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Transcendence and the Evaluation of Faith-Based Peacebuilding

1 Introduction

There is very little research on professional evaluation[1] of religious or faith-based peacebuilding (terms we will use interchangeably), despite the existence of a variety of efforts over centuries to promote peace within many faith traditions. Therefore, this chapter will address pertinent concepts and principles related to the perception of transcendent experience that, to varying degrees, influences any intervention in which religious conviction plays a role. There are three specific roles which religion can play: (1) the interveners, either indigenous or external, can be motivated by faith-based perspectives; (2) local actors whom the interveners wish to influence can be religiously motivated; and (3) the context can be one in which religion plays a significant role in the society as either a conflict driver or mitigator. Therefore, when speaking of faith-based actors, we include any interveners or those they support who are motivated by religious conviction, whether or not religion plays a significant role in conflict dynamic. When speaking of a faith-based context, we refer to any situation in which religion plays a major role in the social dynamic, whether the role is negative, positive or of a mixed character and whether or not the interveners are themselves motivated by a faith commitment.

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1 "Professional evaluation" refers to the norms and practices promoted by over 188 (end of 2013) national, regional and international evaluation associations and societies. See International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (2016). The use of this terminology, however, is not meant to ignore the important professional role of religious leaders or diminish the value contributed by faith-based actors involved in peacebuilding.

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In each of these cases, it is important that evaluators, whether they are religious or secular, understand the concepts and principles related to a perception of transcendent experience and conviction based on the particular faith tradition and worldview held by those involved in faith-based peacebuilding. The chapter will address the application of these conceptions to evaluation practice. It is the authors' intention to provide guidelines for peacebuilders and evaluators, both religious and secular, as well as policymakers and donors who frequently play an important role in the design, monitoring and evaluation process.

We aim to contribute to the growing effort to learn, share and collaborate between religious and secular peacebuilders, supporting both with perspectives they can incorporate into the evaluation of their work with faith-based communities and within religious contexts. Furthermore, since intra-faith conflicts between different entities within one religion can also be deep rooted and equally intractable, the framework and methodology we present can apply to intra-religious as well as inter-religious contexts. Differences based on identity, authority structures and interpretation, can influence worldviews and various faith-based practices, adding significantly to the complexity of a conflict and to the processes employed to address it effectively.

So far, however, cooperative exploration among religious and secular actors and evaluators has engaged only a part of the full spectrum of faith-based peacebuilders – those who have been integrated into the Western-dominated world of non-profit NGOs. Many more traditional faith-based entities exist across the world and work primarily within their own networks. For these religious peacebuilders that have not participated in professional evaluations, the paper will potentially serve them as well since many in our audience will work with them.

The primary factor that distinguishes religious from secular peacebuilding is the conviction that one's experience and comprehension transcend the ordinary or the normal. What distinguishes faith-based or religiously motivated actors is a conviction that those involved in the process are part of a reality greater than the sum of all human endeavours. Their transcendent worldview implies the existence of a reality beyond the natural world, a realm they also refer to as the supernatural. We will, therefore, use the terms transcendence and supernatural interchangeably to refer to a perception of a presence that defies normal explanation.

In addition, there are a number of other factors that contribute to the distinctive nature of faith-based peacebuilding.

1. Its primary focus on personal transformation aligns it with only certain parts and priorities of secular peacebuilding practice.
2. Religion is fundamentally about narrative and symbol that explain the meaning of life and death and its aftermath, the cosmos and human nature.

From this the faith-based peacebuilder derives morality, ethics, religious laws or a preferred lifestyle. The centrality of narrative and ritual, which focus on storytelling and symbolic dramatization, have only more recently been incorporated into the wider peacebuilding arena.

3. The existence of religious hierarchy adds a different context in which determination of mission and accountability might be understood.
4. One of the most distinctive features of faith-based peacebuilding is its access to extensive networks, many worldwide. Collectively, faith communities connect with all sectors of most societies, linked to both the most powerful and the most marginalized. (Gopin 2009)
5. At the same time, many individual faith communities are very locally oriented.
6. Unlike most secular peacebuilding programmes, usually religious communities have very long-standing relationships to their societies and view their activities through a long-term lens. Consequently, they tend to view the key element of personal transformation as a long-term process, and many of their peacebuilding efforts are not project or programme oriented.

All of these factors have implications on theories of change, definitions of success, criteria used to measure progress, and other aspects of professional evaluation methodology when applied to religious peacebuilding.

Nonetheless, conviction of the existence of the supernatural, however defined, is the only factor that is unique to faith-based peacebuilding. It is the one that most profoundly influences the distinctive nature of a number of the other factors listed above. Religious peacebuilders from all faith traditions, whether mono-, poly- or non-theistic,[2] are motivated by their sense of connection with supernatural agency, whatever it may be called: divinity, ultimate reality or superior, transcendent good. Consequently, if evaluation is going to be relevant to faith-based peacebuilders, it must provide ways to monitor and evaluate faith-based action that is grounded in a perception of the existence of a powerful, transcendent presence.

2 In addition to the monotheistic (Jewish, Christian or Muslim) and polytheistic (Cao Dai, Paganism, Hinduism, Shamanism, Shinto, Wicca), there are non-theistic (Mahayana Buddhism and Jainism). In each religion, we also find a wide range of religious practice or non-practice among both the nominal and devoted within a particular faith. For example, there are those who are culturally influenced by aspects of a given religious tradition's worldview and values, but do not engage in regular religious practice or belong to a local faith community.

2 Principal Features of Faith-Based Peacebuilding and Evaluation

There are five distinct features of any faith-based activity, due to the perception of a transcendent or supernatural presence, that are especially relevant. Later in the frameworks section of this chapter, each of the following features is associated with one of the typical criteria used in professional evaluation of peacebuilding. The presentation of these features, as well as other characterizations of faith-based actors, are based on general tendencies. Not every viewpoint attributed to religious conviction or practice can be applied uniformly to every faith-based individual or group.

2.1 Accountability

Both secular and religious groups are concerned with evaluating their effectiveness, leading them to emphasize the need for accountability. However, religious peacebuilders have their own perspective on "accountability." In many instances, it is not tied to achieving predefined results. Often, the primary sense of accountability is about faithfulness to a supernatural presence, to the faith tradition, or to a personal sense of calling that has been legitimized within their faith community. Religious peacebuilders frequently value motive, loyalty and relationships more highly than common secular perspectives regarding efficient use of resources or effectiveness in reaching specific pre-determined outcomes. From the perspective of many faith-based peacebuilders, this frees them from the need to demonstrate observable results within a set time period.

Being less project oriented or time bound, religious peacebuilders also often enjoy greater flexibility to change strategies and objectives. The theories of change, and consequent approaches to evaluation, are determined by their values. For many, this reflects the priority placed on personal transformation. Yet, there is also a perspective common to most faith traditions that full consequences, whether they be positive or negative, can be postponed indefinitely in this life and sometimes beyond it. Whether it is due to a conviction regarding divine judgment or grace, karma, or a debt/merit relationship with deceased ancestors, there is the possibility that cause and effect can be postponed to a distant future, including the afterlife. In this light, the fact that faith-based understandings of accountability are measured primarily by faithfulness to the religious tradition and its values, is of paramount importance for evaluation.

