

# Religion and Peacebuilding

## An Ambivalent yet Vital Relationship

by Heather Dubois

Religion, after all, is a powerful constituent of cultural norms and values, and because it addresses the most profound existential issues of human life (e.g., freedom and inevitability, fear and faith, security and insecurity, right and wrong, sacred and profane), religion is deeply implicated in individual and social conceptions of peace.<sup>[1]</sup>

Scott Appleby explains that the ambivalence of religion lies in the interpretation of the sacred, in imperfect human perception: “At any given moment any two religious actors, each possessed of unimpeachable devotion and integrity, might reach diametrically opposed conclusions about the will of God and the path to follow.” In other words, religion can underwrite both conflict and peace on its own terms.<sup>[2]</sup> It is an intervening variable that sometimes escalates, sometimes de-escalates conflict behavior.<sup>[3]</sup> As Appleby notes, “Religious leaders and their followers make choices as to the meaning of the sacred and the content of their faith. These choices, in turn, determine their attitudes toward conflict and violence.”<sup>[4]</sup>

The ambiguity of religion’s relationship to conflict is better understood when religion is recognized as a type of living tradition, “an historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute the tradition.”<sup>[5]</sup> Even in cases where the mainstream advocates bettering the world through nonviolent means, religions are not monolithic entities. This deserves emphasis here because they are often presented as such, distorting or stalling debate that genuinely engages questions surrounding religion’s role in violent conflict. Violent and nonviolent actors alike claim monolithic authority to justify and advocate as well as to deflect criticism. For instance, religious leaders who condemn violence often seek to distance their religion from co-religionists who have committed acts of terror or provoked violent conflict.<sup>[6]</sup> While this is an understandable impulse, labeling a religious actor or a religious movement unauthentic is ultimately misleading and unhelpful. As Marc Gopin writes, “The fact is that while I agree that there are great untapped resources for peacemaking and conflict resolution in the world’s religions, there is also a vast reservoir of texts and traditions ready and waiting to be used to justify the most barbaric acts by modern standards of human rights.”<sup>[7]</sup>

The heterogeneity of the world’s largest religions means that at any time or in any territory, these living traditions might be a source of violence. Yet, it also means that within each of these religions there is room for the normative tasks of conflict resolution. There are existing and developing spiritual practices and theological and ethical resources for hermeneutics of peace.<sup>[8]</sup> These can be harnessed for engaging the vast majority of the world’s religious peoples—who are not, by the way, violent extremists—in prevention and de-escalation of conflict. They can also play an important role in countering the violent extremism of minority religious movements. In sum, religion can be a source of peace or violent conflict, and its importance and potential strength lies in this ambiguity.

## The Need for Reappraisal: Religion and Conflict Resolution<sup>[9]</sup>

Western modernity, especially as understood through the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment, has heavily influenced conflict resolution and international relations. As such, these academic disciplines and their practical applications have incorporated elements of secularization theory<sup>[10]</sup> and marginalized the influence of religion in their analysis of world affairs.<sup>[11]</sup> The roots of this tendency can be traced to the

development of the modern western understanding of religion, which is markedly different from pre-modern and some non-Western understandings.

Scott Thomas explains that in Europe during the Middle Ages the religious realm conflated with the social and the moral, all of which were sourced from and sustained by community. The sacred and spiritual were an indistinguishable part of a total way of life of social, political, economic, and moral dimensions. In contrast, modernity brought the “invention of religion” as “a set of privately held doctrines or beliefs.” This was a gradual process of three centuries that began with an identification of the spiritual within community belief and practice and then developed such that the spiritual was privatized, considered separate from community structure and authority.<sup>[12]</sup>

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, religion becomes mobile, divorced from traditional community life. Thomas writes, “Religio begins to shift from being one of various virtues, supported by practices of an ecclesial community embedded in the Christian tradition, to a system of doctrines or beliefs, which could exist apart from the ecclesial community.” It is this siphoning of sacred and moral authority from its basis in community, necessary for the creation of the secular state,<sup>[13]</sup> that led to the eventual marginalization of religion in western institutions of politics and international affairs.<sup>[14]</sup>

While modernity has affected in some ways the entire globe, the privatization of religion has not been a universal experience for the world’s communities. The process and effects of secularization have been halting and mixed.<sup>[15]</sup> While 78 percent of the world’s states are secular,<sup>[16]</sup> 78.3 percent of the global population adheres to one of the world’s five largest religions.<sup>[17]</sup> As summarized by Swatos and Christiano, the central claim of secularization theory is that “in the face of scientific rationality, religion’s influence on all aspects of life—from personal habits to social institutions—is in dramatic decline.”<sup>[18]</sup> To date, this assertion is problematic at best.

Even in the West where governments, academics, and policy institutes have, to various degrees, minimized or ignored the effects of religion on international relations, religion itself has not disappeared. According to a study by Assaf Moghadam, for example, the trend toward secularization in Western Europe is “not entirely uniform.”<sup>[19]</sup> This statement refers to geographical distribution of religious adherence and to indicators of religious behaviors and values.<sup>[20]</sup> Observing the distinction between the two, Grace Davis calls Europeans an “unchurched” people rather than secular. Analyzing data from the European World Value Survey, she argues that the dramatic decrease in religious attendance since the 1980s has not been accompanied by a decrease in religious belief.<sup>[21]</sup>

In addition to this differentiation between “believing” and “belonging,” Moghadam and others note the rise of spirituality, as opposed to “organized religion.” While those who self-identify as spiritual are sometimes anti-religious, spiritualism includes many behaviors, beliefs, and values similar to those of religion, and thus its popularity contradicts the aspect of secularization theory that triumphs scientific materialism. A preference for spirituality rather than religion has been seen, for example, in the United States where, as Moghadam notes, citizens are likely to subscribe to a “more personal, individualized form of faith.”<sup>[22]</sup> Yet, in addition to this increase in spiritual concerns, the United States remains very religious in the conventional sense.<sup>[23]</sup>

Looking to the United States and parts of the non-Western world, scholars debate whether the globe is experiencing a resurgence of religiosity. Moghadam concludes that change over time in religious adherence, behavior, and values indicates a general trend of strengthening in a majority of countries, certainly in the former Eastern Bloc and most likely in large parts of Latin America, Africa, East Asia, South East Asia, and the Middle East.<sup>[24]</sup> Considering this alongside the decrease in religiosity in the majority of the post-industrial world, some scholars are arguing for resurgence and secularization.<sup>[25]</sup> Marc Gopin states that the contemporary era is characterized by “an unprecedented level of paradoxical religious movement.”<sup>[26]</sup>

Whether or not people and nations are more religious today than in the past, religion is a socio-

political force that affects local and international events. It can be traced backward through the roots of some of the most intractable contemporary conflicts including conflicts in the Middle East, Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tibet, and Kashmir. In new terms of terror, religion has been a factor in events ranging from the bombing of abortion clinics in the early 1990s to the attacks of September 11, 2001.<sup>[27]</sup> In terms of peacebuilding, religion has been explicitly involved in transformations such as the recovery of post-apartheid South Africa<sup>[28]</sup> and the nonviolent transitions from authoritarianism to democracy that took place in East Germany, Poland, and the Philippines.<sup>[29]</sup> More recently, more than 1,000 representatives of transnational as well as indigenous religious traditions gathered for the UN Millennium Summit of World Religious Leaders, which “heralded the world community’s unprecedented recognition of religious peacebuilding.”<sup>[30]</sup>

Jeffrey Haynes calls religion “a stubbornly persistent” actor.<sup>[31]</sup> Regardless of whether religion is considered a renewed or persisting global phenomenon, western policy-making and academia are growing more aware of religion’s presence and salience. Lowering of the modernist’s lens—or the development of postmodernism—has allowed for a more in-depth exploration of non-Western cultures generally, and specifically allowed for greater flexibility in encountering religion, both outside the West and in the United States.<sup>[32]</sup> This awareness needs to be accompanied by corresponding knowledge and skills to overcome what Douglas Johnston calls a “deep-seated tendency to ignore the religious dimension.”<sup>[33]</sup>

United States policy relating to Iraq highlights the urgent need for reappraisal of religion’s role in international relations and conflict resolution. It also illustrates a significant distinction between religiosity among domestic populations and religious literacy in international affairs. While high numbers of Americans are religious and religious issues have been a part of domestic politics for at least the last fifty years, U.S. foreign policy has been predominately modern and secular. Despite the Christian rhetoric with which the Bush administration pursues its own policy, it has marginalized the validity and importance of religious identity in the Arab world.

