UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

Instruments of the Divine? Faith-Based Organizations in International Politics

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Political Science

by

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Dissertation Committee:
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Instruments of the Divine? Faith-Based Organizations in International Politics

By

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Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

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Professor Cecelia Lynch, Chair

My dissertation asks: (1) What are the meanings that faith-based organizations (FBOs) assign to their own values, identities, and practices?, and (2) How do such meanings shape the service-advocacy work of FBOs? Scholars are increasingly interested in the role of FBOs in areas of peacebuilding, development, humanitarianism, and human rights. Such scholars often categorize certain practices and ideas exhibited by FBOs as "religious," "secular," or "political." However, other scholars in international relations, political theory, and other fields have shown that the religious-secular analytical framework is problematic at best. Thus, I argue that scholars who want to understand the role of "religion" in the work of FBOs should move past religious-secular categorizations, and the related assumptions that go along with such designations, and examine the meanings and roles that FBOs assign to their values, identities, and practices. This reflexive and bottom-up concept approach provides more specificity in understanding why and how FBOs engage in their political projects. Drawing on interviews, participant-observation, and textual analysis, I show this methodological approach "in action" through an empirical examination of three FBOs—Religions for Peace, International Justice Mission, and the Taizé Community.

Employing a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach yields several important findings for IR, political theory, and interdisciplinary studies of FBOs. First, my research reveals the critical importance of practices like prayer for FBOs. I show that such practices are not always conceptually distinguished from the "political" or "real" work of FBOs and that they facilitate peacebuilding, reconciliation, and other FBO projects. Second, my cases highlight some of the problems with current scholarly approaches to engagements of religious difference, which often focus on dialogue. I also argue that more attention need be paid to shared experiential practices like prayer, communal manual labor, and cooperative action in such encounters. By shedding light on the specific differences and similarities between FBO and scholarly conceptualizations of religious phenomena and what they do, my research suggests that a more fruitful way to approach the study of religion is to view what we call "religion" as a set of ontologies, which function as overlapping, and sometimes competing, authoritative discourses.

CHAPTER ONE

Reassessing the Ontologies of Religion in International Relations

International Justice Mission (IJM) is an internationally-recognized and well-funded Christian human rights organization working to "rescue" and "restore" victims of human trafficking and slavery, prosecute the traffickers and slave-owners, and "reform" local justice systems. In many ways, IJM exemplifies the fears and myths that scholars attach to Christian organizations, especially those working in the Global South. Not only is the organization widely considered to be "evangelical" in orientation, but it also incorporates "religious" activities like prayer into its daily operations, and is often portrayed by journalists (Bazelon 2016, para. 20–22) as taking a conservative approach to issues like sex work. For many scholars, groups like IJM raise red flags about the role of conservative religion in transnational service-advocacy work—especially as relates to proselytism, cultural imperialism, and other violations of a progressive political agenda.

Religions for Peace (RfP), a transnational peacebuilding organization, sits on the other side of the spectrum. The organization is inter-religious, representing a wide array of religious communities. In addition, RfP is committed to an ethos of respect and inclusiveness, wherein each religious community is treated as distinct and bounded. The organization strongly discourages syncretism and proselytism. In addition, Religions for Peace has a strong relationship with the United Nations and relies on what William Vendley, the current RfP Secretary General, calls "secular" language in order to promote common values and cooperation, while also respecting the boundaries of religious traditions. RfP, then, would seem to adhere to many of the prescriptions laid out by scholars of international relations and political theory, who

assert or assume that the best (or only) way to achieve peace among diverse religious communities is through secular means.

The Taizé Community, an ecumenical monastic brotherhood working towards peace and reconciliation all over the world, represents the kind of group that international relations, and political science more broadly, largely ignores. Groups like Taizé, which do not have more formalized business structures, are often not included in studies of other non-governmental organizations. Moreover, Taizé activities nearly always prioritize prayer—a practice that most scholars view as inconsequential for public life. In short, according to the dominant discourses and trends of political science scholarship, and international relations, in particular, the Taizé Community simply does not matter for questions of politics.

These three organizations represent some of the prevailing mythologies surrounding the role of religion in international relations. Such mythologies draw on and feed assumptions about, among other things, Christianity, prayer, religion and conflict, religion and peace, secularism, and politics. Scholars then rely on such assumptions in their analyses of different "religious" global actors, including faith-based organizations. This dissertation challenges common assumptions about religion and politics by examining how faith-based organizations conceptualize their own acts and ideas.

Scholars and policymakers question whether faith-based service-advocacy organizations (FBOs) are beneficial or harmful to the communities they serve. In particular, some scholars question whether the "religious"[1] components of such agencies might lead them to proselytize or reinforce local religious identities (increasing chances of conflict) (Bradley 2005; Flanigan

[1] From this point forward, I will refrain from using quotation marks to indicate the fluid and contested nature of the "religious," "secular," or "political" categorizations. However, I ask the reader to note that when I use these terms, unless otherwise indicated, I am referring to the ways these categorizations are employed by scholars of religion and politics, rather than making claims about what counts as religion, religious, etc.

2010). Others argue that the religious "assets" of FBOs might enable them to have deeper relationships with local communities, making FBO projects more effective (K. Marshall 2013; Philpott and Powers 2010). In many of these studies, scholars often make assumptions about what a religious component is or what it does. In other words, scholars tend to assume that religious values, identities, and practices are different from their secular counterparts in that they are, for example, irrational, focused on the transcendental or divine, related to emotional rather than logical ways of being, or draw from theological texts and teachings. However, such assumptions are limiting in that they can lead the scholar to ignore the varied, complex, and changing aspects of those FBO values, identities, and practices that scholars often categorize as "religious." Furthermore, assumptions about the religious can lead to broad and problematic generalizations about particular communities and how they might act. I propose an alternative way to conceptualize and study religion and politics—a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach that is attentive to scholarly assumptions about the religious and examines the meanings of religious phenomena for transnational faith-based organizations *themselves*. In particular, I ask: (1) What are the meanings that faith-based organizations assign to their own values, identities, and practices?, and (2) How do such meanings shape the peacebuilding, humanitarian, development, and human rights work of such organizations?

To answer these questions I draw on ethnographic research with three transnational FBOs: Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission. I examine and analyze how these organizations assign meaning to their own values, identities, and practices. Moreover, I investigate how such meanings shape the strategies, goals, ethics, and actions of each group. Employing a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach results in three

important contributions to international relations, political theory, and interdisciplinary FBO scholarship.

First, my research highlights the importance of experiential practices like prayer for FBOs and their transnational work. In part, my findings challenge assumptions that prayer is solely focused on the transcendental, and thus separate from FBO work. In fact, I show that, in certain contexts, FBOs perceive prayer to be both focused on the transcendental *and* part of the "real" work of the organization. This conceptualization directly challenges those scholarly ontologies that assume that (religious) acts focused on the "transcendental" are automatically separate from the "secular/political" projects of development, humanitarianism, and human rights. Moreover, it suggests that such dichotomizations can blind scholars to the important work that prayer is doing in specific areas of conflict resolution, post-conflict reintegration, and psychological and spiritual health.

Second, my research challenges common models of explanatory and prescriptive religious pluralism found in international relations (Banchoff 2008; Eck 2006; Riis 2007), as well as broader conceptualizations of encounters of difference found in political theory (Habermas 1984; Habermas 2011; Rawls 1993), which often tend to focus on dialogue as *the* vehicle for such engagements. I show how some FBOs do not always broadcast their religious identities, challenging an implicit assumption of religious pluralism that engagements of religious difference will necessarily prioritize religious identity. In addition, my research reveals the limitations of dialogical approaches, and the importance of experiential practices like prayer, communal manual labor, and shared meals for inter-religious encounters.

These and other findings complicate common assumptions about religion and politics in international relations, showing that phenomena often categorized as religious, do not always

conform to the assumptions that are attached to those descriptions. For instance, scholarly ontologies of religion often include an explicit or implicit distinction between the religious and the secular and/or the political. However, my research shows that FBO values, identities, and practices, which scholars often assume to be religious, also have meanings and roles that scholars would likely categorize as secular or political. Many scholars rely on assumptions about religious phenomena that close off their analyses from seeing the range of ways that certain acts and ideas can cross conceptual boundaries of religious-secular, religious-political, faith-reason, private-public, etc. I argue for a reassessment and opening of scholarly ontologies of religion, in order to gain more analytical precision into the varied meanings and roles of phenomena often perceived as "religious."

This dissertation has two aims. First, I assess how phenomena often perceived as religious by scholars and others shapes FBO behavior by employing a bottom-up conceptual approach that examines the meanings and roles of FBO values, identities, and practices for FBOs themselves *and* how such meanings inform their transnational peacebuilding, development, humanitarian, and human rights work. Increasingly, scholars want to understand the role of religion in the work of faith-based organizations. They question whether FBOs are prone to proselytizing to recipient communities (Bradley 2005) or supporting certain local religious actors over others, thereby reinforcing religious divisions in a given community (Flanigan 2010). Other scholars ask whether FBOs are more effective than non-faith-based organizations due to their unique religious characteristics (Olarinmoye 2012). Current studies addressing these and other FBO-related issues often approach the "religiousness" of certain phenomena as an unproblematic analytical categorization. However, multiple scholars, in political science and other disciplines, have shown that a strict separation between the religious and the secular does not exist (Asad

1993; Asad 2003; Cadge, Levitt, and Smilde 2011; Fitzgerald 2011; Hurd 2011; Lynch 2011; Mahmood 2005; Weber 1956). How can we study the role of religion in FBO work if we cannot meaningfully pinpoint what is religious? Instead of treating religion as a fixed object of study, I argue that a bottom-up conceptual approach, because of its focus on meaning-making, provides more specificity in understanding *why* and *how* FBOs incorporate certain phenomena, often conceived as religious, into their transnational service-advocacy work and *how* those phenomena shape that work.

Second, my dissertation addresses an important set of ontological questions relating to the study of religion in international relations: What do religious values, identities, practices or other objects of study do vis-à-vis international relations? Alternatively, what distinguishes religious values, identities, and practices from non-religious, secular, or political ones? And, *how* are certain values, identities, and practices religious and what makes them so? I argue that a reflexive approach is best able to answer such questions by being attentive to (often problematic) scholarly assumptions about the religious. International relations (IR) scholars no longer ignore the role of religion in world politics. In addition, critical studies of religion and IR are on the rise, introducing new and insightful approaches to how we conceptualize and study religion (Juergensmeyer 2001; Juergensmeyer 2008; Lynch 2009; Lynch 2014; Sheikh 2014; Wilson 2012). Drawing on seminal sources from political science and other disciplines (e.g. Asad 1993; Asad 2003; Casanova 1994; Mahmood 2005; Taylor 2007), critical scholars of religion and politics tend to agree that religion is socially-constructed, rather than a given object to study. Yet, scholars have yet to fully explore the ways in which our own ontologies of religion often are not attentive to the assumptions we rely on to inform our characterizations of religious phenomena. For instance, scholars often assume that prayer is solely focused on or related to the

transcendental—leading to other assumptions that such an act is separate from the "real" work of FBOs, apolitical, and ultimately inconsequential for international relations. Employing a reflexive approach encourages one to be attentive to these and similar assumptions about FBO values, identities, and practices. In addition, a bottom-up conceptual approach does not take the ontology of prayer for granted, but instead, assesses how FBOs themselves assign meaning to such practices. Thus, by employing a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach, my dissertation is able to investigate whether and to what extent certain so-called religious phenomena conform to common scholarly and policy assumptions about the religious. Furthermore, my research provides more specificity in understanding how specific values, identities, and practices shape FBO behavior.

This chapter is organized as follows. Section II provides a summary of current approaches to the study of religion as relates to FBOs, as well as international relations more broadly. In Section III, I introduce my reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach to the study of religion in IR. In Section IV, I outline my research design. I conclude with a chapter outline.

Section II: Religion and IR, Religion and FBOs

International relations scholars are paying more attention to what they often call service-advocacy faith-based organizations in various transnational sectors, including development, humanitarianism, peacebuilding, and human rights (Barnett and Stein 2012a; Bielefeld and Cleveland 2013; Paras 2012; Paras 2014). Such organizations are deemed "faith-based" because they exhibit some characteristic(s) that scholars consider "religious"—such as an organizational name that includes the term "Islamic" or "Christian," the use of prayer or scripture readings, and/or a stipulation that all employees must sign a statement of faith. According to some scholars

(for example, Hefferan, Adkins, and Occhipinti 2009; Jeavons 1998; Jeavons 2004; Sider and Unruh 2004), such characteristics are what *make* a faith-based organization faith-based. More importantly, multiple scholars want to know what these so-called religious factors are doing in and for faith-based organizations. While FBOs are lauded for their success due to their "cultural proximity" to local populations (Benthall 2012) and their long-term placements in particular project locations (Dicklitch and Rice 2004, 662; Olarinmoye 2012, 10), these organizations continue to be subjects of suspicion by many. Scholars and others question to what extent FBOs may use their positions as aid providers to proselytize, which can impinge on the cultural rights or religious freedoms of such communities (Bradley 2005). Other scholars argue that FBOs, in particular, may reinforce religious identity cleavages within particular communities, which can lead to conflict (Flanigan 2010). Such debates are especially important given the introduction of the Charitable Choice provision of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act ("Charitable Choice: The Facts" 2015), the emergence of various government-based Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (Clarke 2009, 389–390), and the USAID's decision to include faith-based organizations in competitions for government funding ("USAID 'Rule' for Participation by Religious Organizations" 2014). Given U.S. constitutional issues related to the separation of church and state, and broader international concerns about the role of religion in peace and conflict, scholars are examining and debating the role of religion and religious phenomena in development, humanitarianism, and peacebuilding (Barnett and Stein 2012b; J. Berger 2003; Berry 2014; Bornstein 2005; Bradley 2005; Clarke 2006; Clarke 2009; Clarke and Jennings 2008; De Kadt 2009; Dicklitch and Rice 2004; Flanigan 2010; Goody 2003; Haynes 2014; Tomalin 2013; Hope and Timmel 2003; Hovland 2008; James 2009; Jeavons 1998; Jeavons 2004; Lynch 2000a; Lynch 2011; Paras 2012; Paras 2014;

Pelkmans 2009; Petersen 2010; Petersen 2012; Selinger 2004; Sider and Unruh 2004; Sinha 2013; Ver Beek 2000; Hefferan, Adkins, and Occhipinti 2009).