2.2 A Distinctive Value System

The focal point of any religious value system is a framework of meaning that makes sense of life and one's place within it, a worldview that provides a moral compass from which a code of conduct is derived. The religious peacebuilder's worldview is intuitive, not primarily rational.

Most faith traditions hold some generalized values in common with each other, as well as with much of secular society. One can find adherents within most religions that claim to value peace, justice and compassion. Different religious communities, however, give particular meanings to those values. Since the actual practice of a given community is influenced more by the particular, rather than the generalized meaning given to the values, conflict can arise. For instance, Christians, Buddhists, Sunni and Shia Muslims can have different perspectives on peace, conflict, justice, compassion and reconciliation, as can different secular societies.

In cases of conflict driven by values differences, it is important to understand the particular meanings given to those values and the specific practices derived from them. Practices involving concrete issues like land ownership and women's rights, based on very specific faith-based understandings of justice, are at the heart of local conflicts all across the world. Effective handling of different values between faith communities or with secular groups requires sensitivity for each tradition's framing of values and a search for areas of compatibility. In such a context, it is wise to engage local participants in a discussion of key concepts and elicit the language and meaning upon which they can agree, rather than impose external religious or secular perspectives.

2.3 Understanding of Success/Failure

The ways in which religious communities traditionally define and measure success are, in some ways, quite distinct from the methodology and criteria developed by the professional peacebuilding evaluation community. For the faith-based person or group, success is not understood solely in temporal, material terms. Ultimately success (or failure) is understood as transcendent. Religious actors traditionally see themselves as part of something beyond the natural world. Faithfulness to a calling, or a full awareness of (or alignment with) ultimate reality, is often the standard by which success of human effort is evaluated, rather than more easily measured objectives.

Yet for the religious peacebuilder, success is never based solely on the religious actor's performance. A basic assumption is that their initiative is only a

small part of a larger intervention process in which supernatural agency influences other human actors and has impact throughout the process, well beyond the reach of any human activity. Developing scientific mechanisms to measure that magnitude of transcendence is not possible. Nonetheless, an understanding of this perspective is essential in evaluating what is achieved and how, what is understood and recorded, and what has been learned. For example, it enables the evaluator to understand the difference in outlook that allows a Mother Teresa to labour for years among the poor without much sign of measurable success, or why liberation theologians continue the struggle for peace and justice when their secular revolutionaries desist.

2.4 Motivation

As illustrated by the above examples, supernatural direction, guidance and calling, via scripture, spiritual mentor, or meditation, can be a major factor in determining what a faith-based person does. A strong conviction that the supernatural can act independently from the action of any part of the faith community or even the entire human race has great influence over what direction faith-based actors follow.

Faithfulness to one's religious tradition can, in some cases, mean a willingness to live within the status quo rather than pursuing efforts to solve an issue or change an inequitable system. Such a commitment can even motivate some religious propel to resist any intervention by others. Within many faith traditions, there is an emphasis on perseverance in the face of suffering and injustice. Usually it involves more than merely "staying the course." For devotees within many traditions, "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."[3] There are many faith-based practices, including various forms of meditation and lament, which are specifically designed to enable the faithful to find an inner way to live in hope, despite troubles which might appear unsurmountable and unending. Ultimately, most of these religious practices do enable reengagement, though frequently after considerable time spent in contemplative practice and occasionally never outside their religious community. For example, the only activity of some cloistered monastic orders is to pray for the world, depending on supernatural agency alone, or perhaps on the inspiration of their spirituality, to move others to action. In most cases, however, the actions of faith-

3 A verse from the Bible, Hebrews 11:1 (RSV), though a sentiment shared widely among religions.

based peacebuilders are based on a combination of human and supernatural agency. There are multiple ways in which one might conceptualize the balance, all of which can have various effects on motivation.

2.5 Faith-Based Transformation

Religious transformation has its ultimate sights set on the whole world and beyond. If one listens to the vision, common within many religious traditions, of an ultimate solution, one hears of a transformation that can have no bounds. Sometimes, such a vision moves faith-based actors to attempt the seemingly impossible, despite evidence to the contrary. Yet, the kind of transformation seen as primary often differs from that stressed by secular peacebuilders. The most common religious theory of change assumes that peace will be built to the extent that people-to-people efforts are in accord with a transcendent vision, design or transformation process. That is, a religious peacebuilder is not tied only to a specific human agenda, even when it is the funder's!

Therefore, faith-based actors prioritize outcomes that are more often related to change of an individual person or a primary group, rather than at the sociopolitical level. In fact, many faith-based peacebuilders see their people-to-people efforts as the most effective way to facilitate structural change and sustainable peacebuilding. They may even resist pressure from secular peacebuilders to redirect their attention. This distinction between secular and religious peacebuilders, however, is one of emphasis since many religious peacebuilders also work directly for social and structural transformation.

In sum, evaluation of faith-based peacebuilding must provide ways to assess action that is grounded in a conviction regarding the existence of the supernatural, a powerful, transcendent presence as manifest in five distinct features. The religious peacebuilder understands accountability as faithfulness to a transcendent process more than a commitment to implementing projects and programmes. The faithfulness is rooted in a distinctive value system which provides a specific worldview and moral code. Success (or failure) is determined in light of supernatural, as well as human, agency. The faith-based peacebuilder is motivated by sense of supernatural guidance and direction, leading the religiously motivated actor to become part of a uniquely faith-based process of transformation. So, for evaluating religious peacebuilding, the primary question is not how one measures the transcendent, but how one takes into consideration the effect of that conviction. How does one factor that consideration into the way one designs and implements the entire evaluation process?

3 Three Common Components within Religious and Secular Peacebuilding Experience

Psychologist Jonathan Haidt, in his book, *The Righteous Mind* writes about the nature of religiosity – the function of experience, activity and belief within religion:

> Supernatural agents do, of course, play a central role in religion, just as the actual football is at the centre of the whirl of activity on game day... But trying to understand the persistence and passion of religion by studying beliefs about God is like trying to understand the persistence and passion of... football by studying the movements of the ball. You've got to broaden the inquiry. You've got to look at the ways that religious beliefs work with religious practices to create a religious community (Haidt 2012, 290).

Haidt goes on to describe *believing*, *doing* and *belonging* as three distinct, complimentary components of religiosity, each influencing the other (Figure 1). He proposes that one cannot understand the faith phenomenon without examining the interactive relationship between these three. In fact, he claims that *belonging* is the most fundamental, while the purpose of believing and doing is to support the faith community to which one belongs. He proposes that the specific role beliefs and conviction play in this relationship is to create rational explanations designed to support both of the other two – what the believer does and, most important, where the believer belongs.

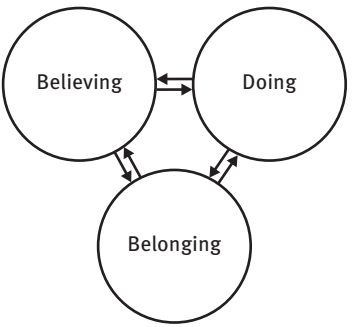

Figure 1: Haidt's components of religiosity

We have here a creative presentation of the role of the supernatural within religious faith – as a belief, but more than that, a presence that provides an ultimate experience of belonging, and a source of motivation that pervades what the believer does. Finally, there is the faith community to which one belongs, which shares the belief and legitimizes one's activity.

