions. These two cri-

tiques appear to be in opposition and an important question emerges: does the call for a certain type of accountability in peacebuilding evaluation reinforce the problem of instrumentalising religion and faith for purposes external to the religious tradition?

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the less visible effects that calls for accountability may have on interreligious peacebuilding, particularly in terms of effects on the moral values that guide interreligious work. Stated differently: how do the values embedded in (secular) peacebuilding evaluation criteria affect religious and interreligious peacebuilding? Examining this relationship involves three steps. The first step is excavating the moral values within the evaluation criteria. The second is looking at values within an example of interfaith peacebuilding; here I use interfaith dialogue with its divergent theories of change to help draw out the different ways religious actors see peacebuilding change happen, and what is valued in the process. Finally, we can take the third step to explore ways in which valuations in evaluation criteria are likely to influence the moral values of religious peacebuilding and discuss its import.

1 Clarifying Terms: Religious and Interreligious Peacebuilding

Before going further, it is helpful to clarify the definitions of religion, religious peacebuilding and interreligious peacebuilding. The term religion is used here to refer to various forms of thought and behaviour around which people come together to become aware of or relate to the divine (Hick 1993). Religion includes theological beliefs, moral values and prescriptions for actions, ritual practices, behavioural expectations, confessional communities and the sacred (Appleby 2000, Johnstone 2016, 8–14). While some definitions emphasize organized religion, this definition does not, although it does require confessional communities.

Religious peacebuilding then refers to actions taken by individuals motivated by their religion or representing religious institutions to constructively and non-violently prevent, reduce or transform inter-group conflict. Interreligious or interfaith peacebuilding, which I will use synonymously, refer to peacebuilding that is undertaken by people motivated by religion or representing a religious institution or confessional community and working between and across faith traditions to prevent, reduce or transform inter-group conflict. This may include direct work on theological beliefs, moral values and behavioural expectations, or indirect involvement of ritual practices, theology and belief. Note that the defi-

nitions of both religious and interreligious peacebuilding rely on a secular definition of peacebuilding that is broad and reflects an emphasis on conflict transformation that builds on John Paul Lederach and Galtung's focus on changing or transforming systems of conflict as well as the relationships and institutions that generate and sustain conflict (Galtung 1976, Lederach 2005). Religious peacebuilding grows out of religious or faith-based motivations and focuses on engaging with religious actors, confessional communities, traditions, ritual practices, institutions and theological or belief systems, and/or some combination thereof.

2 Evaluation and Moral Value Judgements

Evaluation very explicitly involves making value judgements about what is good and right. Evaluators collect empirical data, analyse it and then interpret it in order to make judgements about “the worth, merit or value of something” (2005, 444). Did an intervention achieve good outcomes? Was the intervention the right thing to do? Deborah Fournier notes that, “It is the value feature that distinguishes evaluation from other types of inquiry, such as basic science research, clinical epidemiology...” (2005, 140–1). Evaluators weigh and choose amongst contending ideas about what is right and good, what is worthy and valuable. As I argue elsewhere¹ and draw upon here, weighing and choosing what is good and right also makes evaluation an exercise in moral judgement (Neufeldt 2016b).

In my experience as both a practitioner and an academic who works on learning and reflection in peacebuilding (sometimes in the form of evaluations, although I strongly prefer the language and approach of participatory and ongoing learning), evaluators and guidance for evaluators do not focus on the moral aspect of value judgements. The criteria and standards for judging things are based on criteria commonly set by funders of evaluations. Concerns are typically around accountability, the quality of an evaluation process, methodological choices and analysis of findings, as well as implications for use. While there are opportunities to engage with moral values, as Michael Morris (2007) identifies, this process tends to fall into the background in evaluations themselves as well as in training and support materials. For example, Michael Quinn Patton, in his influential tome *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, discusses rendering judge-

¹ This section draws on material produced for as a discussion paper for the Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium, called “Wicked Problems of Ethics: Confronting the challenge of what constitutes good peacebuilding done the right ways in peacebuilding evaluation” (Neufeldt 2016b).

ments as part of making meaning out of the evaluation findings in only a short, two-page section of his more than 600-page volume. He notes that judgements about whether or not the data and findings are good or bad varies “depending on the values brought to bear” (Patton 2008, 500). The discussion of judgement then moves quickly to who judges values and the question of whether evaluators should independently render judgements versus providing the data for stakeholders to judge, or some combination thereof (Patton’s preference). The values discussion then comes to a quick end.

