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The Journal of Interreligious Studies
A Collaboration Between Hebrew College and Boston University School of Theology

Special Issue in Partnership with Harvard Divinity School's Religions and the Practice of Peace Colloquium

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Guest Editor: Elizabeth R. Lee-Hood

Dean David N. Hempton, Diana Eck, Jeff Seul, and Elizabeth Lee-Hood with students and working group members in Religions and the Practice of Peace (RPP) and guest speakers Imam Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa, Pastor James Movel Wuye, Fania Davis, and sujatha baliga. (Photos provided by Harvard Divinity School photos/Laura Krueger, Evgenia Eliseeva, Angela Counts, Bridget Power, Maggie Krueger—upper left to lower right)

From the Managing Editor

This issue is the first of many in a series of publications in partnership with the Religions and the Practice of Peace (RPP) Colloquium at Harvard Divinity School (HDS). I am delighted that Dean David Hampton of HDS and Elizabeth Lee-Hood, principal research associate for the RPP initiative, agreed to this collaborative project with the *Journal of Interreligious Studies* (*JIRS*). A cursory glance of the respective missions of the RPP and the *JIRS* immediately evinces that this relationship is more than apposite. Furthermore, the urgent and salient scholarship and exposition of practices brought together and presented by the RPP initiative will hopefully find an even larger audience in the readership of the *JIRS*.

The RPP invites scholars, practitioners, leaders, community organizers, and other professionals to share their learned experiences and academic expertise regarding the religious, spiritual, and cultural resources for the cultivation of positive relationships, well-being, justice, and sustainable peace. This HDS initiative recognizes the constitutive role religious leaders and communities play in conflict transformation and peacebuilding at the local and global levels, and so seeks to share best practices and scholarship with the larger Harvard community and the surrounding area.

This mission complements the *JIRS*'s desire to promote innovative ideas and methodologies for interreligious work, to discuss interreligious disputes and their possible solutions, and to provide a venue in which religious leaders and community organizers from disparate regions may learn from one other.

While the RPP initiative has digital archives of many of their events, David Hempton, Liz Lee-Hood, and I agreed that the potential for an even broader reach was necessary to counter the challenges facing our diverse human community in the twenty-first century. There is no need to rehash the critiques and challenges that scholars over the past three decades have executed on the secularization thesis. The world is not getting "less religious," in whatever way this is understood. Neither are religious identities any less formative of political, public praxis, nor are political, economic, and social ideologies erasing the constitutive impact of religious communities and identities in local, national, and international relations. Rather, religious identities are constantly transmuting into new ones in the context of ever-challenging economic, racial, ethnic, cultural, and neocolonial ideologies. As the RPP initiative recognizes, "for the majority of humanity, religion is and will remain a vital and integral aspect of life."[1]

Religious traditions, of course, are not themselves agents of acts of peacebuilding or violence, love or hate. Nonetheless, religious and other spiritual, cultural, and ethical traditions are resources for communities, leaders, and scholars in the advancement of justice, solidarity, reconciliation, and peace. To ignore these rich resources is to the global community's detriment, and to underscore religious animosity while disregarding religious benevolence presents an uneven narrative, and with negative consequences to boot.

Accordingly, the mission of the RPP initiative at HDS coincides with aspects of the *JIRS*'s mission. In particular, the articles in this issue and subsequent ones explore the complex

[1] https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/about/mission-and-urgency, accessed 11/2/18.

relationships among religious communities and identities and the porous—if not fictitious—boundary between the religious and secular spheres.

This issue's introductory piece gives an overview of the RPP initiative at HDS in Dean Hempton's and Liz Lee-Hood's own words. Together, they detail the program's founding, its mission and major activities, some of the experiences and lessons learned in organizing and managing such a large initiative, and the emergence of its more recent undertaking, the Sustainable Peace Initiative. This piece will prove beneficial to other institutions or leaders who may wish to create similar initiatives.

Following the overview of the RPP, the first article illuminates the rich resources that religion may offer in furthering conflict resolution. In "Treat the Stranger as Your Own: Religious Prosociality and Conflict Transformation," Jeffrey Seul explores the ways in which religious prosociality—religious communities' ability to promote intragroup cooperation—can inform methods of promoting intergroup cooperation. Religious communities and traditions do not have a monopoly on the us-them dynamic, but they do possess unique techniques for overcoming some differences. Seul examines the potential of religious prosociality to "avert, moderate, or transform destructive cycles of conflict in which religion is a factor."[2]

In the second article, Madhawa P. Palihapitiya offers a concrete example of interfaith and intrafaith cooperation in the production and deployment of faith-based early warning systems. In "Faith-Based Conflict Early Warning: Experiences from Two Conflict Zones," Palihapitiya examines cases in Sri Lanka and Nigeria in which religious communities collaborate to create mechanisms that can be mobilized in the event of impending conflict and in the prevention of violence. Both these systems are explored from the author's own experience in directing and designing them.

In the third article, "Building Peace Through Trans-local Community and Collaboration: The Tanenbaum *Peacemakers in Action Network*," Joyce S. Dubensky and other Tanenbaum Staff detail the founding, formation, structure, evolution, and effectiveness of the Tanenbaum *Peacemakers in Action Network*. Members of this network live in various contexts throughout the world, but they are enabled to motivate, sustain, and inspire one another through the network's programming and institutional support.

In the final article, "Interfaith Infrastructure: The Indispensable Value of the Local," Diana Eck zooms in on the local to explore the institutional, personal, and relational foundations that sustain successful interfaith engagement. Drawing from Harvard University's Pluralism Project's history and case study method, she looks at the changing religious landscape of America in general, and urban centers in particular.

This inaugural issue alone makes the partnership between the RPP at HDS and the *JIRS* a worthwhile one. I look forward, however, to so many more to come.

Axel M. Oaks Takacs
Managing Editor

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Introduction: Religions and the Practice of Peace—*Journal of Interreligious Studies* Collaboration

David N. Hempton with Elizabeth R. Lee-Hood

Greetings, Friends,

As Dean of Harvard Divinity School and founder of Religions and the Practice of Peace (RPP), I am delighted that RPP's fifth year is coinciding with the publication of this inaugural issue of a long-term series in collaboration with the *Journal of Interreligious Studies (JIRS)*. The series will feature pieces authored by scholars, practitioners, and religious leaders invited to speak at our RPP Colloquium and other RPP events. We are grateful to *JIRS* editors Mary Elizabeth Moore, Dean of the Boston University School of Theology, and Or N. Rose of Hebrew College, and to *JIRS* managing editor Axel Marc Oaks Takács for this opportunity to collaborate and allow our inspirational speakers to share their insights on religions and peace practice with the *JIRS* readership.

With help from colleagues, I founded RPP at Harvard Divinity School in 2014 to serve as a hub for cross-disciplinary engagement, scholarship, and practice at Harvard University and beyond focusing on:

- How individuals and communities around the world, past and present, have drawn on religious, spiritual, and cultural resources to cultivate positive relationships, well-being, justice, and peace across differences;

- How such efforts can inform contemporary conflict transformation, peacebuilding, and leadership; and

- How spiritual and human values, positive engagement across religions and cultures, and nonviolent approaches can help humanity solve shared problems and create sustainable peace for all.

As readers may be considering developing programming on this topic in their own contexts, we would like to share with you a bit of our RPP story: how we came to establish RPP at Harvard Divinity School; the RPP Colloquium and other major activities of RPP thus far; some of our experiences and lessons learned to date; and our most recent undertaking, the emerging Sustainable Peace Initiative (SPI).

This past spring, we were honored to feature at the RPP Colloquium Benjamin B. Ferencz, former prosecutor of the Nuremberg trials.[1] "Ben," as he asked to be called, was appointed Chief Prosecutor in the Schutzstaffel (SS) Einsatzgruppen case against Nazi war criminals and fought to provide victims restitution. Prior to that, he had graduated from Harvard Law School in 1943, served in General Patton's army in the World War II campaigns in Europe,

[1] See video of RPP Colloquium session, "Sustaining Peace: The Role of Ethics, Law, and Policy in Promoting a New International Security Paradigm," May 3, 2018, at https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/rpp-colloquium-2017-18.

and participated in the liberation of Nazi concentration camps. At age 99, he remains an indefatigable advocate for a world of "law not war": an international order that will no longer permit and normalize state aggression. He reminds us that the urgent need for strategic cooperation to "sustain peace" has only heightened now that nuclear weapons make ever-present the risk that we may annihilate ourselves and life on the planet.

Though Ben has dedicated much of his life's work and several books to the technical complexities of preventing interstate violence, he emphasizes that the peace that we must seek entails much more. The "dehumanization" that enables otherwise "good" and "intelligent" people to become "mass murderers" in wartime likewise produces lack of peace in our societies in ordinary times. Taking protean yet recurring forms—hatred, bias, division, discrimination, injustice, oppression, dispossession, exploitation, abuse, neglect, ignorance, and the untold trauma and suffering that result therefrom—this dehumanization of ourselves and others prevents us from realizing our potential to use the gift of our humanity to coexist in compassionate, harmonious, and equitable ways that foster flourishing for all.

Ben points out that sustaining peace is not merely a technical, legal, institutional, and political matter: It is also a profoundly human, relational, ethical, cultural, and spiritual matter—a matter not only of the "mind," but also, and more fundamentally, of the "heart." Only by investigating and availing ourselves of humanity's resources for peace in all these dimensions at once can we bring about a more peaceful and sustainable world for our own and future generations. Ben maintains that it now rests with people of vision and commitment worldwide—especially in our religious communities, which remain primary sites of ethical education for so many—to awaken to this moral agency and awaken it in others.[2] Hence, he honored us at RPP, as a near-centenarian, with this recent visit.

Working together to find effective ways to promote harmony and shared flourishing has indeed become an imperative for all of us in our human family. Lack of peace in its many forms is taking an unacceptable toll on millions of people around the world in the form of brutal violence. Yet it is also the major obstacle to our attaining the unprecedented level of local and global cooperation that we will require to surmount other urgent problems—from entrenched structural inequalities and endemic poverty to mass forced migration and, most critically, degradation of the very environment that makes life possible. We now find ourselves at a juncture in human history at which, as Buddhist monk and nonviolent activist Thich Nhat Hanh has put it starkly, our alternatives are two: "coexistence" or "co-nonexistence."[3]

As panelist J. Bryan Hehir, Parker Gilbert Montgomery Professor of the Practice of Religion and Public Life at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and former Dean of Harvard Divinity School, aptly worded it, Ben's presentation to us at the RPP Colloquium was a true "oral history" and personal "testimony." This hit home for me, since my own preoccupation with conflict, peace, and the role of religion therein was kindled by painful personal experience. In my case, it was living through the "Troubles" between Unionists/Loyalists (mostly Protestant) and Nationalists/Republicans (mostly Catholics) in my native Northern Ireland,

[2] See a special video message by Ben Ferencz, prepared in advance of his visit to RPP at Harvard Divinity School, posted by RPP as "People Power for Peace: Words of Wisdom for Humanity's Future from Ben Ferencz," at https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/rpp-colloquium-2017-18.

[3] Thich Nhat Hanh, *Love in Action: Writings on Nonviolent Social Change* (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 1993), 120.

a thirty-year conflict in which more than 3,500 people were killed in a small province of just over a million and a half people. My daily life as a teenager, then a student at Queen's University Belfast, and later a professor and chair of the University's School of History, was indelibly marked by a dark procession of bombings, revenge murders, young masked paramilitary men toting automatic weapons, army patrols, and funerals. These difficult experiences set me on a quest to understand the roots of that conflict, in particular the relation between religion and political culture, and led me eventually to become a social historian of religion.[4]

Those tough years in Northern Ireland and my research as a historian drove home to me that the roots of destructive conflict and violence are deep and complex—involving unequal power dynamics; social, cultural, and political divisions; injustice; economic inequities; inherited demographic structures; and religious bigotry. Yet, they also revealed to me that in conflict situations, religiously motivated women and men can sometimes be at the forefront in reaching out across divides, serving the welfare of "the other," mediating between sides, seeking reconciliation, and fostering healing. During the "Troubles," for example, Redemptorist priest Alec Reid used his base in the Clonard Monastery of West Belfast to nurture the Irish peace process.[5] His role as a mediator and peacemaker was so significant that he was later credited for helping move the country toward peace by the politicians who won the Nobel Peace Prize. There were similar overtures made by some Protestant clergymen and lay leaders, though it should be stressed that such figures experienced opposition from within their own faith communities.

I witnessed firsthand in Northern Ireland what more and more scholars have since documented:[6] that the knowledge of the conflict, the spirit of commitment and hope, the influential moral voice, and the institutional capacity that religious individuals and communities often bring to peace efforts can make them effective agents of peaceful transformation against the odds. Indeed, religion has informed, empowered, and sustained peace efforts throughout history, inspiring major theoreticians of ethics of peace, architects of practical approaches to peace, and leading implementers of conflict transformation and reconciliation processes. They frequently have on-the-ground insights into the causes and dynamics of a conflict and ways to resolve it that are essential for policymakers, third parties, and international organizations. Many of their methods have been taken up by others across time and place, including governments. While history records the deeds of iconic religious peacebuilders—such as Mahatma Gandhi; the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and even Gandhi's Afghan Muslim friend, Abdul Ghaffar "Badshah" Khan, who raised

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[4] See David N. Hempton, *The Church in the Long Eighteenth Century: The I.B. Tauris History of the Christian Church* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011); *Evangelical Disenchantment: Nine Portraits of Faith and Doubt* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland: From the Glorious Revolution to the Decline of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); *The Religion of the People: Methodism and Popular Religion C. 1750–1900* (New York: Routledge, 1996); *Methodism and Politics in British Society*, 1750–1850 (New York: Routledge, 1984).

[5] See David Little, "Men Who Walked the Street: Father Alex Reid and the Rev. Dr. Roy Magee: Northern Ireland," in *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*, ed. David Little, with Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 53–96.

[6] See, for example, Gerard F. Powers, "Religion and Peacebuilding," in *Strategies of Peace: Transforming Conflict in a Violent World*, ed. Daniel Philpott and Gerard F. Powers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 317–352; David Little, "Religion, Violent Conflict, and Peacemaking," in *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*, 438; David R. Smock, ed., *Religious Contributions to Peacemaking: When Religion Brings Peace, Not War*, Peaceworks 55 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2006); Atalia Omer, R. Scott Appleby, and David Little, eds., *Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Susan Hayward and Katherine Marshall, eds., *Women, Religion, and Peacebuilding: Illuminating the Unseen* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2015); and works cited in note 16.

a "nonviolent army" of more than 100,000 Pashtun men and women[7]—their accomplishments rest upon the often hidden and anonymous activities of millions of others.

From the example of Father Reid and "extraordinary ordinary" lay women and men, I discovered that pursuing peace is far from a passive, "soft," or "Pollyanna" affair: It demands considerable savvy with respect to the conflict, its parties, and their motivations; the clarity to find and retain one's moral vision amidst a situation that it not ethically clear-cut; the commitment to stand up for one's ideals despite being treated as a traitor by friends and family; the courage to take emotional and physical risks and even place oneself directly in harm's way; the determination to persist in the face of constant uncertainties and disheartening setbacks; and the resilience to find strength for oneself and others amidst grave personal traumas and losses. The quiet heroes whom I observed helped mend the ruptures of conflict with virtues that were fruits of spiritual formation, virtues that I recognized from the biblical Beatitudes: poverty of spirit, meekness, righteousness, mercy, purity, and peacemaking. Their peacemaking was spiritual practice in action.

Upon my appointment as Dean of Harvard Divinity School in 2012, I was keen to explore with colleagues what more the School might do to make a positive difference in our world in the domain of religions and peace. I dedicated my opening convocation address as Dean to "The Fog of Religious Conflict: Eleven Reflections from a Conflict Zone" based on my experiences in Northern Ireland.[8] I was surprised at the outpouring of feedback that I received—from faculty, students, and friends of the Divinity School in varied fields. Especially well represented were our alumni, a number of whom had completed their Harvard Divinity School education in the 1990s and since gained relevant career and community experience. There was Shaun Casey, then special advisor to US Secretary of State John Kerry in the newly formed office on faith-based community initiatives, an alumnus of the Divinity School and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.[9] There was Jeffrey R. Seul, then chairman and now cochair of the Peace Appeal Foundation, partner in an international law firm, and a graduate of both the Divinity School and Harvard Law School.[10] Another was the coauthor of this essay, Elizabeth R. Lee-Hood, alumna of the Divinity School and Harvard-Radcliffe College and PhD candidate in the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, studying traditional Islamic spiritual ethics, pedagogies of spiritual formation, and their place in peace practice.[11] In their years at Harvard, each had patched together a cross-disciplinary education at the intersection of religion, conflict, and peace along with training in a chosen professional or scholarly field. They managed to do so, however, by dint of individual creativity and determination, in the absence of a program

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[7] See Eknath Easwaran, *Nonviolent Soldier of Islam: Badshah Khan, A Man to Match His Mountains,* 2nd ed. (Tomales, CA: Blue Mountain Center of Meditation, 1999).

[8] For a transcript of my August 30, 2012 convocation address, see *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 41 (1&2), Winter/Spring 2013, at https://bulletin.hds.harvard.edu/articles/winterspring2013/fog-religious-conflict. For the video, see https://hds.harvard.edu/news/2012/08/30/convocation-2012-fog-religious-conflict#.

[9] See Shaun Casey, *The Making of a Catholic President: Kennedy vs. Nixon 1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[10] See Jeffrey R. Seul, "Treat the Stranger as Your Own: Religious Prosociality and Conflict Transformation," *Journal of Interreligious Studies* 24 (2018): Hyunwoo: Please add page numbers; "Religion and Conflict," in *The Negotiator's Fieldbook*, eds. Andrea Kupfer Schneider and Christopher Honeyman (Washington, DC: American Bar Association, 2006), 323–334; "'Ours is the Way of God': Religion, Identity, and Intergroup Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research* 36, no. 5 (1999): 553–569; and works cited in note 33.

[11] Elizabeth R. Lee-Hood co-translated selections of Qur'anic commentary as an early-stage contribution to *An Anthology of Qur'anic Commentaries: Volume One: On the Nature of the Divine*, eds. Feras Hamza and Sajjad Rizvi with Farhana Mayer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

at the University to support this constellation of interests or the benefit of an organized cohort of peers, all while navigating obstacles posed by a "siloed" system.

They and other alumni observed that in their respective fields—from policy and law to health, education, and business—knowledge of diverse populations' "insider" perspectives and resources is needed to enhance mutual understanding, collaboration across differences, bridge-building across divides, and the effectiveness of organizations' work. Yet, there is a critical shortage of people equipped for this, especially in the domain of religion. In discussions with faculty, it was apparent that Harvard lacked not only a cross-disciplinary program on religion, conflict, and peace, but also—crucially—a program for serious inquiry into religious, spiritual, and cultural resources for peace practice and how these may be engaged in various professional fields.

It also became evident that the vast majority of Harvard students, who are not on a ministry track, lacked systematic supports for integrating the spiritual, ethical, and cultural aspects of their leadership preparation with its intellectual and professional aspects. In fact, many found this to be actively discouraged by an academic climate that makes classroom conversation about spiritual and cultural aspects of students' development and implications for their academic learning and professional careers unwelcome. As Marshall Ganz, Senior Lecturer in Public Policy at the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, later stressed at an introductory RPP Colloquium session in October 2014, this "secular fundamentalism" is a problem not only for our many students informed by religion, but also for our societies. Depriving such students of opportunities at Harvard to hone their moral perspectives and public voices prevents them from realizing their "religious capacity for moral agency." Since these rising leaders remain unprepared to step forward as "merchants of hope" and "transcendent possibility" in our societies, the "turf" is abandoned to "the merchants of fear."[12]

We recognized, moreover, that for nonreligious and religious students alike, holistic leadership preparation that takes account of its interrelated human, interior, and exterior dimensions is vital for effectiveness on any path of transformative leadership in our world. Numerous alumni with whom we spoke lamented not having had this type of training at Harvard, convinced that it would have enhanced their leadership capacities and trajectories in significant ways.

In December 2013, we convened a public panel, "Religions and Peace: Do Universities Have a Role?" to explore with an array of experts the potential value of establishing a cross-disciplinary initiative on religions and peace.[13] The panel was moderated by Diana L. Eck, Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies, Fredric Wertham Professor of Law and Psychiatry in Society in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, member of the Faculty of Divinity, and founder and director of the Pluralism Project at Harvard. Featured on the panel were Martha Minow, then Dean of Harvard Law School; Shaun Casey, already mentioned; Matthew Hodes, director of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations; Jonathan Granoff, president of the Global

[12] See Marshall Ganz, RPP Colloquium, October 29, 2014, at https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/rpp-series/rpp-colloquium-2014-15.

[13] For the video of the December, 2, 2013 public panel event, "Religions and Peace: Do Universities Have a Role?" visit https://hds.harvard.edu/news/2013/12/06/religions-peace-do-universities-have-role-video.

Security Institute and special representative of the United Religions Initiative; and Jocelyne Cesari, Visiting Professor of Religion and Politics at the Divinity School and director of the Islam in the West Program at Harvard. The event was followed by a faculty roundtable at Jewett House, the Dean's residence, where these panelists were joined by eight additional Harvard faculty members and affiliates for further discussion hosted by me and chaired by Shaun Casey. Together, they represented the fields of policy, government, diplomacy, law, sociology, negotiation, conflict resolution, history, religion, interfaith relations, and area studies from the Americas and Europe to Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.[14]

The most salient theme emerging from the event was that, whereas the use of religion to promote division and violence appropriately receives a great deal of attention from scholars, policymakers, and the media (and must continue to do so), the use of religion to transform conflict and foster cooperation and shared flourishing across divides remains vastly understudied and underappreciated relative to its historical, current, and potential significance. To quote Diana L. Eck, "It is commonplace to note that the news media is drawn to stories of violence rather than cooperation and to extremist rather than moderate voices. But what about those of us in the academic world? The Indian political psychologist Ashis Nandy has written of what he calls the 'conspicuous asymmetry' between the number of studies focusing on violence and those focusing on non-violence. . . . We are far more aware of the forces of violence that tear communities apart than we are of those practices and movements that knit them together."[15]

To be sure, scholarship and practice in "religions and peacebuilding" has burgeoned into an expanding academic field since the publication of *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, edited by Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson in 1994, nearly a quarter-century ago.[16] Yet, it

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[14] Joining the six panelists and me at the faculty roundtable were Ali S. Asani, Professor of Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion and Cultures and then director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program at Harvard; Charles Hallisey, Yehan Numata Senior Lecturer on Buddhist Literatures at Harvard Divinity School and former president of the American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies; J. Bryan Hehir, Parker Gilbert Montgomery Professor of the Practice of Religion and Public Life at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, secretary of health care and social services at the Catholic Archdiocese of Boston, and former Dean of Harvard Divinity School; Ousmane Kane, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor of Contemporary Islamic Religion and Society at Harvard Divinity School and Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences; Jamil Mahuad, former President of Ecuador, former codirector of the Project on the Prevention of Global Violence at Harvard Institute on Global Health, senior advisor of the Harvard International Negotiation Program at Harvard Law School, board member of the Abraham Path Initiative, and Global Advisory Council Member of Mediators Beyond Borders; Anne Monius, Professor of South Asian Religions at Harvard Divinity School; Diane L. Moore, Senior Lecturer on Religious Studies and Education and director of the Religious Literacy Project at Harvard Divinity School; and Elizabeth R. Lee-Hood, PhD candidate and Harvard College and Divinity School alumna already mentioned, who organized the events.

[15] See Diana L. Eck, "Prospects for Pluralism: Voice and Vision in the Study of Religion," 2006 AAR Presidential Address, *JAAR* 75, no. 4 (2007): 744–745 and note 1, citing Ashis Nandy, *Timewarps: Silent and Evasive Pasts in Indian Politics and Religion* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 218.

[16] Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, eds., *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). See, for example, Roger S. Gottlieb, ed., *Liberating Faith: Religious Voices for Justice, Peace, and Ecological Wisdom* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003); Katrien Hertog, *The Complex Reality of Religious Peacebuilding: Conceptual Contributions and Critical Analysis* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010); Douglas Johnston, ed., *Faith-based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1997); John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); John Paul Lederach and R. Scott Appleby, "Strategic Peacebuilding: An Overview," in *Strategies of Peace: Transforming Conflict in a Violent World*, eds. Daniel Philpott and Gerard F. Powers (New York: Oxford University Press,

was clear that an enormous amount of work remains, both in the area of academic inquiry as well as to bring the knowledge generated into other fields and into professional settings. Even in what is perhaps the most proximal field, "peace and conflict studies," Thomas Matyók and Maureen Flaherty observed in a book published just months after our event that religion may still "very well be the most understudied phenomenon" within that field.[17]

Through our explorations at the Harvard panel and roundtable and in consultations with other experts, we identified that:

- The immense challenges that imperil our survival in the twenty-first century have profound human, relational, spiritual, ethical, and cultural dimensions. If humanity is to address these challenges effectively, attention to these dimensions—together with the technical, institutional, structural, and political—must become part of intellectual and leadership preparation both at our universities and in training for the practice of our professions.

- Research indicates that, contrary to the "secularization thesis," religion is expected to remain central to life—and foundational to ethics—for the majority of people on our planet.[18] As I noted upon accepting the appointment as Dean, "In the rest of

2010), 19–44; Little, ed., with Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*; Thomas Matyók, Maureen Flaherty, Hamdesa Tuso, Jessica Senehi, and Sean Byrne, *Peace on Earth: The Role of Religion in Peace and Conflict Studies* (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2014); Susan Allen Nan, Zachariah Cherian Mampilly, and Andrea Bartoli, eds., *Peacemaking: From Practice to Theory* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012); Mark Rogers, Tom Bamat, and Julie Ideh, eds., *Pursuing Just Peace: An Overview of Case Studies for Faith-Based Peacebuilders* (Baltimore, MD: Catholic Relief Services, 2008); Cynthia Sampson, "Religion and Peace Building," in *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*, eds. William Zartman and L. Rasmussen (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 273–326; Cynthia Sampson, Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Claudia Liebler, and Diana Whitney, eds., *Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding: A Resource for Innovators* (Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institute Publications, 2003); Timothy D. Sisk, ed., *Between Terror and Tolerance: Religious Leaders, Conflict, and Peacemaking* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2011); David R. Smock, ed., *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2002); David Steele, "An Introductory Overview to Faith-Based Peacebuilding," in *Pursuing Just Peace: An Overview of Case Studies for Faith-Based Peacebuilders*, eds. Mark Rogers, Tom Bamat, and Julie Ideh (Baltimore, MD: Catholic Relief Services, 2008), 5–41; Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, ed., *Interfaith Just Peacemaking: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives on the New Paradigm of Peace and War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); United Religions Initiative, *Interfaith Peacebuilding Guide* (San Francisco: United Religions Initiative, 2004); USAID, *Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding: An Introductory Programming Guide* (Washington, DC: USAID, 2009); and works cited in note 6 and other notes in the present article.

[17] Thomas Matyók and Maureen Flaherty, "Can People of Faith, and People in Peace and Conflict Studies, Work Together?" in Thomas Matyók et al., *Peace on Earth: The Role of Religion in Peace and Conflict Studies*, 1.

[18] As Liora Danan writes, "Until recently, many leading scholars of religion and society theorized that modernization would bring a decline in religion. Instead, they have been surprised by 'an age of explosive, pervasive religiosity.'" Liora Danan, "Mixed Blessings: U.S. Government Engagement with Religion in Conflict-Prone Settings," Report of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007), 1, citing Peter Berger, "Religion in a Globalizing World," *The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life*, December 4, 2006, at http://www.pewforum.org/2006/12/04/religion-in-a-globalizing-world2/. According to a Gallup Global Report, "Gallup surveys in 114 countries in 2009 show that religion continues to play an important role in many people's lives worldwide. The global median proportion of adults who say religion is an important part of their daily lives is 84%, unchanged from what Gallup has found in other years. In 10 countries and areas, at least 98% say religion is important in their daily lives." See Steve Crabtree, "Religiosity Highest in World's Poorest Nations," Gallup Global Reports, August 31, 2010, at http://www.gallup.com/poll/142727/religiosity-highest-world-poorest-nations.aspx#1. See also the Pew Research Center's finding that "In most countries surveyed, majorities consider religion an essential part of

the world vibrant religious cultures are the default position, not the exception."[19] In our highly religious world, the relative neglect of inquiry into religious "insider" perspectives on and resources for sustainable peace is a critical, consequential, and dangerous problem. Lack of knowledge in this area has been hampering the development of sounder approaches in policy, diplomacy, international security, and other arenas.

- Experts acknowledge that they are far from having solutions to the problems of destructive conflict and violence plaguing our world. None of us can afford to neglect learning whatever possible from the millennia of wisdom for peace practice in the world's spiritual and cultural traditions—wisdom honed in the crucible of some of history's most difficult and dire situations.

- Insufficient awareness among the domestic and global publics of historical and contemporary activities for peace by religious communities around the world leaves intact and thereby dangerously perpetuates the false narrative that religious "others" are inherently hostile, furnishing fertile soil for dehumanization, demonization, polarization, and violence.
- Peace efforts have been hampered by top-down approaches narrowly informed by culturally limited perspectives. As I have commented previously, I see the gulf between the concerns, outlooks, and modes of discourse of "secularized cultural elites" and "global religious traditions" as "potentially one of the most dangerous things in our world."[20] Universities must find ways to bridge the two, while decentering and broadening notions of "expertise"; giving special attention to eliciting from grassroots communities and populations such as women and children knowledge, perspectives, and priorities that can inform scholars and professionals; and attending to barriers such as legacies of ethnocentrism, racism, classism, and gender bias that prevent us from realizing and benefiting from an inclusive and cross-cultural approach.

- Advancing sustainable peace will demand that we take on complex and daunting problems that involve all sectors and professions; it is not a task that can be left to a cadre of "peacebuilding" specialists. Our universities must make clear that sustainable peace is an urgent matter in which everyone has a stake and to which everyone has much to contribute. In this, acquaintance with diverse religious and cultural resources for cooperative coexistence is essential to religious literacy, and skills in engaging diverse populations around such resources is an essential global competency. Both are crucial for effective ethical leadership in virtually any sphere in our world today.

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their lives," in The Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Unfavorable Views of Jews and Muslims on the Increase in Europe," 18–24, September 17, 2008, at http://www.pewglobal.org/2008/09/17/chapter-2-religiosity/.

[19] For remarks of March 30, 2012, see "David Hempton's Remarks on Being Appointed HDS Dean," April 2, 2012 , https://hds.harvard.edu/news/2012/04/02/david-hemptons-remarks-being-appointed-hds-dean. For the video, visit https://youtu.be/h1TMO-0PkEk.

[20] Ibid.

- Our universities are key institutions of civil society that offer rare opportunities for individuals from widely differing backgrounds to practice "arts and sciences" of substantive, constructive engagement across values and worldviews. At Harvard, students represent over 135 countries and, at the Divinity School alone, over 35 religious affiliations, and many go on to serve in influential leadership roles around the world. Failure to incorporate into classroom curricula ways for students to share and explore their diverse perspectives and resources for sustainable peace in relation to issues raised in their academic courses and professional training is a massive missed opportunity.

At the December 2013 event, there was resounding agreement that a cross-disciplinary initiative on religions and peace at Harvard University that would address these areas was greatly needed, and that Harvard Divinity School would be ideal as its hub. It would bring to bear the Divinity School's deep expertise in the study of the world's religions and theologies as well as in ministry, in cross-disciplinary exchange with the unparalleled expertise across the University in fields such as diplomacy, law, ethics, psychology, business, education, health, media, the arts, and technology; and allow for collaboration with centers such as the Program on Negotiation (PON) at Harvard Law School. A cross-disciplinary initiative would explore innovative, holistic approaches to sustainable peace and leadership preparation, promote knowledge sharing between scholars and communities, and raise public awareness of religious activities for peace around the world. By leveraging Harvard's remarkably diverse community and global reach, it would grow a worldwide network of scholars, professionals, and community members with unique potential to foster harmony, equity, and cooperation in our world for generations to come. At the same time, the initiative could serve as a model for other programs in the US and across the globe. As the event drew to a close, I welcomed these talented colleagues to join me and interested others in developing the envisioned initiative, and invited Elizabeth Lee-Hood to assist me. All agreed, many soon joined an advisory board,[21] and our RPP journey officially began.[22]

Our first step in 2014–15 was to convene an RPP Working Group of interested faculty members, associates, and alumni from across Harvard and the local area. We met in two-hour monthly sessions in a series that we called the "RPP Colloquium." Although colloquia at the

[21] In addition to Ali Asani, Jocelyne Cesari, Diana L. Eck, Charles Hallisey, Ousmane Kane, Anne Monius, and Diane Moore, already mentioned, others who joined the RPP Advisory Board include Leila Ahmed, Victor S. Thomas Professor of Divinity at Harvard Divinity School; Ann D. Braude, Senior Lecturer on American Religious History and director of the Women's Studies in Religion Program at Harvard Divinity School; Catherine Brekus, Charles Warren Professor of the History of Religion in America at Harvard Divinity School; Marshall Ganz, Senior Lecturer in Public Policy at the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University; Janet Gyatso, Hershey Professor of Buddhist Studies and associate dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs at Harvard Divinity School; Donna Hicks, Associate, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University; Hugh O'Doherty, Lecturer in Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University; Matthew L. Potts, Assistant Professor of Ministry Studies at Harvard Divinity School; Jeff Seul, Lecturer on the Practice of Peace at Harvard Divinity School, cochair of the Peace Appeal Foundation, and partner at the international law firm of Holland & Knight; and Daniel L. Shapiro, founder and director of the Harvard International Negotiation Program, Associate Professor in Psychology at Harvard Medical School/McLean Hospital, and affiliate faculty in the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School. Visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/people/advisory-board-members.