Debates about FBOs are often tied to implicit or explicit concerns about the historical role of religious actors in colonial projects. Christian FBOs, in particular, are often suspected of engaging in behavior similar to early missionaries. One specific issue that scholars and policymakers are primarily concerned with is the possibility that FBOs proselytize—encouraging people to convert to certain beliefs and practices. As Lynch and Schwarz note, "[c]ompelling people to convert to traditions and practices that they may not be comfortable with, or profess beliefs they do not believe in, contravenes liberal modernist ideals of individual choice" (forthcoming). Thus, scholars are skeptical about the extent to which FBOs (especially Christian FBOs) might be using their positions of power to spread their religious beliefs. In short, such concerns center on "…whether contemporary humanitarianism has truly broken with its roots in nineteenth century colonialism and Christian missions—the sword of Western imperialism in one hand and the civilizing and saving power of the Bible in the other" (Thaut 2009, 326).

Debates about FBOs also stem from larger concerns about the proper role of religion in public and political life. In academia, international policy circles, and elsewhere, religion is viewed by many (though not all) as something inherently problematic and thus inappropriate for public life. For decades the field of international relations ignored religion, assuming that as the world modernized, religion would have little effect on global politics. However, that perspective has changed, as scholars reworked or dismissed the secularization thesis (P. L. Berger 1999; Casanova 1994; Casanova 2006; Davie 1999; Davie 2001; Jensen 2011; Norris and Inglehart 2011), and tried to grapple with post-Cold War politics, in which religious actors were significant players. Scholars like Samuel Huntington (1996) shifted our scholarly gaze to the

influence of such actors, and the focus on religious global actors only intensified after the events of September 11, 2001 (Philpott 2002; S. Thomas 2005). While many IR scholars now explicitly deal with the effects of religion in international relations, many remain skeptical of the appropriateness of religion in political spaces, assuming that religious ideas and practices are irrational, backwards, and even dangerous. In addition, though there are important and notable exceptions, many scholars continue to conceptualize religion as ontologically separate from the secular, political, or public. Such scholars continue to question the role that religion plays in global politics, while also relying on Enlightenment assumptions about what counts as religious and the appropriateness of religion in public life. My research engages with these FBO and IR discussions by examining *why* and *how* transnational service-advocacy FBOs include so-called "religious" components in their humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, and human rights endeavors. I also examine *how* those components shape FBO strategies, goals, ethics, and actions. Furthermore, my dissertation engages with broader epistemological and ontological debates and assumptions about how to study religion in international relations.

Scholars continue to grapple with the problem of how to integrate religion into IR—a field of study that often focuses on states and material power. Some scholars integrate religion into existing IR theories as another variable among many, while others argue that such an approach results in a troubling reification of religion, leading to broad generalizations about how religious actors shape international relations (Fitzgerald 2011; Hurd 2008). For instance, studies examining the religious factors of FBOs often take such factors as unproblematic categories of analysis, separating the religious from the political (or the secular)—the latter which scholars often conceive as, in part, "a distinct domain of non-religious rational action" (Fitzgerald 2011, 7). However, multiple scholars in the fields of anthropology (Asad 1993; Asad 2003; Mahmood

2005), law (Sullivan, Yelle, and Taussig-Rubbo 2011), political science (Connolly 1999; Hurd 2011; Lynch 2011; Hurd 2008), and sociology (Cadge, Levitt, and Smilde 2011; Casanova 1994; Weber 1956) problematize the religious-secular or religious-political binaries. Such studies have lead scholars to rethink how they study religion.

A new group of IR scholars are introducing innovative and critical approaches to the study of religion in IR, which draw from and respond to these debates. These critical approaches incorporate religious ethics (Lynch 2009; Lynch 2014), dialogical models (Wilson 2012), and other sociological methods (Juergensmeyer 2008). Such studies often treat religion as socially constructed and context-dependent, rather than as a stable object of analysis. In addition, many of these studies focus on how religious actors themselves give meanings to their own ideas and practices. However, these studies do not directly engage with scholarly ontologies of religion and the assumptions that go along with those. Thus, this dissertation builds on these critical approaches, but aims to assess whether, and to what extent, ontologies of religion in international relations, some of which separate the religious from the secular, political, public, etc. and some of which take more complex and nuanced views, accurately represent how religious actors perceive and enact so-called religious identities, values, and practices themselves. At the same time, my research shows how specific FBOs values, identities, and practices are given meaning and enacted within the context of these organization's humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, and human rights work. In the next section, I briefly summarize my argument and findings (a more in-depth discussion is included in Chapter Two).

Section III: Looking Beyond What Counts as Religious

Increasingly, because scholars want to understand the role of religion in the work of FBOs, they ask questions such as: To what extent do the religious motivations of humanitarian FBOs lead them to proselytize to recipient communities? Do FBOs make conflicts worse by supporting certain local religious actors over others, thereby reinforcing religious divisions in a given community? Are FBOs critical to peace processes? In studies that address these questions, the "religiousness" of certain phenomena (a Christian organizational identity, for instance) is frequently assumed to be an unproblematic analytical categorization. Assuming that certain ideas, actors, and behaviors are religious often implicitly links such phenomena with the irrational, private, emotional, or magical, and in opposition to the secular, public, and rational, which multiple scholars have challenged in their problematization of religious-secular and religious-political dichotomies. My dissertation draws on these critical studies, but calls for a reassessment of the ontologies of religion in international relations. I advocate for a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach to the study of religion and politics where certain acts and ideas are not merely assumed to be "religious," but are instead closely examined and analyzed to assess what specific phenomena mean and do for religious actors themselves. I show such an approach "in action" through an ethnographic examination of three faith-based organizations, the meanings they assign to their organizational values, identities, and practices, and how such meanings shape their transnational service-advocacy work.

My dissertation provides both a conceptual and methodological contribution to the study of religion and politics in international relations by showing how a reflexive approach to the study of religion and politics can open up critical ontological space for examining and analyzing a range of values, identities, and practices for global actors. I argue that scholars need to reexamine our ontologies of religion—moving beyond a priori assumptions about what

characteristics one can assign to so-called religious phenomena and what those phenomena do. I further argue that relying on the categories and concepts FBOs rely on themselves can provide more specified insights into what particular values, identities, and practices[2] *mean* within the context of FBO work and how such meanings shape development, humanitarian, peacebuilding, and human rights work. In other words, rather than saying that scholars need to "distinguish the religious characteristics" (Sider and Unruh 2004, 110) of FBOs, my study calls for an *understanding* of what particular ideas and actions mean and how those ideas and actions inform the broader strategies and goals of FBOs. A reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach enables researchers to see how such phenomena have multiple meanings and roles, many of which do not conform to common scholarly assumptions about the religious —resulting in research that can provide greater insight into *how* and *why* FBOs engage in their global work. Scholars can, for instance, move beyond our own conceptions of Christian organizations, and related assumptions about the likelihood that such organizations would desire to proselytize or be at odds with Muslim communities. Focusing on the meanings of what it means for a particular individual or organization to be Christian, or a specific type of Christian, allows one to understand how such an identity might be informed by specific ethical commitments related to notions of charity, humanitarian aid, inner reflection, community-building, cultural respect, dignity, and other notions and ideals, which then shape organizational policies and strategies. Such an approach also reveals how relations of power—both internal and external to these organizations—shape the concepts, terms, and meanings that are central to FBOs. In short, a reflexive and meaning-focused approach opens up an ontological space to what researchers can

[2] Focusing on values, practices, and identities loosely corresponds to the idea that religion can be studied as belief, behavior, and belonging (Cesari 2013, 37–42; Davie 1994). This is not a perfect fit, however, as, for instance, "religious" identity may or may not correspond with regular attendance at a church, temple, mosque, or other institutions.

know about these organizations. Our own assumptions about the religious fade away, as specific values, identities, and practices become the foci of scholarly analyses, providing greater and more specified insight into why particular courses of action are possible or likely.

Such a meaning-focused approach to the study of religion in FBOs goes beyond merely providing a context-specific analysis of these organizations. Focusing on meanings forces scholars of religion and politics to be reflexive about our own assumptions vis-à-vis religious, secular, and political categories in our studies of FBOs as well as in broader research on issues related to religion and international relations. As Timothy Fitzgerald notes, scholars often "'know' that religions exist because we observe them, describe them, analyse them, compare them, praise them or denounce them" (2011, 9). What I propose in this dissertation is that scholars do not assume the existence of the religious. Rather, researchers should explore and analyze the meanings of ideas and actions that self-proclaimed "religious" or "faith-based" groups employ in order to understand how such meanings can tell us about the motivations and possibilities of action for these organizations. For example, scholars of religion and IR often treat prayer as an inherently religious practice and assign certain ontological properties to that practice because of this categorization. Scholars assume prayer to be irrational, inconsequential, and opposed to the secular and political. Yet, at the same time, such scholars do not tend to examine whether religious actors themselves would assign such ontological properties to prayer. Examining what prayer means for FBOs can further understanding in why FBOs include such a practice in their service-advocacy programs and how prayer might be beneficial or problematic within those contexts. If scholars of religion and IR approach the study of prayer and other so-called "religious" phenomena in a way that accounts for how such phenomena have a range of meanings, forms, and functions, then one can begin to see how and why FBO values, identities,

and practices are a critical part of development, humanitarianism, peacebuilding, and/or human rights.

The approach that I outline in this dissertation has both scholarly and policy implications. By employing a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach to the study of religion in faith-based organizations, this dissertation moves beyond debates about the religious-secular binary to reveal how labels of "religious," "secular," "Christian," "multi-religious," "divine," "Godly," and others are still important in that they are critical to how FBOs behave, but that the labels themselves reveal little without understanding the meanings and meaning-making processes behind them. Even practices like prayer, which scholars assume to be inherently religious, are imbued with meanings and/or play roles that do not conform to those same scholars' definitions of what religious practices are and do. At the same time, people (e.g. scholars, FBO representatives, policymakers) continue to rely on the religious, secular, and political as ontological categories—i.e., they employ such designations to describe things. My dissertation pays attention to the assumptions attached to scholarly and policy ontological categories, while also examining how FBO assign meanings and roles to those phenomena that scholars and policymakers often label "religious." As a result, I not only show some of the disparities between FBO conceptualizations of their own values, identities, and practices, and scholars' and policymakers' conceptualizations of same, but I also reveal important insights about religion and politics for international relations and political theory.

In particular, my research emphasizes the importance of prayer and other practices for FBOs and shows why scholars' assumptions about prayer, which have led to the almost complete neglect of the practice in international relations and political theory is so problematic. Scholars assume that prayer is purely religious, focused solely on the transcendental, a private practice,

and is inconsequential for international relations. However, my research shows that prayer complicates common dichotomies of life-work, private-public, and religious-secular. Moreover, I argue that these kinds of dichotomous frameworks can hide the critical roles that prayer and other religious practices play in post-conflict reconciliation, inter- and multi-religious peacebuilding, psychological health, and the reinforcement of organizational identities. Though the "practice turn" in IR (Adler and Pouliot 2011; Bourdieu 1977; Neumann 2002) is encouraging scholars to pay more attention to a range of practices, there is still very little attention paid to prayer and similar practices because of the assumptions that scholars often assign to them.

My research also provides important contributions to scholarship in religious pluralism and encounters of difference. In particular, I show how the prevailing theories of religious pluralism in international relations (Thomas Banchoff 2008; Eck 2006; Riis 2007) and communicative action in political theory (Habermas 1984; Rawls 1993) are problematically narrow. Such theories focus almost exclusively on dialogical modes of engagement. The prioritization of dialogue, through discussions and debates, not only often misses the ways that relations of power shape such engagements, but also neglects other non-dialogical encounters. My research shows the limits of dialogue in certain FBO contexts, and also highlights the critical role of experiential practices (e.g. prayer, communal work, shared meals) in FBO engagements of difference. I argue that scholars need to pay more attention to such practices and assess the possibility that experiential practices may, in certain contexts, be more effective at building trust and cooperation across diverse communities than dialogical approaches.

Achieving greater understanding of the roles of certain values, identities, and practices in the development, humanitarian, peacebuilding, and human rights work of FBOs also has

important policy implications, as governmental funding is often tied to determinations about the religiousness of particular FBO programs. USAID, for instance, requires that FBOs separate their "religious" components from their (secular) development or humanitarian work. This dissertation builds on the work of other scholars (Paras 2012) who complicate the notion that certain FBO characteristics or behaviors can be definitely categorized as religious or secular. However, I argue that the problem is not only conceptual. In particular, my research shows that trying to make distinctions between the religious and the secular in the context of FBO *practices* internally and in the field may not be possible. USAID designates prayer, for instance, as an inherently religious act—one that should be separated from the "secular" development and peacebuilding work of FBOs. My examination of prayer shows that it can entail communication with the divine. Yet, it also has meanings and roles that (1) policymakers would likely not view as inherently religious, and (2) are integral to specific peacebuilding, reconciliation, development, humanitarian, and human rights projects and programs. Thus, separating out what constitutes the religious and the secular (or non-religious, political, etc.) may not be so easy. Perhaps a better approach would be to examine how specific values, identities, and practices shape FBO behavior, then assess whether such phenomena are beneficial or problematic vis-à-vis governmental funding of FBO projects.