The values dimension of judgement in evaluation requires careful scrutiny as it is here that the real tensions with evaluating religious peacebuilding are attenuated and often elided.² Now, there are some who argue that empirical data can be gathered in order to inform rational decisions in a value-free way; this is rooted in positivist social science tradition. A common value-free assertion goes like this: if we collect the data then we will know what to do. This idea of being able to collect data that will simply tell us what to do is popular yet highly problematic as it suggests a binary that does not exist (Patton 2008, Scriven 2012). When we ask what constitutes good results or ask questions about what data was determined as important to gather, we glimpse at the moral values upon which claims regarding what is good or right are made. There are value-based assumptions that underpin the determination of what is important and why certain evidence is selected. For example, one criterion used to evaluate whether or not peacebuilding programs are good and worthwhile is *if* they generate data on impact from scaling-up. Here, what is valued is a greater number of people affected by an intervention over the quality of that intervention within a given locale. Or another value could be *if* the people involved in the initiative learn from and make adaptations based on the evaluation data and process. Here, adaptations and responsiveness are valued.

² In a special 2012 issue of *New Directions for Evaluation*, titled “Promoting valuation in the public interest: informing policies for judging value in evaluation,” authors discuss roles for evaluators and stakeholders in valuation, politicization, the role of associations like the American Evaluation Association, and the importance of context sensitivity in valuation. Michael Scriven’s contribution aims to unpack the logic of valuing, and while questioning Hume and the distinction between value-free and value-based argument in evaluation, his emphasis on reasoned, critical thinking misses the connection with an area that does this purposively: moral philosophy.

3 Evaluation and the Push to Account for Consequences

In order to assess how interreligious or religious peacebuilding moral values may be affected in the process of judging good and right in peacebuilding, we need to look more closely at evaluation's valuation itself. Are there particular moral values that are elevated uniformly in peacebuilding evaluations? By drawing out the moral values that are prioritized in peacebuilding evaluations, we can begin to see more clearly what conceptions of good and right are prominent and their possible effects on interreligious peacebuilding and dialogue.

The values that guide judgements of what constitutes good or right in peacebuilding are usually identified in the terms of reference (TOR) for an evaluation, or perhaps in the statement of purpose for the evaluation. It is now commonplace for TOR to draw upon the criteria named by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and Development Assistance Committee (OECD and DAC) (2008) as their foundation. These criteria for evaluation are broadly recognized and widely used by non-governmental organizations as well as by governmental and intergovernmental bodies. The 2012 publication presents a slightly revised set of criteria from those initially put forward for public use, testing and feedback in 2007–2008 (DAC Network on Conflict and DAC Network on Development Evaluation 2008). The five criteria identified to judge good peacebuilding are: 1) *relevance* to factors driving the conflict; 2) *effectiveness* vis-à-vis intended objectives and the degree to which results were achieved; 3) *impact* that includes intended and unintended positive or negative effects; 4) *sustainability*, which refers to the continuation of benefits when funding stops (e.g. community ownership of peace work or continued community resilience); and, 5) *efficiency* of resources used to produce effects (OECD 2012, 65–71). Two additional suggested OECD-DAC criteria, which are not on par with the preceding five, are coherence and coordination amongst intervenors or funders.

These five main OECD-DAC criteria are front and centre in recent materials for evaluating religious and interreligious peacebuilding. They are identified as the “criteria typically used in the professional evaluation of peacebuilding interventions” (2016, 7) in the thought piece by David Steele and Ricardo Wilson-Grau, titled “Supernatural belief and the evaluation of faith-based peacebuilding.” Steele and Wilson-Grau add the caveat that the five criteria are “neither all obligatory nor exhaustive,” and one or more might be chosen and prioritized in an evaluation (7). The 2017 guide produced for helping better design, monitor and evaluate inter-religious efforts by Peter Woodrow, Nick Oatley and Michelle Garred, also reproduces these five main criteria as central for evaluating interre-

ligious peacebuilding. They include as a sixth criteria “coordination and linkages,” which is in-line with the suggested additional OECD-DAC criteria, and they add a seventh criteria titled “consistency with values” (Woodrow, Oatley, and Garred 2017, 106). There is general affirmation for the OECD-DAC criteria and some additional work to bridge them into religious contexts. Given their importance, we need to examine what these widely embraced criteria say about what is valued.