[22] For an address that I delivered to over 200 Harvard alumni leaders on May 1, 2014 on the importance in today's world of establishing programs on religions and peace at universities, "Religion and the Promotion of Peace in the 21st Century," visit https://hds.harvard.edu/news/2014/06/03/audio-feature-dean-hempton-religion-and-peace.

School are typically limited to doctoral students, we opened it to master's students as well since many plan to pursue relevant work. The Divinity School's Center for the Study of World Religions, then directed by Francis X. Clooney, SJ, graciously hosted us. In fascinating and thought-provoking conversations co-facilitated by me and Diana Eck, the scholars and scholar-practitioners in the group shared and pondered their work, insights, challenges, and questions across disciplines. We occasionally invited peace practitioners from outside the University to speak, and a session featured presentations by graduate students. Inspired by our spiritual communities' customs of treating food hospitality and shared meals as a practice of peace, we made a tradition of hosting the sessions over dinner. We soon established an RPP website, and we posted videos of the sessions there to serve as educational resources for the Harvard community and global public.[23] With some 70 members and up to 50 attending each session, we were quickly outgrowing the space.

Since broad engagement and raising awareness of the field are major goals of RPP, in 2015–16 we opened the RPP Colloquium to the entire Harvard community and the general public, hosting it in the Divinity School's more capacious Braun Room. After two sessions, we had outgrown that space, too, so we moved to our Sperry auditorium, to accommodate the upwards of 100 people attending each event. We then established the modus operandi that the RPP Colloquium has today: We invite both Harvard experts and outside speakers from around the US and the globe, in consultation with the RPP Working Group and others in our growing network. Faculty in the RPP Working Group serve as moderators, respondents, and panelists. The sessions are two and one-half hours to allow ample time for discussion and Q&A. We keep our tradition of offering dinner and follow each session with a reception and refreshments to encourage attendees to build connections.

The RPP Colloquium, now entering its fifth year, has been described as RPP's "flagship" activity.[24] It draws many "regulars" from across Harvard and the local area, as well as a continuous stream of newcomers who learn about it by word of mouth or our extensive poster and email outreach. Since its inception, the series has hosted over 1,000 unique individuals and over 2,000 including returning attendees. In the years since we opened it to the entire Harvard community and public, the sessions have averaged over 90 attendees, with a third to a half from beyond Harvard and about 50 new attendees each time. RPP graduate assistants provide hospitality, and students and fellows with experience in RPP's programs often help attendees from different communities and institutions get to know one another. The receptions are lively, abuzz with spirited conversation, and people commonly linger past our official 9 pm end time.

In keeping with RPP's mission to bridge academy and community, our RPP Colloquium speakers include distinguished scholars, scholar-practitioners, religious leaders, and community leaders and activists. The sessions place such experts in cross-disciplinary conversation with one another; with faculty, students, and alumni in the RPP Working Group; and with members of the public. The speakers present on specific historical and contemporary cases, provide valuable insights into causes and dynamics of conflicts, and generously distill many years of academic and/or peace practice work into advice intended to be useful to a broad audience and potentially

[23] For videos of RPP Colloquium sessions from 2014 to the present, see the online RPP video archive at https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/rpp-series-archive.
[24] For information on upcoming RPP Colloquium sessions, visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/programs/colloquium.

adaptable in a broad range of contexts. The following is only a small sampling of the scores of speakers whom we have hosted:[25]

- Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Peace Laureate, leader of the Liberian women's interfaith mass action for peace that played a pivotal role in ending Liberia's civil war, presenting on women as catalysts for local and global spiritually engaged movements for sustainable peace;[26]

- Imam Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa and Pastor James Movel Wuye of Nigeria, former militant adversaries turned interfaith mediation partners, on interfaith strategy for peacebuilding;[27]

- R. Scott Appleby of the University of Notre Dame[28] and Marc Gopin of George Mason University,[29] pioneering scholars and professors in the field of religion, conflict, and peacebuilding;
- Susan Hayward, then director of Religion and Inclusive Societies at the US Institute of Peace, on women, religion, and peacebuilding;[30]

- Daniel Shapiro, professor in psychology at Harvard and founder and director of the Harvard International Negotiation Project, on psychology, emotions, and

[25] For the dates and details of the RPP Colloquium sessions mentioned here and videos of these and other RPP Colloquium sessions and RPP talks from 2014 to the present, visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/rpp-series-archive.
[26] For a documentary film on the Liberian women's interfaith mass action for peace, see *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* (Warren, NJ: Passion River Films, 2008). See also Leymah Gbowee, *Mighty Be Our Powers: How Sisterhood, Prayer, and Sex Changed a Nation at War: A Memoir* (New York: Beast Books, 2011).
[27] For a documentary film on the Imam and the Pastor's story and work, see *The Imam and the Pastor: A Documentary from the Heart of Nigeria* (London: FLT Films, 2006), at https://youtu.be/kFh85K4NFv0, as well as a sequel, *An African Answer* (London: FLT Films, 2010). See also David Little, "Warriors and Brothers: Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye: Nigeria," in *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*, 247–277.
[28] R. Scott Appleby is dean of the Keough School of Global Affairs and Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame. For a seminal work in the field, see R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000). For a recent article, see R. Scott Appleby, "The New Name for Peace? Religion and Development as Partners in Strategic Peacebuilding," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding*, eds. Atalia Omer, R. Scott Appleby, and David Little (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 183–211.
[29] Marc Gopin is director of the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution (CRDC) and James H. Laue Professor at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University. For a seminal work in the field, see Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). See also Marc Gopin, *Holy War, Holy Peace: How Religion Can Bring Peace to the Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); *To Make the Earth Whole: The Art of Citizen Diplomacy in an Age of Religious Militancy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009); and *Bridges Across an Impossible Divide: The Inner Lives of Arab and Jewish Peacemakers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
[30] See Susan Hayward and Katherine Marshall, eds., *Women, Religion, and Peacebuilding: Illuminating the Unseen* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2015); and Susan Hayward, "Women, Religion, and Peacebuilding," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding*, 307–332.

conflict transformation;[31] and Donna Hicks, associate at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard, on dignity and leadership;[32]

- Jeff Seul, already mentioned, now our inaugural Lecturer on the Practice of Peace at Harvard Divinity School;[33] Joseph Henrich, professor in human evolutionary biology at Harvard; and Dr. Omar Sultan Haque, expert in psychiatry, social medicine, anthropology, and religion at Harvard, on social science research on religious "prosociality;"[34]

- Fania Davis[35] and sujatha baliga,[36] leaders in restorative justice and reform of the US criminal justice system and "school-to-prison" pipeline, on restorative justice and its spiritual dimensions;
- Madhawa Palihapitiya, expert on micro-level, community-based early warning and response systems, on his design of such systems in Sri Lanka and Nigeria and the involvement of religious leaders and communities;[37]
- Jacqueline Bhabha, professor in health and human rights at Harvard; Mohamad Al Bardan, Syrian peace activist; Nousha Kabawat, Syrian refugee youth program director;[38] and Alexandra Chen, expert in child protection and mental health, on the rights and protection of children in humanitarian crises;[39]

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[31] See Daniel L. Shapiro, *Negotiating the Nonnegotiable: How to Resolve Your Most Emotionally Charged Conflicts* (New York: Penguin Books, 2016); and Roger Fisher and Daniel Shapiro, *Beyond Reason: Using Emotions as You Negotiate* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006).

[32] See Donna Hicks, *Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011); and *Leading with Dignity: How to Create a Culture that Brings Out the Best in People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, forthcoming 2018).

[33] See Jeffrey R. Seul, "Religion in Cooperation and Conflict," in *The Negotiator's Desk Reference*, Vol. 2, eds. Christopher Honeyman and Andrea Kupfer Schneider (St. Paul, MN: DRI Press, 2017), 545–564; "Religious Prosociality for Conflict Transformation," ibid., 565–580; and works cited in note 10.

[34] For examples of research on religious prosociality, see S. Atran, "The Devoted Actor: Unconditional Commitment and Intractable Conflict Across Cultures," *Current Anthropology* 57 (S13), 2016: S192–S203; J. Ginges, H. Sheikh, S. Atran, and N. Argo, "Thinking from God's Perspective Decreases Biased Valuation of the Life of a Nonbeliever," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 113, no. 2 (2016): 316–319; A. Norenzayan, A. F. Shariff, W. M. Gervais, A. Willard, R. McNamara, E. Slingerland, and J. Henrich, "The Cultural Evolution of Prosocial Religions," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 39 (2016); D. Clingingsmith, I. K. Asim, and K. Michael, "Estimating the Impact of the Hajj: Religion and Tolerance in Islam's Global Gathering," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124, no. 3 (2009): 1133–1170; I. Hansen and A. Norenzayan, "Yang and Yin and Heaven and Hell: Untangling the Complex Relationship Between Religion and Intolerance," in *Where God and Science Meet: How Brain and Evolutionary Studies Alter Our Understanding of Religion*, vol. 3, ed. Patrick McNamara (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2006), 187–212; Z. Rothschild, A. Abdolhossein, and T. Pyszczynski, "Does Peace Have a Prayer? The Effect of Mortality Salience, Compassionate Values, and Religious Fundamentalism on Hostility Toward Out-groups," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 45, no. 4 (2009): 816–827.

[35] See Fania Davis, *The Little Book of Race and Restorative Justice: Black Lives, Healing, and US Social Transformation*, The Little Books of Justice and Peacebuilding (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, forthcoming 2019).

[36] See sujatha baliga, "The Day the Jail Walls Cracked: A Restorative Plea Deal," *Tikkun* 27, no. 1 (2012): 22–64.

[37] See Madhawa P. Palihapitiya, "Faith-Based Conflict Early Warning: Experiences from Two Conflict Zones," *Journal of Interreligious Studies* 24 (2018): Hyunwoo: Please add page numbers; "Early Warning, Early Response: Lessons from Sri Lanka," *Building Peace: A Forum for Peace and Security in the 21st Century* (September 2013): 26–29; and "Ethnic Violence: A Case Study on Ethnic Riots in Sri Lanka," *Asian Journal of Public Affairs* 6, no. 1 (2013): 91-107.

[38] See Nousha Kabawat, "Life in Syria for Christians: Teaching Tolerance and Harmony among the Faithful," in *Desert News Faith*, May 10, 2015.

[39] On children's trauma, armed conflict, and mental health, see J. P. Shonkoff and A. Gardner, "The Lifelong Effects of Early Childhood Adversity and Toxic Stress," *Pediatrics* 129, no. 1 (2012): e232–246; and K. E. Miller and A.

- Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, Buddhist leader,[40] and Julie A. Nelson, professor at UMass Boston and Dharma teacher,[41] on Buddhist responses to climate change;

- Yousef Bashir, Palestinian from Gaza and then master's candidate in coexistence and conflict at Brandeis University, and Yakir Englander, then vice president of Kids4Peace International and visiting lecturer and research associate with the Women's Studies in Religion Program at Harvard Divinity School, on religion and approaches to nonviolent conflict resolution in Palestine and Israel;

- Sarbpreet Singh, playright and poet, and J. Mehr Kaur, theatre director, father-and-daughter Sikh social justice and interfaith activists;[42]

- Rashied Omar, South African imam and research scholar at the University of Notre Dame, [43] and Afra Jalabi, Syrian peace activist and scholar, on nonviolent approaches in the Islamic tradition;

- Chaplain Clementina Chéry of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute;[44] Monalisa Smith of Mothers for Justice and Equality;[45] and Stanley Pollack of the Center for Teen Empowerment,[46] all founders and leaders of local urban peace organizations

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Rasmussen, "Mental Health and Armed Conflict: The Importance of Distinguishing between War Exposure and Other Sources of Adversity: A Response to Neuner," *Social Science & Medicine* 71, no. 8 (2010): 1385–1389.

[40] See David Tetsuun Loy, Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, and John Stanley, "The Time to Act is Now: A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change," https://oneearthsangha.org/statements/the-time-to-act-is-now/, accessed August 10, 2018; John Stanley, David R. Loy, and Gyurme Dorje, eds., *A Buddhist Response to the Climate Emergency* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2009); Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, "Climate Change as a Moral Call to Social Transformation," Op-Ed, *Truthout*, October 5, 2014; Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, "Feeling the Touch of the Goad: A Sense of Urgency as a Spur to Climate Action," Op-Ed, *Truthout*, October 5, 2014]

[41] See *Transformation* (blog); "Really Radical Economics," by Julie A. Nelson, posted November 11, 2013, https://www.opendemocracy.net/transformation/julie-nelson/really-radical-economics; and Julie A. Nelson, "The Relational Firm: A Buddhist and Feminist Analysis," in *Ethical Principles and Economic Transformation: A Buddhist Approach*, ed. Laszlo Zsolnai (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 21–33.

[42] See Sarbpreet Singh and J. Mehr Kaur, *Kultar's Mime: Stories of Sikh Children who Survived the 1984 Delhi Massacre* (North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016).

[43] A. Rashied Omar, "Islam and Peacebuilding," in *Trialogue and Terror: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam after 9/11*, ed. Alan L. Berger (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), 201–210; "Ta'aruf: Islam beyond 'Tolerance'," in *Hermeneutical Explorations in Dialogue: Essays in Honor of Hans Ucko*, ed. Anantanand Rambachan, A. Rashied Omar, and M. Thomas Thangaraj (New Delhi: Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2007); "Opportunities and Challenges for Islamic Peacebuilding after September 11," *Interreligious Insight* 1, no. 4 (2003).

[44] See Clementina Chéry, "A Reflection from a Mother's Heart," video at https://vimeo.com/179222390, accessed August 10, 2018; Clementina Chéry and Dr. Debra Prothrow-Stith, "Homicide Survivors: Research and Practice Implications," *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* 29, no. 5 (2005): 288–295; Astead W. Herndon, "For Families of Murderers, an Effort to Alleviate the Shame," *The Boston Globe*, August 15, 2016.

[45] See Monalisa Smith, "Reflections to My Sisters" (Boston: CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2014); Mothers for Justice and Equality, testimonies from surviving parents, http://mothersforjusticeandequality.org/2016/10/20/, accessed September 11, 2018; and "Waiting for Solutions," video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3K2T8Lp07WI, accessed August 10, 2018.

[46] See Joseph A. Curtatone, "Teen Empowerment as a Model for Community and Police Unity," *The Somerville Times*, May 14, 2015; Keyon Wilson, "Wilson: Cops, Youths Need to Listen, Show Mutual Respect," *The Boston Herald*, May 4, 2015; and "Police Confront Youth at Teen Empowerment Peace Conference," Center for Teen Empowerment in

in the greater Boston area; along with Tay Johnson, teen youth organizer, and John M. Brown, sergeant detective from the Boston Police Department.

We invite our RPP Colloquium speakers to tell us about the spiritual resources upon which they draw and how their spiritual journeys have intersected with their evolution as peace practitioners and leaders. What was it that Imam Ashafa heard from the preacher in his mosque that turned the heart of the angry and vengeful young militant toward peace and inspired him to reach out to reconcile with his archenemy? How did Leymah Gbowee and colleagues bring Christian and Muslim women together to launch a nonviolent grassroots peace movement amidst a horrific civil war, when there was reluctance to engage with the religious "other" and some of the women's family members had murdered family members of others? What gave a chief Buddhist priest the courage to visit a Tamil Tiger jungle hideout and the confidence to promise the political wing leader there that he would restrain Sinhalese youth from violence if the Tamil leader did the same with Tamil youth, paving the way for cooperation between the two that helped quell incidents of violence before they ignited into wider conflagrations?[47] What values did the young Muslim Palestinian learn from his father that made him resolve to dedicate his life to working for nonviolent coexistence, despite his home's being occupied by Israeli soldiers for five years and his being shot in the back by one of them while standing peacefully with UN visitors in his family's yard at age 15?[48] What set an American soldier in the Vietnam War on the path to become a scholar of peace history, nonviolence, nuclear disarmament, and international peacemaking and a public advocate for demilitarized national security policies?[49]

We had realized that the "spiritual-ethical backstories" of peace leaders often remain untold—but are crucial for academics' and policymakers' understanding of how successful peace efforts are born and nurtured. Yet, it has only been from our RPP Colloquium speakers' comments to us that we have discovered just how rare it is for this vital knowledge to be elicited in academic and other public forums. We were astonished, for example, when Leymah Gbowee—despite her Nobel recognition as an interfaith peace leader—remarked in a pre-event interview, "It's really strange that for all of the times I've talked about this work, this is the first time someone has brought me back in an interview to remember some of the spiritual things that we did."[50] Speakers tell us that the RPP Colloquium provides a valuable opportunity to reflect upon and develop a new level of facility in articulating these critical aspects of their work, which will better enable them to share this with researchers, professionals, and the public in the future.

collaboration with Boston Police Department, scene from 24th Annual Boston Youth Peace Conference, video at https://youtu.be/J9K9m_yZ5Zs, accessed August 10, 2018.

[47] See works cited in note 37, especially Palihapitiya, "Faith-Based Conflict Early Warning."

[48] Reference to Yousef Bashir, mentioned above, RPP Colloquium speaker on February 25, 2015. For an audio interview by National Public Radio, "Following His Father, A Palestinian Hopes for Peace," March 16, 2014, visit https://www.npr.org/2014/03/16/290493916/following-his-father-a-palestinian-hopes-for-peace.

[49] Reference to David Cortright, Director of Policy Studies and the Peace Accords Matrix, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame; Special Adviser for Policy Studies, Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame, RPP Colloquium speaker on April 6, 2017.

[50] For the pre-event interview with Leymah Gbowee in advance of her keynote bicentennial RPP Colloquium address on October 6, 2016, see Michael Naughton, "Women as Catalysts for Peace," September 30, 2016, https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/news/women-catalysts-peace.

As a complement to the RPP Colloquium, we launched a parallel "RPP Colloquium course,"[51] a year-long Harvard Divinity School course facilitated by Jeff Seul and Elizabeth Lee-Hood, to provide students and fellows from all parts of the University with a cohort of peers with whom to explore this common interest and their shared leadership development concerns. The students read articles and books assigned by the guest speakers and take the lead at the public RPP Colloquium sessions in launching the Q&A with questions that they have prepared together. In separate class sessions over dinner, they discuss topics raised at the RPP Colloquium, pursue individual or group projects, and culminate the year with final presentations. Throughout, we invite them to reflect upon what they are learning in relation to their spiritual, ethical, cultural, intellectual, and professional formation as leaders.

If the public RPP Colloquium is RPP's "flagship" activity, a second special RPP course, "Transformative Leadership and Spiritual Development (TLSD): Cultivating Our Capacities as Practitioners of Sustainable Peace in the 21st Century,"[52] is frequently described by participants as RPP's "heart." A semester-long experiential learning program facilitated by Elizabeth and Jeff, TLSD centers on the question: "If we wish to be peace practitioners and transformative leaders who serve and lead by (as Gandhi and many other spiritual leaders have taught) 'being the change that we wish to see in the world,' what wisdom, qualities, capacities, and supports do we need?" Participants share insights and practices from their diverse spiritual and cultural traditions and life experiences and learn from a cross-disciplinary array of visiting "mentors": distinguished Harvard faculty and alumni and religious leaders, who share their experiences and expertise and offer skill-building workshops.

TLSD provides Harvard students and fellows from different backgrounds and fields opportunities to practice the "arts and sciences" of mutual learning and companionship across values and worldviews. In a manner equally welcoming to the highly religious and the nonreligious, it gives them space to reflect upon ethical and spiritual matters of major import to their lives and future professional and community work. We encourage them, in particular, to share with one another in the unique terms, concepts, and modalities that they use among "insiders" within their respective communities. Many report this to be unprecedented for them in the academic setting, and even elsewhere, and uniquely empowering. Each semester, we invite a few students who have completed TLSD to take part in facilitating it for the next cohort.

Especially memorable for RPP's students have been interactive workshops offered by the RPP Colloquium's annual keynote guests and other speakers. Examples include: experiential learning with Imam Ashafa and Pastor James, by roleplaying in a simulation of their faith-based mediation techniques between rival religious and ethnic groups; hearing a detailed account from Leymah Gbowee of the creative activities by which she and colleagues helped women heal from traumas and overcome obstacles to uniting for peace; and scriptural reasoning and conflict case scenarios with Canon Sarah Snyder, Director of Reconciliation for the Archbishop of Canterbury,

[51] For more on the RPP Colloquium course, visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/programs/colloquium-course. For a video of students and fellows speaking on their experiences in the course and its impact on their growth as peace leaders, visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/colloquium-course/video-student-experiences.

[52] For more information on the TLSD program, visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/programs/spiritual-formation-transformative-leadership-series. For a video of students and fellows speaking on their experiences in the course and its impact on their growth as peace leaders, visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/TLSD-course/videos-student-experiences.

and The Right Reverend Anthony Poggo, the Archbishop's Advisor for Anglican Communion Affairs and former Diocesan Bishop of Kajo-Keji, South Sudan.

Since skills training is often requested of RPP, in Harvard's January term in 2018, we began offering intensive, multiday skill-building workshops.[53] RPP has thus far hosted a workshop on "Healing and Reconciling Relationships in Conflict: A Dignity Approach" led by Donna Hicks of Harvard, already mentioned, and a workshop on "Engaging Conflict: Reflective Structured Dialogue and the Inner Resources of the Facilitator" led by Robert R. Stains Jr., a local dialogue expert affiliated with Essential Partners (formerly the Public Conversations Project). We invite the presenters to take the RPP workshops as an opportunity to expand their attention to spiritual dimensions and to the application of the skills in religious communities. In keeping with our goal of bridging academy and community, the workshops welcome not only current Harvard students and fellows, but also alumni and members of the general public, some of whom have traveled from other US states or abroad to take part.

RPP also hosts special events and activities, some at other Harvard Schools or "out in the field." A highlight at Harvard Divinity School was a public event for World Interfaith Harmony Week in February 2015, "Promoting the Practice of Peace in the 21st Century: Mobilizing Our Resources as Universities, Religious Communities, and Global Citizens," featuring a film screening; talks by me and Melissa W. Bartholomew, cofounder of Women United for Peace through Prayer and the Divinity School's Racial Justice and Healing Initiative; and a public dialogue facilitated by graduate students in the RPP Working Group. Another highlight was an RPP delegation of Harvard Divinity School students to the United Nations High Level Forum on "the Culture of Peace" in New York City in September 2016. The trip was arranged by Federica D'Alessandra, an RPP Working Group member and adviser since 2016 and a Divinity School visiting fellow in 2017–18. A specialist in atrocity prevention and international law, previously at Harvard Law School and the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School, Federica has worked closely with Ben Ferencz and moderated our recent RPP Colloquium with him.[54]

Since 2014, RPP's website has facilitated connections with the global public and made a variety of educational resources widely accessible.[55] Among these are a brief bibliography; links to relevant upcoming events around Harvard and the local area; feature articles; and an archive of videos of our RPP Colloquium sessions and other RPP talks from 2014 to the present.[56] Also on the website are videos of Harvard students and fellows discussing their experience in RPP and its impact on their growth as peace leaders.[57] We hope that these participant perspectives will help inform universities, organizations, and communities that might contemplate developing programming in this domain.

To support alumni of RPP's programs after they leave Harvard—and as one way to leverage Harvard's global reach for sustainable peace—RPP is in the process of establishing

[53] For the latest information on RPP's skills workshops, visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/programs/rpp-workshops.
[54] For a pre-event interview with Federica D'Alessandra in advance of the May 3, 2018 RPP Colloquium with Ben Ferencz, see Fatema Elbakoury, "Sustaining Peace: The Role of Ethics, Law, and Public Policy, April 24, 2018, https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/resources/featurearticles.
[55] Visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/.
[56] Visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/rpp-series-archive.
[57] Visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/colloquium-course/video-student-experiences and https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/TLSD-course/videos-student-experiences.

an "RPP Alumni Leadership Network." The network will offer former Harvard students and fellows who have completed RPP's courses a platform and activities to facilitate their maintaining fruitful connections. Building upon the companionship, mutual mentoring, and exploration of peace resources that they shared in RPP, it will provide channels for them to continue to serve as valuable sources of advice, support, and inspiration for one another as they face the challenges of transformative leadership in varied fields and settings around the world.

As of summer 2018, RPP has over 100 former students and fellows who will be invited to join the RPP Alumni Leadership Network. They represent Harvard's Divinity School, Kennedy School, Law School, Graduate School of Education, Graduate School of Design, School of Public Health, Medical School, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and College, as well as the Loeb Fellowship program, the Nieman Fellowship program, the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, and the Advanced Leadership Initiative at Harvard. Mid-career professionals, young graduates, and seasoned leaders, they bring experience in government and politics, law, international finance, humanitarian relief, education and education policy, global and social medicine and public health, social work, arts for social change, design, journalism, heritage preservation, interfaith relations, ministry and chaplaincy, and environmental sustainability. Their spiritual backgrounds include Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish, Protestant, Evangelical, Catholic, Shia and Sunni Muslim, Mormon, Native and indigenous, shaman, pagan, multireligious, humanist, agnostic, and nonaffiliated. They hail from all regions of the US and countries such as China, Nepal, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, Mexico, Ecuador, Colombia, Haiti, the UK, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Morocco, Nigeria, Egypt, Palestine, and Israel.

Our RPP Colloquium speaker in March 2018 was Rev. Dr. Ray Hammond,[58] MD, alumnus of Harvard's College, Medical School, and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, founder and pastor of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, and executive committee member of the Black Ministerial Alliance. Dr. Hammond shared with us lessons from his decades of work with the Ten Point Coalition, of which he is chairman and cofounder, an ecumenical group of Christian clergy and lay leaders that mobilizes our greater Boston community around issues affecting proven-risk youth. Credited with bettering the lives of many young people and major reductions in violence in Boston, the coalition has been taken as a model by other US cities.

Dr. Hammond's primary point of wisdom for us was "the power of partnerships." Collaboration, he stressed, is essential for impact. He also stressed that it is time-consuming, labor-intensive, resource-intensive, and "*extremely* difficult to make work." In defining it, he memorably advised (in an oft-quoted adage), "Always think of collaboration as unnatural acts between unconsenting adults."[59] Dr. Hammond's remarks are highly relevant to our work in RPP. To grow ties across disciplines in line with RPP's mission and the "One Harvard" vision championed by former Harvard President Drew Gilpin Faust, we regularly cosponsor our RPP Colloquium sessions and other activities with programs and centers around the University.[60] We strive to enable

[58] See video of RPP Colloquium session, "Ministry to the Marginal: The Power of Partnerships," March 1, 2018, at https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/rpp-colloquium-2017-18.

[59] Variations of this adage apparently have circulated for decades. See, for example, Joy G. Dryfoos, "One of my favorite definitions of collaboration is 'an unnatural act between nonconsenting adults'," in *Full-Service Schools: A Revolution in Health and Social Services for Children, Youth, and Families* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994), 149.

[60] Some of the many programs with which RPP has collaborated thus far include the Women's Studies in Religion Program, the Religious Literacy Project, the Racial Justice and Healing Initiative, the Buddhist Ministry Initiative, the

people of many different backgrounds and orientations to connect, contribute based on their particular interests and specializations, and from there explore new ideas, practices—and people—that can expand and deepen their understandings and approaches in cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural, and holistic directions to enhance their impact. The benefits reported by RPP's participants are direct results of our designing our programs to involve a broad spectrum of Harvard faculty, students, fellows, and alumni as well as scholars and leaders from outside Harvard.

As Dr. Hammond's comments underscore, bringing people together across differences is by no means straightforward or easy: In RPP, the individuals whom we engage differ vastly: in life experiences, points of view, cultural assumptions, stages in their peace practice and leadership journeys, and senses of agency and vulnerability. The years since RPP's founding have been exceedingly hard ones in the US politically and socially, leaving many feeling—and too often, being—under attack. We have found that in facilitating interactions, what often works best is consistent with approaches recommended by dialogue experts.[61] Examples include: explicit discussion of our purposes in and perspectives on our shared endeavor, as well as those that participants bring; more (carefully designed and explicated) structure rather than less; discussion of how we will communicate (via inquiry into participants' needs and group agreements); inviting individuals to share by turns so that others can focus on deep listening; asking people to elucidate how their views are grounded in their personal life experiences rather than merely stating opinions or speaking on behalf of groups; heightening awareness of the discrepancy between intention and impact (and the valuable learning opportunities that it raises); and stepping back for "meta"-conversations about how the interactions are affecting people when the going gets tough. Also important are getting to know participants and their hopes and concerns one-on-one in advance and checking in with them periodically, as well as dedicating time for mutually appreciative inquiry among participants and activities to foster positive personal connection prior to proceeding to difficult topics.

We invite people to shift away from reacting reflexively to individuals whose views differ from their own with the "critique and dismiss" response that is so ubiquitous in polarized media discourse and often assumed by students to be normative in academic environments. We encourage everyone to experiment with constructive and collaborative modes of thinking and discourse that welcome critique, while at the same time seeking to identify learnings of value in the ideas and work of persons with whom we may in some respects deeply differ and points of intersection and shared aspiration that may be opportunities to build bridges. This intellectual and

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Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, and the Office of Ministry Studies at Harvard Divinity School; the Program on Negotiation (PON) and the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School; the Harvard International Negotiation Program; the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the John. F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University; the Transformative Justice Series at the Harvard Graduate School of Education; the Prison Studies Project; the Pluralism Project, the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, the François-Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights (Harvard FXB), the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program, and the Islam in the West program at Harvard University; as well as the Department of Conflict Resolution, Human Security, and Global Governance at the University of Massachusetts Boston. For more, visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/programs/collaborations.

[61] See, for example, the free online dialogue resources offered by Essential Partners (formerly Public Conversations Project), an organization whose Reflective Structured Dialogue methods help inform our approaches and for which Elizabeth has served as a trainer and facilitator, at https://www.whatisessential.org/resources, accessed August 10, 2018.

relational skill will need to become much more prevalent in our world if we are to make strides toward sustainable peace.

In our experience, intentional use of such structures and approaches makes a major difference in our ability to co-create with participants spaces conducive to deep sharing, deep listening, deep learning, and constructive conversation around challenging issues—whether in classrooms, at public events, in workshops, or in regular meetings. Breakdowns in communication, in some people's sense of sufficient safety[62] to share, and in mutual understanding that have at times arisen in instances in which we have not made sufficient use of such approaches indicate to us that they are (in some form tailored to each situation) imperative. Our positive and challenging experiences alike have convinced us that efforts for sustainable peace at our universities and in other contexts must go hand in hand with concerted efforts to build dialogue environments and engaged, appreciative, and resilient relationships in our communities and institutions and to foster the practical skills necessary to support these.

From RPP's first year, students and fellows have told us of the unique impact that their exchanges with RPP Colloquium speakers, faculty, alumni, and diverse peers have had on their lives and growth:[63] A dual degree student at Harvard and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University tells us of the "transformational impact" of the RPP Colloquium on the Harvard community and her friends and colleagues in the greater Boston area. A mid-career student from Morocco who works in humanitarianism and government accountability comes to appreciate the practical value of spiritual resources for effective social action and leadership. The manner in which a student from a homogenous locality in the Midwest now interacts with persons of different cultural identities and faith traditions has "dramatically changed." A new connection leads to a student's being invited to present at a conference on bridging racial divides between African and European Americans in the southern US. A Buddhist student from China gives up her preconceived notions about Muslims after a meaningful encounter with a Muslim spiritual leader and peace practitioner. A student from Colombia taps into spiritual resources that enable her to reconcile at long last with a close family member. A doctoral student in American history plans to draw upon what he has learned to "build bridges" in the US and move his Evangelical community "toward a place of building peace."