A reflexive and bottom-up approach to the study of religion in international relations moves beyond scholarly ontologies of the religious to reveal how specific institutions, histories, belief systems, and practices are given meaning and inform behavior. To that end, I do not claim that this dissertation answers the question of how "religion" informs FBO behavior. Instead, my research shows how specific values, identities, and practices are given meaning—sometimes

perceived to be religious or secular, sometimes framed by FBOs in other ways altogether—and how those meanings shape FBOs and their transnational service-advocacy work.

Such an approach suggests that scholars might reconsider how we view religion and politics as a focus of study. Perhaps "religion" is not an object of study, but rather a set of ontologies of religion that function as overlapping and interacting authoritative discourses. So while there may be dominant scholarly notions of the religious, they do not necessarily coincide with the ontologies of religion that FBOs draw on. Moreover, according to this perspective, there is not just one scholarly ontology of religion, nor is there one FBO ontology of religion. There are, instead, common threads and overlapping themes. Treating religion as a set of authoritative claims allows one to view certain values, identities, and practices through an alternative conceptual lens that provides greater and more specified insight into how these phenomena shape FBO behavior.

Section IV: Research Design

In this dissertation, I conduct an in-depth examination of three organizations. The first organization, International Justice Mission, is a Christian human rights organization that employs prayer and other experiential practices, legal strategies, and police raids to rescue and restore victims of human trafficking and other violent crimes, while also capturing and convicting the perpetrators of such crimes. IJM is headquartered in the United States, but works in areas throughout the Global South. The Taizé Community, my second organizational case, is a Catholic and Protestant monastic community based in the south of France. The Taizé Community is known for its prayer services and work in reconciliation, peacebuilding, and humanitarianism in communities all over the world. The third FBO is Religions for Peace, a

multi-religious organization comprised of Catholic, Hindu, Indigenous, Muslim, and other religious leaders working in many areas around the world through peacebuilding, conflict resolution, development, education, advocacy, and other projects and programs. Each of these organizations conforms to general definitions of what scholars consider "religious" or "faith-based." For example, International Justice Mission identifies as "Christian," the Taizé Community relies heavily on the use of prayer in its work, and Religions for Peace references "religion" in its organizational name. My research uses a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach to examine how these three faith-based organizations give meaning to their own values, identities, and practices. Using such an approach allows me to move past the religious categorizations and assumptions of FBO phenomena to understand what specific values, identities, and practices mean for these FBOs themselves and how such meanings inform their peacebuilding, development, humanitarian, and human rights work. More importantly, by relying on such an approach, I am better able to grapple with the complexity of FBO motivations, ethics, and discourses—providing new insights into how these organizations conceive of their values of peace, justice, and reconciliation, the role of prayer and other practices in their work, and how they conceive of and manage religious diversity.

The approach I outline in this dissertation focuses on bottom-up concept formation and reflexivity. I suggest that FBO scholars should pay attention to the terms and concepts FBOs use themselves, as well as the meanings they assign to these terms and concepts. Though one could argue for a different methodological approach, I argue that an interpretive methodology (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012) is best-suited to the reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach I propose. An interpretive methodological stance does not rely on a deductive logic of inquiry focused on testing hypotheses or an inductive logic of inquiry focused on generating

general principles. Instead, an interpretive approach uses abductive reasoning, which begins with a puzzle (i.e., How can we study "religion" in faith-based organizations when scholars have shown the problems with relying on a religious-secular or religious-political binary?) and seeks to explain it "by identifying the conditions that would make the puzzle less perplexing" (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 27). A critical aspect of this process is a focus on meaning. I argue that understanding the meaning(s) of particular FBO terms and concepts is critical for understanding how certain values, identities, and practices might take on characteristics that are often categorized as "religious" or "political" and how this informs the work of FBOs.

An interpretive research design assumes bottom-up concept formation (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 49). Thus, an interpretive study of FBOs aims to understand how these organizations and their individual representatives conceive of particular values, identities, and practices. An interpretive approach also follows the logic of the hermeneutic circle wherein "the researcher begins a project…with some degree of prior knowledge…and his sense-making develops both as he confronts particular elements and as he gains a sense of a wider context" (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 31). My dissertation specifically examines those values, identities, and practices that scholars often categorize as "religious." Scholars of FBOs, as well as many policymakers and funding agencies (e.g. USAID) categorize FBOs *as* religious because of specific characteristics that FBOs exhibit, which scholars also understand to be "religious." Thus, I began this project by identifying those phenomena that scholars and policymakers categorize as religious—these include phenomena like prayer, meditation, a Christian, Muslim, or Hindu organizational or community identity, etc. I then assess whether FBO meanings and roles of such phenomena conform to the ontological assumptions that scholars and policymakers assign to those values, identities, and practices.

Moreover, and more importantly, my approach to the study of FBOs is reflexive in that I pay attention to the stakes involved in calling something or someone "religious," "secular," or "political." This is important on two levels. First, though my project does not explore this directly, I am interested in why scholars and policymakers might categorize certain acts and ideas as religious or secular. Reasons for this might include epistemological commitments or a reliance on categories used by the subjects of study themselves (e.g. governmental designations of religious bodies). Second, I also pay attention to why FBOs themselves might categorize something religious, secular, or political. For instance, FBOs may be strategically responding to expectations from funders, the development/humanitarian or human rights sectors in which they work, or groups affiliated with FBOs (e.g. congregations).

An interpretive approach also requires critical reflexivity. This entails, first, taking stock of the researcher's own position and how this might affect her access to subjects and data, and also how her presence will shape the results of her research (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 102). For me, taking a reflexive approach during my fieldwork meant paying attention to the ways different FBO representatives and affiliates would react to me, as a researcher and as someone with a Christian background. I found that some FBO representatives were more wary than others, but many often warmed up to me when they learned that my parents are Christian clerics. This, in itself, provides interesting insights into the ways these organizations might be reacting to what they see as critical perspectives coming from a variety of directions. Moreover, while I am no longer a practicing member of a Christian community, I found that my familial background in several evangelical Christian communities provided me with an intuitive understanding of how such actors assign meanings to their values, identities, and practices.

Critical reflexivity also requires the researcher to "think deeply about the ways in which their own research communities are historically constituted, such that particular socio-political contexts shape, in previously unarticulated or unrecognized ways, the research questions asked or the very concepts used to investigate phenomena" (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 102). For my research, this means taking into account the ways in which the religious, the secular, and the political have been constructed by IR and other scholars and policy makers and how these constructive processes inform assumptions about what these concepts consist of and their importance for international relations. Thus, I have tried to maintain a reflexive stance by pushing myself to look past my own conceptions of what counts as religious and secular, while also paying attention to what particular terms and concepts mean for FBOs themselves. While conducting interviews and engaging in FBOs events, and particularly in the analysis phase of my dissertation, I have continually tried to look beyond my own religious-secular framework.

The approach I articulate in this dissertation can be applied to other research projects in international relations. In fact, I argue that a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach is useful for any study that wants to understand the role of religion in a given context. For example, Laura Thaut (2009) developed a taxonomy of Christian humanitarian agencies by examining the different ways that their mission statements and organizational practices reflect Christian theology. A bottom-up conceptual approach would allow one to extend her analysis to understand how Christian FBOs *themselves* interpret and enact theology in their humanitarian work. Such an approach pays attention to what specific terms and concepts mean for the FBOs themselves, rather than relying on our assumptions about what those terms means and how they might conform to our own interpretations of Christian theology. For instance, Thaut argues that an ecumenical humanitarian organization "will likely obfuscate the uniquely Christian nature of

its operations" because such organizations often "use 'faith' in a more humanistic manner" (2009, 333; for the latter, Thaut is quoting Kniss and Campbell 1997, 100). My research with the Taizé Community, an ecumenical group, challenges the claim that such an organization would "obfuscate the uniquely Christian nature of its operations." However, further research might inquire into how the Taizé Community conceptualizes "faith" and whether or not this complicates Thaut's story or introduces new questions about the role of "faith" as relates to FBO behavior.

My research with International Justice Mission, Religions for Peace, and the Taizé Community took place in seven field sites and consisted of participant observation, interviews, and textual analysis, and lasted from 2012 to 2016. I participated in and/or observed five FBO events and worked as an intern for Religions for Peace. In addition, I conducted 14 formal interviews with FBO representatives and affiliates. My findings are also based on informal discussions with over 20 other FBO representatives, affiliates, and supporters. These formal and informal interviews entailed asking organizational leaders, other employees, and affiliates questions pertaining to how each organization described itself, its main goals, values, and identities, the practices that were used internally and externally, organizational policies on proselytism, and the strategies for specific projects or engagements. In addition to participant observation and interviews, I also conducted in-depth analyses of organization websites, brochures, pamphlets, flyers, videos, social media presences, and other texts (e.g. books/articles written by organization leaders). Finally, I examined and analyzed secondary sources about each organization.

I drew on discourse methods (e.g. Schaffer 1998), which focus on the analysis of language, interpretation, and meaning, to understand how FBOs and their representatives

conceptualize specific values, identities, and practices and what those phenomena mean in specific contexts. I was attentive to power relations (following Foucault 1977) within each FBO, as well as between and among the organizations and the communities they engage with. For example, I took notice of the role of leadership in creating and maintaining hegemony over organizational practices or discourses. I also paid attention to the ways that each FBO responded to the expectations of donors, national governments, or the international community, more generally.

Focusing on the terms and meanings FBOs use themselves allowed me to move past assumptions about what counts as religious to instead think about the ways that FBO values, identities, and practices are shaped by a range of factors including religious scripture and doctrine, organizational hierarchies, founding histories, development and humanitarian discourses, and other factors. Moreover, by specifically examining those phenomena that scholars often assume to be religious, I was able to assess to what extent scholarly ontologies of religion accurately represent the ontological foundations that FBOs, themselves, rely on.

A. On Faith-Based Organizations

As already noted, my dissertation focuses on three organizations that most scholars would categorize as "faith-based" or "religious." I specifically examine such organizations to interrogate how and why they engage in the work they do. That said, I am also open to the possibility that meaningfully distinguishing such organizations from their so-called secular counterparts may not be possible. Parts of my research, in fact, challenge the idea that we should categorize organizations like these as necessarily religious or faith-based. I use that terminology in this project, then, to signify that I am studying organizations that exhibit characteristics that

most scholars would consider religious in order to investigate these so-called religious phenomena. I am not, however, using the term "faith-based" to indicate some sort of inherent religiousness of such organizations.

Additionally, I would like to suggest that focusing on non-governmental organizations, more generally, rather than secular or faith-based organizations may, at least in some cases, uncover the ways all of these organizations influence and are influenced by ideologies and doctrines, and thus, engage in behaviors that are both beneficial and problematic. Looking past a religious-secular dichotomy allows us to see how NGOs of all kinds are susceptible to engaging in proselytism—whether that be proselytism as relates to Christian doctrine or to neoliberal principles and practices (Lynch and Schwarz forthcoming), for example. However, for this project I have chosen to specifically focus on FBOs in order to examine to what extent these organizations may be linked to values, identities, and practices that challenge common perceptions about what constitutes the religious.

For this study, I understand "faith-based organizations" to include "the vast array of operational and advocacy institutions with specific, widely diverse areas of action that extend well beyond rituals and pastoral care" (K. Marshall 2013, 155). I specifically examine transnational FBOs working on development, humanitarian, human rights, and peacebuilding issues. Shawn Teresa Flanigan points out that NGOs are increasingly "taking on tasks perceived as being the domain of the state" (Flanigan 2010, 23) in issues such as peace and reconciliation, HIV/AIDS and other global health concerns, environmental protection, and poverty alleviation. As NGOs and other civil society actors of all types are growing and gaining in their influence around the world, it no longer makes sense to focus on states as the primary actors in international relations. Moreover, the reemergence of religion in IR has led to an increased focus

on faith-based organizations, in particular, and the contributions of these organizations to global politics. Many of these organizations provide important services to communities in need. Thus, scholars want to know how these so-called religious actors engage in their service work and what effects this has on local populations. However, current studies often make assumptions about the religious characteristics that make up FBOs, without delving into the ways that these phenomena may complicate what we, as scholars, think about the religious and the secular or the political. These organizations are often assumed to be religious; however, scholars do not frame the global issues they focus on (e.g. poverty, human trafficking, climate change, peace and reconciliation) as inherently religious. Thus, examining these organizations and their global work provides the opportunity to examine how so-called religious organizations conceive of and engage with political issues.

Furthermore, while I understand FBOs to be groups that engage in issues that are undoubtedly political—development, for instance, is an inherently political enterprise (K. Marshall 2008, 218)—I also maintain that FBOs are political themselves in that they engage in enterprises of moral reform. As Saba Mahmood argues regarding civil society groups more broadly, "The political efficacy of these movements is…. a function of the work they perform in the ethical realm—those strategies of cultivation through which embodied attachments to historically specific forms of truth come to be forged" (2005, 35). FBOs help to shape how we, as a society, think about development, humanitarianism, justice, and other issues. As such, they are important global political actors.

B. Justification for Case Selection

This dissertation examines three transnational faith-based organizations: International Justice Mission, the Taizé Community, and Religions for Peace. Each of these faith-based organizations is based in the Global North, but is also engaged in the work of "doing good" (Gajaweera 2013) globally. While my research problematizes FBO typologies, which often miss the ways that such organizations transcend such ideal-typical boundaries,[3] it also has broader implications for scholarly discussions related to Christian FBOs, religious difference, the perceived neutrality of the secular, and the role of prayer in IR. In particular, these cases each represent some of the prevailing myths, assumptions, and fears about FBOs. Thus, examining the values, identities, and practices of these organizations enables me to assess whether such myths, assumptions, and fears are borne out "on the ground."

International Justice Mission, due to its conservative agenda, focus on the Global South, evangelical perspective (as outsiders describe the organization), and inclusion of so-called religious practices like prayer, is a prime case for scholarly skepticism and fear. Scholars and others often assume that organizations like IJM will proselytize, disregard the desires and needs of the local communities where they work, and engage in "irrational" and "inconsequential" practices that go against the secularist bias in international service-advocacy circles. Such assumptions and criticisms, which scholars often level at Christian organizations, in particular, make IJM an important case of study—in order to assess to what degree such concerns are warranted.