There is a strong, unifying moral claim embedded in these criteria, which is that peacebuilding programs or projects are good if they achieve the greatest good for the greatest number of people or produce at least as good as any other course of action would produce. The consequentialist logic underpinning the valuation of what is good is clear and unsurprising. Effectiveness, impact, sustainability all refer to slightly different aspects of consequences upon which programs, projects or initiatives are to be judged good. Consequentialism is a moral theory of what constitutes good, which underwrites our ideas about what makes the first three criteria valuable. It involves a cost-benefit, comparative calculation that focuses on ends, not on the means to the end or the nature of the character or relationships between those who pursue the end. As a moral theory, it is attributed originally to Jeremy Bentham and his student John Stuart Mill, with variations over time (such as act and rule consequentialism), and right action is determined as that which produces the most intrinsic good for individuals – whose feel good individually but are calculated collectively. While aspiring to be universal, the origins of this moral theory were 18th and 19th Century England.

Two of the OECD-DAC criteria suggest attention must be paid to means or process considerations that effect the ends. The effects are judged better if they are produced in an *efficient* manner and are *relevant* to the drivers of conflict as identified in a conflict analysis. The efficiency criterion is clearly part of a cost-benefit calculation and noting that maximizing outputs in general are better if they use fewer financial resources. Relevancy is a variation of efficiency, in that the effects are efficient if they effect drivers of conflict. Both of these are, again, consequentialist in moral valuation.

Consequentialism is not the only moral theory that focuses us on assessing what constitutes right action. Deontology offers another way of understanding what constitutes good, which focuses on defining universal goods and principles prior to action, so that the good is defined independently and based on universal reason. For example, Immanuel Kant’s humanitarian formulation of the categorical imperative identifies as universal the imperative that everyone must always treat people as an end and never as a means to an end. Kant’s imperative is a variation of the golden rule identified in many religious traditions (Wattles

1996, Neusner and Chilton 2009). The injunction to treat others as one would like to be treated stands in stark contradiction to the valuing of efficiency, where it suggests that people are used as a resource to an efficient end by peacebuilders. This is one of the points of friction between deontological and consequentialist ethics and indicates one of the ways in which the criteria used by professional peacebuilding evaluators is skewed in its evaluation of what is good.

There is a related concern that ends-based consequentialist thinking, if taken as far as it goes, allows some harm to occur. For example, it might be, in the final calculation, alright for staff to continue to work even when they are emotionally burnt-out or engage in some minor criminal activity as part of peacebuilding, as long as the outcome is at least as good as any other course of action in the final assessment of consequences. Now, the OECD-DAC document includes a list of additional duties or principles that funders should pay attention to in choosing which projects or programmes to fund, which include the duty to “do no harm,” to promote non-discrimination, equality of participation of men and women, and so forth (2012, 23–26). These principles are seen as universal and help to modify the OECD-DAC’s emphasis on consequentialism at the start of an initiative, however they are listed separately as important principles for funders to follow but not directly considered part of the evaluation criteria, with the exception of “do no harm” (a rule-based consequentialist injunction). For example, equal participation of women might be generally viewed as a good principle to follow, but this principle is not factored into the project evaluation’s focus on efficiency.

Separating principles or duties for funders from criteria for evaluation is consistent with a larger pattern in peacebuilding literature. Often ethics considerations are seen to refer to *how* actors engage whereas how one understands *ends* are not considered a value-informed choice (for example see Anderson and Olson 2003, or for further discussion see Neufeldt 2016a). It is a version of the idea that values and evidence are separate categories and obscures the idea that consequentialism actually invokes a moral value choice. Consequentialist moral thinking is one of the dominant lines of ethical analysis today and the OECD-DAC peacebuilding evaluation criteria are firmly in the tradition of Bentham and Mill’s 18th and 19th century ideas.

It may be worth noting that there are other important ways of thinking about what constitutes good in moral philosophy and religious teachings. Virtue ethics, for example, focuses on character and personal excellence. Ethics of care is a relational moral theory that focuses analysis of the good on a foundation of responding to others’ needs and emphasize moral agent interdependence rather than independence. Ubuntu ethics is likewise a relational moral theory. These

foci of good are also present in peacebuilding practice and literature yet do not figure in the widely used evaluation criteria.³

The literature on interreligious and faith-based peacebuilding added some content to the five main OECD-DAC criteria, which hints that the criteria should be more carefully scrutinized. Steele and Wilson-Grau added the caveat that the five criteria are neither obligatory nor exhaustive and, while emphasizing that professional evaluators use these criteria, they nuance the content and suggest that religious beliefs will influence how the criteria are conceptualized. This opens the door for recognizing that the criteria may be inappropriate or not fit with religious and interreligious peacebuilding, it also opens the door for those within a faith tradition to rethink external criteria using concepts internal to the tradition. This seems promising; However, it is mentioned in a short paper and the authors do not expand.