Participants' experiences in RPP not infrequently inspire them to pursue their work in fresh ways or take their careers in new directions: A student has been inspired to include religious leaders among the interviewees in a research project on a minority population in Europe. A doctoral student from Germany specializing in the ethics of artificial intelligence will incorporate peace practice approaches and consideration of spiritual dimensions in his research and teaching going forward. A student from a conservative community in the US has now pursued mediation training and will make facilitating dialogues on difficult topics central to her endeavors at Harvard and beyond. The religious high school at which a student will teach has enthusiastically agreed to her

[62] We feel that it is important to acknowledge that spaces cannot be made completely "safe" and that the realities of human relations and power dynamics are such that sharing and engaging across differences carries inherent risk and risks that vary depending upon an individual's positionality.

[63] The information in this and the following paragraph is from students and fellows in RPP's courses, many of whom are featured in video interviews on the RPP website at https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/colloquium-course/video-student-experiences and https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/TLSD-course/videos-student-experiences, supplemented by our conversations with RPP's participants.

incorporating study of wisdom from diverse religions and cultures into the curriculum. A mid-career student coming from the World Bank who is now residing in Indonesia will dedicate his future work to international interfaith relations. A priest from Sweden who directs programs for youth will approach her leadership role and creation of spaces in a wholly new way. A politician and former member of parliament from Spain has learned to listen openly, not only with her head, but also with her "heart."

News also reaches us of farther-flung impacts coming about through RPP's public offerings and online presence: A professor at a local college invites her students to watch RPP Colloquium videos for her course on world religions and finds that those who do so offer the most thoughtful responses. She draws upon methods from an RPP January term workshop to design a student-facilitated intercultural dialogue on campus, and the students experience peers engaging and sharing more than they anticipated.[64] An associate of a dialogue and consensus-building center in Beirut who is assembling resources on religion and peacebuilding makes use of RPP's online bibliography.[65] A rabbi and scholar references the establishment of RPP at Harvard as a "very important precedent" in his efforts to establish a similar theory and practice initiative for religion and peacebuilding at his university in Israel.[66]

Harvard faculty and associates often tell us of the synchronicity between RPP's focus and directions into which they are expanding, or wish to expand, in their work. A number have echoed our RPP Colloquium speakers in expressing appreciation for the invitation to be freer in academic and public settings to bring serious consideration of religion and of spiritual and cultural resources into their research, writing, speaking, and teaching. On the occasion of Harvard Divinity School's bicentennial in April 2017, I convened a panel at which I asked the Deans of Harvard's Business School, Law School, and Graduate School of Education what they would most look to at the Divinity School to contribute to their schools and the wider University.[67] All spoke of the critical importance in today's world of providing opportunities for students to learn to engage religious topics and differences constructively, including insofar as such learning may inform matters such as ethics that are fundamental to their fields. Nitin Nohria, Dean of Harvard Business School, echoed comments from the other Deans in observing that in the classroom, faculty and students "feel compelled to have that conversation in very secular terms" and "retreat into trying to find . . . universal ethical principles" rather than exploring the varied beliefs in which individuals' ethical viewpoints are "grounded." Unequipped to have such conversations productively, he said, they do not "unearth or even try to understand" the "different" and "deeper" meanings that a given ethical concept may have for persons from different communities and traditions. Dean Nohria indicated that the main obstacle is the faculty's current lack of competence in this area and that the Divinity

[64] Julene Tegerstrand, MDiv, Assistant Professor of Intercultural Studies and Spiritual Director at Eastern Nazarene College in Quincy Massachusetts.

[65] The Common Space Initiative in Beirut, Lebanon, http://www.commonspaceinitiative.org/, per email communication with Jeff Seul in 2014 and on August 12, 2018.

[66] Rabbi Dr. Daniel Roth, faculty member in the Graduate Program on Conflict Management, Resolution, and Negotiation at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan, Israel.

[67] For the video of this public panel in celebration of Harvard Divinity School's bicentennial featuring four Harvard Deans, "Religion Matters: HDS at Harvard University," on April 28, 2017, visit https://hds.harvard.edu/news/2017/05/04/video-religion-matters-hds-harvard-university.

School might help provide ways to bring "more nuance and richness" to this aspect of educating "leaders who make a difference in the world."[68]

Our latest endeavor in RPP is the emerging Sustainable Peace Initiative (SPI).[69] SPI is a cross-Harvard initiative of faculty, students, fellows, staff, and alumni who wish to contribute to a world of more harmonious, cooperative, and equitable human relations that will help reduce destructive conflict, prevent violence, and foster flourishing for all. SPI was incubated within the Harvard community in 2017–18 in a Sustainable Peace Working Group (SPWG) facilitated by graduate students and alumni from a number of Harvard Schools.[70] SPWG drew over 100 "regulars" and "drop-ins," including faculty and student presenters from Harvard's Business School, Kennedy School, Law School, School of Education, School of Design, School of Public Health, Medical School, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, College, and Divinity School, and culminated in a public event to elicit ideas from members of local communities, organizations, and universities.

SPI is founded upon the recognition that humanity's quest to solve its "big problems" and its quest for peace that is substantive, shared, and sustainable are inextricable. These complex endeavors will require tapping into the vast latent energy, talent, and potential for people to do much more in the way of leadership, collaboration, and creativity for sustainable peace locally and globally. SPI promotes the mainstreaming of sustainable peace as a goal of leadership across sectors and the development of innovative, strategic approaches to operationalizing this goal in particular institutional and community contexts. It takes as a model the environmental sustainability movement, which (limitations notwithstanding) has been remarkably successful in mainstreaming its goals among non-specialists in diverse settings.

SPI aims to raise awareness of our human family's interconnectedness and interdependence and to promote holistic, cross-cultural approaches that amplify, catalyze, and learn from peace efforts at all levels, while incorporating knowledge and priorities from people at the grassroots, including women and youth. Drawing upon insights that we have gained from our RPP Colloquium speakers, colleagues, and participants to date, SPI encourages the integration of "six dimensions" of peace practice:

- sharing visions, wisdom, and inspiration for peace within and across communities;
- self-cultivation and virtue cultivation for peace practice and transformative ethical leadership;
- friendship-building and bridge-building across differences;

[68] As Dean Nohria stated at the event, the mission of Harvard Business School is to "educate leaders who make a difference in the world." For more information, visit https://www.hbs.edu/about/Pages/mission.aspx.
[69] See my message on the emerging Sustainable Peace Initiative (SPI) at https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/message-dean-hempton. For more information, visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/programs/sustainable-peace-initiative.
[70] The graduate student and alumni cochairs of the Sustainable Peace Working Group 2017–18 were Enoch Aboi, Tajay Bongsa, Christina Desert, and Lucia Villavicencio from Harvard Divinity School; Qing Guan and Andre Uhl from the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences; and Prathima Muniyappa of the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

- leveraging resources of culture for peace;
- leveraging institutions and community resources for peace; and
- practical projects for mutual benefit and shared flourishing across divides.

From the many experts whom we have been fortunate to learn from thus far, it has become clear that just as the field of medicine has been revolutionized by expanding its focus from pathology to wellness, and by complementing the study of disease with the study of the body's internal mechanisms to heal and support health, a similar holistic revolution is called for in our approaches to sustainable peace. And just as drawing upon traditional and indigenous knowledge and methods has been key to recent progress in the promotion of health, a similar expansion in our thinking and strategies to enhance human harmony and cooperation will be essential to new breakthroughs. To quote Albert Einstein, "The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them."[71]

We are grateful to the generous donors and foundations that have seeded RPP's work in these initial years.[72] Like so many similar initiatives, we will require much more support to ensure that our programs continue to thrive and expand to realize their full potential.[73] Convinced that innovative programming of this kind is essential for Harvard University and the wider world in our twenty-first century, I have announced a goal of obtaining an endowment to establish RPP as a permanent program at Harvard Divinity School for present and future generations.[74]

At the recent RPP Colloquium with Ben Ferencz with which we began, in offering his view as to why our human family has not yet risen to the task of working more concertedly and intelligently for sustainable peace, Ben stated that apparently "We haven't suffered enough yet." May this sobering comment from a near-centenarian who has witnessed some of history's worst atrocities—yet has never lost hope in humanity's capacity to collaborate for a more peaceful future, nor slackened in his personal and professional contributions toward this goal—galvanize us all to place this pressing task among our top priorities. It is a task to which we are called by both our contemporary conditions and the wisdom of our traditions. In this, we in Religions and the Practice of Peace at Harvard Divinity School and our RPP Colloquium speakers look forward to joining with you.[75]

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[71] Albert Einstein, quoted in Marilynn Jackson, "Critical Thinking Models and Their Application," in *Conversations in Critical Thinking and Clinical Judgment,* eds. Marilynn Jackson, Donna D. Ignatavicius, and Bette Case (Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett, 2004), 47.

[72] We are grateful for the generous support that RPP has received in its early years from the Rev. Karen Vickers Budney, MDiv '91, and Albert J. Budney, Jr., MBA '74; the Once Here Foundation; the Planethood Foundation; the Whitehead Foundation; the Provostial Fund for the Arts and Humanities at Harvard University; the El-Hibri Foundation; the Jewish Women's Fund of Colorado; and other donors.

[73] Visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/giving.

[74] Visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/news/hds-establishing-place-peace.

[75] To be apprised of RPP's events and resources, join our mailing list at https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/join-our-mailing-list.

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Visit https://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/ for more information on RPP and the Sustainable Peace Initiative, for videos of the RPP Colloquium sessions and other resources, and to join the RPP mailing list.

Treat the Stranger as Your Own: Religious Prosociality and Conflict Transformation[1]

Jeffrey R. Seul

Recent social scientific research sheds new light on the relationship among religion, conflict, and cooperation. Religion itself does not cause conflict; rather, religious groups are subject to the same us-them dynamic that can generate conflict between other types of identity groups, including ethnic groups. Religions are particularly adept at promoting cooperation within groups, however, which helps explain the unique capacity they have demonstrated throughout history to support the development of and sustain large groups. Recent research regarding religion's capacity to promote cooperation within groups also is yielding insights into how religion can help promote cooperation between groups—a development that has received scant attention among experts in the emerging field of religious peacebuilding, or within the broader international relations community. This article provides a synthetic, analytical overview of this important line of research and offers examples of its implications for policy making and practice.

Keywords: religion, religious actors, conflict, peacebuilding, religious prosociality

Religion and conflict sometimes mix, but perspectives on their relationship tend to be overly simplified. For some, religion is irrational and in tension with modern, liberal notions of democracy and collective problem solving; it is not merely a factor in some conflicts, it is a cause of conflict, and it offers little or nothing in the way of resources for conflict resolution. For others, religion, properly understood, is a benevolent force that promotes personal and collective peace and wellbeing, and all entanglements of religion and conflict stem from perversions of religion or cynical manipulations of it by unscrupulous leaders who are not genuinely religious, but who understand and exploit religion's capacity to bind and mobilize people. Still others see religion simply as a hopelessly complex, impenetrable mass of traditions, perspectives, and social structures; a feature of history and culture that must be superficially understood and acknowledged, but which must largely be quarantined as parties seek a resolution to their conflict in a political, social, and conceptual space mostly free of its influence.

This article presents a different perspective on the role of religion in both conflict and cooperation, and the potential for transformation of conflicts involving religion. A clearer and more nuanced picture of the ways in which religion and conflict relate, and also how religion promotes cooperation within groups and can contribute to the transformation of conflict between groups, has begun to emerge over the past couple of decades—thanks, in part, to the efforts of a small group of social scientists who have approached these questions with genuine curiosity, largely steering clear of the polemics that too often attend them. The first major section of this article provides an in-depth introduction to this emerging, interdisciplinary field of research. The second major section explores the relationship between religion and conflict through the lens of research

[1] First published in *The Negotiator's Desk Reference* (vol. 1), edited by Chris Honeyman and Andrea Kupfer Schneider (St. Paul, MN: DRI Press 2017), as two chapters: "Religion in Cooperation and Conflict," 545–560, and "Religious Prosociality for Conflict Transformation," 565–580.

on religious prosociality. The final major section of this article attempts to draw lessons from this research, and from the fields of religious studies and conflict resolution, that can be employed to avert, moderate, or transform destructive cycles of conflict in which religion is a factor. Violent conflict is the focus of this article, but the perspective on religion it presents, and the lessons drawn, also are applicable to other types of disputes involving religion.

The Prosocial Character of Religion

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century proclamations that religion was dead or dying are now themselves widely considered deceased. Data compiled by the Pew Research Center indicates that humanity now is approximately 31 percent Christian and 23 percent Muslim. The percentage of Christians is projected to be precisely the same in 2050, while the percentage of Muslims is projected to climb to about 30 percent. If current trends hold, by mid-century about 60 percent of the world's population will consist of roughly equal numbers of Christians and Muslims, and another 27 percent will identify with other religions. Just 13 percent of the world's population will be religiously unaffiliated, down from approximately 16 percent today.[2] Even many of these unaffiliated people say they hold religious beliefs; for example, 68 percent of unaffiliated adults in the U.S. and 30 percent of unaffiliated adults in France report believing in God or a higher power.[3] Following decades of official efforts in the Soviet Union to promote atheism, 82 percent of Russians identify with one religion or another.[4]

As political scientists Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart sum up the data, "[t]here is no evidence of a worldwide decline of religiosity, or of the role of religion in politics."[5] Those who are confounded by these trends would do well to consider recent, interdisciplinary research on the prosocial dimensions of religion. Although some view religion principally as a divisive, and even malevolent, force, it seems few other features of human culture historically have been as effective at promoting cooperation among large numbers of people. Indeed, social scientists studying religious prosociality recognize that some secular institutions that promote social trust and cooperation, like the rule of law, can be seen as outgrowths of precursor religious institutions, serving many similar functions.[6]

When most religious and nonreligious people think about religions today, they likely think of belief systems with associated practices, narratives, texts, norms, roles, and institutions. What impulses contributed to the development of these sources, beliefs, practices, and other features of religion, and how do they serve individuals and groups today? Many people see their religious sources, beliefs, practices, and institutions as transcendently revealed or inspired, of course. And

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[2] Pew Research Center, *The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050,* April 2015, http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/.

[3] Pew Research Center, *The Global Religious Landscape*, December 2012, http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-unaffiliated/.

[4] Pew Research Center, *Russians Return to Religion, But Not to Church*, February 2014, http://www.pewforum.org/2014/02/10/russians-return-to-religion-but-not-to-church/.

[5] Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 212.

[6] Ara Norenzayan, *Big Gods: How Religion Transformed Cooperation and Conflict* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013); Jonathan Fox, *Political Secularism, Religion, and the State: A Time Series Analysis of Worldwide Data* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

many religious adherents who link tradition with the transcendent also generally acknowledge that there are many aspects of religion, as it becomes expressed in social life across time and place, that are products of human influence. Indeed, some religious people would say this human agency and its accumulated consequences over time are a dimension of divine agency.[7]

A growing body of empirical research confirms that, however else a religion is understood by and serves its adherents, it helps them get along, promoting mutually beneficial trust and cooperation. According to currently prevailing evolutionary theory, as biological kinship becomes more remote, it becomes too attenuated to ensure cooperation.[8] Religion helps engender a sense of social kinship even among people who are not closely related biologically.[9]

We operate in groups, in part, because group membership confers benefits isolated individuals cannot obtain, or cannot obtain in equal measure, including increased protection from many types of harm (e.g., animal and human predators) and greater productive capacity. Much research—from biological, anthropological, and historical work to game theoretical computer simulations—suggests that blood ties alone may not promote cooperation at a scale sufficient to develop many forms of coordinated human effort we now take for granted, like large-scale

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[7] It should be noted up front that much of the research discussed in this article was conducted by social scientists who are atheists, but who nonetheless are respectful of religion. Needless to say, the veracity of religious metaphysical claims is beyond the scope of this article. Most of these researchers argue that belief in supernatural agents is a byproduct of specific features of human cognition, such as theory of mind, and some argue that the seeming improbability of a religion's metaphysical claims is a factor that increases trust among co-religionists (Scott Atran, *In Gods We Trust: The Evolutionary Landscape of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Norenzyan, *Big Gods*). One need not be an atheist, of course, to appreciate and contribute to the emerging science regarding the psychology of religious commitment, as the work of Christian experimental psychologist Justin Barrett demonstrates (Justin L. Barrett, *Why Would Anyone Believe in God?* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2004). Theologian Sarah Coakley and biologist and mathematician Martin Nowak, both Christians, nonetheless observe in their introduction to *Evolution, Games, and God: The Principle of Cooperation* (which is the culmination of a long collaboration among a group of theologians, philosophers, and religious and nonreligious natural and social scientists) that "if it is simply assumed that 'religion' may be explained away in terms of something else, all attempts to clarify its workings will inevitably fall prey to the same reductive principles," a concern that has led them and collaborators to develop research protocols that "test genuinely *theological* motivations for 'altruistic' human behavior" (Martin A. Nowak and Sarah Coakley, eds., *Evolution, Games, and God: The Principle of Cooperation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 26. Nowak, Coakley and their collaborators have developed and begun to use such protocols (David G. Rand et al., "Religious Motivations for Cooperation: An Experimental Investigation Using Explicit Primes," *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 4, no. 1 (2014): 31–48). This research by scholars who do not share the atheistic orientation of others studying religious prosociality is significant, and perhaps it eventually will produce robust empirical support countering the strains of others' research that Coakley and Nowak consider reductionist. If so, it seems unlikely to me (nor do I think they would expect) that their new line of research would completely negate all findings of others' research, nor the utility of all of those findings (alongside their own) for conflict resolution practice, which is the focus of this article.

[8] W. D. Hamilton, "The Genetical Evolution of Social Behavior, Parts I and II," *Journal of Theoretical Biology* 7 (2014): 1–52; Robert L. Trivers, "The Evolution of Reciprocal Altruism," *The Quarterly Review of Biology* 46, no. 1 (1971): 35–57.

[9] Randolph M. Nesse, "The Evolution of Commitment and the Origins of Religion," *Science and Spirit* 10, no. 2 (1999): 32–33, 46. Biologists Martin Nowak, Corina Tarnita, and Edward Wilson (Martin A. Nowak, Corina E. Tarnita, and Edward O. Wilson, "The Evolution of Eusociality," *Nature* 466 (2010): 1057–1062) maintain that the biological basis for the evolution of cooperation extends beyond the limits predicted by the theory of kin selection. We might surmise that, in human populations, their theory suggests religion does not function to extend cooperation beyond kin, but rather that it is consistent with a broader, God-given tendency to cooperate, and perhaps has "goaded [groups] to further altruistic efforts" (Rand, et al., "Religious Motivations"). The Nowak, Tarnita and Wilson challenge to the theory of kin selection does not, however, appear to be holding up well to critique by other scientists (Xiaoyun Liao, Stephen Rong, and David C. Queller, "Relatedness, Conflict, and the Evolution of Eusociality," *PLOS Biology* (2015), DOI: 10.1371/journal.pbio.1002098.

agriculture, life in cities, and maintenance of reliable trade networks spanning and joining continents.[10]

Life in groups of any size presents us more frequently and pressingly with a question with which even wanderers and hermits must struggle on occasion: Whom can I trust? Satisfaction of many individual needs and desires requires cooperation, but people sometimes exploit others. We all try to guard ourselves against exploitation, but it is not so easy to identify would-be exploiters. Researchers approaching these questions from an evolutionary perspective have developed evidence that family members generally are more reliable, and that closer family members tend to be most reliable, but what about the person at the opposite edge of the village, the stranger passing through, those in the next village, or potential trading partners half a continent away or across the ocean? How do we develop and maintain sufficient trust in others to confront and overcome collective action problems, so as to realize benefits wanderers and hermits largely choose to forego?

Recent social scientific work suggests that the widely shared complexes of beliefs, practices, narratives, texts, norms, roles, and institutions that we recognize today as the world's major religious traditions help solve this dilemma, facilitating social life at large scale.[11] People (religious or not) generally seem to be more trustworthy when they believe they are being watched,[12] and so it arguably follows that felt awareness of a god that one believes is concerned with human moral conduct encourages compliance with social norms and lessens the monitoring burden borne by members of one's group.[13] Ara Norenzayan and others argue that "Big Gods"—morally concerned

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[10] Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (Cambridge, MA: Basic Books, 2006).

[11] Norenzayan, *Big Gods.* Primatologist and biological anthropologist Agustin Fuentes argues that development of our capacity for large scale cooperation precedes the development of religion (Agustin Fuentes, "Hyper-cooperation is Deep in Our Evolutionary History and Individual Perception of Belief Matters," *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 5, no. 4 (2014): 284–290, DOI: 10.1080/2153599X.2014.928350). There also is some counter-evidence suggesting that prosocial forms of religion are most prevalent in mid-sized populations (Christian Brown and E. Anthon Eff, "The State and the Supernatural: Support for Prosocial Behavior," *Structure and Dynamics* 4, no. 1 (2010): 1–21). Norenzayan himself suggests there may come a point in the largest societies when material goods and secular institutions are secure enough that religion is "no longer need[ed] . . . to sustain large scale cooperation. In short: secular societies climbed the ladder of religion, and then kicked it away" (Norenzayan, *Big Gods*, 172).

[12] Azim F. Shariff and Ara Norenzayan, "God is Watching You: Supernatural Agent Concepts Increase Prosocial Behavior in an Anonymous Economic Game," *Psychological Science* 18, no. 9 (2007): 803–809. "A mountain of evidence in psychology and economics reveals how powerful social monitoring incentives are. . . . Experiments in social psychology have also shown that any cue that increases the feeling of being watched . . . increases prosocial tendencies, and those that encourage feelings of being hidden from view . . . license more selfishness and cheating" (Norenzayan, *Big Gods,* 20). This is equally true whether or not the monitor one perceives is associated with religion (Melissa Bateson, Daniel Nettle, and Gilbert Roberts, "Cues of Being Watched Enhance Cooperation in a Real-World Setting," *Biology Letters* 2, no. 3 (2006): 412–414; Azim F. Shariff and Ara Norenzayan, "God is Watching You: Supernatural Agent Concepts Increase Prosocial Behavior in an Anonymous Economic Game," *Psychological Science* 18, no. 9 (2007): 803–809). Economist Thomas Schelling, a pioneer of game theoretic approaches to conflict analysis, foreshadowed the findings regarding supernatural monitoring: "In a society that believes absolutely in a superior power that will punish falsehood when asked to do so and that everybody knows everybody else believes in, 'cross my heart and hope to die' is a sufficient formula for conveying truth voluntarily" (Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 116).

[13] Kristin Laurin, et al., "Outsourcing Punishment to God: Beliefs in Divine Control Reduce Earthly Punishment," in *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* (2012), DOI: 10.1098/rspb.2012.0615; Norenzayan, *Big Gods*. In a meta-analysis of 93 studies on the effects of religious priming for prosocial behavior (i.e., reminding research subjects of God or religion before presenting an opportunity for prosocial behavior), Azim Shariff and colleagues found that "[c]ontrary to previous speculation, . . . religious priming produced no consistent effect on the non-religious," leading them to speculate that "responsiveness to religious cues depends to a significant extent on culturally transmitted beliefs . . . ."

gods that inspire exclusive commitment—are capable of engendering trust among large numbers of people, thus helping groups grow.[14] Religious practices (e.g., regular attendance at services and regular and/or extended periods of time devoted to prayer or meditation) and sacrifices (e.g., fasting, renouncing certain pleasures, and giving material support to the community) signal sincere commitment, thereby demonstrating one's trustworthiness.[15] In addition, I would add, they genuinely deepen one's commitment to a way of life and to others who embrace it, thus helping one become the sort of person whom one means to be. This includes not only cultivation of the virtue of trustworthiness, but also cultivation of other, complementary virtues.

Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart have shown that religious participation and commitment are greatest "in societies in which survival is uncertain" because of poverty, weak or corrupt state institutions, unreliable food or water supplies, disease, harsh environmental conditions, or any of a host of other factors that are less prevalent in industrial and post-industrial societies.[16] As Norenzayan explains:

(Azim F. Shariff, et al., "Religious Priming: A Meta-Analysis with a Focus on Prosociality," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* (2015), 15, DOI: 10.1177/1088868314568811). Many religious people no doubt would take umbrage with the suggestion that their prosocial conduct is primarily attributable to a sense of being watched by a divine agent whose vengeance they fear, and would instead attribute this conduct to elements within their religions that encourage amity, compassion, charity, forgiveness, generosity, and other prosocial values. One might fairly question whether prosocial conduct premised upon a sense of being watched (not to mention fear of punishment) can properly be understood as being associated with trust, as opposed to mere compliance behavior. Social psychologist Mariska Kappmeier has developed a more nuanced, multivariate theory that conceives of trust in terms of the presence or absence of indicia of seven super-ordinate personal and relational qualities (competence, integrity, predictability, compassion, compatibility, collaboration, and security), rather than something dependent upon a sense that one is being monitored (Mariska Kappmeier, "Trusting the Enemy: Towards a Comprehensive Understanding of Trust in Intergroup Conflict," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 22, no. 2 (2016): 134–144. Kappmeier's approach can be used to identify and study other features of religion that promote prosocial conduct, and to do so in a way that is more broadly consistent with the self-understandings of religious people.

[14] Data from numerous cross-cultural laboratory and field experiments support the notion that individual prosocial behavior is causally associated with religion (Dimitris Xygalatas, "Effects of Religious Setting on Cooperative Behavior: A Case Study from Mauritius," *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 3, no. 2 (2013): 91–102; Shariff et al., "Religious Priming." The theory that mass commitment to Big Gods explains the transition from small-scale group life to the large-scale group life we see in most places around the world today, however, relies heavily upon various studies conducted over the past 50 years that attempt to determine the correlation between group size and belief in a Big God (aka a "moralizing High God"), while controlling for other variables, like relative resource scarcity. The findings from these correlational analyses generally are consistent with the "Big Gods, big groups" theory, but there remain open questions, particularly with respect to groups outside the Abrahamic religions, about which more, and currently more compelling, data exist (Quentin D. Atkinson, Andrew J. Latham, and Joseph Watts, "Are Big Gods a Big Deal in the Emergence of Big Groups?," *Religion, Brain & Behavior* (2014): 1–9, DOI: 10.1080/2153599X.2014.928359). Among the major religions, Buddhism seems least consistent with the Big Gods theory, though "counter-intuitive agents" exist within many strains of Buddhism (Ilkka Pyysiäinen, "Buddhism, Religion, and the Concept of 'God,'" *Numen* 50, no. 2 (2003): 147–171). Norenzayan nonetheless sees "karmic eschathologies," such as those in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, in which "[r]ebirth links up with the idea of ethical causation across lifetimes," as another mechanism promoting prosocial behavior that plays "a central role in the cooperative sphere" (Ara Norenzayan, "Big Questions About Big Gods: Response and Discussion," *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 5, no. 4 (2015): 70, DOI: 10.1080/2153599X.2014 .928359. It is important to note that Norenzayan and his collaborators do not claim that Big Gods are the only prosocial feature of religion, nor, of course, that religion is the only prosocial feature of human culture (ibid).

[15] Joseph Henrich, "The Evolution of Costly Displays, Cooperation and Religion: Credibility Enhancing Displays and Their Implications for Cultural Evolution," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 30, no. 4 (2009): 244–260.

[16] Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 219.

> In a society in which the rule of law is weak, and overall levels of trust and cooperation among strangers are quite low (that's indeed most people for most of history), credible signals of fearing a god are, and have been, the only game in town, and in those societies, it would be reasonable to rely on such religious badges as a trust cue.[17]

Some Iraqis and Syrians in territory controlled by ISIS,[18] though they never were fond of the group or its methods, initially appreciated the jobs, infrastructure improvements, and relative (even if minimal) sense of order it seemed to be providing in a region devastated by conflict that already had made life impossibly bleak[19] —conflict which is, in large part, a response to corrupt regimes (and their foreign patrons).[20] This is how some non-Taliban people in Afghanistan regard the Taliban.[21] The fact that many people remain religious in traditional and untraditional ways in the United States, Russia, and other societies where survival is comparatively certain is evidence that religious perspectives, practices, and affiliations still have salience for many people in those societies. The reasons for this no doubt include, yet extend well beyond, the social ordering functions religion can play.

Scholars debate whether the heightened trust, cooperation, and generosity that characterize religious prosociality are persistent personality characteristics or preferences of religious people[22] or whether they arise only in situations in which a person is reminded of God or religion.[23] Scholars on both sides of this debate cite experimental evidence in support of their respective positions. They also debate whether religious prosociality is parochial (i.e., favors members of one's own group)[24] or readily extends to members of other groups,[25] though it seems clear that situations can be shaped to increase the odds that prosocial conduct will extend to

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[17] Norenzayan, *Big Gods*, 74.

[18] I use this acronym, rather than the phrase signified by its first two letters, because that phrase constitutes a claim by the group that is deeply problematic and offensive to many Muslims.

[19] Ben Hubbard, "Offering Services, ISIS Ensconces Itself in Seized Territories," *New York Times,* June 17, 2015, A1.

[20] Whatever modest sense of appreciation some inhabitants of territory controlled by ISIS initially felt has since been exhausted by ISIS's inability to continue to provide jobs and services, not to mention its onerous taxation and incredible brutality (Ben Hubbard, "Statehood Project is Troubled, Those Who Escaped ISIS Say," *New York Times,* December 2, 2015, A1.

[21] Scott Atran, *Talking to the Enemy: Violent Extremism, Sacred Values, and What It Means to be Human* (London: Penguin Books, 2010); Azam Ahmed, "Taliban Justice Gains Favor as Official Afghan Courts Fail," *New York Times*, February 1, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/01/world/asia/taliban-justice-gains-favor-as-official-afghan-courts-fail.html.

[22] Jim A. C. Everett, Omar Sultan Haque, and David G. Rand, "How Good is the Samaritan, and Why? An Experimental Investigation of the Extent and Nature of Religious Prosociality Using Economic Games," last revised January 21, 2016, http://ssrn.com/abstract=2484659.

[23] Deepak Malhotra, "(When) Are Religious People Nicer? Religious Salience and the "Sunday Effect" on Pro-social Behavior," *Judgment and Decision Making* 5, no. 2 (2010): 138–143; Xygalatas, "Effects of Religious Setting on Cooperative Behavior"; Shariff, et al., "Religious Priming."

[24] Azim F. Shariff, "Does Religion Increase Moral Behavior?," *Current Opinion in Psychology* 6 (2015): 108–113.

[25] Michael R. Welch, et al., "Trust in God and Trust in Man: The Ambivalent Role of Religion in Shaping Dimensions of Social Trust," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43, no. 3 (2004): 317–343; Everett, Haque and Rand, "How Good is the Samaritan."

members of other groups.[26] Finally, scholars debate whether religious prosociality is dependent upon an expectation of reciprocal benefit[27] or not.[28]

Whatever one might conclude in these debates, increased prosociality (including restraint when issuing punishments) is associated more with belief in a punishing God than with belief in a forgiving God.[29] "[R]eligions obey a well-known principle in human psychology (that the stick is often stronger than the carrot)."[30] Norenzayan speculates, however, that religious "sticks" may be relatively more useful (in terms of promoting adherence to group norms) in societies with weak secular institutions, because religion generally is more responsible for producing prosocial behavior in those societies.[31] Anthropologist Hillary Lenfesty and biologist Jeffrey Schloss accept this principle "[g]iven the overwhelming abundance of supporting empirical data," but they also place considerable stock in the ability of positive inducements associated with religion to elicit prosocial behavior. They point, for example, to the experience of connectedness it engenders and "the ability of some religious . . . cues to provoke empathy."[32]

In sum, religion is adept at promoting trust and cooperation among members of a group. No other feature of culture seems to offer so many resources for establishing and maintaining positive, secure group (and individual) identity.[33] Indeed, the notion that there are separate religious and secular cultural spheres in some societies is a modern one, and the existence, nature, and extent of these spheres remain contested.[34]

Religion and Conflict

Religious prosociality arguably is most evident from the in-group dynamics it generates.[35] The flipside of this phenomenon, of course, is competition with out-groups, and "[h]umans often use religion to cooperate to compete."[36] Individuals form and cooperate within groups (including religious groups), in part, to gain advantages over and protect themselves against people outside

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[26] David Clingingsmith, Asim Ijaz Khwaja, and Michael Kremer, "Estimating the Impact of the Hajj: Religion and Tolerance in Islam's Global Gathering," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124, no. 3 (2009): 1133–1170; Zachary K. Rothschild, Abdolhossein Abdollahi, and Tom Pyszczynski, "Does Peace Have a Prayer? The Effect of Morality Salience, Compassionate Values, and Religious Fundamentalism on Hostility Toward Out-groups," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 45, no. 4 (2009): 816–827.