[3] For instance, Gerard Clarke introduced a system of categorization for FBOs, in which he breaks down these groups into six categories: faith-based representative organisations or apex bodies, faith-based charitable or development organisations, faith-based socio-political organisations, faith-based missionary organisations, and faith-based illegal or terrorist organisations (2006, 840). Arguably, my research shows that such categorizations are inherently problematic in that all three organizations I study cross one or more of these ideal-typical boundaries.

My research shows that IJM's Christian identity and practices are viewed, by IJM employees, as critical to the organization's structure and goals. However, while IJM's employees do not necessarily condone proselytism from an ethical standpoint, the organization is very careful about abiding by local laws and cultural norms as relates to respect for religious difference. The organization explicitly prohibits proselytizing. In addition, IJM is very strategic about when and how it deploys its Christian identity. Because of the areas the organization works, and the cultural and political norms surrounding proselytism and religious NGOs, in general, IJM does not always overtly advertise its Christian foundations and practices. Yet, at the same time, IJM founder Gary Haugen, has also written some disturbing things portraying criminals as "locusts" and has promoted the idea that IJM—a "Western" organization—should only employ "Western" approaches in its human rights work. Yet, it is not clear that these problematic aspects of IJM are due to the organization's Christian identity and practices. My research with IJM not only complicates and challenges assumptions about Christian FBOs, but it also provides important insights for theories of religious pluralism, by revealing the ways in which some organizations choose *not* to engage their religious identities in all contexts.

Religions for Peace is an important case for study primarily because of its inter-religious organizational structure. There is very little scholarship in international relations examining inter-religious organizations, and, in particular, how they conceptualize and manage religious diversity. Scholars often assume that religion is inherently divisive and likely to lead to violence. Thus, scholars in international relations, political theory, and other fields often suggest that inter-religious encounters should be engaged in a secular manner to avoid conflict or discord. RfP is represented by a wide range of religious leaders, who come together to discern shared values and act on common goals. An examination of such an organization is important to assess to what

degree dominant scholarly assumptions about engagements of religious difference are mirrored in real-world scenarios.

Indeed, my findings show that Religions for Peace employs, what the current Secretary General, William Vendley, calls "secular language" in its approach. However, it is not clear that this language means the same thing to RfP as it does to scholars. For RfP such language is, in a way, derived from religious communities themselves. In addition, my research shows that the RfP approach does not necessarily result in the existence of a neutral (i.e. power-free) or more inclusive space. In some RfP contexts certain religious communities are silenced. At the same time, my research shows the importance that RfP representatives place on experiential practices for inter-religious bridge-building. Thus, my findings challenge common scholarly assumptions about encounters of difference by revealing a different conception of "secular" engagement, highlighting some of the limitations of a "secular" dialogical approach, and showing the importance of practices like prayer for such encounters.

The Taizé Community is an interesting case in that it represents the kind of organization that IR scholars often ignore. The organization does not "look like" other non-governmental organizations that are often the focus of IR studies. Rather than a company that employs (and pays) people to work towards common goals, the Taizé Community is a monastic brotherhood, where brothers choose to live out their lives and work. In addition, Taizé prioritizes prayer and other shared practices, like communal cleaning, eating, and living. IR scholars largely view such practices—especially prayer—as inconsequential for questions of politics. These assumptions make Taizé an especially interesting case—enabling me to assess whether such an organization *is* consequential for international relations.

Despite IR's scholarly neglect of Taizé, the Community is actually wildly popular all over the world, though especially among young Christians and in Europe. The group hosts tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of people every year at its community in France, as well as its events in other geographic locales. Contrary to scholarly assumptions about the secularity of Europe, the Taizé Community and its supporters are engaging in prayer en masse in order to achieve peace, reconciliation, and justice. In addition, my research highlights the importance that Taizé and its supporters assign to prayer in specific reconciliation and peacebuilding projects. In fact, unlike common models of religious pluralism, Taizé often prioritizes prayer over dialogical approaches in encounters of difference. The brothers assert that dialogue can strengthen identity differences, which can lead to further conflict, whereas prayer can mask such differences. In addition, the brothers do not always view prayer as conceptually or materially separate from the "real" work of the organization. Such findings have important implications for theories of religious difference, and indicate that more attention need be paid to prayer and similar experiential practices in peacebuilding, reconciliation, and other areas.

In addition to the specific characteristics of each organizational case outlined above, I also chose these cases in order to address assumptions about religion in the "West." A common critique of scholarship focusing on religion and politics is that there are not enough studies looking beyond Western and/or Christian perspectives and experiences. Cadge, Levitt, and Smilde (2011) argue that focusing on Western and/or Christian religious experiences can shape our conceptualizations of religion. These scholars are correct. More work needs to be done outside of Western perspectives. However, as Sindre Bangstad points out, we should be careful about relying on a Western vs. non-Western framework of religion. An increase in global interconnectedness and globalization has led to a world in which relying on a Western vs. non-

Western framework may not be analytically useful (Bangstad 2009, 194). Moreover, Grace Davie argues that so-called Western cultures are not necessarily less religious, they are just "differently religious" (1999, 65). I would like to suggest that how we think about the religiousness of particular communities and regions is directly dependent on how we, as scholars, conceptualize what constitutes the religious. Erin Wilson notes that "….the view remains strong that however important religion may be for individuals in the West, Western (and by extension international) politics and society are predominantly secular" (2012, 79). By examining FBOs headquartered in the West (or the Global North), I have been able to shed light on whether and how such groups might problematize common assumptions about the secular characteristics of the region.

For instance, I have chosen the three FBOs included in this study in order to explore how organizations based in the Global North conceive of and assign meaning to their values, identities, and practices. Focusing on organizations based in the Global North allowed me to examine to what extent these organizations integrate religious phenomena into their organizations. In other words, I was able to reveal the ways that practices like prayer—often conceived as inherently religious—are actually a central component of these three "Western organizations" and are also important for their individual representatives. Relying on a reflexive approach allowed me to move away from assumptions about the secularization of the Western world, and instead look for how different values, identities, and practices found in Western faith-based organizations challenge how we think about the secular nature of the Western world or the religious nature of FBOs.

These three organizations are critical cases for assessing common scholarly assumptions about religion and politics, especially as relates to issues of religious difference, Christian FBOs,

prayer in politics, and religion in the West. In addition, examining the Taizé Community, Religions for Peace, and International Justice Mission enables me to see the range of terms and meanings that are used within each organization, while also identifying similarities and differences across three prominent transnational service-advocacy FBOs.

Section V: Thematic Areas of Study and Research Design

The rest of my dissertation is organized as follows. In Chapter Two, I examine and assess the strengths and weaknesses of current studies in religion and international relations, as well as studies focusing on FBOs, which come from an interdisciplinary group of scholars. I highlight the important work that critical scholars of religion and IR are doing, while also questioning and problematizing common ontologies of religion in IR. I then introduce my own theoretical contribution, where I argue that a reflexive approach to the study of religion and politics might help scholars to recognize our own ontological limitations and how we tend to make assumptions about what constitutes the religious without paying attention to the analytical assertions and dichotomies that are often embedded in such assumptions. I then outline how I employ such an approach in this dissertation through an examination and analysis of three International Justice Mission, the Taizé Community, and Religions for Peace.

Chapters Three, Four, and Five comprise the empirical section of the dissertation. Relying on an interpretive approach that focuses on the terms, concepts, and meanings FBOs assign to their own values, identities, and practices can highlight to what extent FBOs rely on conceptual frameworks similar to those used by scholars who study these organizations. Such an approach might also open up a space for the scholar to rethink the roles that certain values, identities, and practices play in the work of FBOs. To show how such an approach might provide

new insights into FBOs and other areas of religion and IR, I conducted a close examination of the values, identities, and practices of International Justice Mission, the Taizé Community, and Religions for Peace. However, as this is a fairly broad area of research, I have focused on three main questions, which comprise my three empirical chapters.

In Chapter Three, I ask: "How do these three FBOs conceive of justice, peace, and reconciliation, and how do such values shape each FBO's projects and programs?" In my preliminary examination of International Justice Mission, the Taizé Community, and Religions for Peace, justice, reconciliation, and peace emerged as the primary values of each organization. That is, International Justice Mission focuses on justice, the Taizé Community works towards reconciliation, and Religions for Peace strives for peace. Thus, by studying the meanings and roles of these values, I am able to better understand the broader goals of these organizations. My research shows that these values (which are, in some cases, also overarching goals for these organizations) are directly drawn from religious texts and teachings. However, my research also shows that how these three FBOs *interpret* religious scripture is shaped by, among other factors, organizational leadership and the historical context of each organization's founding. Conducting an in-depth examination of these factors helps us to understand why FBOs that represent similar religious traditions might have very different conceptualizations of justice, peace, or reconciliation, which then inform their service-advocacy work. I move past studies that assume the "religiousness" of FBO values and show how these organizations interpret and enact religious theology. The findings from this chapter reveal the critical ways that FBO leaders can shape specific interpretations of religious texts as well as broader notions of justice, reconciliation, and peace. Moreover, my research shows that these influences do not stop at FBO employees, but that they are spread through prayer practices that include members of the public,

as well as through religious leaders who spread such narratives. In addition, my research reveals the way that values not only inform FBO action, but can also manifest *as* action.

In Chapter Four, I ask: "What are the meanings that these three organizations assign to their terms of self-description?" and "How do such meanings inform their conceptions and management of religious diversity?" Here I explore how FBOs conceptualize their own religious and organizational identities, paying attention to the value commitments that inform and are informed by the employment of specific categories of self-identification. I then employ my findings from this initial analysis to further explore how FBO self-descriptions shape how these organizations conceive of and engage with religious diversity. Studies of religion and conflict often engage in narratives that explicitly or implicitly portray religions as distinct traditions or communities that are prone to tension or outright conflict when coming into contact with one another. Such narratives can often also be seen in the public sphere via daily news broadcasts. Thus, asking how religious actors, in this case FBOs, conceive of and engage with religious diversity is both important and timely. In this chapter, I analyze the strategies and processes IJM, the Taizé Community, and RfP employ at various levels and contexts of inter-religious or inter-denominational relations and engagements, examining the links between religious self-identification and the reasons why particular strategies are chosen over others. We would expect to find that Religions for Peace, an explicitly multi-religious organization, is the more inclusive of the three. However, one critical finding from my research shows that Religions for Peace sometimes silences the voices of certain communities, due, in part, to some problematic organizational practices as well as the strong influence of RfP leadership. In addition, my research shows how both RfP and the Taizé Community employ experiential practices like prayer to facilitate bridge-building. However, Taizé prioritizes such practices, opening up space

for meaningful and inclusive engagement between religious, as well as rival ethnic and political groups, while RfP continues to prioritize linguistic dialogue, even as representatives note the limitations of dialogue in certain contexts. These findings suggest that theories of religious pluralism might be strengthened by moving past a dialogical model to include experiential practices. Moreover, my research shows that IJM, while encountering religious "others" and incorporating Christian values and practices, also avoids explicitly identifying itself as Christian in certain contexts—suggesting that more study is warranted on inter-religious engagements where the explicit expression of religious identities is not salient.

Finally, in Chapter Five, I ask: "What are the meanings and roles of prayer for and in the work of these three organizations—both internally and 'in the field'?" I have chosen religious practice, e.g. prayer, as the third thematic area for two reasons. First, IR research on the meanings and roles of prayer, song, and other practices is lacking. This is a result of the prevailing assumption that such practices are inconsequential and thus unimportant for international relations. Second, prayer, meditation, and similar practices are often assumed to be solely focused on the transcendental. Thus, it makes sense to assess (1) to what extent prayer and other acts only center on the divine or transcendental and (2) whether or not prayer has "real" consequences for IR. My findings indicate that prayer has a range of meanings and roles that do not always conform to common assumptions about such acts. In particular, I argue that prayer complicates common analytical categories of religious-secular, private-public, life-work, rational-emotional, etc., which IR scholars and FBO government donors often rely on. Such dichotomous frameworks, can, in fact, mask the important political roles that prayer, as well as other forms of religious practice, can play in post-conflict reconciliation, inter-religious peacebuilding, psychological health, and the reinforcement of organizational identities. My

research shows that prayer is central to the identities and work of IJM, the Taizé Community, and RfP. In many cases, prayer does not only facilitate the work of each organization; prayer *is* the work. Such findings support my call for a reassessment of the ontologies of religion in international relations, which often rely on problematic dichotomies that mask the varied and critical role of religious practice in global politics. Moreover, this chapter suggests that donor requirements that attempt to separate the religious from the secular in FBO work are not only problematically conceived, but also may miss important benefits of religious practice in peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian spheres.

Each question/chapter as laid out above, examines the three phenomena that I focus on as my primary objects of analysis—organizational values, identities, and practices. In other words, Chapter Four focuses on the values of justice, peace, and reconciliation for these groups. Chapter Three explores how International Justice Mission, the Taizé Community, and Religions for Peace self-identify. Chapter Five examines religious practice within each FBO. That said, I also address organizational values, identities, and practices throughout the dissertation. So, while these chapters each focus on one analytical category, those categories are not restricted to those chapters. Moreover, other aspects of these FBOs, including their ethics, values, goals, strategies, and structures, are also important for this study. As such, I address these organizational phenomena when appropriate. However, for the purpose of analytical clarity and readability, the focus of my dissertation is on the values, identities, and practices of International Justice Mission, the Taizé Community, and Religions for Peace.

This dissertation concludes by summarizing my findings from the previous three empirical chapters and discussing the implications of my research for international relations scholarship, FBO funding, and practices of development, humanitarianism, and peacebuilding. I

also reflect on how scholars of religion and IR might incorporate a reflexive approach into their own studies, paying particular attention to the limitations or implications of their own ontologies of religion.