Faith Matters, the design, monitoring and evaluation guide for religious peacebuilding builds on Steele and Wilson-Grau. The authors add a seventh criteria, consistency of values, which again seems promising as a way of opening up a discussion on the given consequentialist criteria. The description of what they mean indicates that evaluators could assess whether the values embodied in a project were consistent with various religious values, such as dignity of the person, compassion, justice and so forth (Woodrow, Oatley, and Garred 2017, 112). Here the lens of religion has expanded considerations around the five consequentialist criteria yet clearly not displaced focus on the five as central for judging the value of religious and interreligious peacebuilding. The question then remains: what happens to moral values in interreligious peacebuilding and dialogue when those designing or supporting the dialogue are pushing to see the initiative be more relevant, effective, impactful, sustainable and efficient? Is there anything for faith-based peacebuilders to be concerned about? Are there problems that arise if consequentialism dominates our understanding of is valued as good and right in religious and inter-religious peacebuilding evaluation?

³ Evaluation resources are emerging to focus on principle-based evaluation. For example, Michael Quinn Patton has a new book called *Principles-Focused Evaluation: the GUIDE* (2017), which aims to help assess organization's based on their principles, and assessing whether implementing the principles achieved desired results.

4 Accounting for Consequences: A Simple Secular-Faith Divide?

To restate, evaluation judges what is good and bad based on a set of values. And, to state the obvious, judgements of good/bad, right/wrong are also the purview of religion. Religious teachings provide foundations for moral values.

We might think that the push to judge, based on consequentialism, is actually a tension between religious moorings and the secular call to demonstrate positive consequences. While there are aspects of the above discussion that could be read as a secular perspective being brought to bear on religious worldviews, it is also clear that there are a range of ways of seeing and assessing what is morally good in religious traditions themselves. Simply focusing on Catholicism for the moment, there are clear examples of ways in which consequences are viewed as morally good which are in-line with consequentialist moral philosophy. To name just two examples, Thomas Aquinas explores the doctrine of double effect in Just War thinking in weighing moral responsibilities vis-à-vis the outcomes of war (e.g. see Dower 2009). Catholic theologian and peacebuilder Todd Whitmore has called on Catholic peacebuilders to broaden the understanding of moral accountability related to peacebuilding and development and its effects (Whitmore 2010). Considerations of ends are important in religious discourse, as are considerations of motives and core religious moral principles.⁴

Evaluations can raise internal arguments that exist within religions with respect to how to prioritize values or how to enact values in a given context and time. This means that the moral values are placed in direct tension with one another as choices are made about which values are the right ones by which to judge peacebuilding. For example, is it important to mediate or pray to pursue personal transcendence, or to engage in social action and effects?

To better understand what is at stake in the tension of values, the next section focuses on interreligious dialogue and looks at the values underpinning it, which may be affected by the ways values are prioritized in project design and evaluation. Interreligious dialogue is a subset of religious and interreligious peacebuilding, and often explicit in articulating religious values, as discussions of values are often part of the dialogue itself between traditions, which makes it particularly helpful to examine.

⁴ It is also interesting to note the tension between competing moral values is not solely the domain of religious peacebuilding either, as we see similar tensions between those committed to duty-based responses and those who are looking at impact as producing the greatest positive consequences in more secular discourse (explored further in Neufeldt 2014).

5 Vying Values in Interreligious Dialogue: Awesome Agency, Faithful Followers, Earthy Ends

Interreligious dialogue itself is not uniform (e.g. see Abu-Nimer, Khoury, and Welty 2007). We see at least three types of dialogue enacted today that value different types of change through dialogue and understandings of agency by those engaged in the dialogue; these can be understood from a theological, political and a peacebuilding perspective (Neufeldt 2011). The descriptions that follow below briefly summarize the focus of each dialogue type, provide an example and distil over-arching moral values regarding social change processes in order to assess how the priorities in evaluations may affect interreligious peacebuilding values.

5.1 Theological Dialogue

The theological approach to dialogue emphasizes theological exchange and religious experience as the central “modes of dialogue”.⁵ This type of dialogue tends to be led by those with a background in theological and religious studies and aims to be largely apolitical in content although spurred by experiences of exclusion or violent conflict. The theological approach tends to focus on individual change and relationship development. Its purposes include increasing understanding of beliefs, doctrines, practices and values between groups; establishing areas of common values between faith traditions; probing areas of theological difference; engaging in active theology where new theologies might emerge; as well as developing relationships of mutual respect between members of religious traditions. Prayer, mediation and being open to Ultimate Reality or God as leading change are important in the process.