[27] Shariff, "Does Religion Increase Moral Behavior?"

[28] Xygalatas "Effects of Religious Setting on Cooperatie Behavior"; Everett, Haque, and Rand, "How Good is the Samaritan."

[29] Laurin et al., "Outsourcing Punishment to God."

[30] Norenzayan, "Big Questions," 73.

[31] Norenzayan "Big Questions."

[32] Hillary L. Lenfesty and Jeffrey P. Schloss, "Big Gods and the Greater Good," *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 5, no. 4 (2015): 305-313, https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599X.2014.928357. Nowak and colleagues maintain that the role of punishment in the evolution of cooperation has been inflated (Anna Dreber et al., "Winners Don't Punish," *Nature* 452 (2008): 348–351).

[33] Jeffrey R. Seul, "'Ours is the Way of God': Religion, Identity, and Intergroup Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research* 36, no. 5 (1999): 553–569.

[34] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (eds.), *Rethinking Secularism* (New York: Oxford University Press., 2011); Tala Asad, et al., *Is Critique Secular? Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).

[35] Ara Norenzayan et al., "The Cultural Evolution of Prosocial Religions," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 39 (2016): 1-19.

[36] Atran, *Talking to the Enemy*, 456.

the group. Even groups arbitrarily assembled and labeled in temporary experimental settings bond and compete.[37] Scholars debate the extent to which groups fight for material gains[38] or to address identity-based grievances,[39] but most acknowledge that both these and other motivations typically are at play in civil wars and other violent conflicts.[40]

Attitudes toward religion in the West can be so hostile that the average person might be forgiven for considering it a factor in most violent past and present conflicts.[41] As best we can tell, however, this simply is not true. The few rigorous analyses available suggest that religion has been a factor in no more than 40 percent,[42] and perhaps even significantly less than 10 percent,[43] of violent conflicts from antiquity to the present day. Rarely is religion the primary factor. One recent study found that religion was a primary factor in just 14 percent of conflicts, but that it was not the lone primary factor in any of these.[44]

We nonetheless must ask why religion is associated with conflict at all. One reason that some conflicts involve one or more religious groups is that identity dynamics play a significant role

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[37] Henri Tajfel, "Experiments in Intergroup Discrimination," *Scientific American* 223 (1970): 96–102; Marilynn B. Brewer, "In-group Bias in the Minimal Intergroup Situation: A Cognitive-Motivational Analysis," *Psychological Bulletin* 86, no. 2 (1979): 307–324.

[38] Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 56 (2004): 563–595.

[39] David Keen, *Complex Emergencies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

[40] Anthony Vinci, "Greed-Grievance Reconsidered: The Role of Power and Survival in the Motivation of Armed Groups," *Civil Wars* 8, no. 1 (2006): 25–45.

[41] Neuroscientist Sam Harris, one of the "New Atheists," calls religion "the most potent source of human conflict, past and present" (Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2005), 35). An empiricist, Harris cautions that "an insufficient taste for evidence regularly brings out the worst in us" (ibid., 26). Like biologist and fellow New Atheist Richard Dawkins (Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), however, Harris nonetheless shows little interest in studying religion with the rigorous empirical orientation and methods he deploys in his work as a scientist. Writing about the causes of violence involving religious people, Dawkins says "[t]he very word 'religions' is bowdlerized to 'communities', as in 'intercommunal warfare'" (Dawkins, 21). Like Harris, Dawkins thus advances the notion that religion is the cause of conflict involving religious people, which is a view that has been discredited by scientists studying conflict involving religion. Psychologist and prominent atheist Steven Pinker is no friend of religion, but does not go quite as far as Harris. In his 802-page, data-driven explanation of the historical decline in all types of violence, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence has Declined* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), Pinker acknowledges that "particular religious movements at particular times in history have worked against violence" (ibid., 677) and maintains that "[r]eligion plays no single role in the history of violence because religion has not been a single force in the history of anything" (ibid., 678). He nonetheless opens his book with a (textually accurate) litany of heinous acts reported or sanctioned in the Bible, then returns frequently to the theme of religious support for violence, cruelty, and intolerance throughout his book. Pinker maintains that "[t]he theory that religion is a force for peace, often heard among the religious right and its allies today, does not fit the facts of history" (ibid., 677), but this position is not reached using the unbiased empirical orientation and quantitative methods with which he studies the history of violence more generally, nor the other subjects to which he has turned his attention, like human cognition. It is unsurprising that some of the (mostly atheist) social scientists studying religion in a comparatively unbiased manner distance themselves from these critics of religion. For example, as atheist experimental anthropologist Scott Atran muses about the flimsy empirical basis underlying the New Atheists' crusade against religion, "Well, damn the facts; world salvation is on the march here" (Atran, *Talking to the Enemy,* 417).

[42] Greg Austin, Todd Kranock, and Thom Oommen, compilers, "God and War: An Audit and An Exploration," 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/world/04/war_audit_pdf/pdf/war_audit.pdf.

[43] Austin, Kranock, and Oommen, "God and War"; Charles Phillips and Alan Axelrod, eds., *Encyclopedia of Wars* (New York: Facts on File, 2004).

[44] Institute for Economics & Peace, *Five Key Questions Answered on the Link Between Peace & Religion: A Global Statistical Analysis on the Empirical Link between Peace and Religion,* October 2014, http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Peace-and-Religion-Report.pdf.

in intergroup conflict and religion serves the identity-related needs of individuals and groups.[45] Religion supports a strong sense of *us*, generating a strong sense of *them*, and we know this us-them dynamic can turn violent when one group feels threatened by another.

The us-them dynamic, it must be noted, also is at play in conflict in which religion is not a significant factor, like conflict between ethnic identity groups, so this answer does not tell us whether religion contributes uniquely to conflict dynamics. Through cross-cultural lab experiments and field research, social scientists from varied disciplines are attempting to determine whether there is something peculiar about religion that makes religious groups more prone to conflict, makes conflict involving religion more intense, or both. Norenzayan reminds us that "[e]xclusivity, dogmatism, and fundamentalism are not the same thing as religion," even though "they are often seen as interchangeable with religion by its critics."[46]

Based upon his own and others' research, Norenzayan tentatively believes there are at least three ways religion contributes to conflict. First, Norenzayan sees the phenomenon he and other researchers refer to as "supernatural monitoring" as a unique factor that can contribute to religious intolerance and conflict.[47] This is the felt sense that a person is watched by God, and that God is concerned with human morality. For example, Norenzayan and fellow social psychologist Azim Shariff found in one study that their North American Christian research subjects, when prompted to think of God, were more generous toward other Christians when dividing a sum of money, less generous to those whose religious affiliation was unknown to them, and least generous to Muslims.[48] Norenzayan points out, however, that findings like this are merely evidence that "making supernatural monitoring salient" leads religious people to be less generous toward members of another religion, which is not necessarily "an indication of intense hostility toward religious outgroups."[49]

Second, Norenzayan points to "the social bonding power of religious participation and ritual that could exacerbate conflict between groups."[50] Norenzayan and fellow social psychologists Ian Hansen and Jeremy Ginges conducted a series of experiments involving Palestinians and Israelis to determine whether practices that build strong ties within a religious community also widen the gulf between that group and other groups, making it more prone to intolerance and more likely to support violence. Because many types of identity groups not premised upon religion also build and strengthen bonds through gatherings, rituals, and other practices, these researchers sought to determine whether religious belief itself causes conflict, as many critics of religion claim.

Their studies assessed support for suicide bombings and other extreme forms of parochial altruism among Palestinians and Israelis[51] and how support correlated to the frequency with which

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[45] Seul, "Ours is the Way of God."

[46] Norenzayan, *Big Gods,* 158.

[47] Norenzayan, *Big Gods.*

[48] Azim F. Shariff and Ara Norenzayan, "Religious Priming Effects Are Sensitive to Religious Group Boundaries," unpublished data, University of Oregon, 2012 (referenced in Norenzayan, *Big Gods,* 161).

[49] Norenzayan, *Big Gods,* 161.

[50] Ibid., 160; Seul, "Ours is the Way of God."

[51] Suicide attacks by Israeli Jews are not common, so the researchers assessed attitudes among Israelis toward Israeli settler Baruch Goldstein's February 25, 1994 attack at a West Bank Muslim holy site, during which he killed 29 Muslims and died himself.

respondents attended religious services (as a proxy for strong commitment to the religious group) and prayed (which the researchers found to be a reliable indicator of strong commitment to religious beliefs). These two variables (attendance at services and prayer) are themselves weakly correlated (i.e., some people attend services frequently and pray frequently; others attend services frequently, but do not pray; and so on). The researchers found a strong correlation between support for violence and frequent attendance at services and no correlation among support for violence and prayer frequency (i.e., strong religious beliefs).[52] These results, which were replicated through surveys of respondents representing six different religions (Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism) in six different countries (Great Britain, India, Indonesia, Israel, Mexico, and Russia), discredit the religious belief hypothesis regarding the link between religion and conflict and suggest that "religious violence" is more attributable to the general human phenomenon of solidarity within a group that competes with other groups (as many other types of groups do) than to religious belief itself.

Finally, Norenzayan observes that values embraced by religious groups often are regarded as sacred—that is, they are "immune to trade-offs and seem insensitive to outcome."[53] When values are regarded as sacred, trades involving them are considered taboo.[54] Indeed, even suggesting trades of material goods for things to which sacred value is ascribed (e.g., land regarded as holy) increases opposition to compromise.[55]

This and other recent research regarding the relationship between religion and conflict seems to establish that religion is not the cause of conflict with a religious dimension.[56] Religion may well contribute to conflict in each of the three ways Norenzayan suggests, yet we see similar dynamics at play even where religion is not involved:

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[52] Jeremy Ginges, Ian Hansen, and Ara Norenzayan, "Religion and Support for Suicide Attacks," *Psychological Science* 20, no, 2 (2009): 224–230.

[53] Norenzayan, *Big Gods,* 167.

[54] P.E. Tetlock, R. S. Peterson, and J. S. Lerner, "Revising the Value Pluralism Model: Incorporating Social Content and Context Postulates." In *The Psychology of Values: The Ontario Symposium, Volume 8*, edited by C. Seligman, J. Olson, and M. Zanna (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996).

[55] Jeremy Ginges et al., "Sacred Bounds on Rational Resolution of Violent Political Conflict," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 104, no. 18: 7357–7360 (2007).

[56] Seul concluded previously that so-called "religious conflict" is "caused by the same material factors and social dynamics that incite and fuel conflict between ethnic, racial, and other identity groups. . . . Religion is not the cause of 'religious conflict'; rather, for many, it still provides the most secure basis for maintenance of a positively regarded social identity, and it frequently supplies the fault line along which intergroup identity and resource competition occurs" (Seul, "Ours is the Way of God," 564). Atran, likewise, sees "no evidence that with religion banished, science will reduce violence . . . Religions throughout history have tended to lessen social distance within a group as they have increased distance and occasions for misunderstanding and conflict with other groups. But so do other determinants of cultural identity, such as language, ethnicity and nationalism" (Atran, *Talking to the Enemy*, 414). Social Psychologist Jonathan Haidt, who also studies religious prosociality, says, "[r]eligion is . . . often an *accessory* to atrocity, rather than the driving force of the atrocity" (Jonathan Haidt *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2012), 268.) Norenzayan concludes that "[r]eligion is an important player, but rarely the primary cause of wars and violent conflicts" (Norenzayan, *Big Gods,* 157). These views comport with Norris and Inglehart's belief that "[t]he expanding gap between the sacred and the secular societies around the globe will have important consequences for world politics, making the role of religion increasingly salient on the global agenda. It is by no means inevitable that the religious gap will lead to greater ethno-religious conflict and violence" (Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 241).

- What Norenzayan and other researchers call "supernatural monitoring" is unique to religion almost by definition, but a sense of being monitored promotes prosocial behavior even when the monitor is not believed to be transcendent[57] and even if it is associated with secular, rather than religious, institutions.[58] Nationalists submit to, bond around, and die for abstract, romanticized, superordinate (if not supernatural) concepts of the nation.[59]

- While some studies indicate that co-religionists are more generous to one another than they are to outsiders, this same tendency has been observed in experiments among members of other types of groups, including members of the same ethnic group.[60] There also is evidence that religious prosociality is generalized and not parochial. In one study, for example, Christians were more generous both to other Christians and to atheists in a set of economic games, and more devout Christians were most generous, while atheists gave more only to other atheists.[61] Religious groups generate strong bonds and can generate strong oppositional identities, but other types of groups also do so, including people with differing political perspectives.[62] Although theists whose perspective is exclusivist (i.e., believing one's religion is the only true religion) generally are less tolerant of others, theism can also be non-exclusivist. Non-exclusivist theism is no more associated with intolerance than is atheism; in fact, non-exclusivist religious belief and devotion generally have been shown to reduce intolerance.[63]

- Religion is effective at promoting sacred values, yet secular cultural influences also can sacralize values.[64] For example, some adversaries in environmental disputes regard their values as sacred.[65] Religious rituals can sacralize a group's values, but so can secular rituals.[66] There is evidence that some religious people, more than nonreligious people, are more likely to think about ethics in rule-bound ways not easily amenable to compromise solutions,[67] and this is a factor that might tend to

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[57] Bateson, Nettle, and Roberts, "Cues of Being Watched."

[58] Shariff and Norenzayan, "God is Watching You." Citizens of the officially atheist former Soviet Union felt monitored to a degree that might approach the "supernatural," as perhaps do some people in the United States in the age of digital surveillance by the NSA.

[59] Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[60] James Habyarimana et al., "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?," *American Political Science Review* 101, no. 4 (2007): 709–725.

[61] Everett, Haque, and Rand, "How Good is the Samaritan"; see also Welch et al., "Trust in God."

[62] Adam Waytz, Liane L. Young, and Jeremy Ginges, "Motive Attribution Asymmetry for Love vs. Hate Drives Intractable Conflict," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111, no. 44 (2014): 15687–15692.

[63] Ian G. Hansen and Ara Norenzayan, "Between Yang and Yin and Heaven and Hell: Untangling the Complex Relationship between Religion and Intolerance," in *Where God and Science Meet: How Brain and Evolutionary Studies Alter Our Understanding of Religion* (vol. 3), edited by Patrick McNamara (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press—Praeger Publishers, 2006).

[64] Atran, *Talking to the Enemy*.

[65] Andrew J. Hoffman et al., "A Mixed-Motive Perspective on the Economics Versus Environment Debate," *American Behavioral Scientist* 42, no. 8 (1999): 1254–1276.

[66] Hammad Sheikh et al., "Religion, Group Threat and Sacred Values," *Judgment and Decision Making* 7, no. 2 (2012): 110–118.

[67] Jared Piazza and Justin F. Landy, "'Lean Not on Your Own Understanding': Belief that Morality is Founded on Divine Authority and Non-Utilitarian Moral Judgments," *Judgment and Decision Making* 8, no. 6 (2013): 639–661; Jared

> intensify some conflicts involving religion. However, the same is true of political conservatives.[68]

As noted above, what religion does clearly provide is abundant support for the development and stability of group identity, and competition between identity groups of various kinds sometimes turns violent.[69] Religion certainly offers some distinctive resources for group development and cohesion. However, while it is a common perception that these resources or other features of religion make religious groups more prone to conflict, or to more intense conflict, than other types of identity groups, the existing evidence does not support such claims.[70]

Religion's distinctive features may well have helped religious groups grow larger and endure longer than other groups, with their expansion inevitably bringing them into conflict with new potential adversaries.[71] The more we understand about the ways religion is associated with conflict—and especially about unique ways in which it is associated with conflict—the better able we will be to devise approaches for trying to avert or transform violent and otherwise destructive conflict in which religion is a factor. Where religion is a significant factor in a conflict, however, other factors almost certainly will be at play. Effective conflict resolution strategies must attend to all dimensions and drivers of a conflict.

In addition to providing insight into how religion is and is not entangled in conflict, research on religious prosociality has begun to provide useful insights about the ways in which religion can contribute to the promotion of tolerance and conflict resolution. Unlike many other cultural markers and worldviews that have contributed to conflict, religions also have resources that tend to promote tolerance and peacemaking.[72] As Norenzayan says, if religion is a maker of conflict,

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Piazza and Paulo Sousa, "Religiosity, Political Orientation, and Consequentialist Moral Thinking," *Social Psychological & Personality Science* 5, no. 3 (2014): 334–342.

[68] Piazza and Sousa, "Religiosity, Political Orientation, and Consequentialist Moral Thinking."

[69] Seul, "Ours is the Way of God."

[70] One recent quantitative analysis of armed conflicts in developing countries over a 20-year period (1990–2010) may begin to shed some light on the question of when religious identities or other religious factors do and do not play a role in the onset of armed conflict (Matthias Basedau, Birte Pfeiffer, and Johannes Vüllers, Bad Religion? Religion, Collective Action, and the Onset of Armed Conflict in Developing Countries," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60, no. 2 (2016): 226–255. The study found that armed conflict between two groups is more likely when both their ethnicities and their religions differ (what the study calls "interreligious conflict"). It also found that, when a religious group has ideological differences with the state (what the study calls "theological conflict"), such as when the group wants to replace secular law with religious law, calls to violence by religious leaders have some predictive effect regarding the onset of armed conflict. When one religion is dominant (i.e., at least 60 percent of a country's citizens adhere to the same religion), the study found that this can contribute to the onset of types of armed conflict other than "interreligious conflict" and "theological conflict" (e.g., conflict between two religious groups with mixed ethnic identity or conflict between a religious group and an ethnic group). The study found, however, that both religious fractionalization (i.e., high religious diversity) and religious polarization within a society (i.e., the existence of religious groups that are roughly equal in size) reduce the likelihood of armed conflict.

[71] Atran, *Talking to the Enemy*; Norenzayan, *Big Gods.*

[72] Political scientist Matthew Walton and conflict resolution practitioner Susan Hayward provide an excellent example of recent scholarship identifying tolerance promoting religious resources within a specific tradition (Theravada Buddhism) and conflict context (Myanmar's long-running civil war) and offering suggestions about how to employ those resources to help transform tensions among some Buddhists and Muslims. Matthew J. Walton and Susan Hayward, *Contesting Buddhist Narratives: Democratization, Nationalism, and Communal Violence in Myanmar* (East-West Center Policy Study Series 71) (Honolulu: East-West Center, 2014), https://www.eastwestcenter.org/sites/default/files/private/ps071.pdf.

then it also is an unmaker of conflict.[73] Religion's potential to help resolve conflict and promote peace is the subject of the third and final major section of this article. Before turning to that topic, however, I wish briefly to address the issue of extreme militancy in the name of religion.

Extreme Religious Militancy

What are we to make of contemporary groups that sponsor suicide attacks and other acts of extreme violence in the name of religion, as opposed (or in addition) to engaging in conventional forms of armed conflict, like Al Qaeda and ISIS?

Like all paramilitary groups, they are comprised mostly of young men—and, increasingly, but still minimally, young women[74] —who use violent tactics that are shocking, and which are meant to shock.[75] Anthropologist Scott Atran, who has studied and interviewed suicide bombers and other violent extremists around the world, concludes from his extensive research (involving many interdisciplinary collaborations) that religiously affiliated militants, including jihadists, generally are, or emerge from, "cliques of youthful friends . . . on a moral mission."[76] Research conducted by political scientist Marc Sageman supports this view.[77] His "data shows that they are generally idealistic young people seeking dreams of glory fighting for justice and fairness."[78] Political scientist Robert Pape and economist James Feldman distinguish between transnational suicide attackers, who act in defense of distant communities to which they are loyal, and national actors defending their own communities. Though their analysis suggests that transnational attackers work in tightknit groups and national actors more often are independent volunteers,[79] the latter often may be influenced by and seek the esteem of likeminded peers.[80]

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[73] Norenzayan, *Big Gods,* 160. This point also has been emphasized by José Casanova (*Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994)); Jeffrey R. Seul ("'Ours is the Way of God': Religion, Identity, and Intergroup Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research* 36, no. 5 (1999) and "Religion and Conflict," in *The Negotiator's Fieldbook*, edited by A. K. Schneider and C. Honeyman (Washington, DC: American Bar Association, 2006)), R. Scott Appleby (*The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000)); Marc Gopin (*Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) and "Religion as Destroyer and Creator of Peace: A Postmortem on Failed Peace Processes," in *Religion and Foreign Affairs: Essential Readings*, edited by D. R. Hoover and D. M. Johnston (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012), 271–279); and others.

[74] Atran, *Talking to the Enemy*; Josh Halliday, "London Schoolgirls among 60 Female Britons Thought to Have Joined ISIS," *The Guardian,* March 1, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/01/london-schoolgirls-60-female-britons-joined-isis.

[75] Suicide bombings and beheadings may be meant to shock, but Stephen Walt (Stephen M. Walt, "What Should We Do if the Islamic State Wins?: Live With It," *Foreign Policy*, June 10, 2015, http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/06/10/what-should-we-do-if-isis-islamic-state-wins-containment/) rightly encourages us not to "pretend that today's 'advanced' societies are uniformly genteel or moral either. An innocent blown up by an ill-aimed drone strike is just as much a victim as someone brutally beheaded by the Islamic State."

[76] Atran, *Talking to the Enemy,* 312.

[77] Marc Sageman , *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

[78] Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad,* 35.

[79] Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005); Robert A. Pape and James K. Feldman, *Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

[80] Atran, *Talking to the Enemy.*

All of these scholars find that violent extremists' moral mission is not principally propelled by religion. Pape and Feldman, who analyzed a comprehensive dataset containing details about all suicide attacks occurring since 1980, including the timing of attacks in relation to the inception of associated foreign military occupations, conclude that, "[s]imply put, [resistance to foreign] military occupation accounts for nearly all suicide terrorism around the world since 1980."[81] ISIS's bombing of a Russian commercial airliner in Egypt on October 31, 2015 and its attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015 seem consistent with this perspective; in September 2015, both countries began striking ISIS militants in portions of Syria controlled (albeit in contravention of international law) by ISIS. Even scholars like Sageman,[82] who place more emphasis on processes of religious radicalization, including belief in a global war against Islam, see specific grievances—such as objection to foreign military occupation—as a necessary precondition to terrorist acts.

Most suicide attacks occur when the foreign military presence is from a country with a different predominant religion than the predominant religion of those in the place where the foreigners are present,[83] but this likely describes the vast majority of contemporary foreign military occupations. Religion is among the features of culture these actors wish to defend; it is one of the sources of shared meaning that binds them together; and they ground their actions, in part, in religious doctrines and passages from texts that justified violent defense of the group centuries or millennia ago. Resistance to foreign occupation nonetheless holds greater explanatory power for suicide attacks, rather than religion as such.[84] Members of some militant groups, like Hamas's founder and leader, Khaled Meshaal, sometimes explicitly frame the group's violent tactics in these terms: "We are a resistance movement against an occupation. . . . We have never sought to kill a Jew because he was a Jew."[85]

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[81] Pape and Feldman, *Cutting the Fuse*, 10.

[82] Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad.*

[83] Pape and Feldman, *Cutting the Fuse.*

[84]Speaking about the assumptions he held as he began his research on suicide terrorism, Robert Pape says, "I thought I was going to figure out when an Islamic fundamentalist goes from being a devout, observant Muslim to somebody who then is suicidally violent. But there was no data available, so I put together this complete database of suicide attacks around the world . . . I was really struck that half the suicide attacks were secular. I began to look at the patterns and I noticed that they were tightly clustered, both in where they occurred and the timing, and that 95 percent of the suicide attacks were in response to a military occupation" (Elliott Balch, "Myth Busting: Robert Pape on Suicide Terrorism, ISIS, and U.S. Foreign Policy," *Chicago Policy Review*, May 5, 2015, http://chicagopolicyreview.org/2015/05/05/myth-busting-robert-pape-on-isis-suicide-terrorism-and-u-s-foreign-policy/. Commenting on journalist Graeme Wood's March 2015 article about ISIS in *The Atlantic*, in which Wood argues that ISIS's chief objective is to "[return all of] civilization to a seventh-century [religious] legal environment, and ultimately to [bring] about the apocalypse" (Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," *The Atlantic,* March 2015, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/), Pape maintains that Wood is "just wrong. . . Wood is painting a picture of ISIS as all religious, all the time. Interestingly . . . he is talking about how the main difference with Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda is that ISIS really wants territory. Wanting territory means there's a community that wants a state. ISIS, and most suicide groups, are driven by an ideal of nationalism; they want to control their destiny with a state. ISIS is composed of a leadership of about 25 people, which is one-third very heavily religious, for sure; one-third former Saddam [Hussein] military officers who are Baathists, who are secular; and one-third who are Sunni militia, Sunni tribal leaders. That just conveniently is lost in the Wood piece. It's definitely the case that ISIS wants to kill people who are not part of its community. But this is normal in nationalist groups" (Balch, "Myth Busting").

[85] Atran, *Talking to the Enemy*, 399. There are obvious differences between an organization with transnational ambitions, like ISIS, for example, and Hamas. ISIS seeks to build a theocratic state and to dominate the surrounding region from it, displacing a perceived hegemon to which it attributes many problems near its base and around the world (Cole Bunzel, *From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State* (The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the

Many of those recruited to Islamic militant organizations are recent converts, or come from moderate or largely secularized Muslim families.[86] "[W]hat inspires the most lethal terrorists in the world today," Atran maintains, "is not so much the Koran or religious teachings as a thrilling cause and call to action that promises glory and esteem in the eyes of friends, and through friends, eternal respect and remembrance in the wider world that they will never live to enjoy."[87] Reflecting on the presumption that Islamic fundamentalist religion "independent of American and Western foreign policy" is the cause of suicide attacks, thus justifying military intervention to democratize Muslim countries, Pape and Feldman conclude that "the facts have not fit our presumptions."[88]

While religion may not be the driving motivation of these militants, it would be a mistake to view religion only as cynically manipulated for instrumental purposes in these movements and to view their religious character as irrelevant to most recruits. For some—and perhaps for many recent converts, in particular—religion may be considered an antidote to the unmoored, debased existence the forces of secularization and globalization seem to promote.[89] It was right for Muslim leaders to denounce both ISIS's militant and exclusivist form of Islam and the violence ISIS has done in its name,[90] and Western leaders' insistence that such extreme militancy has nothing to do with religion is to be applauded as a moral stand against such violence and in defense of the

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Islamic World, Analysis Paper No. 19, March 2015), http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2015/03/ideology-of-islamic-state-bunzel/the-ideology-of-the-islamic-state.pdf). Although Hamas once campaigned for imposing uniform religious standards, like requiring women to wear the hijab, on all Palestinians, and there have been some sporadic, though less ambitious, efforts to do so since, it never has officially declared imposition of a specific interpretation of Islamic law on all Palestinians to be among its policy objectives, nor does it advocate global jihad.

[86] Sageman *Understanding Terror Networks*; Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*; Atran, *Talking to the Enemy*.

[87] Scott Atran, "Pathways To and From Violent Extremism: The Case for Science-based Field Research." Statement Before the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats & Capabilities, March 10, 2010, http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/atran10/atran10_index.html.

[88] Pape and Feldman, *Cutting the Fuse,* 2–3.

[89] Atran, *Talking to the Enemy*.

[90] Michael Kaplan, "ISIS Ramadan War: Muslim Leaders Condemn Islamic State Attacks, Call Holy Month Time for Peace," *International Business Times,* July 1, 2015, http://www.ibtimes.com/isis-ramadan-war-muslim-leaders-condemn-islamic-state-attacks-call-holy-month-time-1990904. Among many in the West and some smaller regions around the world, Muslims presently are viewed as more prone to violence than other groups, but data compiled and analyzed by political scientist Steven Fish dispel this invidious stereotype, clearly demonstrating that Muslims generally are not violent people. Non-Muslim countries average 7.5 murders per 100,000 citizens per year, for example, while the murder rate in Muslim countries is less than a third of that number, whether or not those Muslim countries have authoritarian regimes. Nor is large-scale political violence more prevalent in predominantly Muslim countries (M. Steven Fish, *Are Muslims Distinctive? A Look at the Evidence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)). Muslims were, however, responsible for about 60 percent of the approximately 200 terrorist bombings that occurred between 1994 and 2008 (ibid.). Fish sees this statistic as a response by a small number of extremists to the fact that "in the contemporary world, Christians won big." As Fish explains, "Christians drew the boundaries of the states in which most Muslims live. . . . Currently, people in Christian countries make up one-third of the world's population, while holding two-thirds of its wealth and nine-tenths of its military might" (M. Steven Fish, "Why is Terror Islamist?," *The Washington Post,* January 27, 2015, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/01/27/ why-is-terror-islamist/. Many Muslims feel frustrated and humiliated by this history and its legacy, Fish maintains, but only a small number of people express those feelings violently, as (according to Fish) we could expect to happen if the tables were turned (ibid.). Of course, Muslims in the Middle East and elsewhere generally have a negative view of groups that sponsor terrorism and their violent tactics (Pew Research Center, *Concerns about Islamic Extremism on the Rise in Middle East: Negative Opinions of al Qaeda, Hamas and Hezbollah Widespread*, July 2014, http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/07/01/concerns-about-islamic-extremism-on-the-rise-in-middle-east/).

spiritually and ethically grounded forms of Islam practiced by the vast majority of Muslims around the world. Discrediting violence in the name of religion and validating and amplifying religious perspectives that encourage tolerance and moderation is imperative.

Nonetheless, we should acknowledge that religion is at least superficially entangled even with the most extreme forms of violence with which it plainly seems to be associated, and we should encourage more research about extreme militancy in the name of religion, as well as methods for addressing it. The strategies and methods useful for addressing this problem may be more about altering Western foreign and military policy, avoiding and reversing radicalization of youth, and other types of policies and programs that are largely beyond the primary focus of this article, but understanding the ways in which religion is associated with extreme militancy (ranging from cynical and disingenuous manipulation of religion to sincere belief) and supporting efforts by mainstream religious actors to counter them no doubt can contribute meaningfully to solutions.[91]

Religious Prosociality and Conflict Transformation

As we saw in the previous sections of this article, religious beliefs and practices help bind people together in groups, and groups sometimes compete. Yet the prosocial features of our religions that help groups form and develop strong internal bonds also can and do help build bridges between people from different groups. Most contemporary conflict resolution theory and practice focused on conflicts that involve religion, particularly the work of religious peacebuilding scholars and practitioners, has given little or no attention to social scientific research on religious prosociality and what it tells us about the ways in which religion is and is not entangled with conflict and how it can and does contribute to conflict transformation.

The contemporary (and still largely Western) academic field of religious peacebuilding, one key strain of which is about religious actors working to prevent or end violent conflicts, has grown rapidly over the past two decades, both in terms of theory development and in terms of number and scope of applied activities. This growth was sparked, in part, by the publication in 1994 of *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*,[92] the first in-depth study in the modern West of religion's potential to contribute positively to official and unofficial diplomacy in the context of contemporary international relations. This was the year after Samuel Huntington's article "The Clash of Civilizations?" appeared in *Foreign Affairs*.[93] That article and the book[94] that followed it tend to characterize religion as essentialist, reified, and conflict generating. The field's growth began to accelerate in 2000, with the publication of Scott Appleby's *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* and Marc Gopin's *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking*.

While violence in the name of God grabs headlines, many religious actors are working quietly to avert or end conflict, whether or not it involves religion, and to promote peace in other

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[91] For example, Scott Atran *(Talking to the Enemy*, 415) observes that "Islam also stops violence. The only organizations I've found that have actually enticed significant numbers of voluntary defections from the ranks of would-be martyrs and jihadis—in Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt, and elsewhere—are Muslim religious organizations."

[92] Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[93] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 22–49.