CHAPTER TWO

Articulating a New Approach to the Study of "Religion" in "FBOs"

In recent years, scholars from various disciplinary backgrounds, including international relations, have paid more attention to faith-based organizations. Scholars are interested in the role of these so-called religious organizations in a variety of global governance sectors, including development and humanitarianism, human rights, and peacebuilding and reconciliation. Studies examine issues related to the uniqueness of FBOs—including their "cultural proximity" (Benthall 2012) to local populations, their long-term commitment to local communities (Bradley 2005, 337–338), their access to important and influential religious networks (Clarke 2006, 845; Dicklitch and Rice 2004, 662; Tyndale 2003, 26), their ability to provide services or engage in certain approaches that secular organizations can not (Toft, Philpott, and Shah 2011, 184), and their propensity to proselytize (De Kadt 2009; Pelkmans 2009). While not always explicitly stated, most studies of FBOs assume that these organizations are, at least in part, comprised of religious factors that influence the ways that these organizations operate. While some scholars are trying to provide more specificity in defining what a faith-based organization is, given the diversity of such organizations (Hefferan, Adkins, and Occhipinti 2009; Jeavons 1998; Monsma 1996; Petersen 2010; Sider and Unruh 2004; Thaut 2009), there is a lack of critical scholarship questioning how we should study faith-based organizations and what assumptions underpin our notions of what counts as religious in the first place. I argue that many current approaches to the study of these groups are problematic in that the scholars who employ them often assume the religiousness of certain acts and ideas without fleshing out the ontological foundations of their own ideas about what constitutes the religious. As a result, scholars often treat religious acts and ideas as analytically separate from the secular, the political, the rational, the modern, etc. Some

scholars are beginning to challenge these frameworks—relying more on FBOs' own conceptualizations of the religious and the secular. My work builds on these studies, but argues that more attention need be paid to what specific values, identities, and practices, often categorized as "religious" by scholars, mean for FBOs and how these meanings shape the development, humanitarian, human rights, and peacebuilding work of such organizations. In part, this means that scholars need to be more reflexive about why it would matter—in the context of the scholar's own assumptions about rationality, modernity, magic, etc., as well as in the overall work of FBOs—if a FBO representative claimed to communicate with the Christian god on a daily basis or whether an organization required employees to sign a statement of faith. In this chapter I show why relying on religious (and political and secular) categories is both analytically and normatively problematic—highlighting broader debates about the religious-secular and religious-political binaries in international relations and other social science disciplines. I argue that a reassessment of the ontologies of religion in IR is warranted—one that goes beyond simply treating religion as socially constructed to reflexively engage with our own scholarly assumptions about the religious.

This chapter is laid out as follows. Section II examines how scholars are approaching two topics within international relations—the study of faith-based organizations and the study of religion in international relations more broadly. I show where current approaches to both fields of inquiry are lacking. In Section III I introduce my argument—outlining what a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual engagement with religion and politics in IR might look like. I show how such an approach opens up ontological space for a more careful analysis of FBOs, and religion and politics more generally. The chapter concludes with some final thoughts and questions about our assumptions about religion.

Section II: Religion, Faith-Based Organizations, and International Relations

While Christian commitments informed Augustine's and Aquinas' work on just war theory and Grotius' writings on international law, the modern discipline of international relations essentially rejected religion as a worthwhile object of study until very recently. The mythological linking of the birth of modern-day international relations—vis-à-vis the secular nation-state system—with the Peace of Westphalia, and the introduction of the secularization thesis were largely responsible for this omission. Scholars assumed that religion was no longer an influential factor in international politics—that it either masked other "real" motives or was a reflection of older and more primitive irrational beliefs and behaviors that needed to be reserved for the private sphere. However, José Casanova (2008b), Daniel Philpott (2001), and others showed that the genealogical narrative that this assumption is based on—of the introduction of the modern nation-state system and the secularization of the international community—is problematic at best. Similarly, scholars of religion and politics (P. L. Berger 1999; Casanova 1994; Casanova 2006; Davie 1999; Davie 2001; Jensen 2011) have now widely challenged and/or reworked the secularization thesis—the notion that "[m]odernization necessarily leads to a decline of religion, both in society and in the minds of individuals" (P. L. Berger 1999, 2).[4] Additionally, some scholars are providing new ways to conceptualize modernity and its relationship with the secular (Eisenstadt 2000; S. Thomas 2005). Due to the widespread questioning of common modernity and secularization narratives, more scholars—within international relations, as well as the social sciences more broadly—are integrating religion into their research and challenging long held

[4] There are still some scholars who support the general assertions of the secularization theory (though they may challenge the explanatory arguments that were originally tied to the thesis, see Norris and Inglehart 2011; Toft, Philpott, and Shah 2011); however, these views are not representative of the majority of scholars of religion today.

assumptions about the absence of religion in politics. Consequently, the study of religion in international relations, once relegated to the periphery, has now grown into a robust subfield.

At the same time, the questioning of the modernization framework in United States policy circles has led to the introduction of legislation and government offices supporting faith-based organizations in their charity and service work, both in the U.S. and abroad. The Charitable Choice provision of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, signed into law by President Clinton in 1996, specifies, among other things, that FBOs cannot be excluded from federal funding merely because of their faith ("Charitable Choice: The Facts" 2015). Additionally, Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives have emerged in five federal departments including USAID (Clarke 2009, 389–390). And, in 2004, USAID issued a "Rule" for participation by religious organizations ensuring that faith-based organizations "are able to compete fairly for USAID funding" ("USAID 'Rule' for Participation by Religious Organizations" 2014). The purpose of these offices and policies is to build relationships between religious non-profits and the federal government to increase the effectiveness of aid in the U.S. and around the world. The introduction of FBO-focused policies and offices, together with the reemergence of religion in international relations, has led to an "upswing" in scholarly literature on faith-based organizations (Bielefeld and Cleveland 2013, 443). However, FBO scholars confront the same theoretical and methodological challenges that plague those who study religion in all areas of IR—namely, how religion can and should be defined and studied.

For some scholars, the issue revolves around how representative any given definition of religion is. That is, many scholars now acknowledge the problems of defining religion as belief. For instance, in their study on development FBOs Clark and Jennings assert that "[t]he term 'religion' is normally associated with the values, rules and social practices that stem from belief

in spiritual and supreme being, usually codified in a sacred text such as the Bible, Quran or Bhagavad Gita" (2008, 5), but they acknowledge that such a definition can be criticized for its focus on "book religions." Consequently, Clark and Jennings prefer to use the term "faith," which, they say includes the major religions, "but also political philosophies with strong religious elements such as Confucianism or Rastafarianism, modern sects such as the Church of Scientology or the Falun Gong, and belief systems associated with traditional indigenous societies such as shamanism, mysticism or animism" (2008, 5).

Other IR scholars note the problems with studying particular religions as monolithic entities. To counteract this, Mona Kanwal Sheikh relies on Ninian Smart's seven part scheme, which breaks religion up into seven dimensions: practical and ritual; emotional and experiential; narrative or mythical; ethical and legal; doctrinal and philosophical; social and institutional; and material dimensions (2014, 260, relying on Smart 1996). Sheikh argues that

> Applying Smart's seven-part scheme to a case study of militant Islamism in order to trace, for instance what dimensions of religion are securitised and if any of them are especially disposed to triggering the process of securisation would give rise to a number of pertinent questions, including: Do obedience to God/worship (the ritual dimension), the *Quran* or *hadith* (the narrative dimension), monotheism (the doctrinal dimension), spiritual values (the experiential dimension), *sharia* (the legal dimension), the *ummah* (the social dimension) or holy places (the material dimension) play a role" (2014, 260)?

Relying on this kind of definitional framework allows IR scholars to be more exact in determining whether specific factors play a role in a given phenomena—conflict, for instance. As Sheikh notes, such an approach "can provide a more nuanced picture of the idea of religion as a unified, monolithic category" (2014, 262).

Though Clark and Jennings and Sheikh approach the study of religion with a more critical lens than some, other scholars focus on the problems of treating religion as a variable at all. Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, Scott Thomas, Timothy Fitzgerald, and others have drawn upon

the historical evidence provided by Talal Asad (1993; 2003), José Casanova (1994; 2008a), and Charles Taylor (2007) to critique the assumptions made about the religious and the secular in international relations, and, in particular, the distinction between religion and politics. In the next section, I briefly summarize the primary contributions by Asad, Casanova, and Taylor to the study of religion, then engage with critical IR scholarship that relies on these authors to question the religious-secular and religious-political binaries in international relations.

A. Challenging the Study of Religion in IR, and Thinking of New Ways Forward

Talal Asad acknowledges that for many twentieth century anthropologists and social scientists, religion is "a distinctive space of human practice and belief which cannot be reduced to any other" (1993, 27). He also notes that the concept of the secular tends to include the idea that it is possible to separate that which is religious from that which is not (2003, 25). However, Asad challenges this assumption—arguing that there is "nothing *essentially* religious, nor any universal essence that defines 'sacred language' or 'sacred experience'" (italics in original, 2003, 25). Instead, as he and others (Casanova 1994; Connolly 1999; Fitzgerald 2011; Hurd 2008) argue, definitions of the secular and the religious are not natural or essential. They are products of discursive processes and historically contingent.

José Casanova notes that in premodern Western Christendom, two layers of dualism existed: earth/heaven, which designated a distinction between the immanent world and transcendence, and religious-secular, which divided up the immanent world into two spheres (1994, 14–15). The word secular is derived from *saeculum,* which has three different meanings—"century," "age," and "world" (Casanova 1994, 12–13). According to Asad, the notion of the secular first appeared in the thirteenth century when it was used by monks to

describe the difference between those Christian priests who chose to live in the world instead of in a monastery. This was directly connected to ideas of the sacred versus the profane, with "the sacred" referring to anything the community deemed to be of high value, and "the profane" being that which is ordinary or commonplace (Asad 2003, 31, drawing on Durkheim 1915; Casanova 1994, 13). Thus, there was not only a divide between this world and the transcendent world, but there was also a religious world, which was signified by life inside the monastery, and the secular world outside consisting of the profane or ordinary.

In the sixteenth century the connection between the profane and the secular loosened, due in part to the contestation of religious textual authenticity. According to Asad, clergy and other intellectuals began to question Christian doctrine, leading to a scholarly reexamination of the authenticity of biblical works, thereby introducing the idea of a split between "secular history" (what really happened) and "sacred discourse" (2003, 43), which "helped to constitute the secular as *the* epistemological domain in which history exists as history" (italics in original, 2003, 43).[5] At this time, Western elites began to think of religion as a private matter, leaving "everything else" to be designated as secular. As Casanova articulates, "If before, it was the religious realm which appeared to be the all-encompassing reality within which the secular realm found its proper place, now the secular sphere will be the all-encompassing reality, to which the religious sphere will have to adapt" (1994, 15).

While Charles Taylor does not focus on the genealogies of the terms "religious" and "secular," he does weave a related historical narrative about secularization in "the modern West" in his seminal tome, *A Secular Age* (2007, ix). Taylor examines one mode of secularity he identifies as "a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed,

[5] For Asad, there is no direct linear evolution of the secular. Instead, its formation came through the working out of "a series of particular oppositions" (2003, 25).

unproblematic, to one in which is it understood to be one option among others" (2007, 3). Taylor argues that in the late-medieval and early modern period, there was a great push for Reform—"a drive to make over the whole society to higher standards" (2007, 63). He contends that it was this move that led to "the destruction of the old enchanted cosmos, and to the creation of a viable alternative in exclusive humanism" (2007, 63). Humanism, according to Taylor, then opened up a range of options for ways of being (2007, 19), which developed into a widespread "presumption of unbelief" (2007, 13), wherein belief was no longer "the default option" (2007, 12). Taylor calls this presumption the "immanent frame" (2007, 542).

Scholars like Scott Thomas, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, and Timothy Fitzgerald draw upon the historical evidence provided by Asad, Casanova, Taylor, and others to critique the assumptions made about the religious and the secular in international relations, and, in particular, the distinction between religion and politics. For instance, Hurd challenges the oft-held assumption of a secular divide between religion and politics by arguing that this divide is "not fixed but rather socially and historically constructed" (2008, 1). While the works of Asad and others have convinced some IR scholars to reexamine their reliance on a strict religious-secular or religious-political binary, Hurd argues that others continue to rely on secularist assumptions as an organizing framework. Such scholars often ignore secularism's discursive power and historically contingent nature (2008, 16), which becomes problematic when attempting to produce "objective" explanations that are, in many cases, considered to be broadly generalizable.

As Hurd and other scholars have pointed out, IR theory has been (largely) unable to effectively explain religious behavior in the context of international relations due to the secularist assumptions these theories have been based in and/or their inattention to the ways in which religious beliefs, principles, and practices are mutually constitutive of culture and language

(Hatzopoulos and Petito 2003; Snyder 2011; S. Thomas 2005). Adherents of realism and liberalism continue to rely on the assumption that religion has been essentially privatized since the Peace of Westphalia, thus they find religion to be either epiphenomenal or merely unimportant in relation to other social and political influences. Yet, the Western European secularization narrative relied on by so many IR scholars is problematic at best. John Hobson goes so far as to argue that IR theory "does not so much explain international politics in an objective, positivist and universalist manner but seeks, rather, to parochially celebrate and defend or promote the West as the proactive subject of, and as the highest or ideal normative referent in, world politics" (2012, 1). If this is indeed the case, and common assumptions about the religious, the secular, and the political are, in part to blame, IR scholars must find new ways to move forward in the study of religion.