An example of a theological dialogue is the “Thinking Together” series that was organized by the World Council of Churches Office on Interreligious Relations and Dialogue. This dialogue series, which ran from 2000 to 2009, brought together a relatively small group of core participants to consider difficult questions from theological perspectives. The meetings included personal sharing and worship ritual. As one participant, M. Thomas Thangaraj (2003) relayed,

⁵ The descriptions of the three forms of interreligious dialogue draw on “Interfaith dialogue: assessing theories of change” (Neufeldt 2011).

“We were not simply talking, either; we prayed together and meditated together. Every morning persons in the group, in accordance with their own religious traditions, led us in prayer/meditation/singing.” Through the dialogue, representatives of different religious groups (including Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam) identified and explored theological concerns and differences utilizing the languages and methods of their respective religious traditions, developed new insights and forged bonds of friendship (Ucko 2001, 2005).

This model of dialogue valued religious and spiritual encounter, personal change and new insights generated through exchange as part of a transcendent process. The group periodically wondered about how to increase the effects of their work, and published collected volumes in an effort to make the group’s deep exchange more widely available (Ucko 2005, Premawardhana 2015). However, the primary good was the experience itself, exchange, the insights generated and the opening of space to God or Ultimate Reality. In this type of dialogue, in the awesome presence of the divine, humans were not primary agents of change, but they were part of a change process made manifest. Here we see an ontological understanding of forces operating outside of the normal purview of monitoring effects. What is front and central is the awesome agency of the divine for faithful followers.

5.2 Political Dialogue

The political approach to interfaith dialogue typically occurs in response to active conflict although strives to be apolitical in content in terms of formal politics (e.g., political parties). The focus of these dialogues is to solidify the support of religious leaders for politically negotiated peace agreements or peace processes, and in so doing, generate more widespread grassroots support. Such events are often hosted by governments and include political representatives in the midst of highly placed religious leaders. There is a small element of theological exchange in that religious beliefs or tenets related to “peace” and “violence” are voiced by leaders, although typically they are framed as parallel monologues and the primary audience for each leader (at least as hoped by organizers) is their own faith adherents.

An example of a politically sponsored interreligious dialogue effort by the United States (US) occurred during former George W. Bush’s administration and was led by then- Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes. She met with religious leaders at various “interfaith dialogue” events between 2005 and 2007, held around the world and in the US. Hughes stated the reason why the US government was interested in interfaith dialogue

and convened religious leaders was because “...faith plays such a critical role in the lives of so many people across our world. Governments would be foolish to ignore its power and impact or to leave the floor only to those who seek to use religion as a force to divide or destroy” (Hughes 2006). The goals of dialogue included: the desire to highlight the many voices speaking out against terrorism and for greater interfaith understanding; to demonstrate that all faiths believe in the sanctity of human life; and to give the world a more accurate picture of Muslims in America (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2006, Hughes 2007).

To illustrate further what was involved, at a 2005 meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, Hughes had a joint meeting with the Mufti of Istanbul, the Armenian Patriarch, the Chief Rabbi, the Syrian Metropolitan, a representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and a Catholic Bishop in addition to a few others. At a press conference prior to the meeting, the Syrian Metropolitan Yusuf Cetin leader stated:

...I think that for world peace, religious leaders and politicians are the two parties that have very big tasks to fulfill, more than ever today. We need to pray much more for world peace, and politicians need to work much more seriously for world peace. Religious leaders, of course, are not politicians, but for world peace we are ready to discuss any topic, we are ready to be present at any gathering so long as it calls for peace to reign all over the world – because we have the tears and screams of war. These make all countries in the world very troubled. We believe that when there are good intentions in a meeting like this, God will hear our voice, respond to our goodwill and hopefully will show us good days in the future. (Hughes and Powell 2005)

This quote draws out the nature of the dialogue, which was not mutual transformation but rather persuasion of others regarding the right thing to do in order to work for peace. Religious and political leaders held distinct but important roles, and the power of prayer was mentioned but not directly tied to the dialogue itself. In the quote, the emphasis on good intentions and internal motivations as well as the consequentialist valuing of stability and cessation of violence are named. However, within the political approach to interfaith dialogue, the pragmatic brokering of peace – an earthy and observable end – takes priority over any sense of awesome agency. Dialogue and mentioning the divine is a step, a helpful means that faithful followers are willing to do, to prepare the way for a longer-term politically brokered peace.