[94] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

ways[95]—as, indeed, they have been doing for millennia. According to one study published in 2011, religious actors have played a mediating role in the vast majority of post-Cold War peace processes designed to end civil wars (21 of 25), playing a very direct and decisive mediating role in over half of these cases (11). Well-known examples include the successful mediation efforts by the Roman Catholic Community of Sant'Edigio and the work of Muslims and Christians through the Interfaith Mediation Center to reduce conflict in Nigeria. Religious actors also played significant roles in many of the reconciliation and transitional justice cases examined.[96] There is resurgent interest among researchers and policymakers in religion as a positive force in international affairs, including interest in "very non-political notions such as reconciliation, forgiveness, healing of relations, and apology . . . connected with religious world views" that are increasingly "included in contemporary discourse on [international relations]."[97] Former United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright asserts that religious organizations "have more resources, more skilled personnel, a longer attention span, more experience, more dedication and more success in fostering reconciliation than any government."[98]

Religions obviously have resources (texts, norms, rituals, etc.) that can be used to justify and promote cooperation or conflict.[99] While resources that more readily can be used to promote cooperation often are deployed to expand and strengthen bonds within religious groups, and resources that more readily can be used to justify conflict sometimes are deployed to maintain and defend the boundaries of religious groups, examples of religion supporting tolerance and cooperation between and among groups are abundant.[100] One contemporary opportunity and challenge for those who wish to help prevent or transform conflict involving religion is to tap into religion's prosocial impulses more systematically in efforts to improve intergroup relations.[101]

Effective conflict transformation efforts can, and often must, be incredibly varied, encompassing different modes of advocacy, third-party and internal mediation, interaction within and between groups, and social action.[102] While the (mediated or unmediated) negotiation of a

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[95] David R. Smock, "FBOs and International Peacebuilding," United States Institute of Peace Special Report 76, October 2001; Susan Hayward, "Religion and Peace Building: Reflections on Current Challenges and Future Prospects," United States Institute of Peace Special Report 313, August 2012, https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR313.pdf.

[96] Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011)

[97] Joanna Kulska, "A Balanced Perception of Religion in International Relations," E-International Relations, July 9, 2015, http://www.e-ir.info/2015/07/09/a-balanced-perception-of-religion-in-international-relations/.

[98] Madeleine Albright, *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God and World Affairs* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 77.

[99] Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*; Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon*; Seul, "Religion and Conflict," 323–334.

[100] One will find numerous examples among the essays collected in the new *Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding,* edited by A. Omer, R. S. Appleby, and D. Little (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[101] This project is not about excavating what supposedly is authentic and good in religion, sifting out what supposedly is inauthentic and bad, and essentializing these "good" elements apart from their historical, social, and political contexts—a strategy justifiably criticized by religion, conflict, and peace studies scholar Atalia Omer ("Religious Peacebuilding: The Exotic, the Good, and the Theatrical," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding,* 3–32). Rather, it is about recognizing that the impulses and perspectives that often cause people to favor their own group—a tendency that cannot simplistically be characterized as good or bad, either for one's own group or for other groups—sometimes also can be tapped to help extend prosocial conduct beyond the boundaries of one's own group, possibly reducing intolerance and violence.

[102] Robert Ricigliano, *Making Peace Last: A Toolbox for Sustainable Peacebuilding* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2012).

ceasefire agreement, peace accord, or new constitution is a focal point activity in efforts to transform most violent conflicts, a document like this typically is just a milestone, however important it may be, in an ongoing process of building more functional structures and relationships within a society. Most peace processes that lead to long-term social and political stability are akin to social movements that involve diverse actors and diverse forms of action.[103] Key actors involved in any peace process must find direct and indirect ways to engage many more people in the process, not only through dialogue, but also through modes of communication and experiences that help to overcome differences, serve basic human needs, and unite and reconcile people who have been in conflict. Religious actors can engage in peace practice not only by participating in negotiations and political dialogue, but also through other forms of speech (e.g., preaching) and action (e.g., group ritual or provision of social services), however loosely or tightly connected to official negotiations and dialogues these activities may be.

The "Big Gods, big groups" hypothesis introduced above and contending theories will continue to be debated, but the potential value to the field of conflict resolution of this new strain of social scientific research regarding religious prosociality already is becoming apparent, whether or not a consensus regarding grand theories ultimately emerges. To date, most theory and practice directed at conflicts that involve religion, including work done by religious peacebuilders, has not systematically accounted for insights derived from the empirical research methods used by social scientists, nor has it routinely been evaluated by them.[104] Scholars and practitioners have advanced what would seem to be many valuable approaches to employing religious resources to promote peace, such as using practices of forgiveness and reconciliation in conflict resolution efforts[105] and amplifying pro-peace doctrinal strains within a tradition,[106] but they have lacked rigorous ways to determine which approaches are most effective, to fine-tune approaches, and to develop new approaches. The new social science regarding the relationship among religion, conflict, and conflict resolution already is beginning to produce insights that can increase the effectiveness of efforts to resolve conflicts in which religion is a factor.

The remainder of this section provides an overview of some early insights from the new social science on religious prosociality that should prove useful to conflict resolution practitioners

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[103] John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2003); Mikael Weissmann, "The Missing Link: Bridging Between Social Movement Theory and Conflict Resolution," GARNET Working Paper No. 60/08, October 2008, http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A780143&dswid=-966; Ricigliano, *Making Peace Last.*

[104] Save one passing reference to one source in one author's contribution to the project, the *Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding*, an otherwise excellent and wide ranging 700-plus page survey of the field written by leading religious peacebuilding scholars, does not discuss, or even reference, any of the new social science on religious prosociality and its implications for conflict resolution practice, including evaluation of programs. The GHR Foundation has made a large grant to the Alliance for Peacebuilding to enable it to systematically assess and improve the effectiveness of religious peacebuilding efforts using evidence-based methods. Paul M. J. Suchecki, "How Useful Is Religion in Defusing Conflicts? A Funder Gives Big to Find Out," *Inside Philanthropy*, February 27, 2015, http://www.insidephilanthropy.com/home/2015/2/27/how-useful-is-religion-in-defusing-conflicts-a-funder-gives.html.

[105] Jerald D. Gort, Henry Jansen, and Hendrik M. Vroom, eds., *Religion, Conflict and Reconciliation: Multifaith Ideals and Realities* (Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2002); Raymond G. Helmick and Rodney L. Petersen, eds., *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy, and Conflict Transformation* (Radnor, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001).

[106] Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Nonviolence and Peace Building in Islam: Theory and Practice* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2003); Walton and Hayward, *Contesting Buddhist Narratives.*

and other peacemakers working to help prevent or transform a conflict involving religious actors. These examples mainly pertain to what Rob Ricigliano[107] calls attitudinal (i.e., group perspective change) and transactional (i.e., negotiation interaction) contributions to peacebuilding, but research on religious prosociality also can make structural contributions to peacebuilding (for example, by influencing law and policy on such matters as free exercise of religion and religious militancy).[108] Some of this research affirms current practices; some suggests refinements or new modes of practice. I see this research and the insights it offers as a complement to other perspectives and approaches within and beyond the social sciences, including more qualitative perspectives and approaches.[109] Practitioners have much to gain from this new line of scholarship, but effective practice must be multidisciplinary, including careful attention to the history of a conflict.[110]

Devoted Actors Defending Sacred Values

Much conflict resolution theory is premised upon the hypothetical "rational actor" model that dominates modern economic theory. This model has been tempered by findings from psychology about actual human perception and cognition, but this tempered view of rationality still assumes that individuals always seek to achieve outcomes that maximize net personal, worldly gains; sometimes, according to this perspective, we simply are prone to errors in perception and judgment that prevent us from optimally serving our self-interest.[111]

Some conduct, from suicide attacks to forgone opportunities to resolve a conflict on terms widely judged by others to be beneficial, seems so to defy self-interest, however, that it strains the rational actor model to the breaking point. This sort of conduct makes more sense when viewed from the perspective of a *devoted actor* model, in which one is willing to defend what is at stake in the conflict at great, and even ultimate, this-worldly personal cost.[112] Devoted actors do not seek outcomes that maximize self-interest in mundane or material terms; they act to preserve and

[107] Robert Ricigliano, *Making Peace Last.*

[108] Ibid., 35.

[109] Political scientist Ron Hassner's study of conflict over sacred sites is an excellent example of interdisciplinary work on the relationship among religion, conflict, and conflict resolution efforts that endeavors to be both "deep" and "broad." Deep approaches to studying this relationship, such as those utilized by many scholars in disciplines such as religious studies, theology, and history, often rely upon detailed case studies to gain in-depth insight into very local perspectives and practices within a particular religious group or national or subnational geographic area. Broad approaches to studying this relationship typically utilize quantitative and qualitative social scientific research methodologies in search of insights that apply, and which may be capable of guiding policy and practice, not only within, but also across, local contexts. Each of these orientations has advantages and disadvantages. This article focuses mostly upon contributions made by broad approaches, because they are largely neglected in the literature on religious peacebuilding, but joining these orientations arguably is the most productive way to generate actionable insights regarding the relationship among religion, conflict, and conflict resolution (Ron E. Hassner, *War on Sacred Grounds* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 174).

[110] Elizabeth F. Thompson, "Justice Interrupted: Historical Perspectives on Promoting Democracy in the Middle East," United States Institute of Peace Special Report 225, June 2009, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/101370/sr225.pdf.

[111] M. Bazerman and Katie Shonk, "The Decision Perspective to Negotiation." In *The Handbook of Dispute Resolution*, edited by M. Moffitt and R. Bordone (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005).

[112] Scott Atran, "Genesis of Suicide Terrorism," *Science* 299 (2003):1534–1539.

defend a moral order with which they and their compatriots identify completely.[113] Many religious people undoubtedly conceive of themselves and behave as devoted actors in many situations.

The devoted actor can, of course, be seen as an absolutely resolute rational actor; as a person who values one thing (like resistance to foreign occupation) much more than other things (like the prospect of continued this-worldly existence with family and friends) that most of us give comparable weight when making decisions (and which other theists believe God wills for them as much or more). In this sense, the devoted actor who resorts to violence is acting to maximize personal gain. He simply ascribes much higher value to outcomes that others either consider immoral or as entailing unacceptable costs.

This point highlights a major difference between a typical secular materialist worldview and a typical theistic religious worldview. Many religious people believe that acting in accordance with God's will, following ethical principles, and struggling for moral causes lead to nearness to God, salvation, and eternal well-being, all of which are, in a sense, considered personal gains consistent with one's worldview. A person with such a religious worldview may well consider the espoused religious justification for a suicide attacker's conduct to be theologically unsound (not a true expression of God's will) or disingenuous (not truly motivated by religion), yet she herself does try to discern and act in keeping with God's will in her own life, and she accepts and appreciates that other religious people also try to do so. To the extent she makes what she herself or others consider to be sacrifices along the way, these sacrifices are rational when considered from inside her worldview. The secular materialist, by contrast, regards the suicide attacker's conduct as irrational, not only because it fails to account for costs she believes the attacker should wish to avoid (like loss of one's own life and the likelihood of retaliation against members of one's family and community), but also because she considers the attacker's religious worldview to be false.

Some suggest that (religious or secular) sacred values may not really be incommensurable (non-tradable) with more mundane (religious or secular) interests. Some values that are deeply held by some people may well be more subject to compromise when one's alternatives to negotiation are unattractive.[114] There is evidence, for example, that environmentalists are more open to compromise when they perceive significant litigation risk.[115] Studies by experimental anthropologist Scott Atran, political scientist Robert Axelrod, and their colleagues (and the daily news streams from the fronts of civil wars and culture wars) indicate, however, that many conflicts with devoted actors involved in armed conflict and extremely polarized political disputes are likely to remain immune to negotiation so long as efforts to resolve them solely employ methods that treat sacred values as if they were readily tradable. From a practical perspective, we would be wise to assume in these situations that concessions involving sacred values cannot be bought with concessions on more mundane matters, even though, with careful attention to process, including

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[113] Scott Atran, Robert Axelrod, and Richard Davis, "Sacred Barriers to Conflict Resolution," *Science* 317 (2007): 1039–1040; Jeremy Ginges and Scott Atran, "What Motivates Participation in Violent Political Action: Selective Incentives or Parochial Altruism?," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1167 (2009): 115–123; Alan Fiske and Tage Shakti Rai, *Virtuous Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[114] Ann E. Tenbrunsel et al., "The Reality and Myth of Sacred Issues in Negotiations," *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research* 2, no. 3 (2009): 263–284.

[115] Andrew J. Hoffman et al., "A Mixed-Motive Perspective"; P. E. Tetlock, "Thinking the Unthinkable: Sacred Values and Taboo Cognitions," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 7, no. 7 (2003): 320–324.

the sequencing of moves, a package deal in which all parties to a conflict realize gains and losses on both sacred and mundane matters ultimately may be possible "within an overarching moral frame of social duties and (material) attempts to balance duties," rather than through trades that ask devoted actors to disregard felt duties imposed by sacred values.[116]

In one study, social psychologist Jeremy Ginges, Atran, and other researchers assessed Israelis' and Palestinians' and other combatants' willingness to end their conflicts through material concessions and compromises on issues to which one or both of the communities in conflict attached sacred values (e.g., territory, the right of return, and the status of Jerusalem). They found that proposed trades in which one side would concede something to which it attached sacred value in exchange for material benefits (e.g., money) generated a "backfire effect," increasing resistance to resolution of the conflict. However, even the most hawkish members of each community were open to proposals in which each side made concessions involving sacred values.[117] The conventional thinking among conflict resolution theorists and practitioners is that incremental progress on resolution of more mundane issues eventually can lead to willingness to compromise on major issues of symbolic importance, but this research suggests instead that symbolic gestures (like demonstrations of recognition and respect or an apology) may pave the way for negotiation of more mundane issues.[118] The implication, of course, is that peacemakers should invest at least as much energy in efforts to achieve early symbolic concessions as they invest in efforts to achieve material concessions.

Atran and Axelrod suggest numerous strategies for reframing sacred values to make trades involving them more tenable.[119] These reframing strategies include the following (which I illustrate with examples):

- *Updating how sacred values are expressed to signal retreat from or revision of claims one knows are inaccurate or out-of-step with current realities.* For example, before the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) revised its policy on inclusion of homosexual youth and leaders, it progressively relaxed prior claims about the morality of homosexuality.

- *Expressing or operationalizing sacred values in ways that are creatively ambiguous.* The BSA's new membership standard says a person cannot be excluded from the organization based solely upon "sexual orientation or preference," thus allowing those involved to "agree to disagree" on the nature of homosexuality, while paving the way for inclusion of

[116] Scott Atran and Robert Axelrod, "Reframing Sacred Values," *Negotiation Journal* 24, no. 3 (2008): 229. Deeply held values implicated in disputes that are brought to court in a well-functioning domestic legal system are effectively rendered commensurable, because both parties implicitly accept that the outcome of litigation may be a ruling that wholly or partially disregards one's values. A judicial system before which parties can bring a dispute involving sacred values simultaneously allows their values to be negotiated (by the judges who will debate and rule on the merits of the case) and ensures their values and the group's identity are (seemingly) defended without compromise (Jeffrey R. Seul, "Settling Significant Cases," *Washington Law Review* 79, no. 3 (2004): 881–968. In the context of many international armed conflicts and civil wars, as well as some domestic conflicts involving sacred values (e.g., free speech rights versus images of the Prophet in Denmark or France), however, there is no third-party arbiter that all parties consider legitimate or sufficiently authoritative. The conflict must be resolved through negotiation by the conflict parties themselves, if it is to be resolved peacefully.

[117] Ginges et al., "Sacred Bounds on Rational Resolution"; Atran, Axelrod, and Davis, "Sacred Barriers to Conflict Resolution."

[118] Atran and Axelrod, "Reframing Sacred Values."

[119] Ibid.; Atran, *Talking to the Enemy*, 382–389.

homosexuals. Years before the 2000 Camp David Summit, Israeli legal scholar Ruth Lapidoth proposed that Jerusalem's Holy Esplanade (the Temple Mount to Jews, and Al Aqsa Mosque to Muslims) be regarded as subject to Divine Sovereignty,[120] and Jordan's King Hussein later suggested many times that *all* holy sites in Jerusalem be regarded as subject to Divine Sovereignty, rather than the sovereignty of one party or divided into sovereign parts. This notion was seriously explored at the summit, but was rejected because religious leaders were not sufficiently involved in the process and the suggestion raises many complications regarding religious understandings of holy sites in general, and the Holy Esplanade in particular.[121] Nonetheless, Professor Lapidoth and King Hussein were suggesting a creatively ambiguous solution to the symbolic dimension of the disputes over Jerusalem's holy sites that was intended to open the way for compromise on more mundane matters.

- *Change the context or time horizon, so the stakes are lowered here and now.* The recent multilateral agreement regarding Iran's nuclear capacity is intended to delay (for 15 years), but not entirely eliminate, Iran's ability to develop a nuclear arsenal eventually. Assuming the agreement is respected by all parties, sanctions against Iran will be lifted, but Iran's leaders can credibly claim they still stand by Iran's "sovereign right" to develop a nuclear bomb.

- *Prioritize among sacred values without abandoning any of them.* Many environmentalists and other supporters of renewable energy and many supporters of fossil fuels likely agree that job creation is desirable (and, for some, even a sacred value), even if they do not agree on the scientific case for climate change. Policies that phase in renewable energy production and phase out reliance on coal in the nearer term and natural gas in the longer term, and which focus on creating jobs in the transitional fossil fuel and renewable energy sectors now and later seek a (shifting) balance among prioritized values, thus might be negotiable among these staunchly opposed players. Laws creating buffer zones around abortion clinics and waiting periods and/or optional counseling prior to abortions balance pro-life and pro-choice perspectives on abortion and the principle of free speech, which both sides value.

- *Seize low-cost opportunities to demonstrate respect for others' sacred values.* During Nelson Mandela's first secret meeting with South African President F.W. de Klerk, Mr. Mandela opened with a respectful, in-depth summary of Afrikaner history, experience, and perspectives, as he understood them. Mr. de Klerk later reported feeling utterly disarmed by this opening gesture and completely disposed to listen to and work with Mr. Mandela. Mr. Mandela's gesture cost him nothing, but helped achieve much for all South Africans.

Other reframing strategies include appeals to shared values that will be served through an agreement in which each side compromises on some sacred value that is not shared and breaking a sacred value down into smaller elements or steps. The abortion waiting period law discussed above is an example of the latter strategy. It may result in fewer abortions, even if does not eliminate

[120] Ruth Lapidoth, "Sovereignty in Transition," *Journal of International Affairs* 45, no. 2 (1992): 325–346.
[121] Hassner, *War on Sacred Grounds*, 86.

all abortions (a goal that pro-life advocates would continue to pursue). All of these reframing strategies have a common logic and objective: They enable a party to enter, and negotiate within, the other's frame of reference without leaving one's own frame of reference, and they permit parties to retain (sometimes in a refigured way) all, or nearly all, of the *symbolic value* associated with what they hold sacred while enabling them to divide the *mundane or material value* connected to what they hold sacred.

Tolerance-Promoting Texts and Doctrine

Religious peacebuilding experts often encourage religious leaders and others to amplify texts and doctrine that encourage tolerance,[122] but does spotlighting of pro-peace textual material and ideas help? If so, in which circumstances? Social scientists may help provide some answers to these questions.

For example, through decades of collaborative research, including studies of Israelis and Palestinians and U.S. citizens reminded of the 9/11 attacks, social psychologists Sheldon Solomon, Jeff Greenberg, and Tom Pyszczynski consistently have found that "[d]eath fears inflame violence toward others with different beliefs, especially those whom we designate as evil."[123] A fascinating and encouraging study by Pyszczynski and other colleagues, however, found that Iranian conservative Muslim and U.S. fundamentalist Christian subjects were more likely to support violent action against the other group when reminded of their mortality, but that support for violence decreased to the same levels expressed by moderate citizens of each country when they also were reminded of their religion's compassionate values (for Muslims, the saying "Do goodness to others because Allah loves those who do good"; for Christians, the saying "Love thy neighbor as thyself").[124] These priming studies are not conducted in the ordinary course of subjects' lives, but it seems reasonable to assume that reminding people frequently (in religious services, in daily life, and during conflict resolution activities) both of the transience of this earthly life (through, for instance, the Christian ethic and practice of *momento mori* or Buddhism's Five Remembrances) and of their tradition's compassionate values may promote a similar shift in perspective.

A recent set of studies by social psychologists Adam Waytz, Liane Young, and Jeremy Ginges involving Democrats and Republicans in the United States (in one study) and Israelis and Palestinians (in a separate study) revealed that parties to intense political and ethnoreligious conflicts unconsciously attribute their own group's aggression more to love of their group and the other group's aggression more to hatred of the out-group, a bias they call "motive attribution asymmetry."[125] Interestingly, a material reward (in this case, money) offered to some study participants for accuracy in assessing the other side's true motivations "reduce[d] egocentrism through increasing effortful perspective-taking."[126] This suggests that structures and incentives designed to help a group see and experience the real, in-group focused motivations of the other group might help dampen this bias (and other biases). Interreligious dialogue that is structured and

[122] Harold Coward and Gordon S. Smith, eds., *Religion and Peacebuilding* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).
[123] Sheldon Solomon, Jeff Greenberg, and Tom Pyszczynski, *The Worm at the Core: On the Role of Death in Life* (New York: Random House, 2015), 144.
[124] Rothschild, Abdollahi, and Pyszczynski, "Does Peace Have a Prayer?"
[125] Waytz, Young, and Ginges, "Motive Attribution Asymmetry for Love vs. Hate."
[126] Ibid., 15690.

guided in keeping with findings from research on attitude change and the sort of perspective taking exercises that are standard fare in conflict resolution trainings are examples of these types of structures, and perhaps "effortful perspective taking" would be increased if small, appropriate incentives were deftly incorporated into the experience (e.g., facilitators might offer to pick up the tab for the group's dinner if participants effectively assess others' motivations).

Devotional Practices

An interesting study in the United States (where existential security generally is high) found that conservative Pentecostal Christians who attend church most regularly and report greater influence of religion in their daily lives are more trusting of people inside *and outside* their group than less committed co-religionists and atheists, other Christians, and Jews.[127] As noted above, a series of studies (conducted in environments with comparatively low existential security) found strong support for suicide attacks among those Israelis and Palestinians who attend religious services frequently, but do not pray frequently. However, these same studies found that "[r]eminders of prayer, if anything, decreased" support for attacks.[128] These latter studies suggest that devotional practices such as prayer may dampen out-group hostility, even where groups are under stress. There are many types of prayer in theistic traditions in which one could reflect upon peace-oriented textual material or values. Certain types of Buddhist meditation practice have been shown to increase empathy and compassion, as well as prosocial conduct in games that offer the opportunity to cooperate or compete.[129] This research would seem to validate the efforts of some conflict resolution experts to incorporate mindfulness practices into their work.[130] Religious peacemakers should consider encouraging these types of devotional practices.

Group Ritual

The religious peacebuilding literature encourages the creative use of ritual in conflict resolution practice.[131] Recent social scientific research on religious prosociality validates this idea, while also offering insights about types and features of rituals that may particularly help promote tolerance and conflict transformation. For example, several studies indicate that *synchronized movement* is one key to creating feelings of affinity.[132]

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[127] Welch et al., "Trust in God and Trust in Man."

[128] Norenzayan, *Big Gods*, 164.

[129] O. M. Klimecki et al., "Differential Pattern of Functional Brain Plasticity After Compassion and Empathy Training," *Social Cognitive Affective Neuroscience* 9, no. 6 (2014): 873–879.

[130] Leonard L. Riskin and Rachel Wohl, "Mindfulness in the Heat of Conflict: Taking STOCK," *Harvard Negotiation Law Review* 20 (2015): 121–155.

[131] Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon*; Lisa Schirch, "Ritual, Religion, and Peacebuilding," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding*, 516–540.

[132] Michael J. Hove and Jane L. Risen, "It's All in the Timing: Interpersonal Synchrony Increases Affiliation," *Social Cognition* 27, no. 6 (2009): 949–961; S. S. Wiltermuth and C. Heath, "Synchrony and Cooperation," *Psychological Science* 20, no. 1 (2009): 1–5. Other examples include uniform, repeated rituals (which also may involve movement and song) performed regularly and less regular, high-arousal rituals performed under the supervision of religious authorities (Quentin D. Atkinson and Harvey Whitehouse, "The Cultural Morphospace of Ritual Form: Examining Modes of Religiosity Cross-culturally," *Evolution & Human Behavior* 32, no. 1 (2011): 50–62; Ivana Konvalinka et al., "Synchronized Arousal Between Performers and Related Spectators in a Fire-walking Ritual," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 108, no. 20 (2011): 8514–8519; Xygalatas et al, "Extreme Rituals Promote Prosociality," *Psychological Science* 24, no. 8 (2013): 1602–1605. Group ritual evokes the sentiment Emile Durkheim famously described as "collective effervescence" (Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, translated by K. E. Fields (New York:

Most studies of ritual have focused on in-group solidarity, but there is evidence that group rituals can help promote solidarity with and tolerance toward members of other groups. Economists David Clingingsmith, Asim Khwaja, and Michael Kremer studied effects on social attitudes of Pakistanis who either won or lost (through a lottery system) a spot to participate in the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca (the Hajj). The Hajj draws more than two million Muslim men and women of all sects, races, ethnicities, classes, ages, regions, and cultures from around the world for a five-day pilgrimage that includes performance of a diverse set of rituals at a number of different locations. A one-time requirement (for those with financial and physical capability) symbolizing each individual's ultimate self-presentation before and return to God, the Hajj is an event of culminating spiritual significance and intimacy for the individual, and is intended to highlight the shared nature and equality of human beings' existential situation before God. Intentions and prayers, ranging from verbally recited prayers and prayers involving synchronous movements to individual, personal spontaneous supplications, are integral to the rituals. Many of the rituals, such as encircling the Ka'ba and running back and forth between the hills of Safa and Marwa, are understood to recapitulate prayers, activities, and events in the lives of beloved religious figures and spiritual-ethical exemplars. The Hajj is very strenuous physically, with much of the travel between locations taking place on foot, often in high temperatures. The pilgrims together undergo considerable hardships and physical risks, provide mutual assistance, engage in spiritual conversation, share meals and supplies, and stand side by side for prolonged periods while praying with many people different in physical appearance, languages, customs, and even styles of ritual practice.

The Hajj thus brings diverse people together for extended interaction and ritual activity. The researchers found that Hajj participation decreased observance of more parochial religious practices and increased observance of more global religious practices; increased attitudes of equality, peace, and harmony toward other Muslims (including people from different Islamic sects and ethnic groups) and toward adherents of other religions; increased belief in the ability of people from different religious traditions to live in peace; and produced more favorable attitudes toward women.[133] Cambodian Buddhist leader Maha Ghosananda's Dhammayietra (also known as the Walk for Peace and Reconciliation)[134] and the Abraham Path initiative in the Middle East[135] are other examples of the simple power of group ritual for peacebuilding.

Shaping Situations to Promote Religious Prosociality

Religious prosociality is persistently "in the situation" (i.e., religious people tend to behave in prosocial ways when their present context encourages prosocial behavior), regardless of the conflicting evidence about whether it is persistently "in the person." This suggests that it may be possible to shape negotiation contexts and other situations in ways that encourage prosocial behavior. For example, if key members of negotiation delegations are religious, moderate religious

Simon & Schuster, 1995), vii. Social psychologist Jonathan Haidt provides a more comprehensive list of activities that can evoke this sentiment (Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*, 221–245).

[133] Clingingsmith, Khwaja, and Kremer, "Estimating the Impact of the Hajj."

[134] Monique Skidmore, "In the Shade of the Bodhi Tree: Dhammayietra and the Re-awakening of Community in Cambodia," *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 10, no. 1 (1996): 1–32.

[135] Abraham Path Initiative, accessed June 13, 2016, http://abrahampath.org.

leaders could be invited to offer words of encouragement (perhaps drawing upon scripture) before important meetings or negotiation sessions, reminding people of the loss of life the conflict has caused and will continue to cause if it is not resolved, and of values within their respective traditions that call for tolerance, compassion, and reconciliation. Meeting spaces could contain or be situated around positive reminders of religion. For example, the offices of the Common Space Initiative in Beirut, where many key meetings that are part of Lebanon's national dialogue process have occurred, is surrounded by dozens of churches and mosques that broadcast their presence throughout the day with bells and calls to prayer.[136]

One recent experiment involving Muslim youth in Gaza and the West Bank powerfully demonstrates the potential value of interventions that shape negotiation situations to promote prosociality across group lines. Study participants were asked how they would resolve a moral dilemma in which they had the choice to act to sacrifice the life of one Palestinian man to save the lives of several children who otherwise would be killed accidentally (a variant of the famous trolley dilemma). All respondents considered two versions of this dilemma: in one, the children they had the opportunity to save were Palestinian; in the other, they were Jewish Israelis. Even the baseline responses of these Palestinian youth were not what many would expect: many of the respondents had serious reservations about allowing Jewish children to die to save a Palestinian. When the researchers subsequently asked them to think about this choice *from God's perspective*, however, they were almost 30 percent more likely to sacrifice the life of a Palestinian to save the Jewish children—a hugely statistically significant shift. Those who facilitate discussions or negotiations among parties in conflict who are religious will recognize immediately how practically useful an insight like this can be in their work. Asking theistic negotiators to consider issues and options from God's perspective may well help spark creativity and break impasses.

Conclusion

This article highlights the role of religion in promoting cooperation within groups and the ways in which it is—and is not—implicated in conflict between groups. Religion promotes trust and cooperation among members of a group. No other feature of culture seems to offer so many resources for establishing and maintaining positive, secure group (and individual) identity and, hence, group solidarity. Religion supports a strong sense of *us*, generating a strong sense of *them*, and we know this *us-them* dynamic sometimes can turn violent. Yet, the prosocial features of religion that help a religious group grow and thrive also can contribute to tolerance and the resolution of conflicts between groups. Recent social scientific research regarding the prosocial nature of religion is producing a clearer and more nuanced picture of the ways in which religion and conflict relate, and also of how religion can contribute to the transformation of intergroup conflict with a religious dimension. This work is beginning to yield insights that can increase the effectiveness of conflict resolution practice, both by affirming or prompting modifications to existing approaches to practice and by inspiring new approaches. This new line of scientific inquiry into the social dynamics surrounding religion deserves the sustained attention of scholars and practitioners interested in conflict with a religious dimension.

[136] Common Space Initiative, accessed June 13, 2016, commonspaceinitiative.org.

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Faith-Based Conflict Early Warning: Experiences from Two Conflict Zones

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Formal interfaith associations are an emerging frontline of conflict early warning and early response systems. While early warning systems and peace negotiators at the national level may be successful in addressing structural issues and war, the article points to a need to build more localized or "organic" intrafaith and interfaith mechanisms that can be mobilized to prevent violence at the source. Faith-based early warning systems can be a valuable tool for identifying early signs of violence and for controlling in-group members in order to quell religious and ethnic violence in deeply divided societies. The examples of cases from Sri Lanka and Nigeria demonstrate the usefulness of sustaining local or community-based early warning and early response mechanisms, and the merits of building on new or existing community associations, particularly faith-based associations for early warning and early response. The study is based on the author's own experience directing a community-based conflict early warning system in Sri Lanka from 2002 to 2006 and designing a similar system for Nigeria in 2013.

Keywords: conflict early warning, early warning systems, religious violence, interfaith dialogue, intrafaith dialogue, religious peacebuilding, violence prevention, violence interruption, Nigeria, Sri Lanka

Riots broke out in the town of Mutur1 in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka in June 2002, after fourteen crosses erected by a nearby Christian church were destroyed by Muslims.2 A cadre belonging to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), popularly known as the Tamil Tigers, assaulted a Muslim man driving a taxi and the Muslims retaliated by attacking an LTTE office to which the LTTE responded with a hartal.3 Muslims, led by the North East Muslim Brotherhood and Muslim Students Union at the South Eastern University, responded by imposing a counter-hartal, provoking ethnic clashes, burning of houses, and damage to places of religious worship.

> The security forces eventually quelled these incidents. . . . However, modern communications are such that news and rumors surrounding the incident quickly spread to other towns. Vallachenai[4] experienced the worst violence. Terror, fear and violence gripped the town for a few days. Fear and insecurity spread to other towns such as Batticaloa, Kathankudy, Kalmunai, and Akkraipattu. Over 12 people died during this incident with more than a hundred injured and over 235 shops belonging to both communities were destroyed. As a result, an unofficial curfew was imposed for a few days.[5]

[1] A town in the District of Trincomalee that is majority Muslim and is situated in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka; the adjacent villages are Tamil.
[2] Kumar Rupesinghe, "Enhancing Human Security in the Eastern Province: Road Map Discussion Paper No. 4." Paper presented at the Road Map Program on Negotiating a Political Settlement and Promoting Conflict Transformation in Sri Lanka workshop, Colombo, Sri Lanka, October 16, 2002.
[3] A *hartal* is a protest that involves the stoppage of work.
[4] A town in the District of Batticaloa in the Eastern Province that is majority Muslim.
[5] Rupesinghe, "Enhancing Human Security in the Eastern Province."