Snyder acknowledges the difficulty scholars face in integrating religion into current IR, noting that the foundational paradigms often do not offer guidance on how to do this (Snyder 2011, 1–2). Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler (2004) argue that the integration approach—in which religion is integrated into existing approaches as a new variable—is more than adequate. However, according to Hurd, "This 'add and stir' approach misses the point, because adding a religious viewpoint, variable, or actor does not compensate for the fact that the basic categories structuring the analysis remain untouched" (2011, 171). She urges us to "suspend" the assumption that the religious-secular binary is fixed, and argues that "approaching it as an unstable, historically contingent construct that is capable of sustaining a broad discursive field that goes beyond the maintenance of a distinction between the secular and the religious allows the ground that supports this distinction to shift in intellectually fruitful directions" (2011, 170).

Constructivism, sometimes referred to as the third paradigm of international relations, but often conceived as an approach, is better equipped to take up Hurd's call for a broader questioning of the religious-secular binary, as constructivists tend to look beyond the role of state and international actors, and instead focus on the role of ideas, history, and identity formation. Constructivism assumes that interests and preferences are influenced by what social actors value, which is, in turn, influenced by "identity, national history, and how the state was formed" (S. Thomas 2005, 80). Thus, these influential relationships are mutually constituted. State formation shapes individual preferences, but individual preferences also shape state formation. For constructivists, religious ideas and practice can be important contributors to identity and preference formation. However, Scott Thomas, drawing on Alasdair MacIntyre (1977), argues that constructivists "have not fully acknowledged… the *content* of social interaction" or "the way religious ideas, rules, norms, principles or moral judgments are… shaped by the linguistic conventions of a community, and connected to the practices of a particular cultural and religious tradition…" (2005, 96). Still, here Thomas (and MacIntyre) may be painting constructivist scholars with too broad of a brush.

Although all constructivists start from the premise that structure and agency are mutually constitutive, their views on the fixedness of particular meanings vary. "Whereas the positivist sees social facts as relatively unproblematic, the post-positivist sees them as in need of ideological excavation" (Klotz and Lynch 2006, 13). Thus, when it comes to the study of religion in IR, some constructivists treat religion as stable while others do not. For instance, in his examination of conflict and sacred sites, Ron Hassner defines sacred spaces as "religious centers at which the heavenly and earthly meet, sites that act as bridges between the human and the divine worlds" (2009, 22). Here Hassner is not so interested in what counts as a sacred space to

his subjects, but rather why sacred spaces are sites of conflicts. Cecelia Lynch, on the other hand, takes a post-positivist approach, in which religious and secular meanings are challenged and probed. In particular, Lynch focuses on the ethics of religious actors in aid and development and how these frameworks inform and are informed by discourses related to the War on Terror and neoliberalism (2011). While both Hassner and Lynch assume that structure and agency are mutually constitutive, and are interested in the role of religion as a social fact, they differ in the levels of fixedness they assign to religious identifiers. Despite the post-positivist contribution (Bornstein 2005; Deeb 2006; Mahmood 2005; Salvatore and LeVine 2005), many scholars (including some post-positivists) continue to make assumptions about *what constitutes* the religious, secular, or political, as I explain in more detail below.

B. Problems with the "Religious" Categorization

Though post-positivist constructivist studies of religion go further in challenging the religious-secular and religious-political binaries, Fitzgerald argues that all IR scholars, even those that problematize the rigidity of these binaries, continue to rely on a distinction between religious and secular or political phenomena that may not, in fact, exist. He points out that the modern-day concept of politics relies on both the religious as the non-rational Other and the notion that politics is necessarily a "domain of non-religious rational action" (2011, 16). Thus, religion is reified and objectified by scholars in a way that provides seemingly clear conceptual boundaries between religion and politics. Similarly, certain actions are deemed "political" while others are not. Yet, according to Fitzgerald, the boundaries between that which is religious and political or secular are not, in fact, empirically observable, but are, instead, constructed.

Fitzgerald argues that even Hurd, who explicitly challenges foundational IR assumptions by encouraging IR scholars to move "beyond" a religious-secular distinction, continues to rely on these terms as analytical and descriptive tools in her own works. Fitzgerald points to Hurd's description of the Iranian Revolution and the Taliban as "inescapably religious" (2008, 4n21) as one example. He says,

> I am confused about the logical level at which categories such as religion, religious, spiritual and material, which ostensibly are being problematized, are being used….There is a slippage here between religion as a powerful Anglophone discourse which rightly needs to be critiqued in order to show that this is a historically constructed and unstable category parasitically connected to the category of the secular; and on the other hand a dogmatic assumption that the Iranian revolution and the Taliban are 'religious.' But to apply this category is to assume what is being questioned. One might ask, for example, if they are religious instead of political? Or are they both religious and political? If politics simply means power and control, then there is no real binary problem…. But if politics means *secular non-religious politics* as constructed by Anglophone and more generally Europhone discourse, then we are still stuck in the binary that is being disembedded and critiqued (italics in original, 2011, 213).

While Hurd and others are increasingly challenging the religious-secular and religious-political binary, in many cases they are also continuing to rely on Western elite assumptions about what these terms mean. Indeed, as Fitzgerald points out, Hurd argues that "Religion and politics do not belong in distinct domains" (2008, 134); however, she also says that religion and politics intersect and overlap. If religion and politics are not distinct, how can they interact in a manner that implies a distinction (Fitzgerald 2011, 214)? Thus, Fitzgerald argues that Hurd, and other scholars, continue to rely on religious-secular and religious-political analytical binaries, even while they assert the malleable and dynamic nature of such categories.

In FBO literature, the use of religious designations is most apparent in those studies that introduce typologies of faith-based organizations. With the rise in FBO-focused studies, more scholars are rightly trying to provide more refined definitions and classifications for these

groups, given the diversity in their structures and goals (see Marshall 2013, 154–183 for a summary about the immense diversity among FBOs). Such scholars ask "What makes a faith-based organization 'faith-based'?" and/or "What kinds of differences can we identify among faith-based organizations?" This is especially important given that scholars have argued that there are difficulties in separating secular discourses of development (Hovland 2008; Linden 2008; Paras 2012) from so-called religious discourses. One typology scholars often cite is one introduced by Ronald J. Sider and Heidi R. Unruh (2004), wherein they not only distinguished between religious characteristics of organizations themselves, but also the religious characteristics of their programs or projects. According to Sider and Unruh's typology, organizational characteristics include mission statements, founding conditions, affiliations, funding, practices, and staff selection (2004, 112–113). Project characteristics include environment, content, integration of religious content and other project components, and expectations pertaining to the effects of religious factors (2004, 114–115). Based on these characteristics, Sider and Unruh develop a typology of six different types of FBOs: faith-permeated, faith-centered, faith-affiliated, faith-background, faith-secular partnership, and secular (2004, 112–115). Hefferan, Occhipinti, and Adkins amend Sider and Unruh's typology to provide "greater flexibility" for the diversity of FBOs and their organizational structure (2009, 17–18). Other typologies include those introduced by Stephen V. Monsma (1996), which designates the religious practices of organizations as low, medium, or high, and Thomas H. Jeavons (1998), who assesses the religiosity within seven factors of each FBO. Finally, in her typology, Laura C. Thaut relies on four characteristics—mission, staffing policies, affiliations, and funding (2009, 321–322)—to determine a taxonomy of Christian humanitarian work, which

includes Accommodative-Humanitarianism, Synthesis-Humanitarianism, and Evangelistic-Humanitarianism (2009, 346).

Typologies of faith-based organizations highlight one of the blind spots in FBO research, and in IR studies of religion more generally. Each of these typologies strives to provide more specificity in defining FBOs, while also taking into account the diversity of these organizations. However, the religious components identified in these typologies are all based on "observable and explicit phenomena" (Sider and Unruh 2004, 117–118), which scholars assign their own predetermined conceptual frameworks to, rather than relying on how FBOs, themselves, conceptualize aspects of their organizations. Why do Sider and Unruh, as well as other FBO scholars, assume the religiousness of particular phenomena? What is it about these particular phenomena that make them "religious" and why does that matter, analytically and normatively? I argue that trying to say something about the religious aspects of FBOs while making assumptions about how identities, values, and practices are religious results in studies that lack specificity and explanatory value.

Though the trend is to rely on an external perspective, as the above authors do, more FBO scholars, and scholars of IR more generally, are trying to engage in studies that take into account the internal discourses of these organizations. Lynch, for one, encourages IR scholars to look beyond religious doctrine to the way in which religious actors *interpret* that doctrine through practice. For Lynch, "the most useful way to study religion in international politics is through examining its practice—the intertwining of ethics and action—in a variety of contexts" (2009, 382). She introduces a "neo-Weberian" approach to the study of religion that focuses on moral reasoning and how notions of the common good are shaped by actors and their experiences

(2009, 399).[6] Lynch's research highlights the ways that religious actors constitute what specific religious ideals mean for them through practice, as well as how practice shapes those ideals. She questions what specific religious ethics and discourses mean for FBOs themselves (rather than taking the meanings of such phenomena for granted), and examines the resulting effects on the strategies and work of these organizations. An approach that focuses on the internal discourses, practices, and meanings of FBOs highlights *why* FBOs engage in the work they do and *how* they do it. Furthermore, such studies are often able to show how the religious, the secular, and the political are mutually constituted.

For instance, Lynch has shown how conceptions of the religious and the secular among FBOs are fluid and that they both inform and are informed by political, social, and economic factors. Similarly, Erica Bornstein (2005) analyzes the discourses surrounding development work carried out by World Vision and Christian Care in Zimbabwe, to show some of the tensions between certain Christian notions of witness and development and Zimbabwean conceptions of humanitarian assistance. Lynch, Bornstein, and other scholars (Flanigan 2010; Mahmood 2005; Paras 2012; Paras 2014) are going beyond those studies that rely on a strict religious-secular or religious-political dichotomous framework. They challenge such distinctions by showing that religious actors may engage with secular discourses in ways that blur conceptual boundaries of the religious, secular, and political and/or by showing how the religious and the secular, for religious actors themselves, are mutually constituted. However, many studies that focus on the

[6] Anthropologist Saba Mahmood proposes a similar approach she calls "positive ethics" (drawn from the works of Aristotle and Michel Foucault). She says, "An inquiry into ethics from this perspective requires that one examine not simply the values enshrined in moral codes, but the different ways in which people now live these codes…. What is consequential in this framework is not necessarily whether people follow the moral norms or not, but what relationships they establish between the various constitutive elements of the self (body, reason, volition, and so on) and a particular norm" (2005, 120).

internal discourses and narratives of FBOs continue to make assumptions about the religiousness of particular discourses, practices, or other phenomena.

For example, in her study of women's piety groups in Cairo, Saba Mahmood (2005) wants to understand what the goals of her subjects are. This aspect of her project entails asking piety group members about what they mean by particular terms, such as "secularization." Mahmood's meaning-focused approach is an important first step in understanding why her subjects behave in particular ways. However, her analysis of the *consequences* of these practices make particular assertions about what is "really" religious, secular, or political. While Mahmood challenges particular dominant definitions of religion and politics (Mahmood 2005, 35), she continues to frame her argument with the assumption of a religious-political binary. For Mahmood, religion can encompass a wide array of beliefs and practices, and politics can include many different kinds of encounters; however, there is always a conceptual break between that which is religious and that which is secular or political. More importantly, Mahmood does not explain *why* she identifies certain phenomena as religious, secular, or political. Is she relying on her research subjects' own conceptualizations of these terms? Or, is she unreflexively assigning analytical categories to what she thinks counts as religious? The latter would, I argue, likely include making assumptions about why certain practices or ideas are religious or political, without attending to the analytical or normative implications of such a move.

Similarly, Asad argues that while one might be able to define what constitutes a religious action within a particular context, determining whether or not one is engaging in that action due to religious or secular reasons may be problematic (2003, 11–12). In other words, for Asad, it is not always clear whether someone is acting for religious or secular reasons. The way that Asad frames this issue is telling. He seems to assume that the categories of the religious and the

secular, while contested and dynamic, are inescapable when identifying particular motivations. Now, this is not to say that conception of the religious and the secular or the political for individuals and groups "on the ground" are hermetically sealed from outside influence—including mainstream international discourses on these subjects. Thus, religious actors may, themselves, adhere to a religious-secular discursive framework. However, this is an empirical question that deserves more study, rather than an assumption that should be made.

Marie Juul Petersen's work provides another example of an approach relying on a religious-secular binary. In her work, she conducts a broad examination of religious NGOs at the United Nations to interrogate what makes a "religious" organization religious. As she rightly argues,

> In itself, religiosity is not necessarily a characteristic that tells us anything about the person or organization possessing it. If we want to understand religious organizations we cannot merely characterise them as *religious,* based on a prejudiced conception of the significance of religion, and leave it at that. Instead we have to examine *how, when,* and *why* these actors are religious (2010, "Conclusions," para. 5).

To do this, Petersen digs into some of the internal descriptions of these organizations, by analyzing their mission statements and activities, for example. However, Petersen's analysis is based on an *a priori* notion of what counts as "religious traditions, values and ideas" and other phenomena. Petersen often separates those phenomena that are secular and those that are religious. She considers "implementation of projects, research, conferences, lobbying, and advocacy" to be secular, while "prayer, mission, religious education and theological studies" are religious (2010, "Methods," para. 1).

There are some scholars of FBOs who are trying to move past their own assumptions about the religious-secular and religious-political binaries by relying on how FBOs frame their own identities and action. For instance, Lynch, in her 2011 article on faith-based organizations

and international discourses of the Global War on Terror and neoliberalism, relies heavily on FBOs' own conceptions of what is considered religious or secular—showing that, in fact, such conceptualizations are mutually constituted and fluid. Yet, Lynch's own interviewees *do* rely on a religious-political binary, as she says that members of a Palestinian NGO "described their struggle against occupation in political, not religious, terms" (2011, 213). These kinds of encounters highlight what Fitzgerald does not seem to take into account in his critique—namely that religious actors themselves might frame certain acts and ideas as religious, political, or secular. On the other hand, relying on a meaning-centered approach similar to Lynch, Andrea Paras (2014), in her study of Canadian development FBOs shows how these organizations' conceptions of "mission" and "development" and their related religious or secular connotations often blur (also see Lynch and Schwarz forthcoming). These initial forays into how FBOs, themselves, frame the religious and the secular are critical interventions into studies of religion and IR. Such studies not only provide greater understanding of how and why religious actors choose certain courses of actors over others, but they also can highlight discrepancies between how scholars and FBOs think about, frame, and enact the religious and the secular.