5.3 Peacebuilding Dialogue

A third approach to interfaith dialogue emphasizes a broader commitment to religious peacebuilding that draws on peacebuilding and conflict transformation frameworks. In this approach, interfaith dialogue is an entry point and way of working towards multiple types of change. Peacebuilding initiatives integrate dialogue to build mutual understanding and respect, broaden peace processes to include community members, or function as a foundation for other types of community-level engagements that address economic and social drivers of the conflict. This approach attempts to value both the earthy ends of immediate cessation of violence and observable changes, as well as the awesome nature of the divine, and therefore includes joint rituals and sharing alongside other types of intervention activities. These efforts seek to deliberately affect the political environment and focus on political processes and actors as well as conditions that give rise to the conflict with a greater sense of agency than occurs in the political mode of dialogue. Religious peacebuilders operating in this mode are often motivated to do good peacebuilding work as an expression of their faith – they are devoted peacebuilders in terms of their commitment to peace efforts as well as their commitment to faith and religion. They tend to be rooted in the conflict-affected communities and want to see effects and change happen because of their efforts and so there may be a more immediate valuing of the earthy ends that are produced through peacebuilding.

An example of a peacebuilding interfaith dialogue is Mindanao's Bishop-Ulama Conference (BUC), which was originally called the Bishop-Ulama Forum. It involved Catholic, Protestant and Muslim clerics in a formal, interfaith dialogue that was initially intended to help contribute to peace following the 1996 negotiations with the Moro Liberation Front. Over the years, the format of dialogue evolved, moving from political dialogue to providing a platform for a variety of types of peacebuilding initiatives that included purposive peace education and grassroots projects, as well as behind-the-scenes involvement in peace negotiations (Bishop Ulama Conference undated, Fitzpatrick 2007). Additional dialogue groups, such as the Ustadz-Priests-Pastors dialogue and the Episcopal Commission for Inter-religious dialogue formed. There were culture of peace and peace education trainings, youth, academic, grassroots and church worker dialogue groups. Grassroots groups in particular developed initiatives to respond to their needs, such as through small income generation projects. The BUC expanded media attention for peace efforts in Mindanao, which enabled the peace movement to gain a greater profile elsewhere in the Philippines. The religious leadership themselves pursued peacebuilding training early in the formation of the BUC because they were interested in affecting larg-

er-scale social change. The inspiration was rooted in their faith, they continually engaged in theological dialogue and worship experiences, but they also wanted to respond to the needs around them effectively. In this mode of dialogue, it appears that the valuing of faith and a duty to do the right thing according to one's faith, was also modified by the valuing of earthly ends and outputs (decrease in violence, increase in solidarity, and so forth). In this approach, there is some effort to embrace both earthy ends as well as the awesome agency of the divine by faithful followers.

These three examples illustrate the point above – that the call to achieve good effects is not a secular value foisted upon religious actors – these actors themselves are interested in effects in this world, and this in part comes out of their faith. Members of the Bishop-Ulama forum members want to be good adherents of their respective faiths, but they also want to see peace – a just peace – built in Mindanao and perceive themselves to be agents of change in addition to, or because of, the divine. The multiple demands of being good faithful followers, who are transformed by the awesome, and want to achieve changes in this world is present to varying degrees in the theological and political forms of interreligious dialogue. The modalities that are suggested in response are then further informed by other religious values, such as reconciliation and a commitment to recognizing the sacredness of the other. Yet, we also see that across these three different types of interfaith dialogue efforts, there is some balancing of significant moral goods. Religious actors are doing their best to be faithful followers in the process of pursuing earthy ends. They are also conscious of awesome agency even while making an effort to achieve earthy ends. Awesome agency, earthy ends and faithful follower demands are variously prioritized in all three approaches. How might evaluation values alter or transform these vying goods in interreligious peacebuilding?

6 When Faithful Followers Prioritize Earthy Ends over Awesome Agency

What issues of concern arise when interreligious dialogue and interreligious peacebuilding more broadly embrace evaluation and the values therein? I offer this final section as a thought piece to help religious peacebuilders identify issues in advance, so that evaluation criteria may be developed in a more careful way and appropriate to the moral values content as well as context, as well as to recognize the limits of evaluation. With this caveat noted, I see three ways the

values of religious peacebuilders in interfaith dialogue are likely to be affected by evaluation criteria.