It is important to note that these three dynamics operate on all members of a community, whether they see themselves as religiously motivated or not, as they inform the underlying value systems and social norms that are passed on to all. We can, therefore, draw parallels with the secular field of peacebuilding which certainly has its own forms of belief or conviction and identification of the proper activities that constitute the work of building peace. Within peacebuilding, there is also emphasis placed on belonging, not only to the community of actors with whom one works, but to the many communities which the secular peacebuilder seeks to heal, strengthen and empower. In this case, one might also conclude that peacebuilders' convictions are formed in response to what they do, and most importantly, the quality of belonging they help to create and to which they belong.

Certainly the process of evaluation within both religious and the secular peacebuilding must take into account the interrelationship of these three: beliefs and convictions, activities in which we engage, and the communities of belonging we seek to enhance, often framed as "improving social cohesion" among secular peacebuilders. Within both peacebuilder networks, there is an ongoing assessment of all three, albeit using different lenses, which sometimes emphasize the dissimilarities.

How to do this? First, when working within faith-based contexts, peacebuilding and professional evaluation must respect indigenous religious frameworks of believing, including assumptions about the supernatural. Any effective evaluation of a peacebuilding process and its results, therefore, will assess the degree to which the desired transformation is informed by the wisdom and values found within the indigenous faith tradition. Such an assessment requires an examination of the role played by beliefs and their underlying values in the process of attitude change. The importance of this kind of inner personal transformation, and the specific way in which beliefs become important indicators is explored in the last part of the following section presenting a framework for evaluation of faith-based peacebuilding.

Second, professional evaluation of faith-based peacebuilding should examine the doing. – the activities performed in order to facilitate all the levels of transformation – inner personal, inter-personal, social and structural. This must include faith-based adaptations of traditional peacebuilding practice and various categories of distinct religious practice (addressed separately in the rest of the chapter).

Third, to broaden and deepen the sense of belonging within faith-based contexts, the evaluator must address the fundamental basis upon which each specific faith community's identity and solidarity is based, as well as its understanding of its moral commitment to "the other." All faith traditions include some

vision of a desired, wholesome relationship within and beyond their in-group. The way this vision is understood within one specific faith tradition can vary greatly depending on its status within a given society and the interpretation given to its defining narrative. Effective faith-based peacebuilding evaluation must begin by asking questions about their perspective rather than assuming the superiority of the non-indigenous perspective.

4 A Framework for Evaluation of Faith-Based Peacebuilding

4.1 Purpose

Jonathan Haidt, in the previous section, proposed three essential components of religiosity, each of which is also very important to peacebuilding and professional evaluation. Insights from these key components of religiosity fit well into basic frameworks developed by professional evaluators. In fact, the field of professional evaluation of peacebuilding has much to contribute that supports and augments such an approach to the evaluation of faith-based peacebuilding.

Evaluation of a peacebuilding initiative can be understood as an effort to support accountability, understanding and learning by determining the merit, worth or significance of what has happened and been achieved.[4] These three foci, derived from professional evaluation, are also relevant to faith-based peacebuilders, because they can be applied to the distinctive nature of religious peacebuilding (as presented in Table 1 and described in detail in the rest of the chapter). Merit, worth and significance correspond to the three interconnected components of faith experience – believing, doing and belonging.

Table 1: Foci of Professional Religious Peacebuilding Evaluation

Focus of Professional Evaluation	Focus of Religious Peacebuilding Evaluation
Merit is about intrinsic qualities, ***performance*** or results of an intervention – how well the activities implemented meet the needs of those it intends to serve.	*Excellence* of ***performance*** of the religious peacebuilding process, including use of faith-based practices and religious networks, as described below, to facilitate personal and communal transformation. (Doing)

4 See American Evaluation Association (ND).

Table 1: Foci of Professional Religious Peacebuilding Evaluation *(Continued)*

Focus of Professional Evaluation	Focus of Religious Peacebuilding Evaluation
Worth is the extrinsic quality of an intervention or its results – the ***value*** of the programme for the broader community or society.	***Value*** of the results of peacebuilding efforts, whether they are in line with the faith tradition's vision of community and sense of purpose, as informed by its worldview, values and source of motivation based on the faith's understanding of human and supernatural agency. (Belonging)
Significance is the potential ***importance*** of the intervention or the **influence** of its results – the prospect that the programme will have more or different merit or worth.	***Importance*** of what has been done and achieved in light of the faith-tradition's understanding of accountability and standards for measuring success, both of which are ***influenced*** by belief in the transcendent intervention of the supernatural as described below. (Believing)

As previously noted by Haidt, the distinctive role played by belief, including affirmation of the supernatural, is to explain or legitimize any activity undertaken as well as the understanding of belonging, the ultimate objective. Discerning (but not measuring) the influence of belief helps establish the significance of the peacebuilding effort. Religious belief, then, can influence the way in which faith-based actors conceptualize each of the following criteria typically used in the professional evaluation of peacebuilding interventions:[5]

1. Efficiency measures how cost-effectively resources used in a peacebuilding effort are converted to results. Religious actors' sense of motivation affects how they will view efficiency.
2. Effectiveness measures the extent to which a peacebuilding activity attains results within its immediate environment. Religious actors' understanding of accountability influences how they view effectiveness.
3. Impact refers to the wider effects produced by a peacebuilding intervention – positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended. Religious peacebuilders' understanding of success/failure affects how they think about impact.
4. Relevance is the extent to which the peacebuilding activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the parties in conflict, the peacebuilders and

5 Adapted here from OECD, Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results, 65–71.

other stakeholders. The distinct sets of values, held by each group – religious or secular, will influence relevance.

5. Sustainability is concerned with assessing whether the benefits of a peacebuilding activity are likely to continue after the intervention ends. The way faith-based peacebuilders conceive of transformation affects how they view sustainability.

These five criteria are neither all obligatory nor exhaustive. In each evaluation, one or more are chosen or prioritized. Furthermore, other criteria may be added, such as coherence and coordination. In addition to providing an assessment of the purpose for an evaluation and guiding the selection of criteria to be used, the framework needs to address the type of activity to be evaluated.

4.2 Types of Activity

Many of the types of activity involved in faith-based peacebuilding (e. g. mediation, conciliation, dialogue, educational efforts, advocacy, problem solving, or structural reform) are also performed by secular peacebuilders. In particular, religious actors will adapt their efforts in order to fulfil the specific needs of faith communities. For example, advocacy efforts are likely to include specific religious activities such as preaching or fasting. Intermediary efforts might include faith-based storytelling, interfaith dialogue sessions or inter-religious round tables that produce joint statements.

However, some distinct categories of religious practice are used by faith-based peacebuilders, sometimes as part of traditional activities, sometimes as stand-alone activities. Five such practices are of particular significance: expressions of piety, education/proclamation, rituals, reconciliation processes and faith witness, living out one's faith in the world. These practices will be explored in detail in the next section on selecting an evaluation methodology.