According to Michael Hirsch, the Bush administration dismissed veteran State Department Arabists during the crucial months of 2002 and 2003, and instead consulted scholars like Bernard Lewis, author of *What Went Wrong? The Clash of Islam and Modernity in the Middle East*. This evidenced a determination to “fix” Islamic societies, whose religious behaviors and values are viewed as automatic causes of conflict and obstacles to transitions to modernity. In Hirsch’s words, Lewis (and the Bush administration) has envisioned a “secularized, Westernized Arab democracy that casts off the medieval shackles of Islam and enters modernity at last.” In Lewis’ words, “The Islamic world is now at [the] beginning of [the] 15th century” and “on the verge of its Reformation.”<sup>[34]</sup>

Secularization was one of the hallmarks of modernity in the West, but it does not follow that in order to be modern, one must be secular. According to critics of Lewis like Richard Bulliet, author of *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization*, U.S. foreign policy is operating from a fundamental misreading of post-Ottoman Arab identity and history. Instead of the meta-narrative of secular democracy per Western experience, Bulliet suggests a rediscovery of Islam’s traditional role as a constraint to tyranny. Bulliet cautions against rejecting Islam as anti-modern and urges the West to remember its own struggle with the role of religion in civil society, one that continues in America today.<sup>[35]</sup>

## **Tradition and Particularity: Foundations of Religious Peacebuilding**

Changes in the context of international relations and conflict resolution have been matched by changes internal to many religious traditions. Positive responses to the human rights era, globalization, and fundamentalism have included the growth of the Christian ecumenical movement, increased pursuit of interfaith dialogue, and the development of coalitions across religious, secular, cultural, and geographic boundaries.<sup>[36]</sup> Within this current of change, some religious leaders and groups have an increased interest

and capacity in conflict resolution. While this necessarily involves training in contemporary conflict resolution techniques and approaches, religious actors can also draw upon their identities as participants in a social and spiritual tradition.

Whatever becomes of the secularization debate, the privatization of religion has had as yet its strongest influence only in the West, which represents less than one-sixth of the world's population.<sup>[37]</sup> In many parts of the world, conceptions of personhood view the self as socially embedded in traditions at least influenced by religion.<sup>[38]</sup> Understanding the way identity and morality are formed in this context gives foundation to the concept of religious peacebuilding. The social theory of Alasdair MacIntyre provides a useful vehicle for beginning such an exploration. Grown from Aristotelian thought, it argues for the importance of community in forming, continuing, and rejecting morality and tradition.<sup>[39]</sup>

For MacIntyre, human identity is forged in narrative-based histories and evolving cultures, and is, thus, a relational concept. In this way, it resembles the African concept of ubuntu, which Desmond Tutu describes this way: "A person is a person through other people."<sup>[40]</sup> MacIntyre's understanding of rationality is also relational in that it is dependent on tradition. Contrary to the dictates of the Enlightenment, "What makes it 'rational' to act in one way and not another is the conception of the good embodied in a particular social tradition or community."<sup>[41]</sup> Moral identity, then, is not based upon a set of rules employed by rational actors; rather, it exists in social practices that have developed in community and through tradition, including, of course, religious tradition. Put more simply, working toward moral ideals is a way of life rather than a series of independent decisions.

Understandings of identity and rationality like those put forth by MacIntyre are helpful in resolving conflict in non-Western and some Western contexts in that it can validate parties' conceptions of themselves rather than ignoring or marginalizing their reasons for their behavior. This fulfills what Gopin calls "the human need for uniqueness ... our need for some distinctive identity and meaning system in the context of the mass of humanity and the indifferent character of the universe."<sup>[42]</sup> An approach to peacebuilding that can make room for tradition-dependent rationality and social understandings of morality is able to consider parties' desires to protect "a certain conception of who they are," which is as important as (and often more so than) a desire to defend what they have.<sup>[43]</sup>

Acknowledging difference or uniqueness provides metaphoric room or safe space for conflict parties to lower defenses and be introspective, exploring the inclusive and nonviolent resources of their traditions or communities. It can create space for individuals and groups to build "a clear and confident sense of identity"<sup>[44]</sup> and, thus, the capacity for challenging the exclusive and violent elements of those same traditions. As no tradition is monolithic, whether it contains a religion, a guerilla movement, or a government at war, would-be peacebuilders engage with a variety of moral choices in relationship with members of their community. This transformative process is essential to broad and sustained adoption of peacebuilding strategies and personas.

Grounded in a deep comprehension of their complex tradition, these peacebuilders may consequently have confidence to interact inclusively with the "other," even to discover common moral paths. This is an essential part of peacebuilding and, as MacIntyre explains, the junction between the particular and the universal:

the fact [that] the self has to find its moral identity in and through its membership in communities such as those of the family, the neighborhood, the city, and the tribe does not entail that the self has to accept the moral limitations of the particularity of those forms of community. Without those moral particularities to begin with there would never be anywhere to begin; but it is in moving forward from such particularity that the search for the good, the universal, consists.<sup>[45]</sup>

Social understandings of religious and other types of moral community begin by pointing out that people

develop in context—that is place, time, environment, relationships. Yet the end of a process of engaging with such understandings, especially in contexts of peacebuilding, may be much broader than the borders of any one tradition.<sup>[46]</sup>

Particular context is important in limiting or de-escalating mutual fear of extinction by providing space for the unique self to exist and affirming that this self will not be consumed. Gopin explains that, in addition to the need for uniqueness, human beings have a need for integration, “to merge with the larger world” and to find “an overarching unity to existence.” Instead of being balanced by recognition of others’ needs for uniqueness, this second need is sometimes pursued with violent means; individuals or groups try to consume the whole world or remake it in their image.<sup>[47]</sup> Even when this need is not manifest violently, recognition of it can cause fear of loss of identity and so be an impediment to peacebuilding.

MacIntyre writes, “Particularity can never be simply left behind or obliterated. The notion of escaping from it into a realm of entirely universal maxims which belong to man as such ... is an illusion and an illusion with painful consequences.”<sup>[48]</sup> Modern understandings of identity must be infused with social understandings if fears of extinction are to be taken seriously. Valuable attempts at discovering shared standards have often been undermined by rhetoric and policies that ignore the importance of particularity. Denial of the particularity of modernity is especially insidious in its correlation with myths of universalism.<sup>[49]</sup> Consequently, “[m]any people around the world—not just religious people—perceive [universalism] as secular cultural imperialism or evangelism.”<sup>[50]</sup> Given that totalitarianism has often hidden under the guise of quests for the best possible world, it seems that it is better simply to find improved ways to live in the world as it exists, with its multitude of complex and varying traditions.

The invention of the secular state through Westphalia was a peaceful solution for a region suffering from the ravages of the “wars of religion” (1550-1650). Similarly, there are many reasons to praise the development of international organizational structures and concepts such as universal human rights that, though strongly influenced by religious thought,<sup>[51]</sup> were actualized through the secular nation-state model. Yet, as Alasdair MacIntyre, Hannah Arendt, and many others have argued, people live and experience the world through particular communities. While some of these do display the bifurcation of life into spiritual and secular spheres, many more have not fully separated behavior (ritual and daily life) from belief (spiritual and moral values and metaphysical experiences). It is within this framework that religious actors are often a more suitable proponent for peace than their secular peers to the extent that the latter are versed exclusively in individualistic and scientific materialist understandings of international relations and conflict resolution. It is because of this that religious actors can play a positive role in conflicts with and without religious dimensions, not when they “moderate their religion or marginalize their deeply held, vividly symbolized, and often highly particular beliefs,” but rather “when they remain religious actors.”<sup>[52]</sup>

## Academic Policy Definitions of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is an enterprise that is more often described than defined. Perhaps this is because it is undertaken by a wide variety of actors whose strengths and capacities enable them to build peace in different ways. Michael Pugh traces peacebuilding practices back to the Cold War in the confidence building<sup>[53]</sup> work of NGOs such as the Mennonite Central Committee, the Society of Friends, the movement for European Nuclear Disarmament, and the UK-based Centre for International Peacebuilding.<sup>[54]</sup> As early as the 1960’s, Johan Galtung began to describe peacebuilding as “the practical implementation of peaceful social change through socio-economic reconstruction and development.”<sup>[55]</sup> Since then, Galtung has promulgated the idea that peacebuilding involves radical change to overcome contradictions that lie at the root of conflict.<sup>[56]</sup>

The emphasis on root causes and structural change has been a lasting aspect of discussions of peacebuilding. However, Stephen Ryan has found that Galtung’s definition suffers from the lack of a relational dimension. Ryan has emphasized the need to change negative conflict attitudes in society;

particularly, he focuses on the grassroots level.<sup>[57]</sup> Bringing together Galtung and Ryan's analysis, John Paul Lederach has characterized peacebuilding as "a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships."<sup>[58]</sup> In doing so, he has made a strong place in the discourse for peacebuilding that addresses the structural, relational, and cultural aspects and causes of conflict.