Despite the work of Lynch and Paras, as well as broader critical studies of religion and global politics, most scholars focused on FBOs or religion and politics more generally, do not rely on actors' own conceptions of what constitutes the religious, secular, or political. Scholars simply assume these categories (see Fountain 2013 for a discussion about the use of the religious-political binary in development studies). Assuming that certain values, identities, practices, founding stories, institutions, or other phenomena are inherently religious is problematic for several reasons.

First, assuming the religiosity of certain phenomena can lead scholars to other, potentially problematic assumptions about what such phenomena do. For example, assuming that the use of the term "Muslim" or "Islamic" in an organizational name is inherently religious often leads to other assumptions about that identity—namely that it is fixed, exclusivist, and monolithic. Scholars miss the ways that such organizations are shaped by a range of factors, and that their "Muslim" identities are perhaps not even as salient as other identifiers (Hurd 2015, 103–105). Scholars focus in on what it means to be "Muslim" (often according to scholars' own interpretations of what this means), then rely on these assumptions to infer how such an organization would engage with organizations or communities that represent other religions.

A second problem that emerges from assuming that certain FBO ideas and acts are religious is that the scholar often misses the range of roles a particular act or idea might play. Tamsin Bradley's (2005) ethnographic study of Indian FBO Water for Rajasthan provides a good example of how relying on a religious-secular or religious-political binary can (1) lead to monolithic conceptualizations of certain actors, and (2) result in the scholar missing an important aspect of a given phenomena. Bradley argues that though FBOs are doing valuable work, they also can be harmful to the communities where they work because these organizations' religious perspectives blind them to the "real" needs and cultures of those they are trying to help. For Bradley, Christianity and Hinduism are distinct, dogmatic, and exclusivist. Yet scholars have shown such descriptions to be problematic and inaccurate (Lynch 2000b). Moreover, Bradley's analysis also relies on a conceptual framework in which prayer is an act that can only be understood within the context of how Bradley herself conceptualizes Christian traditions and practices. That is, for Bradley prayer is an inherently Christian act, with certain assumed ontological properties. As a result, she focuses on how prayer can be communication with the

Christian god, but rejects the other work that the FBO representatives say that prayer is doing. According to Bradley,

> Prayer is thought to unite Water for Rajasthan with the community it seeks to help. However, in reality it fails to do this not least because the communities Water for Rajasthan works in are Hindu. Worship for Hindus takes a very different form and it is therefore inappropriate to attempt to unite two very different religions through the Christian concept of prayer (2005, 345).

Here, Bradley is so focused on her own assumed conceptions about what prayer does that she neglects what else it might mean for Water for Rajasthan and what the Hindu aid recipients might think about the practice.

Relatedly, I would like to suggest that assuming the religiousness of certain FBO phenomena may contribute to the secularist bias in some studies of religion in IR. In particular, focusing on religious factor(s) may blind the scholar to the problems or benefits of other factors often conceptualized as either secular or religious. As Sheikh notes:

> What European or American opinion makers often advance as non-religious principles can closely function in the same way as what, by contrast, are labeled as religious doctrines since they can be based on the same kinds of strong sentiments. Just as religion and the myths of religion can bring to mind images of cosmic struggle, evoke something greater than life, provide vehicles of social mobilisation, give legitimacy to and moral justification for violence, demonise opponents and cast a conflict in transhistorical terms, evoking doctrines of secularism and freedom can follow the same pattern (2014, 266).

If so-called secular doctrines and principles can operate like religious doctrines and principles, we should be paying attention to these factors, as well. But, focusing on the religious may, in fact, blind us to the ways that these secular phenomena are critical factors to our object of study (Fountain 2013, 24–25; Lynch and Schwarz forthcoming; Mehta 2008, 87).

Finally, relying on a framework that categorizes some ideas and acts as religious and others not, may implicitly support assumptions that religion is inherently irrational, unfit for the

public sphere, or normatively problematic in some way.[7] As Hovland notes, "In the development field…there often seems to be a vague, undefined fear of religion. Religion is split off. It is not trusted. It is frequently ignored, and sometimes people have to pretend it is not there at all" (Hovland 2008, 180). Alternatively, relying on a religious-secular framework might contribute to the notion that religion is inherently good (in peacebuilding, for instance). As Fitzgerald suggests, by relying on categories of the religious and the secular or the political, IR scholars are engaging "in an ideological project" that has (intentional or not) consequences for the study and classification of many cultures and practices, and often results in "domination and exploitation" (2011, 240). Moreover, as scholars we should ask ourselves whether assuming the religiousness of particular phenomena, which often entails assuming an analytical distinction between the religious and secular/political, might be reinforcing these divisions—in both the scholarly and "real" world. Could driving home the point that religion *is* something distinct lead to assumptions about its intractability, despite studies suggesting that religion is actually malleable or syncretistic? As scholars, we need to be very careful that we do not rely on theoretical frameworks that are not only possibly erroneous, but could also lead to further tensions and conflict in the world.

Focusing on FBOs as the object of study, rather than development, aid, human rights, and peacebuilding organizations more broadly, carries an implicit research agenda—that of focusing on the religious aspects of these organizations and/or what religion does for FBOs and their work. Paras notes that "recent [FBO] research tends to intervene with strong normative arguments about the necessity of including religion in development….but such research often shows little sensitivity to how such arguments contain implicit beliefs about what religion is, or

[7] For a relevant discussion on whether religious discourse is fit for the public sphere, see Mendieta and VanAntwerpen 2011.

how development should best be pursued" (2012, 245). As I have argued above, assuming the ontological characteristics of certain so-called religious aspects FBOs is problematic and has broader implications for the study of religion in international relations. Not only are definitions of religion highly contested, but scholars have argued that such definitions usually rely on a religious-secular or religious-political binary, or may entail other assumptions about the inherent characteristics of religious phenomena, which FBOs may not rely on themselves. Furthermore, such a framework may lead the scholar to neglect the other work so-called religious acts and ideas may do. Finally, relying on such analytical frameworks often results in the implicit reification of certain traditions or communities, wherein certain organizations or groups are portrayed as irrational, "backwards," barbaric, or merely problematic for the public sphere (De Kadt 2009; Olarinmoye 2012, 9; Pratt 2009).

In the next section I argue that a reassessment of the ontologies of religion in IR is warranted. Moreover, I assert that one way to engage with religion and FBOs while being attentive to the problems of assuming how certain acts and ideas are religious is to examine and analyze the terms, concepts, and meanings that FBOs assign to their own values, identities, and practices, while maintaining a reflexive stance about what constitutes the religious.

Section III: Broadening and Challenging the Ontologies of Religion in the Study of FBOs

In this section I articulate a reflexive and bottom-up concept approach to the study of FBOs that focuses on the concepts and meanings such organizations assign to the values, identities, and practices that are critical to their work. I argue that an approach to the study of FBOs and other religious actors that does not assume the religious characteristics of these individuals and organizations forces the scholar to be reflexive and aware of his or her role in the

ideological project of portraying certain actors or actions as inherently irrational, prone to peace or conflict, dogmatic, barbaric, etc. (Lynch 2014). In addition, relying on the concepts and meanings used by FBOs themselves, while also paying attention to the contextual factors that shape these meanings, yields important conceptual and methodological insights for the study of religion in FBOs, as well as in international relations more broadly. First, my research problematizes the assumptions that go along with categorizing certain values, identities, and practices as religious by showing how these phenomena do not always conform to typical scholarly definitions of what constitutes a religious act or principle. This then opens up ontological space to think about the influences and roles of FBO characteristics in new ways. Second, my research muddies common descriptive and normative assumptions scholars and others often assign to religion. For instance, an in-depth examination of FBO values, identities, and practices and the meanings and concepts FBOs assign to these phenomena shows that not all religious actors view religious difference in the way that scholars of peace and conflict or religious pluralism often frame those issues.

As discussed in the previous section, there is an ongoing debate among IR scholars about how to study religion. While some scholars are challenging integrationist approaches to the study of religion in IR, others include religion—manifested through identity, belief, or practice—as one variable among many. In the process, religion is often implicitly or explicitly defined in opposition to the secular or the political due to the academy's reliance on the European secularization narrative and contemporary secularist discourse. More scholars are challenging the rigidity of the religious-secular distinction by (1) questioning whether or not a generalization of a particular kind of secularism to all peoples and communities is justified (Bhargava 2004) (Bhargava 2004); (2) debating the role of religion in the public sphere (Habermas 2008;

Mendieta and VanAntwerpen 2011; Salvatore and LeVine 2005); and/or (3) probing the ethics and motivations of religious actors (Bornstein 2005; Lynch 2011; Mahmood 2005; Paras 2012; Paras 2014). The authors of these studies challenge preconceived notions of what constitutes the religious, the secular, or the political; however, the analytical frameworks used by these scholars often continue to rely on assumed categorizations of particular behaviors or identities (Fitzgerald 2011). Mahmood (2005) for instance, in her ethnography of Muslim women's piety movements in Cairo, argues that certain religious acts have political consequences (or vice versa) but continues to assume that certain actions, like prayer, are religious. Fitzgerald argues that relying on categories of "religious" or "faith-based" relegates such actions, groups, and identities to the non-rational (2011, 8). Similarly, Lynch argues that a reliance on an Enlightenment narrative has led scholars to link religion with the "magical, emotive, irrational, and dogmatic, while the exercise of individual reason produced rationality and logic" (2014, 278). Increasingly, there are scholars who are employing these categories while also complicating notions of what it means to be rational or modern (Eisenstadt 2000; Landy and Saler 2009). In addition, feminist scholars (Ashcraft 2000, 348; Burrell 1984, 99; Mills and Chiaramonte 1991) have challenged broader dichotomies of the rational-emotional, life-work, public-private and others that, I suggest, scholars often implicitly rely on in their analyses of religion. Thus, I argue that the continued use of analytical categories that treat certain ideas and acts as inherently religious or secular still creates and maintains an ontological barrier to understanding the full range of values, ethics, actions, and structures that global actors rely on and engage in. In particular, an ontology that relies on religious-secular distinctions often include assumptions about *how* specific acts and ideas are religious (e.g. they are focused on the transcendental) and what kinds of impacts they will have in international relations and other areas. Additionally, such an approach often assumes

that so-called religious actors frame their actions in the same way as scholars, when, in fact, this may not be the case.

Scholars who study FBOs acknowledge the difficulty in defining these organizations. The problem for these scholars is that those elements categorized as "religious" are manifested in a variety of ways in FBOs. The typologies introduced by Sider and Unruh (2004) and others (Hefferan, Adkins, and Occhipinti 2009; Thaut 2009; Monsma 1996; Jeavons 1998) provide a partial corrective to this problem by identifying specific criteria along a spectrum to better understand whether and how particular religious phenomena are present within a single organization. The problem with such an approach to the study of religion in FBOs is that the religiousness of the criteria included in these typologies is assumed, rather than determined. Certain identities, values, and practices and other phenomena are simply labeled "religious" or related to "faith." Such designations then lead to certain assumptions about what constitutes a religious act or idea. How can we study FBOs, and their contributions to important issues of global governance, without relying on a religious-political or religious-secular conceptual framework, where the religious is analytically separated from the political and secular (and implicitly separated from the rational, modern, public, etc.)? I suggest that scholars employ a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach.

Using a reflexive approach in the study of religion and politics means understanding and acknowledging the stakes involved in categorizing something as "religious" or "political," for both the scholar and the subject(s) of study. Such an approach encourages the scholar to ask questions about why particular kinds of phenomena are often defined as "religious" and what normative implications these categorizations include. As Pratap Bhanu Mehta notes in a discussion of a Hobbesian conception of religion and politics:

> Hobbes's radicalism was not simply to subordinate religion to politics; it was to assert emphatically that what counts as religious was itself a function of political power. The issue then becomes not "What is religious?" but "What is at stake in marking something 'as' religious?" Is it a strategem to marginalize an argument, or a device to claim authority for it (2008, 71)?

Scholars of religion and IR often categorize certain phenomena as religious or secular, without articulating why such designations are made. A reflexive approach requires the scholar to pay attention to *why* he/she might categorize something as religious or not—being attentive to the specific ontological and epistemological assumptions that are informing such an analytical move. A reflexive perspective understands and acknowledges that our ideas about the religious and secular are informed by both broader discourses—within the academy, in the West, as a liberal, etc.—as well as our own values, ideologies, and experiences (see Cunliffe 2003, 989 for a related discussion about radical reflexivity). When assessing how to study religion in IR from a reflexive position, the question becomes not what religion is (as an analytical category), but rather what definition we are using, why, and what the normative and analytical implications that result from using that definition are (Schilbrack 2012, 106).

My research shows how FBO values, identities, and practices can vary greatly and that those things we call "religious" are often not meaningfully different from those things we label "political" or "secular." If we recognize that religious phenomena is not necessarily apolitical, prone to conflict or peace, and that it cannot be effectively conceptually distinguished from the secular, then what are we doing with these categories? What analytical purchase do they have? I argue that examining the meanings of particular concepts and terms that FBOs use themselves to identify their organizational identities, values, and practices, through a "bottom-up" conceptual approach (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 49), helps us to more readily understand what these

phenomena mean for these groups and how such meanings shape specific organizational strategies.