The violent events described above were so serious that they reverberated around Sri Lanka and threatened to derail the fragile ceasefire agreement signed between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE in 2001. A noteworthy cause of this violence was the role of religious symbols. Religious conflict or mass religious violence was unusual for Sri Lanka where the civil war was widely categorized as an ethnic conflict between Tamils and Sinhalese. However, the conflict always had religious undertones.

The violence in Mutur, which started as religious violence between Christians and Muslims, underlined the powerful force of religious symbols in violent interethnic or interfaith conflict. The religious symbolism also had a direct impact on nonreligious/secular issues such as the peace process and the ceasefire agreement between the ethnic Tamils and the ethnic Sinhalese. It had a bearing on all communities irrespective of faith. The Mutur incident is a reminder that the spillover effect of communal violence can turn into religious violence and vice versa, and threaten all-out war affecting religious and ethnic communities alike.

The same is true for the Interfaith Mediation Centre in Kaduna, Nigeria. In Nigeria, home to numerous ethnic groups, the predominant lines of separation or "segregation" are based on faith, perhaps even more so than in eastern Sri Lanka. Therefore, in both instances, faith-based approaches to early warning and violence prevention were crucial to sustainable peace.

The Need for Conflict Early Warning

The violence in Mutur and Valachenai underscored the need to systematically collect, analyze, and respond to all early warning signs. In Sri Lanka, the Foundation for Co-Existence (FCE) was established.[6] For the FCE, early warning meant, quite simply, to obtain accurate information from the grass-roots or community level about an impending or unravelling violent incident and to communicate that information at the right time to the appropriate persons in a format that would have the most impact.[7]

However, the interspersing of mono-ethnic/mono-religious cities, towns, and villages, particularly in the Eastern Province, added to the complexity of community-based early warning. During tense situations, as with the Mutur incident, violence would be triggered along the borders of these mono-ethnic/mono-religious settlements and could spread to other cities, towns, and villages in other districts within the province.

The need for violence prevention was particularly pertinent to the FCE early warning system. As experts have pointed out, "unless the early warning system has a mechanism to mitigate

[6] The FCE conflict early warning system used events data and a complex network of violence interrupters to reduce violence. During this time, FCE managed to prevent around one hundred incidents of violence, including potentially deadly riots. An independent evaluation of this work in *The Technology of Nonviolence: Social Media and Violence Prevention* by Joseph G. Bock (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012) identified a 26% reduction in the lethality of violence as a result of this system.

[7] In its application to Northern Nigeria as part of the work of the Interfaith Mediation Centre in Kaduna, we were able to slightly modify the FCE early warning slogan to "Right information; provided at the Right time; to the Right people; in the Right format; for the Right action." This became known as the "Five R's" of early warning.

the conflict, there is little utility to be gained in refining the accuracy of current models."[8] The dissemination of early warnings alone will not quell tensions and conflict. "In other words, the sources of conflict, the perpetrators of violence, and their potential victims (i.e., citizens) have to be addressed and involved in peacemaking efforts. Without communication and the partnering of external and internal capacities, an early warning system is of little consequence."[9]

The FCE community-based early warning system, with a strong emphasis on early intervention, was a unique symbiosis of an information center, an early response unit, and a group of highly motivated field staff who were local community leaders, including religious leaders, youth leaders, members of women's organizations, farmers, journalists, local politicians, and other community groups and members. The reliance on "locals" was critical for FCE since it empowered local communities to participate and to lead the peacebuilding effort. As experts have pointed out, local experts are "best positioned in terms of local knowledge and tactical options to react to warnings immediately" and in many instances of catastrophe, the earliest sources of relief come from the endangered population itself, which includes faith-based organizations.[10]

The uniqueness of the FCE community-based early warning system was its early response capabilities. Overtime, through formalized response mechanisms, particularly with interfaith religious coexistence committees, FCE gained considerable access to accurate information and an ability to catalyze the mobilization of interventions using local religious leadership, and scripture in particular. These members of the religious coexistence committee formed a critical mass, or, as Joseph Bock calls it, "bounded crowdfeeding, which involves sending information back to trust network members and trustworthy local-, mid-, and top-level leaders at locations that have been flagged as likely to become violent."[11]

Formal Interfaith Associations

The Foundation for Co-Existence felt the need to develop this "critical mass" of community members very early on. The reason was to tap into local knowledge—and by local, we meant community knowledge. We realized very early on that community members were better at identifying precipitating conditions for ethnic riots, a phenomenon so common to the Eastern Province.[12] They were also capable of early action, whether that was moving out of the community to get away from harm or taking direct action to prevent it. This was particularly true with regard to cyclical forms of violence such as riots, which caused significant loss to life and threatened to unsettle the ceasefire agreement between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE.[13]

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[8] Alexander Austin, "Early Warning and the Field: A Cargo Cult Science?," in *Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict*, ed. Alex Austin, Martina Fischer, and Norbert Ropers (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2004), 129–50.
[9] "Preventing Future Wars," *Peace Matters* (Winter, 1998), http://www.ppu.org.uk/peacematters/peacematters/1999/pm_9899_futurwars.html.
[10] Casey Barrs, "Conflict Early Warning: Warning Who?" *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, February 12, 2006, https://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/41.
[11] Joseph G. Bock, "Firmer Footing for a Policy of Early Intervention: Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Comes of Age," *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 12, no. 1 (2014): 103–111, doi:10.1080/19331681.2014.982265.
[12] Madhawa Palihapitiya, "Ethnic Violence: A Case Study on Ethnic Riots in Sri Lanka," *Asian Journal of Public Affairs* 6, no. 1 (May 13, 2013): 95–111, https://issuu.com/nuslkyschool/docs/ajpa_issue_11.
[13] Ibid.

The earliest coexistence committees were based on ethnic denominations; they were not faith-based. Benefiting from the advice of a field officer, FCE was able to set up a coexistence committee comprised of Tamil and Muslim youth in a multiethnic town called Mutur in the Trincomalee District in the Eastern Province. These youths were identified through a sports festival. As a committee of interethnic and interfaith youth formed, FCE felt the need to expand.

There was an existing, much larger "formal" mechanism known as "peace committees," which were set up in the Eastern Province to monitor peace soon after the signing of the ceasefire agreement in 2002. The FCE realized that this mechanism was largely defunct. This was due to the fact that neither the government, the Norwegian peace facilitators,[14] nor the LTTE has bothered to convene them regularly. Many practical issues, like security and travel concerns, had sprung up after the ceasefire agreement stalemated. The FCE decided to absorb some of the membership of these committees and to develop our own critical mass using the model of "Co-Existence Committees." A number of these peace committee members were invited to participate in initial meetings of the coexistence committees, which were held in roughly the same areas where the formal peace committees had existed. They obliged. The following diagram indicates this geographic dispersal of the coexistence committees.

Figure 1: Geographic dispersal of formal coexistence committee infrastructure in Sri Lanka.

[14] The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) brought in facilitators for the peace process as part of the ceasefire agreement. This group was comprised of primarily Scandinavian peace monitors who were connected with the Norwegian peace negotiators working to end the conflict.

These coexistence committees comprised eminent persons from all ethnic and religious groups in the Eastern Province, including a very large group of religious leaders from the Islamic, Hindu, Christian, and Buddhist faiths. FCE field staff, who themselves belonged to these faith groups, were tasked with organizing regular meetings, networking, and involving the membership in peacebuilding activities, particularly early response activities.[15] The onus for developing a separate branch focusing on religious peacebuilding was the long history of faith-based conflict in the Eastern Province, which province was highly representative of the country's religious diversity, with all four major faiths represented.

This formal interfaith mechanism developed by FCE became one of the strongest forces for peace. They blossomed as new relationships were formed between religious leaders and groups like Moulavis or religious teachers from the Muslim community, Buddhist monks from the Sinhala community, and Hindu Kurukkals or priests, and Christian priests from Tamil and Sinhala communities.

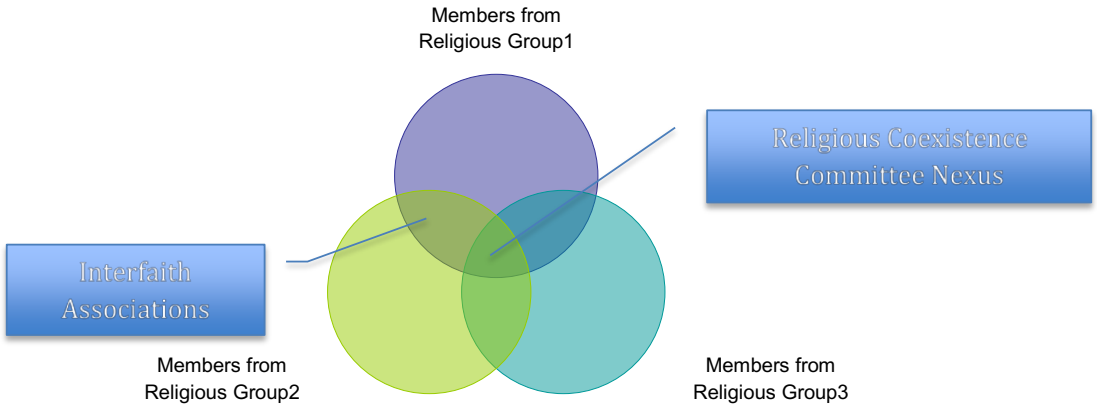

Figure 2 : The "architecture" of the "Religious Co-Existence Committee."

These relationships were fostered over years, some organically, but harnessed into early warning and early response mechanisms through well-organized and facilitated monthly meetings, trainings, and violence prevention interventions where religious leaders and groups developed conflict analysis skills, intervention skills, and—more importantly—an ability for joint action through "learning from doing." Considerable effort was made to explain to these stakeholders the principles of early warning and violence prevention. A special mediation training was also conducted for members of these committees, which spanned the entire Eastern Province. Particularly strong clusters of these interfaith associations were formed in and around hotspots near multiethnic cities and towns like Mutur and Akkaraipattu.

[15] Joseph Bock, Patricia Lawrence, and Timmo Gaasbeek, "Foundation for Co-Existence's Human Security Program in the Eastern Province" (presentation to the British High Commission by the Asia Foundation, Colombo, June 12, 2006).

Thus, these interfaith mechanisms were strengthened through joint action to predict and prevent violence, particularly religious violence. Overtime, an early response structure began to emerge that keenly resembled an interfaith and infrafaith collaborative network that was capable of quelling violence by exerting peer pressure on violence promoting intrafaith groups.

The following model, developed from the work by Joseph Bock, shows how the religious coexistence committee would exert influence on violence-promoting religious leaders and/or groups through a hierarchical intrafaith influence system that was tied to, and coordinated by, the religious coexistence committee as the central interfaith mechanism of the early warning and early response system.

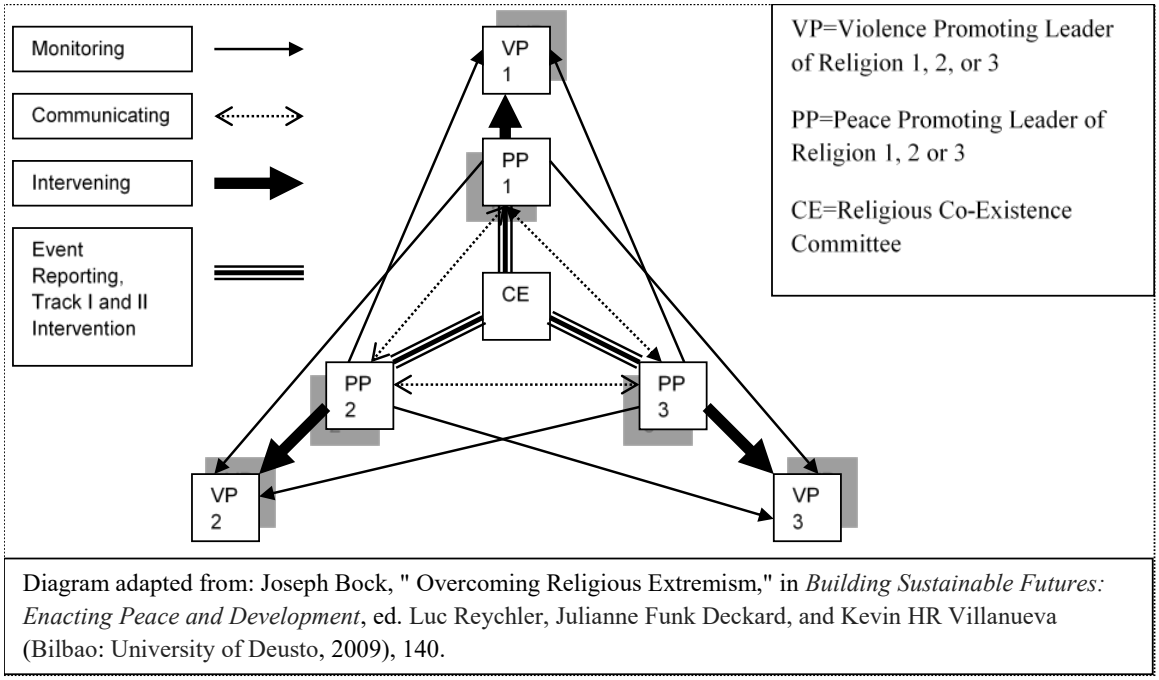

Diagram adapted from: Joseph Bock, " Overcoming Religious Extremism," in *Building Sustainable Futures: Enacting Peace and Development*, ed. Luc Reychler, Julianne Funk Deckard, and Kevin HR Villanueva (Bilbao: University of Deusto, 2009), 140.

Figure 3: Network structure of intragroup influence of religious violence prevention network.

When forming this infrastructure, as the architect of these early response networks, I took into account the existing religious leadership and focused on even the marginal leaders. By expanding the boundary of inclusion, we were able to bring in a diverse group of religious stakeholders who were able to collectively envision a future without violence, and a return to the peaceful teachings of each individual faith that had long been marginalized by the warring parties and whose adherents were uprooted, disbanded, or disturbed by the war.

The recruitment and retention of these leaders depended largely on the formal nature of the collaboration. Though neither legally not judicially appointed, the membership of this infrastructure drew some legitimacy from the official nature of the former peace committees established under the ceasefire agreement. However, special strategies were employed to recruit and retain additional members. A key recruiting strategy was a large periodic district-level convening of a summit of religious leaders and the formation of a centralized interfaith group attached to a network known as the National Anti-War Front (NAWF).

The NAWF was initially a voluntary organization of individuals and organizations committed to the idea of preserving the ceasefire agreement and working towards a peaceful settlement to the civil war. At the nexus of this group was a group of religious leaders who regularly used religious scripture to promote a peaceful resolution of the conflict. As a founding member organization, the Foundation for Co-Existence had direct access to this vast network of activists, including the religious peace activists who actively assisted FCE with recruitment. The NAWF religious leaders were also instrumental in designing interventions to prevent religious violence using the influence structure of peace-promoting religious leaders. Another key to recruitment and retention of religious leaders was a stream of successful and well publicized religious violence prevention interruptions carried out by this influence network. These "victories" increased the confidence of religious leaders and groups at the local level who joined the network and felt they were well connected and supported by the larger network.

These formal interfaith associations were very much the frontline of early intervention activities before, during, and after the outbreak of violence. An independent evaluation of the early warning system noted that the religious coexistence committees "became seriously involved in mediation" and that they were "activated immediately and could help with reducing tensions."[16] Prior to this, formal intergroup associations were found to prevent communal violence in other parts of the world. In a study conducted in India, formal interethnic associations, as opposed to informal interethnic contacts, were proven to have the capacity to intervene to prevent violence.[17]

The religious coexistence committees' capacity to conduct intrafaith as well as interfaith mediation activities was particularly useful for early response interventions. This infrastructure was regularly used to conduct on-the-ground interventions at multiple stages of a conflict cycle. A clearer example of the committees' effectiveness for early response is described in the following section.

The Religious Coexistence Committee Influence Network for Early Response Action

The religious coexistence committee set up by FCE was mobilized to mediate some high-profile conflicts in eastern Sri Lanka. For example, in May 2005, a Buddha statue was placed in Trincomalee City, the capital of a multiethnic District in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. The powerful religious symbol created tension and rioting that lasted for weeks. Although it might seem unusual for a peaceful Buddha statue to cause violence,[18] in this instance, the statue was seen by non-Buddhist religious and ethnic groups as a symbol of dominance by the majority Sinhalese in

[16] Joseph Bock, Patricia Lawrence, and Timmo Gaasbeek, "Foundation for Co-Existence's Human Security Program in the Eastern Province," in *Third Generation Early Warning*, ed. Kumar Rupesinghe (Colombo: Foundation for Co-Existence, 2009), 216.

[17] Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

[18] As I have discussed at the beginning of the article, religious symbols can be both an incentive to peace as well as a threat to peace and coexistence. Religious symbols can be used by adherents of a religion as a rallying point against alleged blasphemers from another religious group, as having conspired to destroy a religious symbol or as having infringed on and being disrespectful of a particular symbol held sacred by its believers. See Joseph Bock, "Communal Conflict, NGOs, and the Power of Religious Symbols 1," *Development in Practice* 7, no. 1 (1997): 17–25, doi:10.1080/09614529754729. Religious symbols can also be used to indicate religious and ethnic dominance and as an incitement to violence for larger political reasons.

a region where the Tamil and Muslim minorities and their respective faiths had a long-standing religious dominance.

The statue was placed in the middle of Trincomalee on May 19, 2005, amidst opposition from the Tamil population in the area.[19] Leaflets were distributed in the city by an organized body called the Tamil People's Forum, which requested that the people in Trincomalee hold a *hartal*—or a general shutdown—on May 17, 2005. The leaflets condemned Buddhist extremism, urged people to "Sound the death knell to Buddhist chauvinism," and stated that the Tamil People's Movement would not tolerate any religious extremism of this kind in the capital of Tamil Eelam.

The tension was increased further after an unidentified attacker lobbed a hand grenade at the Buddha statue on the sixteenth night after it was erected, causing minor injuries to the statue. But the Buddhists had made a firm decision not to remove the statue at any cost. A Sinhala banana vendor was killed in a second grenade attack on the day of the *hartal*. Several more bomb attacks continued as the *hartal* crippled Trincomalee. Soon, what was a conflict over a religious symbol had escalated into a national debate on whether to withdraw from peace negotiations with the LTTE. Thus, the Buddha statue incident became the rallying point for Sinhala chauvinists campaigning against the ceasefire agreement and attending negotiations with the Tamil Tigers.[20]

It was during this time that a group of religious leaders from the Anti-War Front, with interfaith peacebuilding capacity based in Colombo under the auspices of the Foundation for Co-Existence, sent a delegation to negotiate peace in Trincomalee. The group, led by Buddhist monk Madampagama Assaji, brought all parties to the negotiating table. Using their seniority as members of the Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, and Islamic clergy, the group exerted influence on the local, less senior religious leaders who were instigating the *hartal* situation. If the visiting delegation did not have the requisite influence on the local leaders, they were able to find individuals with that influence using the NAWF's vast network of religious leaders. During subsequent negotiations between the parties, an agreement was reached to obey a court decision requiring the implementation of regulations against all unauthorized construction in the city. The *hartal* was soon abandoned and normalcy was restored in Trincomalee.

This case is an example of how a potentially peaceful religious symbol such as a Buddha statue can be used as a tool to create a wedge between different religious and ethnic groups. It is also an example of the importance of formal associations of interfaith mediation, particularly before, during, and after an occurrence of religious violence. The incident also bears witness to the effectiveness of an interfaith influence network in controlling and policing in-group violence-promoting faith leaders. And while interfaith mediators at the track one national level comprised of senior national leaders may perform these mediations locally during times of crisis, evidence also points to a need to build more localized "organic" intrafaith mechanisms that can be mobilized to prevent violence and/or to control in-group members so that religious and ethnic violence is quelled before it escalates in deeply divided societies. In the event the local mechanisms fail, a national body like the NAWF can be useful in exerting the necessary influence through the "rank

[19] Nanda Wickremasinghe, "Erection of Buddha Statue Produces Communal Tensions in Sri Lanka," World Socialist Web Site, June 9, 2005, http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2005/06/sril-j09.html.
[20] Ibid.

and file" of a religious group. However, for coordinating both types of interventions, formal intrafaith and interfaith coexistence infrastructure is critical.

Since coexistence committees can also engage in successful intrafaith mediation, a case from Sri Lanka can be used to further demonstrate the intersection between intrafaith and interfaith mediation within the infrastructure of the religious coexistence committee model. The case concerns a tragic incident, which led to an early warning and early intervention.

The Case of Intrafaith Mediation Within the Religious Coexistence Committee Model

Sammanthurai, in the District of Ampara in the Eastern Province, is a majority Muslim town. The town was relatively prosperous, with mostly farmers and landowners living in it. One day, during the ceasefire agreement, a Sinhala truck driver belonging to the Buddhist community hit and killed three Muslim civilians in Sammanthurai. Although largely peaceful, many eastern townships were always on the edge, expecting an imminent infringement on their right to life by another ethnic or religious group. Violence could easily be triggered with even the perception of an external threat. Although the death of the pedestrians was a road accident, it was recognized as a manifestation of that threat. Violent armed mobs can easily form to counter that threat.

As the tension escalated, and with it the threat of communal riots between the two communities, the FCE religious coexistence committee in the district made an announcement through the Sammanthurai Mosque requesting all Muslims not to harm members of the Sinhalese community in the area. The announcement was made within an hour of the deadly accident. At the same time, the coexistence committee of traders worked alongside the religious coexistence committee to reduce the tension and the possibility of an ethnic riot in the area. Also as an early warning activity, the coexistence committee members contacted the police and the police paramilitary groups to maintain law and order in the area. On the following day, the same early response activities described above were repeated. This helped to reduce the tension and to avoid communal violence until arrangements were made to release the bodies of the three Muslims from the Sammanthurai Hospital. Subsequent negotiations between the two groups were successful and peace was restored to Sammanthurai.

The case illustrates how intrafaith mechanisms, coordinated by a formal association of religious coexistence committees, can control in-group behavior. This in-group policing model is critical for conflict early warning and early response in that it places a damper on the destructive behavior of a group that, if unabated, would garner a violent response from other groups resulting in an uncontrollable spiral of "tit-for-tat" violence.

Utilizing Preexisting Interfaith Associations for Early Warning and Early Response

While creating new formal interfaith bodies can form a strong line of defense against the outbreak of communal and religious violence, tapping into existing associations and mechanisms within a particular conflict zone for coordinating conflict early warning and early response is also critical.

The Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC) of Kaduna, Nigeria engaged primarily in interfaith dialogue and mediation until 2013, when early warning and early response was introduced to the

center and its operations in the states of Bauchi, Borno, Plateau, Kaduna, Kano, and Sokoto in Northern Nigeria.

The goal of the IMC is political stabilization through mitigating religious extremism and defending religious freedoms with the aim of increasing religious tolerance and interfaith understanding. While this might seem a significant departure from previous generations of early warning systems, which were operated by academics, defense agencies, and "traditional" peacebuilding NGOs, the IMC's interfaith approach was proven a success given the nature and context of the conflict in Northern Nigeria.

Starting in 2013, the IMC began to develop its own community-based conflict early warning system based on an interfaith mediation model that employed preexisting interfaith associations as key mechanisms for conflict early warning and early response. The main body that coordinates early warning and early response at the IMC is the Community Peace Action Network (CPAN), which is comprised of the Community Peace Coordinating Centre (CPCC), the Conflict Mitigation and Management Regional Councils (CMMRCs), and Community Peace Observers (CPOs). Much of this infrastructure was preexisting. The CMMRCs, in particular, were formal associations between community leaders of different faiths and ethnicities. The IMC managed to realign these different community-based resources for conflict early warning and early response.

The CPCC is similar to the FCE Information Center in that it "collects, collates, verifies, analyzes, records, and disseminates early warning information for quick response." [21] The CMMRC is similar to the FCE Early Response Unit. Both the FCE and the IMC use field-based observers, which in Nigeria are called Community Peace Observers. These are trained grassroots-level observers "responsible for monitoring, collecting and disseminating conflict and peace information." [22] They were drawn from CMMRCs and other preexisting IMC community networks.

The CMMRCs are formal interfaith and interethnic associations and early warning mechanisms that currently exist in numerous cities and towns in Northern Nigeria. These mechanisms, coordinated by the early warning system, have had a significant positive impact on increasing community trust, religious tolerance, social contact, and peaceful coexistence in those areas. A quasi-experimental study conducted as part of an evaluation of the IMC's work revealed that harmful effects of religious intolerance, like derogatory name-calling for example, which increase intolerance amongst people were reduced through these formal interfaith associations.[23] These mechanisms also reduced segregation. The independent evaluation found: "Both treatment and control groups describe greater integration of their neighborhoods. From 2015 to 2017, the median survey response changed from "Disagree" to "Agree," an increase of two points on the five-point scale. Regression analysis confirms that responses unambiguously improve with each additional year of project exposure."[24]

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[21] "Community Peace Action Network," The Interfaith Mediation Centre, accessed July 26, 2018, http://www.earlywarningnigeria.org/cpan/.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ben Mazzotta and Alexander Brehm, 2017 *Midline Evaluation: Interfaith Mediation Center, Nigeria* (Evaluation Report, 2017).
[24] Ibid, 16.

The IMC has a rich history of interfaith mediation thanks to the center's leaders Imam Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye, who used to be enemies but joined hands to preach a unified and scripture-based message of peace. The IMC is an example of the need to utilize existing interfaith mechanisms for conflict early warning and early response.

Utilizing Existing Religious Infrastructure for Early Warning at the Local Level

Organizations like the IMC were established for the purpose of peacebuilding and can easily be used to engage in conflict early warning through training and the commitment of resources. But the vast majority of faith-based organizations have only one mission—to shepherd their adherents through life. These purely congregational mechanisms of faith can also be utilized for conflict early warning and early response. An example of a more local preexisting faith-based mechanism successfully mobilized to prevent and/or quell violence is the Mosque Federation of the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka.

The Mosque Federation proved time and time again to be an effective mechanism to control the threat of violence unleashed by various Muslim groups in eastern Sri Lanka through numerous calls for restraint and peace. This was despite the fact that the Muslims were on the receiving end of some terrible atrocities committed against them throughout the ethnic conflict. For example, on 18th November 2005, an unknown group of assailants pretending to be Muslim worshippers lobbed hand grenades into the Jumma Grand Mosque in Akkaraipattu in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. Six Muslim worshipper were killed in the incident. Around 24 others were injured. The attack took place in a climate of escalating political killings during an election campaign period. The town of Akkaraipattu is about two-thirds Muslim and one-third Tamil, who are predominantly Hindu and Christian.

The Jumma Grand Mosque is situated on the borderline that segregates the town's Muslim quarter from its Tamil quarter. Clearly, the choice of the attack's location was deliberately chosen to create religious and ethnic violence. Soon after the attack, rumors began to spread of an impending massive attack by the LTTE and/or the Muslim groups in the area, some of whom were allegedly armed. Police troops were deployed in the area to control tension and maintain law and order; however, tension increased, resulting in an outbreak of public protest against the attack. This culminated in Muslims in Akkaraipattu declaring a general *hartal* or shutdown that continued for four days, crippling the town and the region. General shutdowns of this nature prevent all forms of public life, particularly transportation. As Akkaraipattu is a key transportation and economic hub for the District of Ampara, the *hartal* affected human security in the entire region.

Despite a formal statement by the LTTE that they were not responsible for the attack and a heavy security presence, the tension between Muslims and Tamils in the area continued. As a result, 600 Tamil families displaced by the 2004 tsunami and already living in temporary shelter sites in Akkaraipattu were further displaced to a nearby school in fear. By this juncture, the Foundation for Co-Existence's conflict early warning and early response mechanism had identified the signs of a communal riot scenario developing in the Akkaraipattu area.

The Foundation for Co-Existence performed a detailed analysis of the attack and communicated the findings to the religious leaders in both the Muslim and Tamil communities, thereby effectively reducing the circulation of rumors and holding at bay an impending riot. In

particular, meetings were facilitated between the Mosque Federation and Muslim community representatives in Akkaraipattu to discuss the issues and devise a strategy to prevent a riot between Muslims and Tamils. This was an effective strategy, as the Muslims considered themselves to be the aggrieved party facing an uncertain future in Akkaraipattu. After many rounds of talks, a breakthrough was achieved, thanks mainly to the leadership of the Mosque Federation.

The Mosque Federation of Ampara and the Mosque Federations in other parts of the Eastern Province released a statement calling for calm. Tamil community leaders agreed to ensure that the Muslims would not be hurt in the Tamil villages while Muslim community leaders agreed to ensure the safety of Tamils in the Muslim areas. The *hartal* was called off by the Muslims. The police announced the agreement to the public over loudspeakers and informed the public that the atrocities would not continue and people could move back to their normal life. After this intervention, normalcy prevailed in Akkaraipattu.[25]

The role of the Mosque Federation as a powerful lobby for peace and coexistence owed much to the role of a number of peace-promoting leaders within the federation. A noteworthy individual among them was Moulavi Kareem from Mutur, near the eastern town of Trincomalee. From a town with a majority Muslim community, Kareem maintained a strong relationship with the Tamil population—including the Tamil Tigers—and was able to act as a go-between and mediator, as well as a calming force for the Muslims as they tried to coexist with the Tamils in Mutur and surrounding Tamil towns.

The example of Kareem is not an isolated one. In fact, history bears witness to a number of such leaders and communities in the South Asian region. A similar example is Abdul Ghaffer Khan and his followers in India who actively promoted nonviolent coexistence. Known as the Khudai Khidmatgars of the Northwest Frontier Province of pre-partition India, [26] the Khidmatgars, under the leadership of their illustrious leader Abdul Ghaffer Khan, took measures to protect other religious and ethnic minorities in areas under their control. The Khidmatgars understood that "they could benefit from peace and liberation in the long run, that their own interests, insofar as they were legitimate, would not be handicapped by educating their followership about a third course of action that, although certainly no panacea, holds as much promise as doing nothing or attempting socially self-destructive bombings and shootings."[27] The Mosque Federation of the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka and its Islamic leaders like Moulavi Kareem also understood this principle.

Faith Leaders as Peacekeepers

While it may be a given that religious leaders traditionally function as advocates, healers, and keepers of peace in their daily preaching practice, the opportunity, skill, and political will to "peacekeep" in highly divided societies with numerous faith-based traditions is far more complicated in practice. However, on occasion, such religious leadership does emerge. The

[25] Bock, Lawrence, and Gaasbeek, "Foundation for Co-Existence's Human Security Program in the Eastern Province," in *Third Generation Early Warning*, 204.
[26] Robert C. Johansen, "Radical Islam and Nonviolence: A Case Study of Religious Empowerment and Constraint among Pashtuns," *Journal of Peace Research* 34, no. 1 (1997): 53–71, doi:10.1177/0022343397034001005.
[27] Ibid., 57.

following case illustrates how a lone Buddhist monk who was well received by the Tamil Tigers during a single negotiation round rose to the level of a peacekeeper through sheer will.

In October 2005, a Sinhala tractor driver disappeared while collecting sand for building construction in Tamil Tiger-controlled territory. This incident took place during a period of severe tension over the killing of a Sinhala police intelligence officer well known in the area by the Sinhala Buddhists. The LTTE was blamed for the assassination of the police intelligence officer. The tension erupted into violence. Several lorries transporting equipment and boats for Tsunami victims were attacked by a mob. Tamil civilians who were using the access road were assaulted. A vehicle belonging to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) that went to the site in order to investigate the attack on the lorry was also attacked. The LTTE Trincomalee District Political Head made a complaint to the SLMM regarding the attacks. On 19th June, a Sinhalese paramilitary border guard was abducted by a group of armed men suspected to be LTTE. On 22nd June, a group of Sinhalese youth stopped a passenger bus traveling from Kantale to Mutur and assaulted three Tamil women. Within two hours of the attack, a group of Sinhalese youth came under a grenade attack, injuring three.

Meetings were convened by the FCE on the 23rd and 24th of June to mediate the violence with community leaders from ten villages led by five Buddhist monks on 24th June 2005 at Serunuwara. On July 1, 2005, the FCE took fifteen Sinhala Buddhist leaders from the ten villages under the leadership of the Chief Incumbent of a prominent Buddhist Temple to negotiate talks with the Tamil Tigers.

Amazingly, the Tigers had placed a white cloth on the seat where the Chief Buddhist Priest sat. This is a sign of respect that the Buddhist laity would perform whenever a Buddhist monk visited their home. It was unusual to see this type of behavior from the Tigers in their jungle hideout. Following this welcome gesture, which set the tone for the meeting, discussions went on for about an hour until the Buddhist priest stood up and directly addressed the Tamil Tiger political wing leader. He requested that the Tiger leader assume full responsibility for the behavior of the Tamil youth groups inciting the violence and that in turn, he himself would prevent the Sinhala youth from resorting to violence. The Tamil Tiger leader agreed to this proposal. The two leaders exchanged phone numbers in case of a future incident that required their intervention.