At about the same time that Lederach was broadly defining peacebuilding, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali narrowed the term in his 1992 Agenda for Peace. Bringing the weight of international attention to peacebuilding, Boutros-Ghali associated it with post-war reconstruction. He defined post-conflict peacebuilding as "actions to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict."<sup>[59]</sup> These goals were initially aligned with military demobilization and political transition to participatory electoral democracy, still core components of UN peacebuilding.<sup>[60]</sup>

In subsequent years, Boutros-Ghali expanded his peacebuilding concept to include a development approach. In the wake of this expansion, Pugh wrote in 1995:

In the context of UN-authorized peace support measures, peacebuilding can be defined as a policy of external international help for developing countries designed to support indigenous social, cultural and economic development and self-reliance, by aiding recovery from war and reducing or eliminating resort to future violence.<sup>[61]</sup>

Over ten years later, this definition still stands as a good synopsis of peacebuilding at the level of the United Nations. On June 23, 2006, the United Nations held the inaugural meeting of its Peacebuilding Commission. On its website, the commission states that it will focus on "the link between immediate post-conflict efforts on the one hand and long-term recovery and development efforts on the other."<sup>[62]</sup>

Most academics and policy-makers agree that peacebuilding entails a multi-layered approach involving many sectors and including local, national, regional, and international actors.<sup>[63]</sup> Given this scope, it seems logical that peacebuilding will be defined in subtly, if not largely, different ways by its different actors. While both Lederach and Boutros-Ghali acknowledge the breadth of the concept, they each present a narrow description of practice that focuses on their respective spheres of influence.

Lederach's pyramid of peacebuilding actors includes three levels—top, middle-level and grassroots leaders—yet, he is known for emphasizing "middle-out" and "bottom-up" approaches.<sup>[64]</sup> In a recent work, entitled *A Handbook of International Peacebuilding*, Lederach lauds the expansion of conflict resolution (since the 1970's) to include "alternative dispute resolution, mediation, conciliation, violence prevention, early warning systems, community reconciliation, nonviolent peacekeeping, trauma healing, second-track diplomacy, [and] problem-solving workshops." He concludes the description by saying that he has mentioned "only a few of the many arenas of today's range of peacebuilding activities," yet it is significant that his handbook focuses on largely community-oriented processes.<sup>[65]</sup>

On the other hand, the UN Peacebuilding Commission has been designed to work with UN peacekeeping operations and "the international network of assistance and donor mobilization including the World Bank."<sup>[66]</sup> From this perspective, peacebuilding is more heavily involved in issues of security, governance, and economic recovery.<sup>[67]</sup> Such activities do not necessarily exclude community or grassroots input; in fact, their sustainability relies in part on multi-level participation.<sup>[68]</sup> Nonetheless, the UN and its partners do not build peace in the same way as conflict resolution practitioners such as Lederach. Both are involved in peacebuilding, and they can work together, but as actors with different access, resources and capacities, they have different emphases.

Galtung associates peacebuilding with “positive” peace, meaning the cessation of structural and cultural violence or the creation of a “self-sustaining peace.”<sup>[69]</sup> Yet, in its task of consolidating the gains of peacemaking and peacekeeping, for instance as part of UN missions, peacebuilding must be concerned as well with the “negative” task of preventing relapse into conflict. In seeking the maximum goal of positive peace, actors must be wary of how their efforts will affect the negative peace. Elizabeth Cousens writes, “Perhaps the greatest challenge for the international community in trying to assist war-torn societies is to be ruthlessly modest about its ambitions.” She specifically mentions the goals of economic liberalization and democratization, stating that the volatile processes they entail make it imperative that international actors consider carefully the form and timing of such efforts.<sup>[70]</sup> In *Peacebuilding as Politics*, Cousens and Chetan Kumar argue that international peacebuilding “should focus on those factors that allow stable political processes to emerge and flourish.”<sup>[71]</sup>

Considering limited material and political resources for peacebuilding efforts, Cousens and Kumar stress the need for the international community to set priorities. They argue that conflict resolution should be privileged as a means for sustaining negative peace and enabling capacity to manage current and future conflict without recourse to violence. While peacebuilding as defined by Galtung tends to focus on redressing specific causes of violence, Cousens and Kumar explain the importance of focusing principally “on a society’s political capacity to manage tensions arising from these causes.”<sup>[72]</sup> They suggest focusing on what I. William Zartman and others characterize as the “reinstitution of political life.”<sup>[73]</sup>

Cousens and Kumar advocate peacebuilding that is more limited in scope and less rigid in outcome. Kumar writes, “International peacebuilders should not focus primarily on prescribing or operating specific political structures but on facilitating or enforcing the conditions that constitute an appropriate context for these structures to emerge.”<sup>[74]</sup> In other words, peacebuilding should be process-oriented. A key element of political process is healthy, legitimate political relations. Here, Kumar cites Lederach’s concept of vertical capacity, an emphasis on “responsive and coordinated relationships up and down the levels of leadership in a society.”<sup>[75]</sup> He argues that the international peacebuilding role is to promote the enabling of relational factors (dialogue, public security, and participation) through which appropriate political structures can be built.

As a final note on academic and policy definitions of peacebuilding, it is useful to consider stages of conflict and length of engagement. The United Nations has limited peacebuilding to post-conflict situations. Referring to the importance of prevention and to Galtung’s emphasis on structural change, Pugh points out that peacebuilding can occur at any time,<sup>[76]</sup> and this is how Lederach, Cousens, Kumar and others understand the concept.<sup>[77]</sup> As for the duration of peacebuilding, all concerned agree that it should address long-term concerns. In theoretical terms, this can imply an open-ended commitment and indeterminate timescale. However, as Cousens and Kumar have explained, this perhaps cannot be the case with international involvement.<sup>[78]</sup> The UN and other major donors or agencies should be tasked with specifically targeted, short- to medium-term objectives that will establish conditions in which internal actors can build long-term peace.

## Defining Religious Peacebuilding

Religious peacebuilding is typically of the type associated with Lederach,<sup>[79]</sup> namely community-oriented processes that are relationship-centered and participatory. In some ways, peacebuilding is “a relatively new label put on an old idea”;<sup>[80]</sup> community-based work to build healthy and peaceful societies has long been essential to many religious traditions. Still, religious peacebuilding is a developing concept. Most of the literature regarding religion and peacebuilding is in the form of case studies, that is stories of specific events, groups, and individuals. There is much work to be done before there is an adequate academic understanding of what a religious approach to peacebuilding might entail. Similarly, the field of peace studies awaits cumulative studies of the contributions of religious actors, communities, and institutions—a way of assessing the “value-added” of religion to conflict resolution. While efforts have begun, this is difficult, in part, because of the sheer number and diversity of actors often involved,<sup>[81]</sup> and also because

social scientists are in need of better tools for holistically engaging religion and its effects.<sup>[82]</sup>

On the one hand, religious peacebuilding is simply peacebuilding done by religious actors. This has a variety of social and political implications but does not involve a distinct set of activities. On the other hand, religious peacebuilding is an endeavor to work within religious traditions and religious contexts through unique activities, such as intrafaith and interfaith dialogue and education.<sup>[83]</sup> Peacebuilding as a process internal to and across religious traditions is vital, especially when contemporary conflict and violence involves religious actors.

While acknowledging the importance of both types of religious peacebuilding, this essay focuses on that which religious actors, often working with secular partners, engage in with religious and secular groups in contexts of religious and non-religious conflict.<sup>[84]</sup> Religious peacebuilding will be defined here as peacebuilding 1) motivated and strengthened by religious and spiritual resources, and 2) with access to religious communities and institutions. The first part of the definition is a subjective description that is difficult to quantify or evaluate, but which is significant nonetheless. Its presence may be manifest in many different ways, some more or less discernible. Peacebuilding with the benefit of access to religious communities and institutions is significant, according to the particular relationship of a religious tradition with its host society. Appleby explains that the “historical record and reputation, size, resources, ethnic composition, and public and political presences of the religious body in question [affect] its representatives’ chances for success in conflict resolution.”<sup>[85]</sup> Some religious individuals and groups work as “independent contractors,” but most are embedded in various levels of community and institutionalization.

As explained previously, the identity of religious actors is integral to the character of religious peacebuilding. However, it is important for categorical explorations to focus on peacebuilding as a process, rather than focusing on the religious peacebuilders themselves. A limited typology of religious peacebuilding includes methodology, motivation, legitimacy, and connection to context; the category of methodology is further divided into philosophy, tools, level of engagement, and length of engagement.