6.1 Dimming Awesome Agency

Evaluations that draw upon the OECD-DAC criteria (or other similar criteria) emphasize consequences and the moral value of earthy ends in interreligious dialogue, notably its effectiveness, impact and sustainability. One of the central views around change that is most likely to be ignored or pushed to the side is the ontological commitment to God or to Ultimate Reality as acting in human affairs beyond human comprehension. God's performance does not get evaluated *per se*. While people may ask questions like, "why didn't God act?" or "why did God act in that way?" or even note that one of the assumptions in a log frame is that "God will act" they do not expect answers in the form of empirical data, or to understand that which is wholly other.⁶ Faith traditions require faith. The *awesome* nature of the divine will necessarily have to be bracketed, as one might bracket one's biases, in order to put the matter aside and assess what is accessible and empirical. Indeed, this is precisely what we see Steele and Wilson-Grau do, as they focus on belief and suggest "the primary question regarding belief in the supernatural is not how one measures the transcendent, but how one takes into consideration the effect of that belief" (2016, 5).

Of course, studies could be proposed to examine whether or not conflicts in which more people pray or meditate for peace effects change. However, there will not be controlled experiments to see if prayer and meditation improves things – as experiments in health sciences for angioplasty patients have attempted – because it is simply not possible to control how many people pray for and against any one side and any one outcome in a large-scale conflict and (more importantly), these efforts domesticate the divine. The other complication is that even if there are observable patterns, it does not mean we understand divine or awesome agency. If we see something that looks like Ultimate Reality or God intervening, it does not mean we understand, as the many holy texts, interpretive texts, meditative practices, theological works, and confessional community discernment processes indicate.

The implication here, then, is that the push to pay more attention to consequences such as effectiveness, impact, and sustainability, marginalizes an un-

⁶ For an example of an effort to include mention of God in a logframe see Rich Janzen and David Wiebe's (2011) "Putting God in the Logic Model."

derstanding that God or Ultimate Reality acts in this world in ways that may include humans but also go beyond. Awesome agency does not figure in the valuation for evaluation.

6.2 Commodifying Dialogue Exchanges

A second area to consider is with respect to the ways in which exchanges in dialogue are commodified from a consequentialist perspective. In particular, the effects of positing efficiency as a universal standard to be valued in interfaith dialogue and religious peacebuilding. The valuing of efficiency as a good in the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria offers an economic reading of peacebuilding where efficient uses of resources are prioritized over less efficient uses of resources. Commodities such as social capital are to be efficiently built with the minimum possible peacebuilder resources – financial, human, organizational. This may sound normal and right in North America where relationships are often commodified in financial terms (e.g., paying others to care for aging parents). However, the emphasis on efficient exchange comes into conflict with the valuing of moments of interchange and the quality of interactions as goods in and of themselves for faithful followers.

Todd Whitmore, an American theologian and peacebuilder, has observed the effects of economic and social context on Catholic social teaching in its articulation of the relationship between development and peace, as evidenced in Pope Paul VI's statement that the new name for peace is development, in the 1967 *Populorum Progressio* (2010, 172). This thinking, Whitmore notes, had its origins in Europe, and its primary audience was European. Catholic social teaching was speaking into a context that had experienced the industrial revolution, but which he notes is vastly inappropriate for other parts of the world such as sub-Saharan Africa. Whitmore forcefully writes, "Development as it has actually existed has not been an unalloyed good, or even a basically good set of activities that has been led astray by self-interest. It has been from the start, whatever else it has been, a tool for extracting labour and natural resources from indigenous peoples. This is the context in which any effort to empower the poor necessarily takes place" (2010, 175). In looking at the valuation of efficiently producing results, we see it reinforces an exchange dynamic, which represents the economic and political context of donor countries and can be read as part of a continuing problematic dynamic.

The value of efficiency as a moral good reinforces a commodified view of interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding. It cuts against elements of interfaith dialogue in which faithful followers experience a deeply religious encounter in

the presence of the divine or the quality of the experience, which are seen as good in and of themselves as illustrated in the theological mode of interfaith dialogue. We have here, then, the danger of valuing peacebuilding and peacebuilders without soul or quality.