Not long after this incident, a van carrying Sinhala civilians was stoned by a group of Tamil youth. The Buddhist priest called the LTTE leader whom he had met and asked for an intervention. The Tiger leader agreed and proceeded to round up and punish the Tamil youth involved in the attack. After the strict punishment was meted out to them, the youth, now escaping the area, were identified and tied to a tree by Sinhala youth. The Buddhist monk heard of this incident and rushed to the scene. He ordered the Tamil youth to be untied and released immediately. This cemented the trust between the two leaders even further and no incidents were reported from this area throughout the duration of the war.

This case is an example of the courage and religious conviction of faith leaders to engage in peacebuilding, and how a conflict early warning system can harness the power of such leaders as mediators in violent conflict situations. A note of caution on utilizing these leaders for violence prevention is to ensure that they are not branded traitors by their own group. In situations of extreme religious and/or ethnic polarization and animosity, any faith leader who engages in

mediation or in any kind of "boundary spanning" faces the very real threat of being outbid and outflanked by members of his own group who might see coexistence as a threat to their own divisive agendas. Situating such lone leaders within a wider and more formal religious coexistence body would afford them more protection by way of a safety net.

Conclusion

Conflict early warning is defined as an information system that can provide timely information to decision makers on impending conflicts, humanitarian disasters, and the mass exodus of peoples.[28] Normatively, the concept of conflict early warning and early response is the prevention of violence by forecasting the timing and place of the eruption of violent conflict and intervening in the impending violent situation. In practice, the writer frames this as a set of operational principles that incorporates: *Right* information; provided at the *Right* time; to the *Right* people; in the *Right* format; for the *Right* action! For this "5R" concept of early warning to work, the focus must be local. I will explain this further.

Despite various early warning systems in practice today the threat of mass atrocities like the genocide in Rwanda, which heightened the need for conflict early warning, is still very real.[29] Most traditional early warning systems have been perceived as Western oriented,[30] egocentric, and designed by outsiders for outsiders.[31] Traditional, or first- or second-generation early warning systems[32] are quantitative analysis methods developed by Western academics, practitioners, and institutions over several decades to analyze troubling "trends" in various conflict-affected states and regions through the analysis of news reports. Western scholars, governments, and their militaries have developed and utilized a number of these approaches over the last several decades with very limited local impact.[33]

Studies and practical examples have demonstrated that these traditional early warning systems do little to advance the goal of human security in deeply divided societies. Further compounding the problem is the difficulty of predicting and preventing violence in societies where the violence is concentrated between state and non-state actors whose boundaries are constantly shifting.[34]

The examples in Sri Lanka and, to an extent, in Nigeria, demonstrate the usefulness of sustaining local or community-based early warning and early response mechanisms, and the merits of building on new or existing community associations— particularly faith-based associations—as both providers of early warning signals and key early response intervention mechanisms.

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[28] Rupesinghe, "Enhancing Human Security in the Eastern Province."
[29] Herbert Wulf and Tobias Debiel, "Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanisms: Tools for Enhancing the Effectiveness of Regional Organisations? A Comparative Study of the AU, ECOWAS, IGAD, ASEAN/ARF and PIF," LSE Research Online, last modified October 1, 2010, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28495/.
[30] Rupesinghe, "Enhancing Human Security in the Eastern Province."
[31] Barrs, "Conflict Early Warning: Warning Who?"
[32] Rupesinghe, "Enhancing Human Security in the Eastern Province."

[33] Sean P. O'Brien, "Crisis Early Warning and Decision Support: Contemporary Approaches and Thoughts on Future Research," *International Studies Review* 12, no. 1 (March 2010): 87–104, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40730711.
[34] Ibid.

The examples from the two countries also illustrate the potential symbiosis between peace-promoting institutions of faith and organizations and/or experts implementing conflict early warning systems in deeply divided societies. The potential merits of this collaboration can enable the utilization of preexisting or new formal faith-based groups and associations to better coordinate impactful and timely violence prevention interventions while assisting proponents of conflict early warning to harness a highly potent critical mass of faith-based groups and their adherents situated in almost every conflict zone. It also helps avoid a critical failure of early warning: early response.

We have learned the lessons of failed early response from Rwanda, Kosovo, and many other parts of the world. When human security in communities in Syria was threatened and no action was taken to guarantee community security, groups—sometimes violent faith-based groups—were formed as a counterbalance to the Assad regime. This void was soon filled by Al Qaeda and the Islamic State.[35]

Early warning is futile without early response. Once an early warning is generated, peacebuilders must generate follow-up action by selecting appropriate response mechanisms (often predetermined), which in the case of faith-based peacebuilding would be faith-based early warning and early response groups. This is often followed by the identification of additional mechanisms/stakeholders on the periphery who receive the warnings (not often predetermined) and by the identification of appropriate method(s) of communication/warning (calls, text) and intervention design through consultation with early response mechanisms.

Early response mechanisms need to identify human and material resources in order to formulate the response. In the examples discussed earlier are the well-established community infrastructure of the Mosque Federations in eastern Sri Lanka.

The conflict early warning systems discussed in this article focused on the immediate de-escalation of ethnic and religious violence, and the formation of religious coexistence committees as one of its main early response mechanisms. These mechanisms, when formalized, properly networked, trained, and motivated can engage in serious violence prevention efforts with particular impact at the community level. The article bears evidence to the need to foster and incorporate these interfaith mechanisms as key early warning and early response infrastructure in countries prone to religious and other forms of violence.

As many of the current global conflicts have a religious dimension, early warning and early response systems that can harness religious stakeholders to coordinate preventative action at the local level are critical for any successful peacebuilding effort. It is hoped that this analysis, with its different dimensions of intrafaith and interfaith mediation efforts using community-based local early warning strategies, has shed some light on the path we must take as peacebuilders and persons of faith.

[35] This is quite the opposite of the model we are envisaging, but one that reminds us again not only of the consequences of failure of faith-based early warning, but of the limitations of interfaith mediation and peacebuilding in general.

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Building Peace Through Trans-local Community and Collaboration: The Tanenbaum *Peacemakers in Action Network*

Joyce S. Dubensky & Tanenbaum Staff[1]

This article explores the Tanenbaum Peacemakers in Action Network. *The authors discuss how the* Network *organically formed and how it is structured, as well as its evolution and effectiveness. The authors also review the ways in which Etienne Wenger et al.'s "Communities of Practice" model is reflected by the* Network's *concepts of domain, community, and practice. The* Network's *32 religiously motivated* Peacemakers *(28 now living) work across various conflict zones throughout the world. Together, they inspire one another, feel less isolated, develop new ideas, and collaborate through Tanenbaum-facilitated "Interventions." Hind Kabawat's story, alongside other* Peacemaker *stories, is woven throughout to illustrate how the* Network *serves as an effective model for structuring peace vis-a-vis peacebuilding writ large.*

Keywords: peacemaker, religious peacebuilding, Syria, network, network theory, women in peace, interreligious, peacemakers in action

On May 5, 2016, the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding (Tanenbaum) had the privilege of presenting its *Peacemakers in Action* program at the Religions and the Practice of Peace Colloquium at Harvard Divinity School. There, I had the opportunity to present with Hind Kabawat, a peacebuilder from Syria ("the Dubensky/Kabawat joint address").[2] Together, we reflected on Tanenbaum's 20 years of engagement with local religious peacebuilders operating in deeply rooted global conflicts, and on Hind Kabawat's experiences as one of 32 Tanenbaum *Peacemakers in Action*.

Over those years, Tanenbaum's understanding of the *Peacemakers'* work evolved. The Dubensky/Kabawat joint address straddled what Tanenbaum has learned with the visceral human reality of Hind's peace practice as she faces armed conflict and the destruction of her homeland.

Here, we touch on this dichotomy, but focus our analysis on Tanenbaum's *Peacemakers in Action Network*, the vehicle now structuring Tanenbaum's work in religious peacebuilding and through which we monitor our impact. Hind's personal story and stories of her fellow *Peacemakers* serve as examples of our thesis that Tanenbaum's *Peacemakers in Action Network* is an effective structure for building peace.

The Peacemakers in Action

Tanenbaum did not begin its religious peacebuilding work with the idea of establishing a formal, operationalized network. Rather, our initial focus grew out of a discussion with the late Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who suggested that Tanenbaum recognize unknown religious

[1] Special thanks to Tanenbaum staff Clayton Maring, Bruce Crise, and Janie Dumbleton.

[2] Joyce S. Dubensky and Hind Kabawat, "RPP Colloquium: The Evolving Field of Religious Peacebuilding" (presentation, Religions and the Practice of Peace Colloquium at Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 5, 2016).

peacebuilders with an award. Holbrooke saw this as a way to provide unknown individuals (and sometimes duos) with public recognition that would afford them some protection from harm or persecution, through media attention or international acknowledgement.

In consultation with scholars of religion and conflict resolution, Tanenbaum subsequently established its *Peacemakers in Action* award to realize Holbrooke's vision, and further resolved to create case studies of the individuals selected, who best embodied the following five criteria:

1. *Religious Motivation*: Their peacemaking work is fueled by their religious and/or spiritual beliefs.

2. *Armed Conflict*: They either work or have worked in an area of armed conflict.

3. *At Risk*: Their lives and/or liberty have been at risk.

4. *Locally Based*: At least some of their work is closely connected to the conflict situation at the local level. Most awardees are from the communities they serve, but some have left their original homes and spent many years embedded in a local community suffering from conflict.

5. *Relatively Unknown*: Despite their impact, they have not received significant international attention or support at the time of selection and are not widely known across the world.

In the process of identifying *Peacemakers*, studying their work, collecting data via in-depth interviews and—most critically—building strong relationships with them, Tanenbaum produced two volumes of case studies.[3] Through this process, we also gained insights into what is, for each *Peacemaker in Action*, a vocation of religious peacebuilding.

Rather than being a field filled with religious individuals whose work is confined to objectively identifiable religious techniques and who work only in religion-fueled conflicts (either on the surface or at their core), the vocation of religious peacebuilding turns out to be far more nuanced and complex.

In Tanenbaum's most recent volume of case studies, *Peacemakers in Action, Vol. II: Profiles in Religious Peacebuilding*,[4] Tanenbaum observes that religious peace actors use a mix of so-called religious and secular peacebuilding techniques to achieve peace, while continually adapting their practices to contextual realities.

In this way, religious peacebuilders live out their vocation and operate across all peace related efforts. Their work can, and often does, overlap with and encompass work that is typically *deemed* secular, especially in Western frameworks: economic development, humanitarian work,

[3] Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*, ed. David Little (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, *Peacemakers in Action, Vol. II: Profiles in Religious Peacebuilding*, ed. Joyce S. Dubensky (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
[4] Tanenbaum, *Peacemakers in Action, Vol. II*.

conflict resolution, transitional justice, political action, etc. Significantly, however, for many of the *Peacemakers* these activities are better understood as religious acts, ways of realizing tenets within their faith.

Consider, for example, José "Chencho" Alas from El Salvador. Chencho's passionate work for the environment (for him, Mother Earth) reflects his deep religious conviction that God created the earth and that we must honor, protect, and preserve this precious gift. His tireless work to cultivate environmental stewardship in others is thus not something he would define as either a "religious" or "secular" technique. Rather, he would view the secular/religious duality as a flawed framework that cannot define his work. Given this, we do not define religious peacemaking by specific official roles, types of peace work, or particular techniques. Instead, we view religious *Peacemakers* through the lens of their motivation and larger vision. They are individuals driven by religious or spiritual beliefs to pursue a vision of a lived peace—even in the face of grave risk and at great personal cost across the breadth of society.

Early on, Tanenbaum developed an expansive view of religious peace actors, naming two women as *Peacemakers* in 2002 (Sakena Yacoobi and Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge). Around the same time, the field of religious peacebuilding similarly broadened its thinking. Where it once focused on religious leaders—thereby excluding most religiously motivated women and men not of the proverbial cloth—the understanding of whom should be recognized as religious peace actors has expanded.

Many have contributed to the development of religious peacebuilding, including pioneers Douglas Johnson, Cynthia Samuels, Scott Appleby, Marc Gopin, David Smock, and John Paul Ledearch, as well as Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah. In 2011, Toft, Philpott, and Shah published *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics*,[5] in which they helped institutionalize the language for describing those involved in religious peacebuilding, identifying them not as "religious leaders," but as "religious actors."

The former language had impact. By focusing solely on "leaders," it marginalized the peacebuilding voices of most religiously motivated women and all non-clergy individuals. The expanded language is therefore useful, as it helped mainstream the recognition of peacebuilders like Tanenbaum's diverse *Peacemakers in Action*: individuals motivated by religion who are woven throughout peacebuilding. They certainly include religious leaders, but also educators, grassroots activists, human rights lawyers, civil society actors, on-the-ground mediators *and,* sometimes, local actors who also assume diplomatic roles. The language of "religious actors" makes more space in the peacebuilding sphere for individuals who pursue peace because of their faith, regardless of their title or position within their faith community.

Hind Kabawat, 2007 *Peacemaker in Action* awardee, embodies this reality. A Christian woman from Damascus, Syria, Hind has never held any clerical title or position, though she is deeply motivated by her strongly held beliefs. Her work, which reveals the fluidity that many religious peace actors exhibit, has shifted over time in response to evolving realities on the ground. Early in her peace work, she built bridges in her home country across the Abrahamic traditions,

[5] Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011).

bringing a rabbi to a land suspicious of its neighbor Israel and of Jews.[6] Since war erupted in Syria, her focus has shifted, as her country faced new gruesome and deadly realities. Today, she works on the ground conducting trainings for those seeking and planning for the cessation of violence, oversees three schools for Syrian refugee girls in Turkey, and serves on the High Negotiations Committee, which represents the Syrian opposition in Geneva in pursuing peace talks with the Syrian state. In this role, Hind incorporated women's voices into the peace talks by founding the Women's Consulting Group for the High Negotiations Committee.

The* Network*: An Idea Becomes Reality

During the early years, Tanenbaum's Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution program focused on recognizing individuals and preparing their case studies, always with the idea that this provided the awardees with the cover that Ambassador Holbrooke had envisioned. However, as the cohort of *Peacemakers* grew, Tanenbaum's vision expanded. We decided to bring these peace activists together to build individual capacity, unaware that a collective dynamic would emerge—one that created a new trajectory for the program.

Tanenbaum first convened its *Peacemakers in Action* in Amman, Jordan in 2004, and then again, in New York in 2005 for weeklong sessions that we call "Working Retreats." These interactions quickly demonstrated the value of coming together and sharing from the *Peacemakers'* local contexts, but it took Friar Ivo Markovic, the first person named as a *Peacemaker in Action*, to shift the role of this informal *Network* a few steps further. Fr. Ivo requested that the next *Peacemakers* Working Retreat take place in his post-conflict community of Bosnia-Herzegovina because he realized the power of bringing this international cohort of diverse religious *Peacemakers* to his country and believed that it would directly reinforce his local work.

Two years later, in 2007, Tanenbaum reconvened the group in Sarajevo, Bosnia. By then, the focus of the planned sessions had shifted from bringing in external experts, to having the *Peacemakers*—as the real peacebuilding experts—train one another. In Sarajevo, Tanenbaum and the *Peacemakers* also added the new dimension that Fr. Ivo had envisioned. Thus, the group not only worked together, but they also provided their Bosnian colleague with support by joining him in public events and meetings with key national and regional leaders. Together, they modeled the power of interreligious cooperation and reinforced Fr. Ivo's work as a resource for his home community.

At the same time, conversations emerged about formalizing the relationships among these disparate individuals, whose lives and personal histories spanned religious, geographic, linguistic, and cultural divides. This was an organic process that evolved from the relationships and trust that they had developed over time. Interestingly, this foundational, relational work is akin to the process of peacebuilding itself, and rings true in the words of Reverend Canon Andrew White as he described his mediation in the Middle East:

[6] Marc Gopin and Thanos Gatsias, "The Diplomat's Daughter, Pursuing Peace in Syria: Hind Kabawat," in Tanenbaum, *Peacemakers in Action, Vol. II*, 19–70.

> Often the Western mentality would be sit down, start working immediately . . . Bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bang. It doesn't work like that. . . . You have to have a day of just getting to know each other again, of being friends, not doing business.[7]

It was therefore natural that, toward the end of the Sarajevo Working Retreat, one of the *Peacemakers* raised a key question about the future of the group and its potential for greater impact:

> We call ourselves a *Network*, but we really aren't. Right now, we're a group of people who are brought together by Tanenbaum and who are happy to see one another when we are together. But then, we return to our lives and get caught up in them until the next time.

This led to the deeper question, "Do we want to be a *real Network*?"

The *Peacemakers* considered the ramifications of this question. To be a real *Network* meant that they would commit to ongoing collaboration to expand their individual and collective impact for peace. The *Peacemakers* discussed this and then took a vote. Unanimously, those present decided to explore options for establishing a *Network* in the years until the next Working Retreat. They committed to this process with the expectation of making a final decision when they were again together. Four years later, at their next convening, the *Peacemakers* considered the *Network* model that a few of their representatives had developed for the group. To our surprise, the *Peacemakers* quickly revised the proposed model and established a living structure better suited to the entire group. Then, with another vote, they formally and unanimously established the *Peacemakers in Action Network*. With this decision, Tanenbaum began the next part of its journey with its *Peacemakers*.

The **Peacemakers in Action Network** ***as a Community of Practice***

At the time of this writing, 32 women and men (28 of whom are living) comprise the *Peacemakers in Action Network*. They are from a range of official professions and diverse roles, all individually motivated by their respective faiths and spiritual beliefs to build peace within armed conflict zones across the globe. All are actively engaged in peacebuilding and they work at, or near, the grassroots level in at least some of their work. Their *Peacemakers Network* grew organically, but it owes a particular debt to *Peacemaker* Reverend William "Bill" Lowrey, who guided the formation of the formal *Network*, aligning it with Etienne C. Wenger's communities of practice model.[8] Tanenbaum operationalized the *Network* by providing a Network Coordinator, who brought it to life. And over time, the *Peacemakers* have successfully deepened—and stewarded—their knowledge of peace and conflict, as they shared experiences, skill sets, and ideas, both virtually and in person, to advance their collective (and individual) work for peace.

Wenger's communities of practice model and its three key elements (domain, community, and practice) serve as the framework for the *Peacemakers in Action Network*.

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[7] The Reverend Canon Andrew White, interviewed by Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, New York City, Tanenbaum archives.

[8] For a brief introduction to communities of practice, please see: Etienne Wenger-Trayner and Beverly Wenger-Trayner, "Introduction to Communities of Practice: A Brief Overview of the Concept and Its Uses," Wenger-Trayner, last modified 2015, http://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/.

Domain – For Wenger and his colleagues, the domain is at the core of a community of practice. Wenger et al. define domain as "common ground and a sense of common identity. A well-defined domain legitimises the community by affirming its purpose and value to members and other stakeholders."[9] In the case of the *Peacemakers Network*, the domain—or shared purpose—is a collective commitment to religiously motivated peacebuilding, in which peace actors utilize tactics and approaches couched in conflict resolution, transformation, reconciliation, peace education, human rights, and social justice. The *Peacemakers Network*, by virtue of its global and heterogeneous composition, has both a core and a loosely defined domain. Central to all of the *Peacemakers*' efforts is a core commitment to working for peace and interacting with the *Network* on an ongoing basis to advance peace. How they advance peace, however, is less circumscribed, as Tanenbaum's *Peacemakers* use multiple approaches and skill sets for addressing conflicts.

Community – When Wenger et al. define the dimension of community in the model of a community of practice, they note that strong communities manifest a vibrant learning environment that "fosters interactions and relationships based on mutual respect and trust" and "encourages a willingness to share ideas, expose one's ignorance, ask difficult questions and listen carefully."[10] A sense of community is particularly important because learning requires a sense "of belonging as well as an intellectual process, involving the heart as well as the head."[11]

When applied to the *Peacemakers Network*, this theory comes alive. Many of Tanenbaum's *Peacemakers* have known one another, despite working in different regions of the world, for well over a decade. They maintain close relationships with one another, and the majority stay in close contact by providing regular updates on their current work, fielding questions for the *Network* to consider, and providing mutual support in the sometimes lonely—and dangerous—work of peacebuilding. In these exchanges, we note that our *Peacemakers* work alone or for different organizations, but are not in direct competition, which allows them to share areas of uncertainty free from fear of professional sanction.

The core community of the *Peacemakers Network* is the current group of 28 women and men recognized by Tanenbaum for their religiously inspired work for peace and social justice. Not a static group, the *Network* expands as appropriate to include individuals within each of the respective *Peacemaker's* domestic and international networks. Biennially, Tanenbaum also expands the *Network* by selecting two more individuals (one of whom must be a woman, the other a woman or man) whose lives and work make them appropriate recipients of the *Peacemakers in Action* award. When the individuals chosen accept the award, they become new members of the *Peacemakers Network.*

Practice – The final dimension of the Wenger, et al. model is "the practice" or the group culture. The practice is the "set of frameworks, ideas, tools, information, styles, language, stories, and documents that the community members share." Together, these components create a body of knowledge that is developed, shared, and maintained by the community and allows its members to effectively navigate its communal purpose or domain.[12]

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[9] Etienne Wenger, Richard McDermott, and William Snyder, *Cultivating Communities of Practice* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2002), 28.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., 29.

In the case of the *Peacemakers Network*, the practice constitutes the design of the *Network*, which includes a leadership group and the ideas, experiences, support, statements of solidarity, methodologies, and peacebuilding skill sets that the *Network* members share on an ongoing basis. Frequent interaction allows the *Peacemakers* to do the following: broaden their understanding of peace, inclusion, justice, and conflict; sharpen skills; and widen their approaches for resolving conflicts in what are often dynamic and evolving contexts.

In addition, and perhaps most importantly, the *Network* encourages, and is regularly enhanced by, practical collaboration. Tanenbaum calls these collaborations "*Peacemaker* Interventions."[13] In each, small groups of two or more *Peacemakers* from unique conflict zones come together to enrich one another's work for peace on the ground. The participating *Peacemakers* bring their unique knowledge in peacebuilding, distinct methodologies, and personal histories. Yet they collaborate and, in so doing, sometimes innovatively re-contextualize each other's work in different conflict settings.

***Operationalizing the* Peacemakers Network**

Network Coordination – To establish a domain, community, and practice as described by Wenger et al., the *Network* members need to engage regularly with one another, both virtually and in person. However, establishing these connections was not a simple endeavour. It required a dedicated *Network* coordination mechanism.

When the *Peacemakers* voted to establish their *Network*, they discussed how to turn their idea into a practical reality. They concluded that a dedicated person needed to be identified who would be charged with coordinating their new undertaking and moving it forward on a consistent and ongoing basis. As part of the plan for the new *Network*, therefore, the *Peacemakers* charged Tanenbaum with actively coordinating their new community of practice.

As a next step, Tanenbaum created a *Network* Coordinator position to steward knowledge, streamline communications, compile and share relevant information, develop *Network* projects, and continually work with the *Peacemaker*-designated *Network* Leadership to assess the health of the *Network*. The *Network* Coordinator serves as a dedicated colleague who manages the *Network* and does everything from connecting *Peacemakers* to support and help one another in times of crisis, to managing logistical arrangements for virtual and face-to-face meetings, coordinating Interventions, and working closely with the members of the *Network* to help them problem-solve and take advantage of opportunities. This frees the *Peacemakers* from added tasks in the midst of their high-stress and high-demand roles, and makes it possible for them to fully participate in the *Network*, free of coordination and logistical responsibilities.

***Connecting the* Peacemakers Network**

Virtual Communications – In addition to coordinating and planning calls with the *Peacemakers* who serve on the *Network* Leadership between in-person convenings, the *Network Coordinator* organizes

[13] For more information on *Peacemaker* Interventions, please visit "*Peacemaker* Interventions," Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, accessed July 12, 2018, https://tanenbaum.org/*Peacemakers*-in-action-*Network*/*Peacemaker*-interventions/.

monthly conference calls and all *Network* members are invited to participate. The *Peacemakers* may choose from two staggered call times to best coordinate with their own time zone and personal schedule. On these calls, the *Peacemakers* and the *Network* Coordinator discuss topics within the *Network* domain and strengthen community relationships.

Most often, the *Network* conference calls begin with quick updates from each of the *Peacemakers* about their current work and the challenges they face. The call then moves on to a discussion of particular challenges and ideas for how best to deal with them, based on the group's experiences. These conversations range from technical discussions to emotional, supportive conversations, illustrating the deeply social nature of this type of learning and knowledge development. When *Peacemakers* identify opportunities for collaboration, the *Network* Coordinator works with them to concretize the ideas into a plan for an Intervention.

E-Newsletter – The *Network* Coordinator circulates a bimonthly newsletter to the *Peacemakers* and to Tanenbaum's Program Advisory Council. The newsletter includes media clips and articles, and related information on the *Peacemakers* in the *Network*, so that members whose work, geographic location, language restrictions, or access to technology does not permit regular participation, can stay up-to-date with the community.

Organizing and Partnering with the **Peacemakers Network**

Working Retreats – The *Network*, as a standard practice, meets in person regularly. The goal is to convene every two to three years for a weeklong Working Retreat, and that has been the general practice for over 15 years. At these retreats, the *Peacemakers* build their community; discuss peacebuilding issues reflective of their domain; expand their skill sets by learning from one another; assess global issues like extremism and the inclusion of women in peace work; and identify ways to leverage the *Network's* members and their experiences. These more in-depth Working Retreats deepen relationships and collaborations that lead to Interventions and enhance the effectiveness of the virtual meetings.

Interventions – On an increasingly frequent basis, the *Peacemakers* plan to conduct Interventions through which they collaborate in small groups for targeted peacebuilding efforts. Usually held in the home country or to help with the home country's conflict, sometimes they collaborate outside their own regions in the pursuit of peace.

Two illustrative Interventions with different specifics exemplify these collaborations. In the first example, two *Peacemakers* came together to bring new skills and possibilities to a third conflict. In the second, *Peacemakers* from three conflicts joined in the home of one of them to share examples of, and strategies for, peacebuilding.

José "Chencho" Alas, Tanenbaum's El Salvadoran *Peacemaker,* brought fellow *Peacemaker* Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge of South Africa, to Honduras. There, they worked together to inspire and help build a new political effort that sought to offer an alternative to the government in upcoming elections and to bring about a participatory democratic process. In collaboration with Tanenbaum, they then brought a representative of the incipient political effort to South Africa to meet top representatives from the African National Congress (ANC). Not only did the representative learn about the ANC's work in post-conflict South Africa, but he also received a

commitment for an ongoing mentorship for the Frente Nacional de Resistencia Popular (FNRP) coalition if they won in the election.[14]

The Asia Pacific Intervention in the Philippines occurred as this piece was being prepared. Tanenbaum *Peacemaker* Maria Ida "Deng" Giguiento of the Philippines invited three fellow *Network* members—Reverend Jacklevyn "Jacky" Frits Manuputty of Indonesia, and peace partners Pastor James Wuye and Imam Muhammad Ashafa of Nigeria. Due to a conflict, Imam Ashafa could not participate, but Jacky and Pastor James joined Deng in the Philippines to advance interreligious action for peace. Together with Catholic Relief Services, Deng gathered over 30 religious and peace practitioners across religious, government, academic, and civil society sectors to explore faith-based approaches for preventing and addressing threats of violent extremism.

Peacemaker Pastor James shared his story, which included his own violent extremist past in Nigeria. He then went on to describe lessons learned from the Nigerian experience, and to offer ideas for moving forward in different contexts, specifically within the Philippines. His ideas and inspirations included understanding the roots of conflict; shifting language so that you can be understood; and recognizing the value of faith-based peacebuilding and using it for peace. He suggested that in the Philippines, faith leaders and peace practitioners facilitate psychosocial interventions. Similarly, Reverend Jacky shared his experiences working with youth, and with interfaith dialogue, in Indonesia.

Reporting on the workshop process, Deng noted: "The workshop process consisted of listening sessions and conversations among the participants and experts that were intended to expand the participants' knowledge and understanding of their faith foundations vis-a-vis peacebuilding. . . . [As such, it was designed to give] them impetus to generate innovative ideas and plans, especially in preventing and countering violent extremism in each of their work areas."[15]

Offering Support Both for Opportunities and for Times of Crisis

In addition to sharing opportunities with the *Peacemakers* including prizes and recognition that could enhance their work, the *Network* and its Coordinator also provide support in moments of crisis. One example is unfolding as this piece is being drafted. The life of one of the *Peacemakers* has been threatened, making it impossible for that *Peacemaker* to remain in the individual's home country. Members of the *Network* naturally rallied with support, and one *Peacemaker* is actively working to find sanctuary in his home country for his colleague. Simultaneously, Tanenbaum has identified other possibilities through collaborations with major U.S. universities and funds that might provide resources or sanctuary, and has reached out to government contacts. Though we will not know the extent or success of our efforts for some time, it is clear that our *Peacemaker* is not alone.

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[14] For the full Intervention report, please see: "Summary Report: Honduras and South Africa Interventions," Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, last modified July 2014, https://tanenbaum.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Honduras.pdf.

[15] "Faith Encounters and Peace Actions: Overcoming Violent Extremism in Communities through Faith-Based Peacebuilding – A Synthesis of Learnings from the Workshop on Advancing Interreligious Action for Peace: Contextualizing Religious Literacy to Overcome Violent Extremism in Communities," report produced by Maria Ida "Deng" Giguiento.

The* Network *Adds Value

The *Network* provides value to the *Peacemakers* in a range of ways. For example, when people operate alone, the full range of potential responses to a situation is rarely visible. With the *Network*, this is no longer part of the *Peacemakers'* reality. They have peers who face similar challenges in local environments with different contextual factors and dynamics; by sharing, new approaches and possibilities for peace practice sometimes emerge that were previously difficult to envision.

Sometimes, these new options do not work out as envisioned. For example, during the initial stages of the civil conflict in Syria, a fellow *Peacemaker* suggested to Hind that the nonviolent protestors she was advising seek to humanize their efforts with the government forces, by bringing water, flowers, and kind words directly to them. While this offered the potential to create a new dynamic between protestors and the armed state actors that would not have been explored otherwise, these efforts did not avert devastating military conflict. Nor did they prevent devastating personal consequences for those who sought to give flowers to government soldiers.

When the *Peacemakers* meet face-to-face or connect via technology and share information, lessons, and techniques from their work, the exchanges sometimes become fuel for their *Network* colleagues, who appropriate valuable ideas and mold them based on their knowledge of the contexts of their local conflicts. Through such conversations, we witness *Peacemakers* evidencing the concept of the "adjacent possible." Borrowed from the scientific world by Steven Johnson to reveal processes of innovation, the adjacent possible describes the limited number of next steps available to someone seeking to advance knowledge from a technological, biological, or even creative starting point.[16] People have ideas but sometimes, they do not recognize all their options for action (i.e., the adjacent possibilities). In these instances, exposure to new ideas can reveal new directions or trigger new pathways for *Network* members to pursue. As a *Network* member takes this new information and filters it through his or her knowledge and experiences in a particular conflict zone, entirely new peacebuilding practices can emerge. As such, the *Network* has built trans-local informational connections among individuals struggling with similar problems.

A powerful example of the value-added elements noted above occurred during a *Network* Intervention in Nigeria. There, a Pakistani peacebuilder shared his work with Madrassa leaders and teachers, aimed at bringing more inclusive and less polarizing education and understanding of the Qu'ran to students. His Nigerian hosts have since discussed the possibility of taking this work a step further by taking it to Christian educational institutions as well. As the Nigerian *Network* members told us, "We hope to use it [the educational reform technique] both for those who teach Christian religious knowledge as well as in Muslim madrasas to bring about unity, further understanding on issues of religiously motivated violence."

The *Peacemakers* also support each other in more personal ways. In her address at the Religions and the Practice of Peace Colloquium, Hind Kabawat noted that the *Network* stands with her. She is not alone and does not feel isolated in her work for peace in Syria. As she explained, "in the middle of the darkness, we find light." Her fellow *Peacemakers* not only share the emotional load by speaking and sharing with Hind, but at times, they have also joined her to share their skills and insights, drawn from years of dedicated peace practice, with the Syrian activists on the ground.

[16] Steven Johnson, *Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2010), 9.

In addition, as noted, Tanenbaum now has a deeper understanding of what it means to adopt the vocation of religious peacebuilding because of its close collaboration with the *Network*. *Network* members assume diverse functions across sectors, including, but not limited to, religious, educational, administrative, activist, legal, and medical; and occasionally, diplomatic. However, when *Network* members come together, they bond around their common vocation of religiously motivated peacebuilding.