## Methodology

What philosophical underpinnings distinguish religious peacebuilding? It can be said that religious peacebuilding works within, rather than adjacent to or opposed to, spiritual elements of culture. According to Gopin, conflict resolution theories, such as human needs theory and social psychological/psychoanalytic approaches, are alone inadequate, especially in certain contexts.<sup>[86]</sup> Religious peacebuilding can build on these philosophical approaches, adding existential dimensions through spiritual language and activity. A more subtle philosophical aspect of religious peacebuilding might be humility, in recognition of the difficulty and complexity of peacebuilding vis-à-vis human capacity.<sup>[87]</sup> Generalizing, the anthropology of religion states that humans cannot have all of the answers and that human action is often insufficient.<sup>[88]</sup> In other words, religion is based on the perception or belief that humans need god/s. Taken to the extreme, this can lead to fatalism and paralysis. Taken in measured doses, it leads to an understanding of the importance of determined, small steps and the futility of the grandiose.<sup>[89]</sup> In the words of Archbishop Oscar Romero, humility is an appropriate reminder that “we are workers, not master builders, ministers not messiahs.”<sup>[90]</sup> In the words of Pope Benedict XVI, “We are helped by the knowledge that, in the end, we are only instruments in the Lord’s hands; and this knowledge frees us from the presumption of thinking that we alone are personally responsible for building a better world. In all humility we will do what we can, and in all humility we will entrust the rest to the Lord.”<sup>[91]</sup>

**Tools.** Religious peacebuilding operates with different tools than does secular peacebuilding because of its inclusion of spiritual issues. Overall, peacebuilding activities are the same in religious and secular organizations; but as Julia Berger writes, “Spiritual guidance, prayer, and modeling are a unique feature of RNGO [religious non-governmental organization] operations.”<sup>[92]</sup> Religious peacebuilding entails focus on interiority or “the inner life of the individual,”<sup>[93]</sup> which might be manifest in the use of

tools such as ritual<sup>[94]</sup> and myth.<sup>[95]</sup> These tools are not exclusively religious, but to the extent that secular peacebuilding is related to belief in scientific materialism, it may be incompatible with their use. Similarly, religious peacebuilding may be more likely to employ tools of imagination in envisioning new possibilities and facilitating empathy.<sup>[96]</sup> Scholars such as Lederach and Walter Brueggemann write that the “moral imagination” and the “prophetic imagination” are essential to peacebuilding.<sup>[97]</sup> Religious peacebuilding might also emphasize the importance of prayer, silence, or meditation. A Clingendael Institute/Salam Institute study accredited a large part of the success of a meeting between Muslim and Christian leaders in Sudan to the inclusion of prayer and readings from the Koran and the Bible. It highlighted the presence of a prayer team, whose “sole purpose was to pray and fast during the four days of the meeting, praying for the success of the deliberations.”<sup>[98]</sup> Lastly, concepts such as forgiveness and restorative justice are often more resonant when employed in combination with theological and/or spiritual understandings of their application. Of course, there is no formula for using spiritual tools, and each case must include “local cultural analysis wedded to political insight.”<sup>[99]</sup>

**Level of Engagement.** In terms of levels of engagement, religious peacebuilding can be located in the grassroots, middle-level, and elite levels of organization. Potentially, it can involve all of these levels, which are likely to be linked through religious networks. In the world’s largest religions, religious peacebuilding can occur at local, inter-communal, national, regional, and international levels, which can network and exchange support and information horizontally and vertically. On the local level, it is often part of the “small-scale and usually unpublicized initiatives” praised by Judith Large. Religious peacebuilding can be compatible with or the same as indigenous peacebuilding. Because of this, it has the capacity to challenge cultures of violence through what Betts Fetherston calls the “anti-hegemonic, counter-hegemonic and post-hegemonic.”<sup>[100]</sup>

**Length of Engagement.** In terms of length of engagement, religious peacebuilding is markedly different from the efforts of many secular NGOs and of the international community, as described by Cousens and Kumar. Religious peacebuilding has the capacity to function long-term because it can potentially operate from the base of and integrate into a permanent presence within a community. Berger writes, “In some cases, religious networks and infrastructures are more stable than local or national governments—providing channels of information and resource distribution in the absence of state-sponsored alternatives.”<sup>[101]</sup> Secondly, religious peacebuilding is a potentially long-term process because it can be based on different funding mechanisms. Some local peacebuilding programs are directly and exclusively funded by local churches, mosques, and temples. National and international RNGOs are more susceptible to the attention span and priorities of international donors,<sup>[102]</sup> yet even they can be partially or completely funded by national and international religious networks. This is significant because religious leaders have different time horizons than donor governments. Bishops, for example, retain their office for life, whereas politicians must be responsive to electoral constituencies and annual budget cycles. In addition, the fraternal and structural ties of religious networks raise the probability of interaction, which can increase mutuality and consistency of priorities and expectations.

## Motivation

The second category in this typology is motivation. From a survey of seventy religious peacebuilding actors, the Clingendael and Salam Institutes found that “religious values and principles seem to provide a mandate” for building peace and preventing conflict.<sup>[103]</sup> Like many such suggestions in literature on the subject, this begs the question, are religious mandates stronger than secular mandates? For instance, how is the Mennonite mandate for peacebuilding different, in effect, from the Marxist mandate? This is a question that demands further research, yet one might begin by considering the practice of religious martyrdom. Mark Juergensmeyer writes, “In most cases martyrdom is regarded not only as a testimony to the degree of one’s commitment, but also as a performance of a religious act, specifically an act of self-sacrifice.”<sup>[104]</sup> Contemporary reference to martyrdom conjures images of suicide bombings, a form that inflicts as well as absorbs violence. However, one could also refer to the hunger strikes of Mahatma Gandhi or the self-immolation of Buddhist monks in protest of the Vietnam War.

For this typology, it may be more useful to consider, instead of the strength of motivation, the ways in which motivation is transmitted and renewed. In this respect, religious peacebuilding is distinct because of its relationship to myth and ritual. Archbishop Oscar Romero's death, often considered a "witness for peace," is a case in point.<sup>[105]</sup> Before his 1980 assassination, Romero said, "I have frequently been threatened with death. As a Christian, I do not believe in death without resurrection. If they kill me, I will be resurrected in the Salvadoran people."<sup>[106]</sup> This statement is evidence of a tradition-specific belief in the power of myth as a motivating force. It came true in that Romero's martyrdom inspired others to strengthen and continue their struggle against oppression. The image of a priest shot at the altar while celebrating Mass, the primary sacred ritual of the Catholic tradition, galvanized not only local but also international outcry regarding human rights abuses in El Salvador. Romero has become a mythical figure who remains a source of motivation for Catholic and non-Catholic activists worldwide. In the methods of Catholic tradition, he is the unofficial patron saint of the region and official canonization processes are moving forward.

## Legitimacy

The third category of this typology, legitimacy, depends on many cultural and historical circumstances; yet, some generalizations can be made. To the extent that spirituality is accepted and deemed important, communities and conflict parties may perceive religious peacebuilding as legitimate because it addresses spiritual elements of conflict. This may be compounded if peacebuilding actors are perceived to have purely social and spiritual—and not political—intentions. In addition, religious traditions claim moral authority. If this claim has currency, it can facilitate an embrace of peacebuilding processes. The tendency to invest legitimacy in religious actors is often exhibited not only by those within a specific tradition, but also by the larger community, especially when leaders are charismatic and institutions are competent.<sup>[107]</sup> This is increasingly probable if religious peacebuilding builds on a long record of social service activity and/or relief and development work, as it often does.<sup>[108]</sup>

## Context

Finally, the last category in this typology of religious peacebuilding is connection to context. Obviously, when peacebuilders are working within their own communities or with communities of the same religious tradition, they will benefit from pre-existing knowledge of at least some aspects of the religious and cultural context. The same may be true to a lesser extent when actors adhere to different religions but share a religious worldview. Communicating using religious texts and traditions can make it easier to introduce or strengthen concepts of peace.<sup>[109]</sup> This does not necessarily exclude secular actors. It does mean that all actors must overcome varying degrees of unfamiliarity and be willing to facilitate peacebuilding within the context they are working. Gopin writes, "Religious adherents must see that their way of looking at reality is being directly addressed by the content and method of conflict resolution."<sup>[110]</sup>