6.3 The One, the Many, and the Connections Between

A third area to consider is less obvious in the criteria but relates to the ways in which individual agency is construed within theories of change and the emphasis on individuality over community and relationships. There is a subtle shift to emphasize individuals as agents leading social change as well as being the base unit for analysing the effects of an intervention in consequentialist analysis. As noted above, awesome agency is problematic to include in evaluations, what is left then is individual agency. Why individuals and not groups or communities? The answer relates to assumptions underlying the analysis of how change occurs. For example, the widely cited Reflecting on Peace Practice Project produced findings that highlighted the important role that key people play in affecting structural change to impact peace writ large (Anderson and Olson 2003). Works were clustered into initiatives that targeted either “more people” or “key people” – while this simplification was meant for analytic purposes it has powerfully shaped the imagination of how change happens and the role that communities and social structures may play. Key individuals are important actors in change. Effects are also measured based upon individual reports of change, and cumulative effects on individuals as occurs in utilitarian consequentialist calculations. This approach reflects Max Weber’s (1978) methodological individualism in which individuals are the agents of social phenomena and the focus of sociological study.

Here again is the concern that what is valued as good is shaped more by the social and economic context of those pushing for evaluation based on consequentialist values than religious faith and moral beliefs about what is good and right, which are often communally inscribed. Further, the social and political context that produces these norms benefit from the current political and economic order. Miguel De La Torre, Professor of Social Ethics and Latino/a studies, writes:

While the ethical positions held within the dominant culture are neither uniform nor monolithic, certain common denominators nevertheless exist, such as a propensity toward hyperindividualism, a call for law and order, an emphasis on charity, an uncritical acceptance of the market economy, an emphasis on orthodoxy, and a preponderance for deductive eth-

ical reasoning. While such an ethics is congruent with the dominant culture, it is damning for those residing on the margins of society because of how it reinforces the prevailing social structures responsible for causes of disenfranchisement.

The push to evaluate can unintentionally reinforce individualism, perhaps even hyper-individualism. The valuing of individual agency and individual experience is, of course, also present in religious discourse.⁷ We see this valuing of key individuals (religious leaders) possessing agency in the political mode of interfaith dialogue, with the anticipation that key people are able to effect larger-scale and institutional change. Yet many are concerned that this mode of dialogue is using religious actors for political purposes. Ends considerations have the potential to overshadow the valuing both of faithful followers and awesome agency – which the peacebuilding strand of interfaith dialogue tries to hold in the balance.

6.4 Implications

The three themes noted above all point to a side-lining of some of the values present most clearly in theological exchange as a likely outcome of efforts to monitor and evaluate interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding. What is most likely to happen is reinforcing an individualized subject (and object), a push towards economic modes of reading interactions between people in conflict settings, and a diminishing appreciation of the *awesome* in interfaith and religious peacebuilding encounters. The already difficult balancing of earthy ends, faithful followers and awesome agency, which we see in religious peacebuilding and the three modes of interfaith dialogue, give way to the dominance of earthy ends. The implication is that if the values that currently permeate evaluation discourse pervade religious peacebuilding it will lose its uniqueness. To answer the questions that I posed at the start of this chapter, on whether the call for certain types of accountability in peacebuilding evaluation reinforces the problem of instrumentalising religion, the answer seems to be yes, certain types of values in this call for accountability do instrumentalise religion. At stake, then, is no less than the soul of interfaith dialogue and religious peacebuilding.

Can anything be done to keep balancing awesome agency with faithful followers and earthy ends? Perhaps, but I am not confident. What it will take is for the criteria for evaluation to be only partially consequentialist. This part is not too challenging. We can utilize the values of faith traditions themselves, as sug-

7 Indeed, Max Weber's analysis of the connections between Protestantism and the rise of capitalism reinforce this point in *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930).

gested by Woodrow and colleagues, if they are identified in a careful process of eliciting those values prior to planning an intervention, and in a way that does not emphasize consequentialist views. For example, did people come to care more for one another in the project, or did people enact their religious values in each engagement with “the other.” We can choose to not use the OECD-DAC criteria, or use them only very selectively. We can value personal transformation as a good in and of itself, as Steele and Wilson-Grau note. We can value religious community participation and collective transformation as well to move away from hyper-individuality. For example, one creative effort to include discernment in evaluating a faith-based project in Canada adapted participatory action research methods for its approach as a way to open-up the process to community participation (Janzen and Wiebe, 2011).

However, we also need to value awesome agency on its own terms. Not just belief in awesome agency, but value that which is beyond belief: awesome agency that affects change on its own time and terms, beyond human understanding. It is this ontologically unique piece of interfaith dialogue, and other types of religious peacebuilding, that remains firmly outside of evaluation criteria and therefore lost in evaluation. While there is value in evaluation for many of the activities in and elements of the theory of change in interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding, evaluation is not an absolute good. Recognizing the things not evaluated but valued will be equally necessary if interreligious peacebuilding is to keep its soul.

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