For Tanenbaum, our continued engagement with the *Peacemakers* revealed that this core bond—this identity as religiously and spiritually driven women and men pursuing a vision for a lived peace in the face of conflict—is at the heart of being a religious *Peacemaker.* It is not the functions or even the techniques that they employ. Rather, Tanenbaum has witnessed how *Peacemakers* evolve within their specific contexts and continue to serve the cause of peace in their communities, whether that manifests in conflict mitigation, the provision of education, participation in government, or some other channel.

As the field has made clear, peace is not a destination, but a fluid relational milieu. The *Peacemakers* model techniques for one another, and also model fluidity across roles in the cause of peacebuilding in a changing society or situation. Hind, as just one example, has worked extensively with Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge of South Africa, who has run the gamut of experiences, from ANC (African National Congress) activist and prisoner to diplomat to political gadfly. Hind, similarly, has moved from activist socialite to expelled critical voice now on the Syrian opposition's High Negotiations Committee. The *Network* provides information to help her understand these shifting roles.

***Reflections on the* Peacemakers Network**

Tanenbaum *Peacemakers in Action* have always been (and still are) active—and sometimes vulnerable—individuals. And yet, they share a palpable sense that the *Network* and the relationships that it nurtures are particularly valuable. Through it, they give and receive social, spiritual, and technical benefits that have motivated them to seek and actualize a structure for formal cohesion.

Why? Reasons include the following:

- *Supportive Community:* As discussed above, the *Network* members experience a greater feeling of community and outside support for their work that reaches outside the *Network* and into the communities where they work. This involves a sense of connection and emotional support but, also, shared action. As one example, "Statements of Solidarity"[17] from our

[17] One such "Statement of Solidarity" was issued to protect Colombian *Peacemaker* Ricardo Esquivia Ballestas as he faced severe political persecution at the hands of the Colombian military and paramilitary groups in the region in 2013. In response, Tanenbaum and the *Peacemakers in Action Network* developed a strategy to raise pressure and ensure that Colombian authorities protected Ricardo. The *Network* Statement demanded the protection of Ricardo's life, but more was done, including: appealing to key contacts at the U.S. State Department and to U.S. and Colombian politicians, disseminating an online petition (which accrued over 2,000 signatures), and meetings with NGOs and human rights organizations to raise support. For more, please see "Intervention to Protect Colombian *Peacemaker* (2013)," Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, last modified 2013, https://tanenbaum.org/*Peacemakers*-in-action-*Network*/*Peacemaker*-interventions/2013-*Network*-intervenes-to-protect-colombian-*Peacemaker*/.

Network of global *Peacemakers* have reached activists on the ground in Nigeria, Syria, and Honduras. Our *Peacemakers* in those regions report that, in their communities, these statements are more than mere words. The statements reveal that leaders for peace around the world are paying attention to local realities, and this heartens grassroots peacebuilders and justice advocates who often feel isolated and forgotten. It appears to Tanenbaum that the element of community, stressed in Wenger's theory of communities of practice, may have this additional psycho-social benefit for participants, especially as individuals dealing with extreme stress in their work.

- *Advice and Counsel: Peacemakers* share ideas and synergize on *Network* calls. They also use the calls as a space to ask for advice from their colleagues. The advice allows the *Peacemakers* to more effectively (or at least with solidarity) address difficulties in their work.

- *Innovative Peacebuilding Approaches:* Their interactions, both in person and virtual, have become the seedbed for innovative peacebuilding practice. As detailed above, this has resulted in new synergies, adaptations of strategies, and new applications for peacebuilding drawing on the knowledge that each *Peacebuilder* has of her or his local context (i.e., the adjacent possible).

Impact Beyond the Formal **Network**

From the beginning, Tanenbaum envisioned that a successful *Peacemakers Network* would involve voluntary connections and collective action. Happily, this has begun. Without Tanenbaum's involvement, participants are more frequently reaching out to each other individually, even having conversations about their work or pursuing conversations started during *Network* interactions such as the Working Retreat. An example is *Peacemaker* Friar Ivo Markovic, who works for reconciliation in Bosnia, recently traveling to Kosovo in the course of his work. During his visit, he made a special effort to contact a fellow *Peacemaker,* Father Sava Janjic, who had not as yet become an active member of the *Network*. Friar Ivo told him about the *Network* and returned to the group with an update on Father Janjic's work and with new ideas for working with him. Many other examples bear this out, while some go unrecognized within the broader *Network*.

What is clear is that the Tanenbaum *Peacemakers Network* is a robust community of practice that retains its capacity for organic shifts and growth. While still guided by a shared sense of purpose and vision, community members also continue to influence its direction in unforeseen ways that strengthen the community and build a sense of shared ownership of the process.

As such, the Tanenbaum *Peacemaker Network* is not only thriving, but it is contributing—both as a model for others, and by providing real-time impact in a world fraught with conflict. The regions where the *Peacemakers* operate include areas with conflicts that often manifest religious division and tensions. In this landscape, the *Network* offers a peacebuilding model that may be used, and adapted, to advance the cause of peace, including the work of religious peace actors. This achievement marks a path forward. It is a path only made possible because of the vision and commitment of Tanenbaum's *Peacemakers.*

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Interfaith Infrastructure: The Indispensable Value of the Local

Diana Eck & The Pluralism Project Staff

As our country and world become urbanized and connected to an unprecedented degree, we hear of trends on a sweeping, large scale: we may know that anti-Semitism is on the rise in America, but we rarely hear about the people, the relationships, and the networks that are working to combat that anti-Semitism. I remain steadfastly convinced of the integral importance of the local as a foundation for America's interfaith infrastructure. In this article I will trace the roots of the Pluralism Project, which I founded over twenty-five years ago to explore the ways in which new religious immigrant communities were changing the fabric of America and becoming changed themselves. Since its beginning the Pluralism Project focused its research on the particularity of the local, and from that emphasis on the local we have been able to understand interfaith work and its infrastructure in a comprehensive way. I will present salient examples of interfaith efforts that are steeped in the local context of their home communities and encourage readers to consider the ways in which specific local context is foundational to interfaith infrastructure within the United States.

Keywords: interfaith, case study, case learning, interreligious studies, pluralism, Harvard University, multireligious, America, United States, research

In October 2017, one day after Yom Kippur, Judaism's holiest day, and just two days after the end of the Hindu festival Navratri, I was honored to receive the second annual award from the Interfaith Institute of the Islamic Center of Long Island (ICLI). Dr. Faroque Ahmed Khan, board of trustee chair of the Interfaith Institute, and the community of the ICLI have been pioneers in interfaith relations and have modeled the future of our lives together as Americans and as people of faith.[1]

As I prepared my remarks for the occasion, I returned to the concept of infrastructure, the lifelines of our cities and towns. The deficits of America's aging infrastructure—our highways, bridges, and transportation systems—have been the subject of political and economic discussion and debate. Though these concerns are warranted, I find myself more concerned with another kind of infrastructure: the human and cultural bridges, the communications networks, that link the people of a city together. And in America's increasingly diverse cities, religiously diverse in ways unimagined fifty years ago, this is what I call the "interfaith infrastructure": it is a kind of everyday pluralism, a grassroots pragmatic pluralism that is critical for our common future.

In 1991, I began to offer a course at Harvard University on "World Religions in New England." The course developed out of my growing interest in how the religious landscape of America was changing and the diversity of my students was reflective of that broad change. The diversity of the students in my classroom was a microcosm of the shifts occurring in Boston's religious landscape, which was itself a microcosm of changes throughout the country:

[1] This article has as its foundation the remarks I offered at the ICLI ceremony in Westbury, NY on October 1, 2017.

> When I first met these new students—Muslims from Providence, Hindus from Baltimore, Sikhs from Chicago, Jains from New Jersey—they signaled to me the emergence in America of a new cultural and religious reality about which I knew next to nothing. At that point I had not been to an American mosque, I had never visited a Sikh community in my own country, and I could imagine a Hindu summer camp only by analogy with my Methodist camp experience. I felt the very ground under my feet as a teacher and scholar begin to shift. My researcher's eye began to refocus—from Banaras to Detroit, from Delhi to Boston.[2]

This was the start of the Pluralism Project, as my students and I began to research and document these shifts in our own community in Boston. Though the Pluralism Project has now been at this work for over twenty-five years, and despite countless case studies, research projects, and organizational profiles, in many ways we are left with more questions than answers. I see this as a sign of the depth of our work; indeed, meaningful research often opens up a new labyrinth each time one dives in, tempting the researcher to fully immerse herself within the subject and get deeper into its messy, complicated reality.

In this article I will examine the ways in which America's interfaith infrastructure is grounded in the local context, and encourage the latest generation of researchers—both at the Pluralism Project and elsewhere—to keep their focus on the particularity of the local. By surveying the Pluralism Project's history and early research, exploring our case study method, and offering numerous salient examples of interfaith engagement, I will underline the local context and the personal relationships that are integral to interfaith infrastructure, and stress that we as researchers must continue to keep our focus on the local if we are to accurately represent interfaith efforts in the United States.

A New Urban Reality

Cities—their neighborhoods, surrounding towns, suburbs—are important sites of religious encounter, religious diversity, and potentially religious pluralism. The city, writes Lewis Mumford in his now-classic study, *The City in History*, is "energy converted into culture." Since he wrote in 1961, the energies of towns have been fueled and driven by an increasingly diverse population, and these are the very places where we discern how to live in a complicated multicultural society. This is where we gather up the complexity and diversity of a culture, not always in harmony, but sometimes in conflict. Here we can see the fault lines of a culture where its revolutions begin, the stretching marks where a whole society is giving birth to something new. Our urban centers are the nexus for the overlap of cultural, religious, civic, and other personal commitments. Indeed, the Pluralism Project has been attuned to these interwoven dynamics since the inception of our work.

The economist Jeffrey Sachs speaks of the twenty-first century, our century, as the "urban century": "For the first time in human history, most of the world's population will live in urban centers" and the sprawling surround of villages. Well over half the world's population live now in such urban complexes where Sachs enumerates "a host of challenges."[3] Poverty is urbanized.

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[2] Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 17–18.

[3] Jeffrey D. Sachs, *Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2008), 25–27.

Hunger is urbanized. Job creation is urbanized. Transportation is impossible. Gridlock is ghastly. Pollutants are concentrated. There are unanticipated health challenges with this intense human proximity.

But nowhere among the many "urbanized" issues that Sachs investigates are the people themselves, the structures of their ethnic and religious communities, their density and proximity, perhaps their fears and prejudices, or the challenges this diversity poses for human interrelations in a century marked by increased urbanization. Despite the fact that there are many new theories about the crisis of cities, the megalopolis, and the urban future, they attend little if at all to religion. I would like to talk about another kind of infrastructure: the human and cultural bridges that link the people of a city together. These networks in America's increasingly diverse cities, religiously diverse in ways unimagined fifty years ago, are what I call the "interfaith infrastructure." And it is critical for our common future.

In the past five decades, the migration of peoples has changed the religious demography of the world and of the United States, creating a level of cultural marbling and interpenetration in cities that is unprecedented in human history. And this is true not only of large cities, but smaller cities as well: while big American cities are "world cities," small cities and even suburban villages like Westbury, New York on Long Island now increasingly have a population that is marbled with the diversity of the globe. This is something new in modern American history.

How do religious communities contribute to the health and well-being of our cities and towns? How does the local context affect interfaith infrastructure and cooperative interfaith relationships? Changing demographics and densely packed neighborhoods mean citizens typically cannot avoid interacting with fellow neighbors who may look, act, and pray differently from them. As the world's population is increasingly located in urban centers, practical questions—What sounds constitute an expression of faith versus noise pollution? Where can parishioners park for worship? How might civic leaders choose to decorate their town for the holidays in a religious diversely community?—become more and more pressing. The practical and higher-level questions are not simply abstract inquiries divorced of context; as we have learned in the course of our research, these questions are integrally dependent on local and personal dynamics.

As I will share below, our 2011 in-depth study of interfaith groups around the United States confirmed our notion that interfaith work is steeped in the local and personal context. In our earliest work and during our 2011 study, we used three typologies—leadership and constituencies, context, and purpose—as the lenses through which we viewed interfaith efforts. It is important to note that these typologies are not intended to measure interfaith work but instead serve as the framework through which we are able to examine these vast and complex networks.[4] Interestingly, studies of interfaith work often focus primarily on constituencies (who is being served) and purpose (what is the goal of the organization) rather than context. Just as Sachs ignores the human religious elements of an urbanizing world, studies and conversations on interfaith work often cast aside the important third typology of context, both local and personal. I will focus my examination here almost exclusively on context, keeping in mind the inevitable ways in which these three typologies overlap. In examining how interfaith infrastructure manifests on a local level and exploring many

[4] "The Interfaith Infrastructure: Citizenship and Leadership in the Multireligious City," The Pluralism Project, accessed January 22, 2018, http://pluralism.org/interfaith/report/.

examples of this infrastructure in various American cities, we can appreciate both the infrastructure itself and the integral importance of a local context in this work. There is perhaps no better place to start than our original laboratory: the city of Boston.

Boston's Changing Religious Landscape—and Beyond

During that first "World Religions in New England" course in 1991, I led my twenty-five students out of the classroom and into the increasingly diverse religious communities in and surrounding Boston for research and documentation. Our pioneering work had a special emphasis on Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, and Buddhist communities, understanding research as a tool for engagement across lines of difference. From the Sri Lakshmi Temple, located close to the starting point of the Boston Marathon, to New England's first mosque, established in the shadows of the cranes of Quincy's shipyards, students documented the post-1965 transformation of greater Boston's religious landscape. The result of this research was the publishing of *World Religions in Boston: A Guide to Communities and Resources*, a printed guidebook that would serve as a model for future research. In 2009, as we adjusted to an increasingly web-based world, we published an updated and online version of *World Religions in Greater Boston.* With this work, we were documenting buildings, relationships, and societal issues to form a full picture of communities. The student researchers who worked with the Project were pioneers in the documentation of a new religious America, and they soon expanded their reach from Boston to cities and towns across the country.

These researchers spent summers documenting this new religious reality in their hometowns and regions: the mosque with its minarets rising from cornfields outside Toledo; the Hindu temples in Wilmington, Delaware; on a hilltop south of Atlanta; in Pearland, south of Houston; in a western suburb of Nashville. They collected short histories of dozens of Islamic centers in Chicago and Houston, urban and rural Buddhist centers in North Carolina, and Jain and Zoroastrian centers in Orange County, California. In Fremont, California, they discovered that Muslims and Methodists had purchased property together and had begun to build side-by-side. This was a time of dynamic change, year after year, and our academic instincts told us that someone should be paying attention to what was happening. Our work in those early days was "part history, part ethnography, part immigration studies, part cultural geography, part what we used to call civics."[5] We have always understood that we cannot be exhaustive in this work; we simply cannot document each and every faith community in the United States. But by paying careful attention to the many varied snapshots offered, noting the differences and similarities between them, the ways in which each local context affects and colors an issue, we come to see the larger picture and appreciate the deep and interwoven connections that are being forged all throughout America.

To speak of interfaith relations now in the United States is not to speak of global issues and of people in complex societies on the other side of the world, but of local issues and of neighbors metaphorically and often literally across the street. As we completed more and more research at the Pluralism Project, we came to an almost paradoxical conclusion: while common themes emerged from our research, so too did a recognition that the local environment was integral to understanding our research in a comprehensive way.

[5] Diana L. Eck, "Prospects for Pluralism: Voice and Vision in the Study of Religion," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75, no. 4 (December 2007): 750.

Criticality of the Local: The Greater Boston Interfaith Organization

Returning for a moment to our first living laboratory of Boston, the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO) offers a clear example of how interfaith work is inherently steeped in the local context. The GBIO was formed in 1996 by forty-five clergy and community leaders with the primary goal to "develop local leadership and organized power to fight for social justice." As it brings together leaders of many different faiths, its aims are rooted in overcoming the deep divisions between Boston neighborhoods, particularly those divisions driven by race and class issues.[6] In order to work toward erasure of these divisions, the GBIO has launched campaigns to address needs in affordable housing, financial literacy, affordable healthcare, and education.

In the 1970s, Boston's public schools were essentially segregated even if not legally so. From 1974 to 1988, the city's schools were under a court order to integrate by means of a controversial and complicated busing plan that transported black students into predominantly white school districts and white students into predominantly black school districts. During the time of forced busing, racial tensions in the already racially charged city of Boston intensified. With this in mind, we can come to appreciate the uniquely local issues that were present when the GBIO formed just eight years after busing ceased, and why the group might have prioritized bridging race and class divisions over other shared concerns. Because the GBIO has had great success during its two decades of work, other cities may be able to look to the organization for guidance on how their faith communities might respond to the needs of local citizens, but it is critical that we recognize the context-specific way in which the GBIO determined its priorities.

The Local Personified: The Development of the Case Studies Method for Interfaith Research

To further examine the particularity of the local context in this shifting religious landscape, we began to document moments when religious identity and civic life come together in points of tension. These situations became the basis for our case studies that are now widely used in faith communities, college classrooms, and public conversations about religious diversity.

In 1992, Chris Coble, a graduate student in one of my first seminars on Boston's religious landscape, wrote some of the Pluralism Project's first case studies. Coble engaged in extensive fieldwork to document emerging forms of interfaith activity in Boston and developed two papers: one analyzing the formation and growth of interfaith groups in greater Boston, and three richly described narrative case studies that comprised the paper "A Wreath, a Prayer, and a Shovel of Dirt: Three Case-Studies of Religious Pluralism in the Greater Boston Area." Each case study relied on specificity and context:

- In suburban Weston, controversy emerged when the local garden club learned that their thirty-year tradition of decorating the school doors with wreaths was now against school policy. Did the removal of a wreath signal an increase or a decrease in the tolerance and diversity of the community?

[6] "About GBIO," Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, accessed February 8, 2018, http://www.gbio.org/about-gbio.

- At the Cathedral of St. Paul in downtown Boston, planners of an interreligious prayer service struggled to balance the integrity and particularity of diverse faith traditions—some with music, others with silence—and the unifying theme of justice and harmony. For the first time, they were celebrating together, as Christians, Jews, Neo-Pagans, Hindus, and Buddhists, yet they worried: would they be able to fit everything into a one-hour time frame?

- After a Muslim community was blocked from purchasing a property in a neighboring community, clergy in the predominantly Jewish town of Sharon came together to offer their assistance. Years later, those same clergy members celebrated the groundbreaking of the new Islamic Center, each turning over a shovel of dirt. One local rabbi commented, "We are truly breaking ground today."

Written twenty-five years ago, these cases capture that moment in time, yet they introduce questions that continue to be relevant today. Coble recognized that as cases, the stories of a wreath, a prayer, and a shovel of dirt needed to be free of analysis or frameworks; in other words, to allow room for the readers of the case, or those discussing the case, to provide their own analysis and construct their own frameworks. The context is specific; the problem is actionable. These were true stories about specific events, richly described. They did not shy away from conflict or controversy; indeed, they pointed to the fact that sometimes the strongest bridges are built over the deepest divides. The "shovel of dirt" turned at the interfaith groundbreaking was an indication of how problems can, in fact, be generative: religious leaders in Sharon invited the Muslim community to come to the predominantly Jewish city after the local mosque's leadership had been prevented from buying property in the neighboring town. It was part of a trend, which we have observed in many communities over the years, where innovative interfaith activity grows out of a specific crisis or conflict. The problem and promise are interrelated, if not inextricably linked.

Our cases are so successful as teaching tools because they harness the human desire to connect one-on-one, even if hypothetically, as the reader takes on the protagonist's commitments and choices. In this way, our case studies represent a moment when the local becomes personified through the protagonist's perspective. While engaging a case, the reader is forced to consider the nuanced and complex questions brought up for the particular person and community that is profiled. In "A Mosque in Palos Heights," a local Muslim community in Palos Heights, Illinois attempts to buy a church long for sale to repurpose the building as its worship space, but receives pushback from the local community. How would the reader respond if she were the mayor? How would she vote if she were a member of the city council? In "Driven by Faith," we learn that Somali Muslim taxi drivers in Minnesota do not want to transport clients who are visibly carrying alcohol, and we hear from the airport director as he struggles with how to properly serve customers while respecting his drivers' religious faith. How would the reader respond if he were the airport director? How would the reader respond if he were a customer denied a taxi ride from the airport because of the bag of duty-free alcohol in his hand? We consider these case studies to be snapshots of the issues that arise from the new reality in the world's most religiously diverse nation. As we began to see that interfaith collaboration was built on the foundation of relationships, we recognized that any teaching tool must prioritize this sense of personal connection in order to be effective.

In our case studies, we always establish the local context in which the dilemma takes place so that the reader can consider how these factors might affect the developing moment of tension. As an example, I will share a short excerpt from "A Mosque in Palos Heights" that demonstrates this helpful framing:

> Palos Heights, Illinois is a small bedroom community with a population of just over 12,000. The city takes its name from a Spanish word for "trees," and is bordered by a forest preserve. It is a grid of leafy neighborhoods with neat, upper middle-class homes, as well as newer "McMansions" emerging as symbols of growing affluence on the local landscape. Driving along the main thoroughfare of 127th Street, which stretches across the Southwest suburbs of Chicago, one small city blends into another, dotted with low buildings, strip malls, and churches. In Palos Heights, this stretch of road was home to five churches, including Reformed Church of America, Baptist, Christian Reformed, and Assembly of God denominations, and the Palos Bible Church.
>
> Palos Heights had been called "a city of churches" and even a "Christian city." Many of the city's residents were of Dutch ancestry, affiliated with the Reformed Church of America and the Christian Reformed church; in addition, a large and active Catholic parish served the city's considerable Irish-American population. In the year 2000, of the eleven houses of worship in Palos Heights, all were Christian. One of the largest and most vital churches was the Reformed Church of Palos Heights, with ties to the community that were as long as they were deep: some residents say that the plans for the church existed before the city was incorporated in 1959. The Reformed Church enjoyed strong linkages to Palos Heights' own Trinity Christian College and provided the city access to its gym for recreational programs.[7]

With this framing, the reader is compelled to think about the local environment in which our cases take place and is also encouraged to consider how her own framework is similar or different. Through this she can consider how a particular situation would unfold in the context of her own community. When reading "A Mosque in Palos Heights," the reader can ask herself: How might the situation turn out differently if it were taking place in the reader's hometown of North Andover, Massachusetts versus Palos Heights, Illinois? This curious mix of locally specific, yet generalizable issues and themes can also be seen in two city-specific examples in Austin and Omaha:

> "An Invitation to a Tri-Faith Neighborhood"[8] considers not only the challenges of the Tri-Faith Initiative, but also tells the story of Omaha, Nebraska, and its distinctive experience with diversity. By understanding what a shared space project might look like in Omaha, readers are then challenged to think about how these issues would, or would not, apply in other cities: What is emblematic about the dilemmas they face, and what is specific? What are the risks—and rewards—of any

[7] Elinor Pierce, "A Mosque in Palos Heights" (Cambridge, MA: The Pluralism Project at Harvard University, 2007), 2.

[8] In our 2012 case study "An Invitation to a Tri-Faith Neighborhood," Reverend Tim Anderson is asked if the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska would like to join the Jewish and Muslim communities in a groundbreaking tri-faith neighborhood in Omaha, Nebraska.

> co-location of religious communities? In Austin, Texas, the case study of an Interfaith CEO, "Cultivating Change," is uniquely "Austin," at once corporate and creative. Yet the issues this interfaith organization faces, whether financial insolvency, lack of new, younger participants, or needing to change the organization's name to reflect an expanded constituency, are common to many interfaith groups. As "city-based" cases they are specific and situated, which, in turn, makes them more generalizable for use as teaching tools.[9]

As our work progressed at the Pluralism Project, we appreciated the specificity of each community's context, but also wanted to explore if we might draw out those common themes that were just beginning to surface in our early work. How might we demonstrate in more concrete ways how these initiatives are similar? How they are different? And how do the leaders of these groups orient themselves and their work?

To tackle these questions, the Pluralism Project developed a nationwide study of interfaith groups with a city-based approach in our initiative "Interfaith Infrastructure." We used this particular language of "infrastructure" to make the point that cities and towns need not only the infrastructure of highways and bridges to deal with transportation and potholes but also the human framework that offers foundational support to local communities.[10] This work again used the lens of the local: we mapped interfaith activity in twenty U.S. cities, surveyed leaders at interfaith organizations, and developed case studies to add dimension and particularity to our study. This work comprised a catalogue of 410 organizations across 20 cities, with survey results from 124 (30%) of those organizations.

When, during our extensive research, the Pluralism Project surveyed program leaders about their purpose, over 80% identified "relationship building" as their primary purpose. "Education" and "dialogue" were listed next, followed by "service" and then "spiritual development." Additionally, 70% identified their context as "city/metro area."[11] Here we see in stark numbers the central importance of both the personal (relationships) and context (the local environment) in the nuanced and varied interfaith communities located in American cities.

As we learned during our early years and confirmed in our 2011 study, no examination of interfaith work would be complete without *both* quantitative and qualitative data. For example, mapping Austin's twenty interfaith organizations offers a helpful but specific kind of insight, but it is incomplete and shallow without fuller profiles such as the one we undertook in our case study "Cultivating Change," mentioned above. We recognized then, as we still do now, that we could only "capture glimpses into the breadth and depth of America's growing interfaith infrastructure."[12] Interfaith work has always been a grassroots effort and by that very nature is always changing. We mapped these organizations in their diverse, complex, and dynamic forms, understanding that we are studying these organizations and communities in vivo; this is an ongoing project with communities that are fluid and in flux. Omaha's Project Interfaith is a striking example

[9] "The Interfaith Infrastructure."
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

of this fluidity: the organization was an impactful one that we documented in our 2011 report under the section "Promising Practices," yet it had closed its doors by the start of 2015.[13]

These complex and robust manifestations of interfaith infrastructure are everywhere and various in their local energies and contexts: the Queens Interfaith Council in New York, the Marin Interfaith Council in California, Serve2Unite in Milwaukee, OneJax in Jacksonville, the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization in Boston, the Wayland Weston Interfaith Action Coalition in the Boston western suburbs, the Interfaith Hospitality Network in Columbus, Ohio. Local interfaith initiatives might bring women together, like the Daughters of Abraham Book Clubs in New England or the Women Transcending Boundaries in Syracuse, New York, a group that began as women reached out to support one another after 9/11. More recently, the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom formed in New Jersey when a Jewish woman and a Muslim woman gathered a small group of women who met for conversation, celebration, and community engagement.[14] The Sisterhood is a recent example of an initiative that started locally and gained a much wider reach: in 2010 it was simply one small group of women in New Jersey, and by December 2016, when the *New York Times* published a profile on the group, the Sisterhood had fifty chapters in twenty states.[15] Yet despite the Sisterhood's wide reach, we cannot gloss over the importance of appreciating the local context.

As we learned when we researched one of Boston's chapters of the Sisterhood, each chapter has its own foci and limitations, and to ignore the particularity of the local here would prevent us from accurately documenting the on-the-grounds interfaith infrastructure . In Boston, one of the Sisterhood chapters has a somewhat uneven roster of attendees, with more Jewish women than Muslim women attending regularly.[16] Through our research we learned this is mostly due to the different life-stages of its members: the Jewish members tend to be empty nesters who are retired, while the Muslim women are younger and still building their careers and their families. With even this small focus on the particularity of the local, we can gain deep understanding of the needs, limits, and opportunities for the Jewish and Muslim women who participate in the Boston chapter profiled.

Another local-turned-national endeavor is the Amazing Faiths Dinner Dialogues in Houston, during which people all over the city gather across lines of faith in private homes to share a meal and their thoughts on questions of spirituality, prayer, and religious practice. From Houston, these Dinner Dialogues have spread to half a dozen other cities. Other efforts that are more explicitly based in civic space have inspired initiatives in other cities: over the course of twenty years, the Louisville Festival of Faiths, a weeklong citywide festival, has become a major civic event to highlight and better understand the religious communities of Louisville, Kentucky. It includes speakers, music, and arts across traditions and cultures. The week of programming also initiates a

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[13] "Project Interfaith," The Pluralism Project, accessed February 8, 2018, http://pluralism.org/promising-practice/project-interfaith/.

[14] Deena Yellin, "Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom Brings Muslim, Jewish Women Together to Fight Hate," *USA Today*, December 28, 2017, http://www.northjersey.com/story/news/bergen/2017/12/28/sisterhood-salaam-shalom-interfaith-organization-muslim-and-jewish-women-aims-fight-hate-and-spread/926790001/.

[15] Laurie Goodstein, "Both Feeling Threatened, American Muslims and Jews Join Hands," *New York Times*, December 5, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/05/us/muslim-jewish-alliance-after-trump.html.

[16] Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom Boston Chapter #3, http://pluralism.org/profile/sisterhood-of-salaam-shalom-boston-chapter-3/.

Passport to Understanding, extending that week into a year of visiting in one another's places of worship to learn firsthand about religious communities one may not know. The Louisville festival packaged its approach so effectively that other cities have followed: in Greenville, South Carolina the Festival of Faiths is an undertaking of the Interfaith Forum; in Indianapolis, Indiana it has been launched by the Center for Interfaith Cooperation; and in Kansas City, Missouri the Festival of Faiths has become its own ongoing organization. The hundreds of new expressions of interfaith activity are all part of a growing, nationwide experiment in broadening civic engagement. The interfaith movement in all its forms gives expression to a new civic sense of who "we" are as citizens in a common society. What one might call the "interfaith movement" moves in many streams in the United States with no one leader, but generally in the same direction. Such is the very definition of a movement, and it is important to note the centrality of the local context to the development of this larger interfaith infrastructure.

A Changed Climate: Looking Ahead

The catalyst for the Pluralism Project's creation was steeped in local context: as both my classroom and my city of Boston were becoming increasingly diverse, I could not help but respond with curiosity and commitment to explore these dynamics, bringing to it my "researcher's eye." Yet when we began our research, there was a different climate in the country: this work began before 9/11, before the Muslim travel ban. Twenty-five years later, we are still asking questions about the status and future of interfaith infrastructure here in the United States.

When we think about the physical infrastructure of the country, it is easy to get discouraged, especially in Boston where the bridges across the Charles River are aging and in constant need of repair and the potholes in the streets are large enough to swallow a tire. Aging infrastructure is glaringly obvious when a levee breaks in Louisiana or when a bridge collapses in Florida. Likewise it can be tempting to bemoan the crumbling of interfaith infrastructure when we hear of an increased number of hate crimes across the country, like when a Sikh Harvard Law student is verbally harassed just steps from campus or when Jewish cemeteries around the country are repeatedly desecrated and vandalized. Many of us are tempted to focus on these stories as evidence of divides widening. We wonder: how might interfaith communities respond in increasingly polarized times? Can the bridges they have built withstand these growing distances? Yet if we shift our focus to the experience at the local level, we can begin to see that these bridges are already expanding to reach across those deep divides.

Having closely observed and tracked interfaith efforts in Boston since November 2016,[17] we have seen that incidents of bias, expressions of hatred, and crimes of violence affecting Muslim, Jewish, and Sikh communities have generated an immediate response from the interfaith community. In Boston, we have seen 2,600 people gathered at the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center to show solidarity against hate, brought together by leaders from the GBIO.[18] We have seen a standing-room-only performance of the play "Kultar's Mime," which connects the Russian Jewish experience of pogroms in the 1900s with the Delhi Massacre of 1984. And we have

[17] This tracking was part of our project "Response and Resilience in Multireligious Boston," made possible through a generous grant from the Open Society Foundations' Communities Against Hate grant initiative.

[18] Jeremy C. Fox, "Interfaith Crowd Gathers at Mosque to Decry Incivility and Hate," *Boston Globe*, December 12, 2016, https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2016/12/11/interfaith-crowd-gathers-mosque-decry-incivility-and-hate/DzjUCDhqch5gjlVwti511L/story.html.

seen thousands come together in protest and solidarity in Copley Square in Boston upon the announcement of the Muslim travel ban.[19] These acts of solidarity may demonstrate the resilience of a community in crisis, but they also demonstrate the strength of the grassroots, everyday pluralism of this continually emerging interfaith infrastructure. Let us be sure to continue paying attention to the ways these relationships are fortified every day at the local and personal level, so that we can ensure we are documenting a full portrait of the robust interfaith infrastructure in the United States.

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[19] Mark Arsenault, "Thousands in Copley Square Protest Immigration Order," *Boston Globe*, January 29, 2017, https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2017/01/29/protest/5zOAYFudUwDp8TF4ZnYs5O/story.html.