In addition to connection to philosophical and cultural context, religious peacebuilding benefits from a connection to personal, communal, and institutional networks. This is especially true of indigenous religious peacebuilding, but also true for interventionist religious peacebuilding. Berger observes, for example, that "unlike secular NGOs, which must build their networks from the ground up, RNGOs often attach to existing infrastructures from which to recruit human and financial resources."<sup>[111]</sup> Through their existing connections, religious actors may be well situated to draft volunteers, challenge religious and secular traditional structures, and communicate with governments.<sup>[112]</sup> However, the quality and type of access to religious communities and institutions is dependent on many factors. Relevant matters include: the availability, quality and content of religious education and spiritual formation; the diversity and positive engagement of actors such as local leaders, high-level clergy, NGOs, organized movements, and high-level councils; the powers and responsibilities of leaders and the degree of communication they have with their constituencies and any existing hierarchies; and the range and engagement of organizational

levels (local, subnational, national, regional, and/or international).<sup>[113]</sup>

Listing this multitude of factors begins to illustrate the complexities that determine the impact of religious peacebuilding. The cumulative effect may be one in which religion plays a significant role in portions but not all of society, or, as can be the case with large, transnational traditions, religion may permeate every level of society—institutionally, socially and culturally. In that case, the significant elements of authority, ideology, spirituality and fraternity are all at the disposal of religious peacebuilding. Yet, impact is still determined not only by the degree of religious presence, but also by the degree of experienced peacebuilding capacity. To delineate the possible environments that might shape peacebuilding, Appleby describes three modes of action: crisis mobilization, saturation, and external intervention. In the first instance, existing religious presence is inexperienced but spontaneously adapts to peacebuilding necessities. In the second, an indigenous peacebuilding community of offices, programs, and professionals has emerged and persisted over time. Part of the institutional and social landscape, this peacebuilding is shaped by prevailing political and social conditions and external actors, but not wholly dependent on them. In the last mode, external actors intervene in conflict situations, usually at the invitation of one or more of the conflict parties, to work with existing capacity in the service of present needs and the sometimes distant goal of eliciting and enabling an indigenous peacebuilding community.<sup>[114]</sup>

## Strengths of Religious Peacebuilding

Religious peacebuilding has at least four strengths. First, religious peacebuilding is a vehicle for addressing the spiritual aspects of conflict experience. This strength lies in the perception of spiritual need on the part of those affected.<sup>[115]</sup> Prior, during, and after conflict, people struggle with existential questions and suffer spiritual as well as physical and psychological trauma.<sup>[116]</sup> Religious traditions, through their philosophies and spiritual tools, offer language and other means with which people can interpret their experiences.<sup>[117]</sup> According to MacIntyre's understanding of human identity as narrative-based, the myth and storytelling intrinsic to religion can be especially important.<sup>[118]</sup> As Gopin writes, "Narrative is the path into the individual psyche and the collective memory of human beings."<sup>[119]</sup>

Second, religious peacebuilding can counter violence that is rooted in religious and/or communal identity by virtue of its foundation in tradition-dependent rationality and morality. As discussed earlier, this worldview can result in inclusive processes that create safe spaces for peacebuilding, enabling a willingness to relate to the "other." Religious peacebuilding can also encourage participation in peacebuilding by virtue of its non-secular worldview. People who feel marginalized by peacebuilding that is sometimes "hard secular" or scientific materialist can perhaps better relate to processes that include religious or spiritual dimensions.

Third, religious peacebuilding offers a moral alternative during times of state collapse and times of war, especially when the peacebuilders are from a religious tradition that has a large and stable presence in a society. This was the case, for example, when the Roman Catholic Church joined in the advocacy for democracy and human rights reform in Brazil, Chile, Central America, the Philippines, South Korea, and elsewhere.<sup>[120]</sup> This was the case when U.S. churches opposed the start of the war in Iraq. Massaro notes that the official leadership of many American denominations—including President Bush's own United Methodist Church—vocalized opposition.<sup>[121]</sup> This is not an example of effective religious peacebuilding in terms of preventing war; however, the presence of these Christian actors has strengthened the U.S. peace movement, especially in countering perceptions of the Iraq War as a "Christian war."<sup>[122]</sup> As explained by Chris Hedges, a voice of moral alternative can be especially important in the context of modern, secular nation-states. He writes:

Because we in modern society have walked away from institutions that stand outside the state to find moral guidance and spiritual direction, we turn to the state in times of war. The state and the institutions of state become, for many, the center of worship in wartime. To expose the holes in the myth is to court excommunication.<sup>[123]</sup>

Of course, religious traditions are often a more or less willing accomplice in the justification of war. Nonetheless, when they find it necessary and are able to oppose a nation-state heading to war, religious peacebuilding can offer people the power of an alternative, often combined with the comfort of affiliation with a long-standing authority.

Fourth, because of their numerical significance and multi-level presence, religious traditions offer vehicles for internationalizing peacebuilding and conflict resolution. This is possible through the networking and sharing of best practices among peacebuilders<sup>[124]</sup> and through religious education, which takes daily form in preaching and school teaching. The ambivalence of religion, among other factors, dictates that the latter may be problematic; however, to the extent that local manifestations of religion accept and teach the peaceful doctrines of their traditions, they can contribute to the development of indigenous peacebuilding, or what Appleby calls the saturation mode of peacebuilding. Herein, perhaps, lies the greatest potential of religious peacebuilding: the capacity to transcend the boundary of peacebuilding as a field of external expertise.

## Challenges of Religious Peacebuilding

The greatest challenge to religious peacebuilding is the ambivalence of religion. Ambivalence undermines the perception of the enterprise and enables intra-religious sabotage of its progress. The challenges of religious violence notwithstanding, however, there are many points of criticism within the developing processes of religious peacebuilding.

Literature on the subject commonly refers to four obvious challenges. First, some religious peacebuilding situations require additional skills and knowledge of contemporary peacebuilding theory and practice. Like others in the peacebuilding and NGO sectors, religious actors would do well to advance professionally,<sup>[125]</sup> increase accountability to people on the ground,<sup>[126]</sup> and continue to limit the potential to do harm.<sup>[127]</sup> In some locations, religious leaders are the only leaders in the community, or are perceived as such by members of the community. To the extent that local groups are more likely to approach such leadership to facilitate peacebuilding, religious actors may join the field more often without the benefit of professional training and experience.<sup>[128]</sup>

Second, some individuals and groups will be hesitant or averse to working with actors of a different religion or categorically opposed to the intersection of religion and peacebuilding. The Community Sant'Egidio, an organization of Catholic laity, has mediated conflict in Guatemala, Kosovo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mozambique. It is often cited as an example of an explicitly religious organization that is adept at using non-religious discourse, or second-order language, in creating a space where religious affiliation is not a factor in partnering with secular actors. However, the success of such models notwithstanding, at times religious actors will simply be unwelcome or inappropriate. In conflicts where religion plays a major part, religious peacebuilders may have an advantage in understanding the context, yet be unable to gain sufficient confidence from conflict parties. Not all conflicts are amenable to "insider-partial" mediation.<sup>[129]</sup> An IPRO report finds, "It is paradoxical that when the need for religious peacemaking may be the greatest, the challenges also seem to be the largest."<sup>[130]</sup> In addition, sometimes religious actors will find it difficult to work with their co-religionists.<sup>[131]</sup> It should not be assumed that the ties of religion are necessarily stronger than, for example, the ties of nationalism or ethnicity.<sup>[132]</sup>

A third challenge is the potential perception that religious peace actors are proselytizing, actively seeking to attract religious membership or to induce conversion. While there are times when it is appropriate to use religious and spiritual tools, they are only beneficial and effective when applied with acute sensitivity to context. It is difficult to generalize about the ways religious actors negotiate this challenge. Appleby compares World Vision and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), two U.S.-based

organizations that evolved into large “sophisticated relief and development operations” during the 1970s and 1980s. During this evolution, World Vision retained its evangelical character, while CRS minimized its religious identity. This is illustrated by the fact that World Vision requires acceptance of a statement of faith as a condition of employment,<sup>[133]</sup> while CRS generally lacks such a requirement.<sup>[134]</sup> According to Appleby, World Vision devotes resources and programs to the topic of “evangelism and leadership” and trains Protestant church members to work in relief operations. In contrast, he notes that CRS favors “ecumenical, interreligious, and cross-cultural dialogue” above work designed to increase capacity within Catholic communities.<sup>[135]</sup>

The CRS model of religious peacebuilding makes it easier to dismiss accusations of proselytizing. However, it is not clear that World Vision’s understanding of its role and mission is inherently problematic. Human resource practices and capacity building within a religious tradition are not necessarily indications of proselytizing. Indeed, even as World Vision understands its work as evangelizing (preaching the gospel) through service to the poor “as a demonstration of God’s unconditional love,” it explicitly asserts that it does not proselytize.<sup>[136]</sup> Nonetheless, World Vision may face difficulties when working with non-evangelical communities because of the NGO’s confessional nature. One of the inherent challenges of being a religious organization in this field is that both unwarranted and valid accusations of proselytizing raise challenges to peacebuilding.