4.3 Importance of Attitudinal Change

Professional peacebuilding evaluation has increasingly recognized the importance of personal and public attitudes, especially within fragile contexts. In fact, the OECD DAC guidelines for professional evaluation recognize the importance of assessing this kind of subjective experience (OECD 2012, 64 – 65):

> Many interventions work to build peace and prevent conflict by creating change in people's attitudes, thought processes, and relationships. In such cases, it may be necessary to collect attitudinal data, conduct interviews, workshops, or focus group discussions with stakeholders, or carry out surveys to collect quantitative data. Measuring intangible changes in areas such as perceptions through interviews requires the same triangulation vetting as other types of data.

Changes in attitude are especially important in faith-based peacebuilding. The identification of significance, as one of the central foci of effective evaluation, requires asking what the parties involved see as high priority in the process of transformation. Given the centrality of inner personal transformation – individual and collective – to faith-based peacebuilding, it is essential to assess when, why and how people's attitudes change and how to utilize such data to inform future intervention efforts. For religious peacebuilders, attitudinal change is not merely a precursor to behavioural change. Instead, it is viewed as a central, underlying dynamic that pervades the entire transformation process. Much of the time it is less visible, yet can play a critical role, especially prior to the emergence of the more visible behavioural changes.

For the faith-based peacebuilder, the task of discerning even the least visible sign, just the possibility, of change in peoples' perceptions is very important. Faith-based actors are less likely to abandon a hoped for significant behavioural change, when they sense, in themselves or others, even the slightest beginning of a change in someone's mental outlook. For example, even a minor lessening of acrimonious remarks may be just enough expression of openness for a religious peacebuilder to see it as an initial steppingstone to a not yet seen behavioural transformation. Yet, attitude change is also seen as useful, in itself, even if there is little or no apparent behavioural change.

For the evaluator of religious peacebuilding, the challenge is to take into account attitudinal changes perceived through intuition and insight beyond what is known through the five senses. For example, informants declaring "I sense their attitudes are changing" must be seen as process indicators because the belief or conviction in changing attitudes can be the key to moving forward (or backward) in religious peacebuilding.

The role of belief in relation to attitudinal formation and change is especially relevant to faith-based peacebuilding. Expressions of belief can be important indicators of underlying attitudes, both negative and positive. Identifying patterns of belief can be used to point to either constancy or change in someone's perspective. Yet, even changes in belief often take time to emerge. Once the reframing of beliefs has begun, however, it can signal the presence of even deeper changes in attitude toward other groups and serve the important role of explaining and legitimizing new patterns of behaviour. Designing a process that will as-

sess these kinds of changes in participant attitudes about beliefs can provide extremely important data to be fed into a major learning process which can help redirect the faith-based intervention.

5 Selecting a Religious Peacebuilding Evaluation Methodology

5.1 Overview

Professional evaluation gathers and analyses quantitative and qualitative data[6] to inform learning, decision-making and action. The field has been conceptually visualized by Marvin Alkin[7], as a tree with three main branches: methods, values and use (see Figure 2) (Alkin 2010). An evaluation theory, or approach prescribing how to evaluate "must consider: (a) issues related to the methodology being used, (b) the manner in which the data are to be judged or valued, and (c) the user focus of the evaluation effort." (Carden and Alkin 2012, 103) Most evaluators are influenced by the theoretical approaches represented by all three branches, but individual evaluators tend to emphasize one over the others.

In the methods branch, scientific research methodology is the central focus. Although there are many quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods, evaluators who emphasize methods as central to evaluation tend to demand rigorous adherence to experimental and quasi-experimental designs that determine causation by establishing the difference between what an intervention achieved (the factual), and what would have been achieved without the intervention (the counterfactual).[8] These experimental approaches to evaluation are inappropriate for

6 Quantitative data can be statistically aggregated and numerically compared and contrasted to produce broad, generalizable sets of findings presented succinctly. In contrast, qualitative data produces a wealth of data usually from a relatively small number of people responding to open questions. This increases the depth of understanding but reduces generalizability. The "quanti-quali" data can be complimentary, for example, when you need to know *what* happened but also *so what* does it mean to people. (Patton 2015, 22).

7 Marvin C. Alkin's research includes *Evaluation Essentials: From A to Z, Debates on Evaluation, Evaluation Roots*, and the four-volume *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*. Dr Alkin is currently co-section Editor of the American Journal of Evaluation.

8 These evaluations require random controlled trials (RCTs) using a "treatment" group and one or more comparison groups. In these evaluation modes, causation in religious peacebuilding work would be determined by comparing the results of interreligious peacebuilding in one population (of individuals, groups, communities, or countries) with the same results in a similar population not subject to those peacebuilding activities.

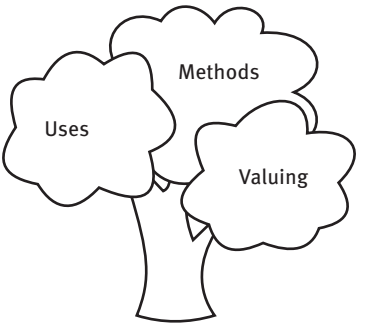

Figure 2: Alkin's evaluation tree

religious peacebuilding because attempting to establish experimentally that there has or has not been the presence of the supernatural in a faith-based peacebuilding intervention will be, not only a fruitless task,[9] but not relevant to an evaluation of the role such beliefs play. Furthermore, most if not virtually all religious peacebuilding falls within the 70% of development interventions that cannot be evaluated experimentally.[10]

As presented in the introduction of this paper, evaluation which is relevant to faith-based peacebuilding needs to provide ways to evaluate a religious peacebuilding initiative that is grounded in belief in the supernatural. For this purpose, the two other branches of evaluation theory are relevant. The *valuing* branch emphasizes that evaluation is basically about making value judgments. The *use* branch stresses the utility of evaluation for the stakeholders of the project, programme or organization being evaluated. There are dozens of evaluation approaches informed by each of these branches.

9 There have been at least two rigorously experimental studies of supernatural causation in religious interventions. One study concludes that "the findings are equivocal" about proving or disproving supernatural intervention. "...although some of the results of individual studies suggest a positive effect of intercessory prayer, the majority do not, and the evidence does not support a recommendation either in favor or against the use of intercessory prayer. We are not convinced that further trials of this intervention should be undertaken and would prefer to see any resources available for such a trial used to investigate other questions in health care." (Roberts, Ahmed and Davison 2009)

10 Bamberger, Rugh, and Mabry (2012) estimate that experimental methods are applicable, at best, in 5% of development interventions and quasi-experimental in between 10% and 25% of interventions.

5.2 Key Components of an Evaluation of Faith-based Peacebuilding

In selecting what approach or mix of approaches is appropriate for evaluating a specific faith-based peacebuilding initiative, three essential components must be considered: complexity-awareness, participation and the qualitative nature of the data.