Fourth, according to the standards set by Western liberal institutions, some religious peacebuilding organizations are arguably incoherent voices for human rights insofar as they exclude women and homosexuals from full participation in society and/or religious institutions. Again, it is difficult to generalize, but many of the world’s religions have poor records in this regard, and these issues are subject to oversight, obstinacy and confusion. Stances on women and homosexuals may make it difficult for religious actors to partner with other peacebuilding agencies, especially on matters related to women’s participation and AIDS prevention.<sup>[137]</sup> However, the corollary of this might be that religious actors share views with local actors and thus make good partners for them. One can note that academics and policy experts continue to debate the potential and form of universal application of western liberal norms of gender equality, especially because attempting to force culture change can have unintentional negative effects on relationships and peacebuilding efforts.<sup>[138]</sup>

## Conclusion

Religious peacebuilding is a relatively new focus for scholarly research and reflection. Nevertheless, numerous authors from the conflict resolution field note the considerable spiritual and theological resources for peacebuilding that can be drawn from the major religions.<sup>[139]</sup> Correspondingly, each of these traditions has its own examples of religious peacebuilding.<sup>[140]</sup> One might consider Quaker conciliation during the Nigerian Civil War<sup>[141]</sup> or the Buddhist dhammayietra movement in Cambodia.<sup>[142]</sup> Some of the most creative and effective religious peacebuilding is done by inter-religious groups, which are surprisingly great in number.<sup>[143]</sup> For example, Muslim and Christian leaders of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone brokered negotiations between the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council and the ousted president Ahmed Tajan Kabbah and then played a key mediating role in the summer 1999 peace negotiations.<sup>[144]</sup> In Bosnia, local Catholic and Muslim clerics enabled their communities to pursue and sustain local cease-fires.<sup>[145]</sup> In the Middle East, an organization of Israeli and Palestinian women works on dialogue, education, and advocacy through ongoing community projects and large programs such as the five-day event “Sharing Jerusalem: Two Capitals for Two States.”<sup>[146]</sup>

Despite numerous success stories, religious peacebuilding is still asserting its validity amidst religious violence and in a largely secular culture of academia and policymaking. The task of this essay is to acknowledge the ambivalence of religion while asserting, nonetheless, its socio-political importance. The process and effects of secularization have been halting and mixed, yet the persisting relevance of religion has not been matched by sufficient religious literacy in Western international relations and

conflict resolution. Current academic and policy definitions of peacebuilding emphasize a determination to be non-prescriptive and long-term oriented. As defined here, religious peacebuilding is well suited to enact such designs—in its capacity for multi-layered, long-term work based in permanent and semi-permanent relationships with people in conflict zones.

Though there are substantial challenges that must be addressed, religion can offer considerable contributions to peacebuilding efforts. At least, religion should be included in matters of conflict and peace because its adherents represent numerically significant portions of society. At most, its inclusion increases the possibility of further contextualizing and internationalizing peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Religious traditions are vehicles for this in their existing networks, through which peacebuilders can share best practices,<sup>[147]</sup> and in religious education, which takes daily form in preaching and school teaching.<sup>[148]</sup> The ambivalence of religion, among other factors, dictates that the latter may be problematic. However, to the extent that local manifestations of religion accept and teach the peaceful doctrines of their traditions, they can contribute to the development of indigenous peacebuilding or what Appleby calls the saturation mode of peacebuilding. Herein lies the greatest potential of religious peacebuilding: the capacity to transcend the boundary of peacebuilding as a field of external expertise.

### End Notes

1. Abdul Aziz Said and Nathan C. Funk, "The Role of Faith in Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution" (presented at the European Parliament for the European Centre for Common Ground, September 2001), 1.
2. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 30.
3. Andreas Hasenclever and Volker Rittberger, "Does Religion Make a Difference? Theoretical Approaches to the Impact of Faith on Political Conflict," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (2000): 649.
4. Appleby, 164.
5. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1997), 204-205.
6. David Little, "Religion, Conflict and Peace," *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law* 31, no. 1 (2006), 98.
7. Marc Gopin, "Religion and International Relations at the Crossroads," *International Studies Review* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2001), <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/crdc/docs/relandiracrossroads.html>.
8. For a discussion of diversity in theological attitudes and correlating political implications, as well as evolving intersections of religious ethics and praxis in addition to dogma, see Cecilia Lynch, "Dogma, Praxis, and Religious Perspectives on Multiculturalism," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (2000): 741-759.
9. This essay adopts Ramsbotham and others' understanding of conflict resolution as a generic or umbrella term that includes conflict management and conflict transformation as well as the processes of peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. In this view, conflict resolution encompasses everything from prevention to the farthest goal of reconciliation. Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), chapter 1.
10. This theory is perhaps most famously expounded by Max Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, yet it can also be found in the works of Comte, Durkheim, Freud, Marx, Nietzsche, Toennies, Voltaire and others. Jonathan Fox, "The Rise of Religious Nationalism and Conflict: Ethnic Conflict and Revolutionary Wars, 1945-2001," *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 6 (2004): 715.
11. In "The Missing Dimension," Edward Luttwak gives historical examples concerning Lebanon, Vietnam, Sudan, and Iran. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, *Religion,*

- The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 8-19.
12. Scott M. Thomas, "Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously: The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Society," *Millenium: Journal of International Studies* 1, no. 3 (2000): 816-22. Thomas explains: "The modern concept of religion begins to emerge in the late fifteenth century, and first appears as a universal, inward, impulse or feeling toward the divine common to all people ... The varieties of pieties and rituals are increasingly called 'religions,' as representations of the one (more or less) true religio common to all, apart from any ecclesial community."
  13. It is helpful to note that secular (non-religious) does not necessarily mean anti-religious or non-spiritual.
  14. Thomas, 821-22.
  15. For contemporary discussions of secularization theory, see Jeffrey Haynes, "Religion and International Relations in the 21st Century: Conflict or Co-Operation?" *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (2006): 535-541. Also, see Peter Berger, ed., *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. and Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999).
  16. According to data from the U.S. State Department's 2002 "International Religious Freedom Report," 141 of the world's countries (78 percent) do not have a state religion. Further, over 70 percent of countries make no reference to religion in their constitutions or quasi-constitutional documents. Almost 60 percent seem not to favor a particular religion through financial support. Assaf Moghadam, "A Global Resurgence of Religion?" paper No. 03-03 (Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 2003), 53, 55, 47.
  17. Year 2000 data from David B. Barrett, George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World*, 2nd ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Cited in Moghadam, 3-4.
  18. William H. Swatos, Jr., and Kevin J. Christiano, "Secularization Theory: The Course of a Concept," 209, as quoted in Moghadam, 36.
  19. "Of the fourteen Western European countries that have been examined in this study, eight (Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Britain, and Iceland) have shown signs of a decline in religiousness. Three countries (Finland, Ireland, Italy) appeared to experience a rise in religiosity, while no conclusions could be reached for Sweden, Iceland, and Denmark because of contradictory trends. ... In Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Britain, and Iceland, most criteria measured indicated a trend towards secularization, although some criteria indicated the opposite. In Germany, for example, respondents suggested a heightened importance attributed to both God and to religion, even though all other indicators showed a decline of religious behavior and values. Moghadam, 23.
  20. For the list of indicators of used by Moghadam, see pages 16-18.
  21. Grace Davie, "Europe: The Exception that Proves the Rule?," in Peter L. Berger, 68.
  22. Moghadam, 20, 68.
  23. According to a 2002 Pew Forum survey, 41 percent of Americans attend a religious service weekly. Cited by Moghadam, 20.
  24. Moghadam, 41.
  25. For example, Martin Riesebrodt, "Secularization and the Global Resurgence of Religion," Paper presented at the Comparative Social Analysis Workshop (March 9, 2000), University of California, Los Angeles, cited in Moghadam, 66.
  26. Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5.
  27. Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious*

- Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
28. Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (London: Rider Books, 1999), 218.
  29. Little, 96.
  30. David Little and Scott Appleby, "A Moment of Opportunity? The Promise of Religious Peacebuilding in an Era of Religious and Ethnic Conflict" in *Religion and Peacebuilding*, ed. Harold Coward and Gordon S. Smith (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 3.
  31. Jeffrey Haynes, "Religion and International Relations in the 21st Century: Conflict or Co-Operation?" *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (2006): 539. Also, for a discussion and listing of religion's international political influence in the years 1945-present, see Haynes, 539-541.
  32. Fox writes that Western academia and policy have been able to marginalize religion because "their paradigms, rather than empirical observations, guided their understandings of the topic." Fox, 718.
  33. Douglas Johnston, ed., *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 4. This page includes discussion of the U.S. failure to recognize religious dimensions causing a failure to predict the Iranian revolution. See also Luttwak, 12-14.
  34. Michael Hirsch, "Bernard Lewis Revisited: What if Islam Isn't an Obstacle to Democracy in the Middle East but the Secret to Achieving It?" *Washington Monthly* (November 2004), <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2004/04111.hirsh.html>.
  35. Hirsh, *Washington Monthly*; Richard Bulliet, Islamo-Civilization, Agence Global (18 November 2004), <http://www.agenceglobal.com/article.asp?id=319>.
  36. Appleby, 218, 281-2.
  37. Appleby, 3.
  38. For a discussion of cultural differences between Western and non-Western conceptions of personhood, see Kevin Avruch, "Introduction: Culture and Conflict Resolution" in *Conflict Resolution: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Kevin Avruch, Peter W. Black, and Joseph A. Scimecca (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 9.
  39. This discussion assumes a moral dimension, rejecting the strict realist assertion that only interests are relevant to decision-making in international relations and conflict scenarios.
  40. Tutu, 35.
  41. Thomas, 827.
  42. Gopin, 5.
  43. Thomas, 827.
  44. Gopin, 132.
  45. MacIntyre, 221. Emphasis in original.
  46. Many religious scholars and leaders have dedicated themselves to finding shared or "universal" understanding among the world's major religions. Such work has resulted in documents such as the "Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights," the "Bangkok Declaration," and the "Declaration of Human Rights by the World's Religions." Gerrie Ter Haar, "Religion: Source of Conflict or Resource for Peace?" in *Bridge or Barrier: Religions, Violence and Visions for Peace*, ed. James J. Busuttil and Gerrie ter Haar (Leiden: Brill Academic Publisher, 2004), 19.
  47. Gopin, 5-6.
  48. MacIntyre, p.221.
  49. Referring especially to contemporary discussions of religion, one author writes, "The Western perception is that 'we' are secularized, they are 'fundamentalists.' But 'we' too are religious in the sense that 'we' are not the products of abstract universality but given substantially from our basis." C. B. Lausetsen and O. Waever, O., "In Defence of Religion: Sacred Referent Objects for Securitization," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 20, no. 3 (2000), 737.
  50. Gopin, 175. Appleby refers to such sentiments in his discussion of "the universal

- human rights regime.” It is important to recognize that many of the principles associated with human rights are taken from different sources and are variously defined in different cultures. Further, while there is much agreement on the ideals of human rights, how those are put into practice is subject of great debate. Appleby, 248-50.
51. People from various religious traditions joined secular counterparts in drafting the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” of 1948. Johannes Morsink, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Origins, Drafting and Intent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), notably chapter 1, “The drafting process explained,” quoted in Gerrie Ter Haar, 18.
  52. Appleby, 20.
  53. “Confidence building” in this context is the linking of people across boundaries such as nationality, ethnicity, or religion.
  54. Michael Pugh, “Peacebuilding as Developmentalism: Concepts from Disaster Research,” *Contemporary Security Policy* (December 1995) 16, no.3, 321.
  55. Johan Galtung, “Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding,” *Peace, War and Defense: Essays in Peace Research*, vol. 2, (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers, 1975), 282-304, as cited in *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, ed. by Oliver Ramsbotham, Oliver, Tom Woodhouse and Hugh Miall (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).
  56. Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilisation* (London: Sage, 1996), 112.
  57. Stephen Ryan, *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations* (Brookfield, Vermont: Dartmouth, 1990), 50, as cited in Ramsbotham.
  58. John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute for Peace, 1997), 20. This 1997 publication is an expansion of a manuscript published in 1994 by the United Nations University for use in its Education and Training Program.
  59. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventative Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-Keeping* (New York: United Nations, 1992), 11.
  60. Ramsbotham, 187.
  61. Pugh, 328.
  62. United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, <http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/>. The site’s home page reads as follows: “The Peacebuilding Commission will marshal resources at the disposal of the international community to advise and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict recovery, focusing attention on reconstruction, institution-building and sustainable development, in countries emerging from conflict.”
  63. T. Keating and W. A. Knight, eds., *Building Sustainable Peace* (Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 2004), xxxvi, xli. Keating and Knight list, for example, civil society and NGOs, governments, ad hoc criminal tribunals, and truth and reconciliation commissions. Keating, xli.
  64. Lederach, *Building Peace*, 52, 151.
  65. John Paul Lederach and M. Jenner, eds., *A Handbook of International Peacebuilding: Into The Eye of the Storm* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), xiv.
  66. United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, “Questions and Answers on the UN Peacebuilding Commission,” <http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/questions.htm>.
  67. ] Keating, xxxiii. It can include: disarming warring parties, decommissioning and destroying weapons, de-mining, repatriating refugees, restoring law and order, creating or rebuilding justice systems, training police forces and customs agents, providing technical assistance, advancing efforts to protect human rights, strengthening civil society institutions, and reforming and strengthening institutions of governance, including assistance in monitoring and supervising electoral processes and promoting formal and informal participation in the political process.
  68. Colin Gleichmann, et al., *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: A Practical Field and Classroom Guide* (GTZ, NODEFIC, PPC and SNDC, 2004).

69. Ramsbotham, 191.
70. Elizabeth Cousens, "Introduction" in *Peacebuilding as Politics: Cultivating Peace in Fragile Societies*, ed. Elizabeth Cousens, and Chetan Kumar (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2000), 14-15.
71. Chetan Kumar, "Conclusion," in Cousens and Kumar, 183.
72. Kumar, 185.
73. Cousens, 12.
74. Kumar, 184.
75. Kumar, 186, quoting from Lederach, "Just Peace: The Challenge of the 21st Century," in *People Building Peace* (Utrecht, Netherlands: European Center for Conflict Prevention, 1999), 29-30.
76. Pugh, 323.
77. Keating and Knight's 2004 edited volume states that one of the key themes of current peacebuilding literature is relocating peacebuilding to include prevention. Keating, xxxiii.
78. Kumar, 213.
79. Lederach is known for effective use of "second-order language" that bridges hermeneutical divisions between the religious and secular. While he is a prominent figure among mainstream peacebuilding practitioners, his work has been intimately connected to religion from the beginning, as he has drawn resources from his Mennonite tradition.
80. Caritas Internationalis, *Peacebuilding: A Caritas Training Manual* (2002), 4.
81. Appleby, 226. For example, Cynthia Sampson identifies more than a dozen types of actors who contributed to the ending of apartheid in South Africa.
82. Sharon Harper and Kathleen Clancy, "The way To Do Is To Be: Exploring the Interface Between Values and Research," *Gender and Development* 17, no. 1 (March 1999): 73-80.
83. In this second category, a religious leader, community or institution may engage in the following efforts: emphasizing a religious traditions' values of tolerance and nonviolence; responding to aggression and violence of co-religionists; guarding against co-option of religion by political entrepreneurs; respecting religious freedom; supporting interfaith initiatives; searching for early warning signs; exemplifying tolerance and inclusivity; and providing spiritual resources and hope. Paraphrased from Judy Carter and Gordon S. Smith, "Religious Peacebuilding: From Potential to Action," in Coward, 294-295.
84. This corresponds with conflict resolution scholarship that emphasizes the importance of complementarity and cooperation between various actors, official and unofficial, religious and secular. Nick Lewer, "International Non-Government Organisations and Peacebuilding: Perspectives from Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution," Centre for Conflict Resolution, Department of Peace Studies, Working Paper 3, October 1999.
85. Appleby, 221.
86. Marc Gopin, "World Religions, Violence, and Myths of Peace in International Relations," in Busuttil, 36-42.
87. Of course, humility is not a virtue inherent or exclusive to religious approaches to peace. Indeed, bringing god/s into the equation can result in a manner of peacebuilding that is arrogant and imposing, to put it mildly. This potential for cultural and structural violence (as defined by Galtung) is a facet of the ambivalence of religion.
88. John Paul Lederach, "Five Qualities of Practice in Support of Reconciliation Processes," in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy, and Conflict Transformation*, by S. J. Raymond G. Helmick and Rodney L. Peterson (Radnor, Penn.: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001), 198. Highlighting three of the world's religions, Lederach writes, "Among the greatest of all mandates common to the three Abrahamic religious traditions [Judaism, Christianity, Islam] was the simple phrase of the prophet [Micah]: Do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God."