5.2.1 Awareness of Complexity

Religious peacebuilding must be complexity-aware because, like all peacebuilding efforts, it contends with an uncertain and volatile, i. e., complex, reality. This is how Michael Quinn Patton characterizes the challenge of complexity for evaluation:

> Complex dynamic situations are characterized by high uncertainty about how to even define the nature of the problem. Often there is great disagreement among diverse perspectives about what the issue is and strong disagreements about what to do. The situation is turbulent, dynamic, ever-changing, and variable from one place to another; non-linear interactions exacerbate the problem and search for solutions within a dynamic system. Key variables and their interactions are unknown in advance. Each situation is unique and in flux. Causal explanations are elusive (2018, NP).[11]

Faith-based peacebuilders face this substantial uncertainty and lack of agreement at the moment of planning their initiative and dynamism during its implementation. In fact, introduction of supernatural agency, however understood, adds an infinite dimension to complexity. The relationships of cause and effect necessary to plan in the conventional manner what to achieve, and how to do it, often are unknown until they emerge, sometimes with unknown degrees of effect. Equally important, no situation is 100 % complex.

Religious peacebuilding is an area of work in which there is considerable uncertainty and often a lack of agreement about the nature of the challenge and how best to address it. To a large extent you do not know what will work and what will not work, and furthermore, you expect things to change, often dramatically, as you work towards peace. Thus, beyond the outputs related to implementation of planned activities with a reasonable degree of feasibility – organ-

11 From the draft of chapter 1 of Michael Quinn Patton's forthcoming book *Principles-Focused Evaluation.*

izing a conference to re-examine the peace-related values within a faith tradition or a workshop to train lay people in faith-based approaches to trauma healing —, as a faith-based peacebuilder, you would naturally be inclined to depend on some kind of inspired direction in order to assess what else to attempt faced with a very unstable environment. Given the high degree of uncertainty facing efforts to turn these training initiatives into significant accomplishments, you follow the guidance you believe you have received. You devise a tentative plan of action and see what is effective in generating the results you believe are consistent with the guidance you received. The greater the complexity the more frequently you have to take stock, seek re-direction and make decisions on what to do next – i.e., practice spiritually inspired adaptive management.

5.2.2 Participation

In religious peacebuilding where process is as important as results, inner personal transformation is central. Thus, it is essential to have the actors involved in religious peacebuilding provide information and insights into when, why and how their attitudes and behaviour change. In fact, in faith-based peacebuilding, attitudinal change tends to be more important than new knowledge and skills in explaining changes in behaviour. Participatory evaluation methods generate credible data on attitudinal change with which to assess the kinds of value systems and dynamics typical of faith-based peacebuilding evaluation. Participatory methodologies provide key stakeholders with a voice and an opportunity to present more of their perspective than is typically the case in conventional evaluations. For example, Appreciative Inquiry, Most Significant Change and Outcome Harvesting are approaches that can provide stakeholders with a voice to inform an evaluation with data, analysis and interpretation and enable evaluators to arrive at more solid evidence-based answers to evaluation questions.[12]

5.2.3 Use of Qualitative Methods

The collection of subjective data – how an individual person perceives change, or the lack of it – is important information for the faith-based peacebuilder and evaluator to understand the inner transformation process. Finding effective ways

12 See "Approaches," Better Evaluation (ND) for more information.

to track such changes is important to achieving the purpose of learning and taking action to improve performance and results, and in the process demonstrating accountability to donors. Consequently, in addition to being complexity sensitive and participatory, appropriate approaches for faith-based peacebuilding will use a variety of *qualitative* data-gathering methods: review of documents such as reports, chronicles and personal and communal histories, storytelling, opinion surveys, observations, interviews, and focus groups.

6 Design of Faith-based Peacebuilding Evaluation Questions

In order to generate evidence of merit, worth or significance of peacebuilding and the influence of belief in supernatural intervention, a first step in an evaluation process is to identify appropriate *questions* to be answered through complexity-aware, participative and qualitative evaluation approaches that will fulfil the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. For example, this is a generic question when the purpose is to understand the *results* of a religious peacebuilding project or programme: To what extent are the outcomes achieved by our peacebuilding practice in line with the faith tradition's values, vision, and peace mission?

These questions guide the process of designing and implementing an evaluation of a religious peacebuilding initiative. In the first column of Table 2 below, we present sample evaluative questions that can be asked about five different categories of religious peacebuilding *practice*,[13] each of which is influenced by belief in the supernatural, the most distinctive factor of religious versus secular peacebuilding.[14] These evaluation questions could guide the implementation of the evaluation when its purpose is to generate understanding about the faith-based peacebuilding process.

Those questions must not be confused, however, with the questions that will be asked of informants when collecting the data through surveys, interviews, questionnaires, in focus groups and so forth to generate credible data with

13 These categories are the designation of one of the authors, David Steele. The publication of his that comes the closest to capturing some of this perspective is Steele, "An Introductory Overview to Faith-Based Peacebuilding."

14 These are not exclusive categories. They are based on David Steele's experience teaching and facilitating religious peacebuilding. For an original, though somewhat different, formulation, see Steele (2008, 22–35). Reference to this same formulation, though with less detailed, can be found in an upcoming publication by Patton and Steele, *Action Guide on Religion and Reconciliation*.

which to answer the evaluation questions. In the second column are samples of these questions that might be asked of informants who were participants in the faith-based peacebuilding process in order to obtain data with which to answer the evaluation questions. We emphasize that all of these questions are samples. In fact, many of the issues covered within one category could as easily apply to another – for example questions about whether it led to mitigation of conflict or transformation of relationships, or what kind of impact or value was realized.

Table 2: Questions to Use in Evaluating Faith-based Peacebuilding Practice by Categories of Religious Practice

Expressions of piety: through worship, sacrament, prayer, meditation.	
Significance: Direct encounter with the supernatural, as both beneficiary and respondent – the ultimate arena in which the interaction of human and supernatural agency is experienced. Frequently, this is the context within which one is reminded of the ultimate, unparalleled potential impact of all supernatural intervention, as well as one's own potential role as part of the process. Piety leads to a sense of motivation, guidance, direction or calling to which the believer can respond.	
Sample questions for the evaluation to answer	**Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers**
1. What is the purpose for which a specific expression of piety was designed? 2. What changes do participants believe happened, in themselves or others, as a result of participation in acts of piety? 3. How effectively was the experience of piety reflected upon and used to foster further transformation of individuals or of relationships between disparate parties?	– In what ways did participation in (x) act of piety change your attitude toward other groups? Or toward specific individuals within other groups? – What caused such changes? – Following participation in (x) act of piety, what changes have you noticed in attitude or behaviour on the part of other members of your group toward other groups or individuals—if any?
Education/proclamation: through use of scripture, teaching, preaching, moral edicts, public statements.	
Significance: More than imparting of information and skills, the intent is formation and internalization of a worldview, framework of meaning, value system – derived from the faith tradition's basic narrative found within its foundational, spiritual source material.	
Sample questions for the evaluation to answer	**Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers**
4. How effectively has the faith tradition's narrative laid a foundation for participants to internalize the peace-related values and concomitant ethical behaviour inherent within their spiritual tradition?	– How do you evaluate the extent to which through this peacebuilding activity you have understood and internalized your tradition's peace values and behavioural norms?