89. For reference to the importance of humility in reconciliation, see Lederach in Helmick, 198-199.
90. Quoted in Caritas, 2002, 3.
91. Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas*, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/encyclicals/](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/)
92. Julia Berger, "Religious Non-Governmental Organizations: An Exploratory Analysis" (International Society for Third-Sector Research and John Hopkins University, 2003), <http://isrc.payap.ac.th/document/papers/paper02.pdf>, 14.
93. Gopin in Busuttil, 46.
94. Gerrie Ter Haar, "Religion: Source of Conflict or Resource for Peace?" in *Bridge or Barrier: Religions, Violence and Visions for Peace*, ed. James J. Busuttil and Gerrie Ter Haar (Leiden: Brill Academic Publisher, 2004), 24.
95. Gopin in Busuttil, 50-52.
96. Gopin in Busuttil, 49.
97. John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001).
98. Tsjeard Bouth, S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, and Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Faith-Based Peace-Building: Mapping and Analysis of Christian, Muslim and Multi-Faith Actors* (Washington DC: Salam Institute for Peace & Justice and the Clingendael Institute, November 2005), p. 40, available at <http://www.salaminstitute.org/Resources/salampub.htm>.
99. Appleby, 168.
100. As cited in Ramsbotham, 211; Judith Large, *The War Next Door: A Study of Second Track Intervention During the War in ex-Yugoslavia* (Stroud: Hawthorne Press, 1997), 4; Betts Fetherston, "Transformative Peacebuilding: Peace Studies in Croatia," Paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, Minneapolis, March 1998.
101. Berger, 5.
102. Ad hoc funding and shifting expectations of international donors can result in arbitrary change and waste. Bronwyn Evans-Kent and Roland Bleiker, "Peace Beyond the State? NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina" in *Mitigating Conflict: the role of NGOs*, ed. Henry F. Carey and Oliver P. Richmond (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003), 108.
103. Bouth, 39, section 4.3.3.
104. Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, 170.
105. Note that the word "martyr" comes from a Greek term for "witness," as in "witness to one's faith."
106. R. Brennan Hill, *8 Spiritual Heroes: Their Search for God* (Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2002), 184.
107. For example, Muslims in Sudan welcomed an ecumenical Christian team to mediate the Addis Ababa settlement of 1972. Douglas Johnston, "Looking Ahead: Toward a New Paradigm," in Johnston and Sampson, 318.
108. Appleby, 8; Bouth, 39.
109. Bouth, 36.
110. Gopin in Busuttil, 44.
111. Berger, 18.
112. Bouth, 37.
113. Also, as an overarching factor, hierarchical structures provide the benefits of multiple points of access, levels of accountability and authority, and proximity to other societal hierarchies such as government. Conversely, autonomous congregations do not suffer hierarchy's negative aspects, which include the relative inflexibility of bureaucracy and the taint of association with harmful and/or unpopular policies and acts of central bodies or other branches of the religion.
114. Appleby, 230-244.

115. It does not require “proof” that the spiritual is relevant or, indeed, that it exists.
116. For a journalist’s exposition of this in various contemporary conflict settings, see Chris Hedges, *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* (Anchor Books, 2003).
117. For a case study example, see William F. Vendley and James L. Cairns, “Religious Dynamics in Kosovo and the Potential for Cooperation,” in *Kosovo: Contending Voices on Balkan Interventions*, ed. William Joseph Buckley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 461.
118. The Caritas peacebuilding manual includes exercises based on the biblical stories “Jacob and Esau” and “The Prodigal Son” (Caritas, 2002), 37-46. See also Lederach on his use of the story “Jacob and Esau,” in *Building Peace*.
119. Gopin, 275 (see note 17).
120. Appleby, 49.
121. Massaro focuses on the Christian actors, though he notes that non-Christian groups were active as well. He lists the Presbyterian Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the American Baptist Church, the Episcopal Church, the Disciples of Christ, and the United Church of Christ, as well as the Mennonites and Quakers. The U.S. Bishops Conference voiced their opposition in letters dated 17 September and 21 November 2002 and statements dated 26 February and 19 March 2003. Massaro, 117-119.
122. Reuters, “U.S. Religious Group Condemns Iraq War” (February 18, 2006). This is an article on the U.S. conference for the World Council of Churches.
123. Hedges, 146.
124. This is part of the mission, for example, of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, <http://cpn.nd.edu/>.
125. Annek Galama and Paul van Tongren, eds., *Towards Better Peacebuilding Practice: On Lessons Learned, Evaluation Practices and Aid and Conflict* (Utrecht, Netherlands: European Center for Conflict Prevention, 2002).
126. For a discussion of the importance of accountability in post-conflict societies, see “Accountability” in *International Governance of War-Torn Territories: Rule and Reconstruction*, by Richard Caplan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
127. Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—or war* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1999).
128. Jonathan Goodhand and Nick Lewer, “Sri Lanka: NGOs and peace-building in complex political emergencies,” *Third World Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (1999): 69-87. This is not exclusive to religious actors. See, for example, Goodhand and Lewer’s discussion about the “anarchy of good intentions” in Sri Lanka.
129. Marie Olson and Frederic S. Pearson, “Civil War Characteristics, Mediators, and Resolution,” *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (2002): 421-446.
130. Kristian Berg Harpviken and Hanne Eggen Røislien, “Mapping the Terrain: The Role of Religion in Peacemaking,” International Peace Research Institute (Oslo), July 2005, 5.
131. Philip Lewis, “Depictions of ‘Christianity’ within British Islamic Institutions,” in *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2001). This difficulty can be manifest even in the way “co-religionist” is defined. For example, Wahhabi ideology equates non-Wahhabi with non-believer, thereby denying “co-religion” status to the majority of Muslims.
132. Brian Starcken notes, for instance, that Tamil and Sinhalese bishops and priests have trouble working together in Sri Lanka. Fr. Brian Starcken, C.S.Sp., Interview with author (July 21, 2006), Dublin. Starcken is editor of Caritas Internationalis (1999) and contributing writer to Caritas Internationalis (2002).
133. World Vision Statement of Faith, [http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/hr.nsf/stable/hr\\_faith](http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/hr.nsf/stable/hr_faith). World Vision Human Resources, [http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/hr.nsf/stable/hr\\_requirements](http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/hr.nsf/stable/hr_requirements).
134. Catholic Relief Services, CRS Frequently Asked Questions, <http://www.crs.org>

/about\_us/careers/fellowship\_opportunities/faq.cfm.

135. Appleby, 272-3.
136. World Vision, FAQ, [http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/pr.nsf/stable/press\\_FAQs?Open&lid=press\\_FAQs&lpos=main](http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/pr.nsf/stable/press_FAQs?Open&lid=press_FAQs&lpos=main). "We understand and respect the cultures in which we work and do not proselytize."
137. It is interesting to note change and mobilization on this issue. For instance, Pope Benedict XVI recently requested a study that could alter the RCC position on the use of condoms in HIV prevention (Tony Barber, "Vatican considers allowing use of condoms in fight against AIDS," *Financial Times*, April 27, 2006, 2). Also, religious leaders called for unified and extended responses during a three day event preceding the 2006 International AIDS Conference. Speakers included the Special Advisor for HIV and AIDS with Caritas Internationalis. See press releases, and other writings at Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, <http://www.e-alliance.ch/>.
138. This is perhaps illustrated by debate surrounding the 1995 UN World Conference on Women in Beijing. Appleby, 251-252.
139. See Harvey Cox, "World Religions and Conflict Resolution" in *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, by Johnston and Sampson; Johnston, *Faith Based Diplomacy*, sections II and III; Ter Haar, *Bridge or Barrier*; Coward, *Religious Peacebuilding*; and Bouth, *Faith-Based Peace-Building*, section II.
140. For the stories of sixteen religious peacebuilders from the Abrahamic faiths, see Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, and David Little, ed., *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
141. Cynthia Sampson, "Quaker Conciliation during the Nigerian Civil War" in Johnston and Sampson, 88-118.
142. Catherine Morris, "Case Studies in Religion and Peacebuilding: Cambodia," in Coward, 191-211.
143. William Headley, "Justice But Little Peace: Peacebuilding as a New Social Action Agenda," *Peace and Change* 25, no. 4 (October 2000): 494.
144. Appleby, 153-4.
145. Gerald Shenk, "God with Us? The Role of Religion in Conflicts in the Former Yugoslavia," Research Report No. 15 (Uppsala, Sweden: Life and Peace Institute, 1993), quoted in Lederach, *Building Peace*, 31.
146. D'Souza, Diane, "Creating Spaces," in Coward, 169-189.
147. See, for example, the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, <http://cpn.nd.edu/>.
148. Appleby, 10.

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