Table 2: Questions to Use in Evaluating Faith-based Peacebuilding Practice by Categories of Religious Practice *(Continued)*

5. To what extent have participants succeeded in mitigating conflict dynamics by acting in accord with their tradition's peace-related values?	– In what specific ways did your understanding of your faith tradition's peace related values motivate you to be a peacebuilder? – What kinds of action did you attempt in an effort to mitigate the specific conflict situation? Did your faith tradition provide you with insights that helped you to assess the peacebuilding problem? How? – Has your perception of your faith's perspective on tolerance changed? If so how? Toward whom? – Has your perception of your faith's call for compassion or hospitality changed? If so, how? With whom? – Did your faith offer you any insight about what kinds of structural change you promoted in this peacebuilding activity? Or how to approach this task?
Rituals: (rites, symbolic expression, customs, ceremonies) which can be used either to promote or inhibit transformation: fasting, funerals, weddings, purification rites, rites of passage or membership, healing rituals, ceremonies of celebration or dedication, observance of holy holidays.	
Significance: Sequence of sacred, customary activities involving gestures, words, and objects dramatizes the human/supernatural encounter, connecting past tradition with present context that fully engages the participant in remembrance, affirmation of belonging, catharsis, reassessment of perspective, reframing of worldview and values, or formalization and celebration of agreement.	
Sample questions for the evaluation to answer	**Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers**
6. How effectively has the use of ritual led to noticeable change in participants' or members of adversarial groups' emotional response to memorable events, or to proposals for reconciliation or dispute resolution?	– Following participation in a given ritual in the peacebuilding initiative, has there been any noticeable change in emotional response to memorable events on the part of participants' or members of adversarial groups? Whose response (doesn't have to be an individual, could be particular gathering, etc.)? What happened? – Did anyone propose reconciliation or dispute resolution? Who proposed what, when and where? – What changes have occurred in participants' perceptions of historical wounds or recent losses, dysfunctional or disrupted relation-

Table 2: Questions to Use in Evaluating Faith-based Peacebuilding Practice by Categories of Religious Practice *(Continued)*

	ships, possible alterations in their worldview? – What are the implications of specific values inherent within their faith tradition?
Reconciliation Processes: Examples: TRCs (S. Africa and elsewhere), Islamic Sulha, Jewish Teshuva, and Buddhist mindfulness meditation.	
Significance: Spiritual practices involving dialogue and mediation enable adversaries to move toward the restoration of right relations – frequently helping parties to mourn losses, face fears, accept "the other," admit wrongdoing, forgive, repent (commit to change), engage in restorative justice, and enter into joint problem solving.	
Sample questions for the evaluation to answer	**Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers**
7. What were the most significant behavioural transformations for participants and others that resulted from the reconciliation processes in which they participated? 8. Why do the faith-based participants believe some transformations they experience during or following reconciliation processes are more significant than others? 9. To what extent did the reconciliation process assist, or have the potential to assist, conflicted parties to resolve disputes and mitigate conflicts of values?	– In which kinds of faith-based reconciliation processes have you participated? What motivated you to take part? – In what context (within or outside the intervention being evaluated)? – Which kinds of processes were included? (handling grief, admitting wrongdoing, repenting, forgiving, engaging in restorative justice?) – What benefit do you believe you received? What about other participants? – What parts of the experience were difficult? Why? – To what extent did the process cause you to change your views or actions or those of other participants? – How effectively did it enable you to relinquish any bondage to hurt and resentment? – Do you believe this reconciliation process has the potential to assist conflicted parties to resolve disputes and mitigate conflicts of values? – Do other participants believe this? Which kinds of conflicts? Any specific ones? How might this process help resolve such conflicts?
Faith witness: Living out one's faith in the world through storytelling, religious music/drama/art, diapraxis (combination of dialogue and collaborative action), problem solving and structural reform.	

Table 2: Questions to Use in Evaluating Faith-based Peacebuilding Practice by Categories of Religious Practice *(Continued)*

Significance: A response to participation in a sacred presence transforms oneself, builds community and leads to implementation of guidance or calling. Sometimes involves patient waiting or action motivated by hope, based ultimately on a transcendent promise.[15]

Sample questions for the evaluation to answer	Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers
10. How effectively does participation in a given act of faith witness provide a healthy sense of belonging – bonding with one's own identity group and bridging the divides between groups?	– Has your participation in a specific act of faith witness in the peacebuilding activity influenced your understanding of belonging to your own group? How? – Has it influenced your understanding of communal solidarity with members of other groups? How?
11. To what extent does participation motivate the believer to engage in the kind of dialogue that leads to peacebuilding activity?	– Has it helped you to see potential ways to bridge the divides between groups? How?
12. What do participants consider is the value of their faith witness?	– How did you view the waiting process before any results can be seen? – What kept you committed? – What did you learn? – What did you hope to achieve? – What do your answers to these questions say about the potential value of your faith witness?

The specific mix of religious practices that are used in peacebuilding depends on the challenge and context, just as do the results they achieve. This is also true for the evaluation questions that, in addition, must be customized to the specific faith-based peacebuilding initiative and its context.

The questions asked in Table 2 focus on evaluating both attitudinal and behavioural change in relation to five of the most important practices found in religious peacebuilding that incorporate normative peace values. The primary reason for using these questions would be to gain an understanding of the role the five religious practices played in a specific peacebuilding process. A change in the way a belief is understood or applied can be an important indication of significant attitude change. Once a change in basic outlook is discerned, then what might be

15 Examples: The film "Pray the Devil Back to Hell" (story of Muslim and Christian women gathering to pray, sing and calling for peace in Liberia), Accompaniment of victims (Mennonite peacemaker teams), Interfaith choirs (Pontanima Choir in Sarajevo), non-violent peaceful protest (Gandhi; Martin Luther King Jr.; People Power in Philippines; Bringing down communist regimes in Eastern Europe; Arab Spring.)

called the reformed parameters of belief can play a critical role in searching for ways to bring behaviour more in line with the revised understanding of faith. The inherent sacred insights and moral principles, now realigned, can assist in explaining and legitimizing the new set of behaviours. Even small steps of behavioural change, taken with this degree of faith-based authenticity, have the potential of evolving into a significant, specific peacebuilding outcome.

Throughout the process, the role of the evaluator is to collect and analyse important data related to degrees of change in belief, attitude and behaviour. In addition, the evaluator can assist faith-based facilitators in the interpretation of the data and exploration of its application, in light of the particular belief and value system of the stakeholders. Of course, the accommodations to worldview, language, symbols and rituals must encompass all of the faith groups implicated – which adds to the complexity, especially if the different groups involved have markedly different perspectives and interpretations. Yet, a redesigned faith-based peacebuilding initiative, enlightened by an evaluation, would be better positioned to enhance the attitudinal and behavioural transformation necessary to build sustainable, inclusive and peaceful community.

7 Illustration of an Evaluation Process Within a Faith-Based Context

Utilization-Focused Evaluation (U-FE)[16] is one methodology that is especially promising for evaluating faith-based peacebuilding. Michael Quinn Patton, the principal architect of this evaluation theory, says in the fourth edition of *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* about the utilization-focus: "epistemologically, the orientation of pragmatic qualitative inquiry is that what is useful is true." In other words, the purpose of the methodology is to apply evaluative thinking and generate data to serve the principal uses of the primary intended users in order to enhance the process and enrich the findings of the evaluation. Utilization-Focused Evaluation focuses on obtaining "actionable answers to practical questions to support programme improvement, guide problem-solving, enhance decision-making, and ensure the utility and actual use of findings."[17] This ap-

16 See Utilization-Focused Evaluation (ND)

17 In addition to Patton's pragmatic, utilization-focused evaluation criteria, there are others that may be promising for evaluating peacebuilding in faith-based contexts because they privilege the experiences of the participants in an intervention. Social construction and constructivist approaches take into account multiple perspectives on participants' experiences. Artistic or

proach can utilize the data collected from questions that relate to beliefs and perception of belonging, as well as those that are focused on assessing attitudinal and behavioural transformation as long as the role of each type of question is clear. Not only can these evaluation questions provide useful data, the questions regarding belief and values can play a crucially important role in the process of interpreting and analysing the data as well as proposing lessons learned which are consistent with the insights and moral principles of the participants' faith traditions.

Outcome Harvesting is a utilization-focused approach that is complexity-sensitive, participatory and qualitative.[18] Here we will use it to illustrate an evaluation with respect to faith-based reconciliation based on a real case. The subject of the evaluation is the fictitious International Inter-Religious Reconciliation Initiative (IIRI), an effort by secular and religious, indigenous and external peacebuilders in a tense, faith-based context.

1. The primary intended users – the IIRI executive council – clarify that their uses for the evaluation process and findings are to obtain evidence between early 2011 and mid 2018 with which to take decisions to improve their reconciliation efforts. In the light of that use, the users affirm that they need answers to reconciliation questions 7, 8 and 9 (Table 2) above.
2. With the evaluator, the users agree what information is required to answer the three questions:
   a. The outcomes achieved
   b. Their significance
   c. How the users' intervention contributed to the outcome
   d. The role, if any, that belief in the supernatural played
3. Through interviews with the participants in IIRI's reconciliation programme, the evaluator obtains the information presented in Table 3.
4. The evaluator verifies the accuracy of the data with independent, authoritative sources.
5. With credible, verified data about the religious peacebuilding process and results, the evaluator provides evidenced-based answers to the three reconciliation evaluation questions.

Here in Table 3 we exemplify the collection of data. After the table, we present answers to the three evaluation questions informed by that data.

"connoisseurship" evaluation evokes participants' experiences. Participatory and collaborative evaluation modes involve participants. Critical change approaches empower participants (Patton 2015, 698).

18 See the community of practice website Outcome Harvesting (ND).

Table 3: Fictitious Outcome Harvesting Example[19]

Instructions: Describe the following four dimensions of faith-based peacebuilding coordinated by the International Inter-Religious Reconciliation Initiative.

1. Outcome	2. Significance	3. Contribution	4. Belief in the Supernatural
What was the change in behaviour that represents progress towards reconciliation? **When** did **who** do **what** and **where, as** a result of IIRI's reconciliation work?	Why do you consider the behavioural change represents progress towards reconciliation?	How did IIRI influence the outcome? **When** did IIRI do **what** specifically that influenced the change in behaviour described in the first column?	To what extent was supernatural agency present in the outcome and the intervention?
1. In February 2011, 10 exiled Sunni religious, tribal and community leaders return to their home village to meet with 10 Shia counterparts from the same village.	In 2006, during one of the peaks of Sunni-Shia violence in Iraq, these Sunni religious and tribal leaders had fled their integrated community just south-west of Baghdad.	In early 2011, IIRI ends a year of building relationships with the Sunni and Shia groups and brings some of the Sunnis back to the village to participate with their Shia counterparts in an IIRI led dialogue.	No effort is made to assess influence of belief in the supernatural.
2. In the course of 2011 – 2012, most of the Sunni exiles move back to their village from Jordan. Inter-religious committees form to establish co-operation in education, sports, business enterprises and with other social sectors.	The Sunni residents of this village had lived as refugees in Jordan for five years, afraid for their lives if they returned.	From early 2011 to early 2012, IIRI with a couple of their Iraqi facilitators who lived near that community, met regularly with both Shia and Sunni leaders to engage in reconciliation dialogue.	In late 2012, people from both Sunni and Shia communities publicly thank Allah for relieving them from overwhelming, crippling fear and providing a window of hope.
3. In June 2014, the ISIS militia overruns this village and kills or forces into exile the local leadership of the	The reconciliation effort not only falls apart, but the killing surpassed the Sunni-	Through 2013, IIRI had promoted reconciliation unaware of the danger of ISIS.	ISIS influenced a number of young men, claiming that Allah had spoken directly to the leaders of their move-

19 All references to specific entities in this illustration are fictitious with the exception of ISIS (the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) and the Shia Popular Mobilization Units.

Table 3: Fictitious Outcome Harvesting Example *(Continued)*

1. Outcome	2. Significance	3. Contribution	4. Belief in the Supernatural
reconciliation programme.	Shia violence of ten years ago.		ments, the Shia Popular Mobilization Units and Sunni ISIS (in both cases led by influential clerics with hereditary claims to special status and educated within extremist theological schools).
4. In March 2015 the Iraqi army ended ISIS control in this village.	About 60% of the previous Shia population will return. However, relations are very tense. Suspicion is at an even higher level than it was in 2011.	In early 2014, IIRI assured the Iraqi government that it would return to work in the same village if ISIS is pushed out.	After serious self-reflection about the disastrous end of their reconciliation programme, the leadership of IIRI reaffirm their belief in Allah's call for *zakat*, which purifies the believer who fulfils the obligation to contribute to the care of those in need, especially to protect and provide for all Muslims.
5. In early January 2017, two newly appointed Sunni and Shia mullahs decide to each send 4 representatives (2 clerics and 2 influential lay persons) to an inter-faith reconciliation workshop.	This is a breakthrough step because there had been a mutual experience of exile and the suffering, including since 2015 more executions by opposing extremist militias and the killing of both former mullahs in this village. Resistance to reinstating any reintegration effort continued high on both sides.	In June 2016, IIRI sends representatives to the village. IIRI's Iraq staff then spends six months deepening relationships with the mullahs as well as lower-level clerics and influential lay people in both traditions within this village. With support from the Iraqi parliament and the local facilitators, IIRI decides to sponsor a reconciliation workshop.	IIRI staff spend some time in intercessory prayer with Sunni and Shia Iraqi Muslims, together with foreigners from both Muslim traditions and a variety of Christian denominations to receive wisdom to know how best to reply and to plan.

Table 3: Fictitious Outcome Harvesting Example *(Continued)*

1. Outcome	2. Significance	3. Contribution	4. Belief in the Supernatural
6. The third week of January 2017, all eight representatives of the mullahs give glowing reports of the workshop and share the concern, embraced by a parliamentary committee to replicate this reconciliation process.	Despite just about everyone's relief over the ending of ISIS, the general communal perspectives of Sunni and Shia had remained distrustful and intra-Muslim violence continued. The apparent success of the reconciliation meeting begins to give some people hope.	During the 12 – 14 January 2017 intra-faith, Sunni-Shia reconciliation workshop, IIRI leads, participants through various stages of an Islamic reconciliation process. This includes the Muslim practices of lament and mutual acknowledgment of wrongdoing, restitution and forgiveness based on the Islamic practice of Sulha.	When all their representatives returned with such glowing accounts of this second reconciliation workshop, both Mullahs say privately that they believe that Allah has begun to touch the hearts of a few of their people and their own suspicion and fear begins to turn into a tentative conviction that Allah may be opening a new pathway of hope.
7. In July 2017, the Sunni and Shia mullahs of the previously ISIS controlled Iraqi village commit themselves to meeting to discuss an end to intra-Muslim, Sunni-Shia violence.	Since the end of ISIS control of the village, although overall violence had decreased, there had been five instances of eye-for-an-eye retributive killings between Shias and Sunnis in this village. These incidents had directly affected the families of both current mullahs.	Since the beginning of 2017, IIRI had offered to host the meetings in a neutral venue.	Both mullahs believing that Allah often works in mysterious ways beyond human understanding or expectation, came to the conclusion that Allah was calling them to follow in the steps of their wise successors.
8. Between September and December 2017, the two mullahs meet five times.	These are the first times that these mullahs have spoken with each other about the vengeance killings.	The IIRI had arranged for a well-known non-Iraqi Muslim cleric to facilitate the encounters.	Both mullahs believe that although the Qur'an does condone retributive violence, it also encourages reconciliation amongst Muslims.
9. In the first week of March 2018, the Shia mullah issues a fatwa	Another vengeance killing took place in December 2017, when	In the beginning of 2018, discussing the results of the facilitat-	The Shia mullah cites his spiritual leader, the Iraqi Shia ayatol-

Table 3: Fictitious Outcome Harvesting Example *(Continued)*

1. Outcome	2. Significance	3. Contribution	4. Belief in the Supernatural
prohibiting vengeance killing and requiring reconciliation.	a Sunni farmer was beaten to death by a Shia shopkeeper. Some Shia defended the action.	ed dialogue between the two Mullahs with the Shia mullah, the IIRI offered to encourage the Sunni mullah to respond in kind if the Shia cleric issued a fatwa.	lah, emphasizing the well-known Qur'anic perspective that any use of violence must be a last resort and the intention must always be to create a pathway toward reconciliation. This convinced the Shia mullah to publicly declare that "*reconciliation with our Muslim brothers was an integral part of Allah's will and vengeance killing was a dire violation of it.*"
10. In the second week of May 2018, the Sunni mullah issues a fatwa requiring just, non-violent reconciliation for vengeance killings.	Following yet another murder of a Sunni by a Shia shop owner, the Sunni community is convinced that reconciliation will only work if the aggrieved party believes that justice has been done.	Both the Iraqi Sunni and Shia staff members of IIRI meet with the Sunni mullah three times in March and April 2018 following the Shia mullah's fatwa. They encourage the Sunni mullah to consider what kind of fatwa he might be able to issue after prayerfully bringing the matter before Allah.	The Sunni mullah remembers learning that Allah does not simply excuse wrongdoing. Heinous acts, such as murder require an accounting. Therefore, he decides to publicly declare that restitution, reparation or some other punishment levelled upon the guilty party, followed by full reconciliation, is Allah's will.

Based on this outcome information, which would be duly substantiated with knowledgeable, independent third parties, the evaluator would answer the three questions for which they collected outcome data as shown in steps 7, 8 and 9 of Table 2:

7. What were the most significant attitudinal and behavioural transformations for participants and others that resulted from the reconciliation processes in which they participated?
   Following a turbulent five years (2011–2015) of Sunni return from exile, incipient reconciliation with their Shia neighbours, and the violent takeover and exile of the Shia community by ISIS, the religious leaders of this community took solid steps to renewed reconciliation and an end to intra-Muslim violence. Over a year and a half (January 2017–June 2018) the Sunni and Shia Mullahs and their representatives changed their positions on reconciliation from passive resistance to active support, which took the form of two fatwas prohibiting intra-Muslim vengeance killings and requiring believers to engage in reconciliation.
8. Why do the faith-based participants believe some transformations they experience during or following reconciliation processes are more significant than others?
   In the first and last transformative actions taken by each Mullah, they agreed that Allah had intervened. Although the intermediate actions were religiously based – "intra-religious violence is morally wrong" and the Koran "encouraged reconciliation amongst Muslims" –, it was their belief that Allah had opened the way which sparked them to issue the fatwas as "the will of Allah".
9. To what extent did the reconciliation process assist, or have the potential to assist, conflicted parties to resolve disputes and mitigate conflicts of values?
   Although the two Mullahs both issue a fatwa by mid-2018, these fatwas are not identical, and they are not issued simultaneously. The Shia fatwa (outcome #9) is issued first and prohibits vengeance killing and requires reconciliation. The Sunni fatwas (outcome #10) is issued later, and, unlike the Shia fatwa, there is a condition placed on the ban of vengeance killing. That fatwa requires accountability to justify a non-violent reconciliation process because, the mullah says "*Allah does not simply excuse wrongdoing. Heinous acts, such as murder, require an accounting.*" The fact that the Sunni population has experienced even greater trauma than has the Shia community may explain why that mullah emphasized different portions of the Koran representing a difference of values.
   In sum, the IIRI staff contributed to an outcome that did not eliminate the differences completely but allowed for the expression of difference while affirming the major goal of encouraging these two religious leaders to publicly call for an end to vengeance killings.

As seen in this Outcome Harvesting evaluation example, the ongoing attention of IIRI staff to the facilitation of self-reflection played a major role in the choices made. Based on belief in the supernatural by themselves and both key stakeholders, they assisted various actors, at different points, to reassess their own perspectives and assist others in that process. Furthermore, there is evidence that this introspective process led, quite directly, to legitimation and explanation, passed from actor to actor. Each stage in this reflection, explanation, legitimation process played a key role in determining the next contribution and influencing the subsequent outcomes. The final fatwas issued by the two mullahs would likely not have been feasible without the role played by supernatural belief.

Naturally, the ten outcomes contain a wealth of information that can be used to answer the other nine evaluation questions about the peacebuilding process. This example illustrates how an evaluator of faith-based peacebuilding can generate data related to peacebuilding activities, perception of belonging and beliefs that explain and legitimize both. It also illustrates how the data about beliefs can help the evaluator to interpret and analyse this data in order, finally, to draw conclusions and propose lessons learned that can provide faith-based guidance for ongoing revision of the peacebuilding activities which will better align with the vision of inclusive communal solidarity and sustainable peacebuilding.

8 Conclusion

In sum, we are convinced that the faith in the presence of supernatural agency is at the core of religious peacebuilding, along with a process of attitudinal change. This peacebuilding can be evaluated by applying appropriate methods for registering and appreciating how beliefs in a supernatural presence influenced different people to take action, or not. For this, complexity-aware, participatory and qualitative approaches are particularly applicable to focus on activities and results, including attitude change, while taking into account what motivates religious peacebuilders within distinct value systems to pursue transformation. The influence of religious belief on this process should be apparent in the way the entire evaluation process is designed and implemented – how criteria are understood, theories of change viewed, indicators determined, results interpreted, and lessons learned applied. In that manner, professional evaluation can help assess the process and results of peacebuilding and explain what motivates religious peacebuilders within distinct value systems to pursue faith-based transformation. Such learning efforts can, in turn, enable religious actors to remain

appropriately accountable and ultimately explain the success or failure of their interventions.

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