In this approach, the concepts that are being analyzed from a bottom-up perspective are specific values (e.g. justice, peace, reconciliation), identities (e.g. Christian, ecumenical, multi-religious), and practices (e.g. prayer). For example, rather than thinking of prayer as a religious practice, a bottom-up conceptual approach examines and analyzes how pray-ers themselves (in this case, FBOs) conceptualize prayer. However, understanding FBO meanings of prayer does not only entail asking FBO representatives what prayer means for them or examining how prayer is defined in an organizational document. To understand the fullness of such meanings, we must understand FBOs own descriptions within the context of history, broader discourses, and other factors (Lynch 2009; Lynch 2014). For instance, delving into what "justice" means for IJM through interviews and textual analysis unveils particular theological understandings of violence, poverty, and God that are grounded in biblical scripture. However, it is not enough to simply assume that such understandings derive directly from unmediated scripture. Instead, it is important to know how specific theological understandings are shaped. Thus, in order to understand how IJM conceptualizes justice, one must have some familiarity with the writings of Gary Haugen, IJM's founder, and his own experiences investigating the Rwanda genocide. As my research shows, understanding these ideological and ethical commitments, and the various factors that shape such commitments, provides insight into why IJM connects the notion of justice to issues of physical violence like slavery and human trafficking, rather than issues of economic inequity.

One way to gain access to the terms and concepts FBOs use to identify their organizational values, identities, and practices, as well as the meanings these organizations

assign to these terms and concepts, is through an ethnographic approach; however, many of the ethnographic studies conducted on FBOs or broader issues of religion in IR continue to take religious, secular, or political descriptors as unproblematic analytical categories. Engaging with FBOs themselves through interviews and participating in and/or observing FBO behavior in their workplaces or FBO-related events can provide important insights into the terms and meanings these groups rely on. Furthermore, an ethnographic approach to the study of FBOs can yield richer and more context-specific research results than other methods (Fountain 2013, 26). As Adkins, Occhipinti, and Hefferan note, "An ethnographic perspective allows us to represent the incredible diversity of FBOs along a number of dimensions, and such case studies allow meaningful comparisons and generalizations to be made" (2010, 27). Unfortunately, such a method, in and of itself, does not necessarily challenge conceptualizations of what constitutes or counts as the religious or political. Though there are ethnographers who are attentive to questions of concept formation, many of the ethnographies focusing on FBOs, in particular, rely on a religious-secular or religious-political framework. For example, the studies included in the Adkins et al. edited volume are ethnographic; yet, Adkins et al. continue to rely on a typology of FBOs to categorize specific organizations as having a "faith-background" or being "faith-affiliated," without questioning how certain actions or identities are related to faith in the first place (2010, 7).

Asad admonishes his colleagues for conceiving of anthropological study, which often relies on ethnographic methods, as an act of translation—matching concepts in one language with those of another. He argues that by doing this, the scholar misses out on the opportunity to truly understand new concepts and ideas, and proposes that "the anthropologist's translation is not merely a matter of matching sentences in the abstract, but of *learning to live another form of*

life and to speak another kind of language" (italics in original, 1993, 180). While in some cases, our studies of FBOs do not cross linguistic divides, they may cross conceptual divides. That is, the subjects of our research may conceive of their own acts and ideas differently than we do. Thus, rather than relying on meanings that we, as scholars, ascribe to specific organizational self-descriptions, I suggest that we examine how FBOs describe themselves and what the terms and concepts they use to describe themselves mean to them. We need to ask questions like: Does an organization like the Taizé Community, which includes brothers from Catholic and Protestant traditions, self-identify as ecumenical? If so, what does "ecumenical" mean for the organizational members themselves? And, finally, (1) What are the implications of such meanings for the work of Taizé, and (2) How might such meanings confirm or challenge our own scholarly understandings of what it means to be ecumenical?

Reflexive scholars of religion and politics must push past assumptions of what makes particular concepts religious or political in order to see what specific values, identities, and practices both mean and do in particular contexts. For instance, if being ecumenical for the Taizé brothers means engaging in reconciliatory processes through prayer, various form of manual work, and the reading of scriptures, we cannot assume that prayer and the reading of scriptures are religious acts and that the manual work is not. Instead, we need to interrogate what these practices mean for the Taizé brothers themselves and how such meanings shape the reconciliation and humanitarian work of the group. Perhaps the brothers conceive of prayer, for example, as communication with the Christian god. But they may also view prayer as a reflexive, contemplative practice that opens up individuals to possibilities they would not normally consider, or a communal exercise that provides a material space in which peoples from differing backgrounds can find common purpose, or an artistic endeavor that brings beauty into the world.

The first conceptualization of prayer would likely fit with common definitions of religion. For instance, Toft, Philpott, and Shah rely on William P. Alston's (1972) definition of religion, which includes:

> (1) a belief in a supernatural being (or beings); (2) prayers or communication with that or those beings; (3) transcendent realities, including 'heaven,' 'paradise,' or 'enlightenment'; (4) a distinction between the sacred and the profane and between ritual acts and sacred objects; (5) a view that explains both the world as a whole and humanity's proper relation to it; (6) a code of conduct in line with that worldview; (7) a temporal community bound by its adherence to those elements (2011, 21).

Prayer, conceived as communication with the Christian god, would fit the second element of Alston's definition. However, Taizé's other meanings of and functions for prayer would not necessarily conform to common definitions of religion. For example, it is unlikely that, relying on Alston's definition, that "a communal exercise that provides a material space in which peoples from differing backgrounds can find common purpose" is necessarily a religious act.

Employing a bottom-up conceptual approach, and focusing on the terms, concepts, and meanings that FBOs use themselves allows the scholar to investigate the characteristics of those phenomena that are often labeled "religious." For instance, a scholar engaging in such an approach might ask why it matters if an FBO includes the practice of prayer in its internal (or external) day-to-day activities—an act that might be defined as "religious" in the sense that it includes communication with the divine. Delving into the assumptions we, as scholars, rely on to conceptualize certain acts as religious or not pushes us to think about why certain practices or values might be important within the context of FBO work. Sider and Unruh argue that determining how and to what extent religion manifests in an organization can help governments and other entities determine which FBOs to fund (2004, 130–131). Sider and Unruh do not explain why particular criteria might be more or less problematic for funders, but the implication

is that certain manifestations of religion would be more or less ethically (or otherwise) problematic than others. What might some of those problems be with regard to communication with the divine, for instance, and this practice's relationship to the work of FBOs? Perhaps funders view communication with the divine as problematic because it connotes irrationality on the part of FBOs and the idea that these organizations are not putting all their energy into practices that "really matter" for the people they are trying to help. Perhaps funders think that an FBO that promotes communication with the divine places a great deal of emphasis on its ideological commitments, and that this organization may be more likely to want to spread their faith to others—thus violating common ethical approaches to aid and development that try to avoid cultural colonialism. Or, it could be that, as some scholars do, funders assume that religious practices are inherently good. We might, for instance, then assume that communication with the divine indicates a willingness for a humanitarian FBO to want to provide spiritual aid, in addition to aid in the form of medical supplies, for example. These examples highlight some of the critical problems with making assumptions about the religious nature of certain FBO characteristics. We, scholars and others, often assume a relationship, rather than showing that one actually exists.

Focusing on the meanings of specific FBO values, identities, and practices also shifts our scholarly gaze from the assumed problems of religion in aid, development, peacebuilding and other global work to the ways that a range of values, identities, and practices can be problematic or beneficial. The approach that I advocate here helps the IR scholar move beyond the secularist bias, which can hide certain ethical and other issues. For instance, a focus on religious proselytism can neglect how both faith-based and secular agencies also proselytize when they encourage (or even require) particular market-based development solutions (Lynch and Schwarz

forthcoming). In short, examining the concepts and meanings used by FBOs themselves encourages the scholar to focus on the broader implications of a range of behaviors, both within FBOs and in other so-called religious organizations, rather than on the assumed properties and effects of religion.

Similar to Sheikh (2014, 266–267), I am not arguing that we should throw the baby out with the bath water and halt any attempts to define this thing called "religion." For some studies, relying on a conceptual framework that uses the religious-secular or religious-political binary is not only prudent, but necessary. Certain policies, laws, offices, and formal and informal discourses explicitly rely on language of the religious. In fact, the USAID Rule for Participation by Religious Organizations designates certain acts as "religious" and provides funding only if a particular organization separates those acts from its other humanitarian or development work ("USAID 'Rule' for Participation by Religious Organizations" 2014). Thus, designations of "religious" are consequential (even if they are not prudent).

For this project though I note that "religious" or "secular" designations are inherently problematic, I rely on the term "faith-based organization." I use this term because the organizations included in my study exhibit characteristics that most FBO scholars would likely call "religious" and I want to interrogate and challenge those claims. In this case, it makes sense to use the term "faith-based." Thus, I am not advocating that the term "religious" or related terms should simply be thrown out. What I am arguing is that certain ideas and acts should not be assumed to be necessarily or inherently religious, because such designations tend to include certain ontological assumptions that are not clarified or investigated. As Philip Fountain rightly asks: "If a Lebanese organisation, for instance, identifies as 'Christian' (whatever this signifies in that context), does this mean that they perceive themselves to be specifically 'faith-based', or

should it rather be taken at face value, that the organisation is connected to 'Christian' discourses and practices" (2013, 19)?

Conducting an in-depth analysis of FBO values, identities, and practices, and the meanings FBOs assign to these phenomena, has important ontological and methodological implications. As my research shows, so-called religious values, identities, practices or other religious phenomena do not always or do not *only* include those attributes that are considered inherently religious by scholars and others. In some cases FBO values, identities, and practices also incorporate meanings, functions, and characteristics that scholars would categorize as secular or political. Such findings challenge common notions about what counts as religious (and secular/political). Furthermore, I argue that focusing on what particular acts and ideas mean for the actors, themselves, must include a critical examination of how we, as scholars, are conceptualizing, categorizing, and framing those terms in our analyses. Once we understand that practices like prayer also include meanings and functions that are political or secular (according to mainstream definitions of what constitutes those terms), we must approach the study of religion in FBOs, and religion and IR more broadly, as an inherently reflexive exercise wherein we no longer assume the existence of a relationship between so-called religious aspects of global actors and the work of such organizations. This relationship must be demonstrated and it is up to the scholar to articulate why such a connection, if it exists, is ethically or otherwise problematic or beneficial.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I conduct an in-depth examination of the values, identities, and practices of three transnational FBOs—International Justice Mission, Religions for Peace, and

the Taizé Community. I engage in a context-rich analysis of the terms and concepts these FBOs use themselves to describe their organizations and their work. In each substantive chapter I show how an in-depth examination of the terms, concepts, and meanings these FBOs assign to their own values, identities, and practices yields important findings for studies of FBOs, as well as religion and IR, more generally. My findings show that FBOs do not always frame their own values, identities, and practices in the same ways that scholars of religion and IR often do. For instance, my research shows that practices like prayer often have a range of meanings and functions—many of which do not conform to common definitions of what constitutes the religious. My dissertation not only challenges common conceptions about the role of religion in conflict, the importance of religious practice, and motivations for faith-based action, but it also articulates an approach to the study of "religious" phenomena in international relations that relies on an attention to reflexivity and bottom-up concept formation.

For the IR scholar, understanding different worldviews and conceptual frameworks is essential for explaining important events that political scientists often focus on. As Scott Thomas argues, "it is very difficult to understand terrorism or other forms of collective violence apart from how people themselves involved understand their goals, values, and passions" (2005, 90). Thus, it is critical that IR scholars begin to branch out from their own onto-epistemologies to understand the categorizations and concepts used by religious actors themselves.

More importantly, taking a reflexive approach in the study of FBOs and other global actors forces the IR scholar to confront why she frames certain ideas or actions as religious or not and why this matters analytically and normatively. First, we can begin to question what it is about particular phenomena that we associate with the religious. Is it a magical or otherworldly quality? Do we assume religious belief or practice to be irrational or inconsequential? After

answering these questions, we can discuss why this matters, which might include asking ourselves if we are concerned about what an eschatological perspective might mean for approaches to poverty reduction, the miraculous or magical aspects of religion, and the ways that they can challenge our own notions of modernity (Pels 2003), and/or the epistemological stances that some religious actors might take. These are questions that philosophers, religious studies scholars, and theologians have already addressed. I do not think it is necessarily helpful to delve into these issues here. However, it is important to understand what it is we are studying, and the knowledge claims we are making, both to ensure more analytical precision and to ameliorate the propagation of damaging narratives and discourses. By looking beyond an ontological framework that relies on the religious-secular or religious-political binaries, we can perhaps stop assuming a link between religion and gender inequality, homophobia, or terrorism (K. Marshall 2013, 187–188) or a link between religion and peace. We can, instead, focus on the beneficial and problematic influences that all kinds of traditions, practices, and communities have on the global community.

CHAPTER THREE

Constructing FBO "Religious" Values

Why do FBOs exist? Why do they include religious components in service-advocacy work? More specifically, why would founders of service-advocacy organizations choose to integrate components often conceived as religious (e.g. Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and other identities, requirements for employees to adhere to certain faith commitments, the inclusion of practices like prayer or scripture reading) into the official structure and programs of their transnational humanitarian, development, human rights, and peacebuilding organizations? These and similar questions have to do with the motivations of FBOs and their representatives, and answers to such questions often include some reference to the role of religious values. In particular, scholars often assume that FBOs are uniquely motivated by "religious" values like justice, peace, reconciliation, and charity. In addition, such values are deemed to *be* religious because they are derived from or connected to religious traditions (Jeavons 1998, 87–88; Petersen 2010). Yet, focusing on the ways in which FBO values are drawn from specific religious traditions leaves little room for understanding how such values acquire meaning and are manifested in FBO missions, goals, and strategies.[8] An in-depth examination of the meanings of FBO values not only provides a better understanding of how such values inform FBO motivations, but is also important for understanding the role of such values in faith-based organizations and their transnational service-advocacy projects (Llewellyn and Philpott 2014, 6). With that in mind, this chapter asks: (1) What do FBO values mean for FBOs themselves?, and (2) How do such values motivate and shape the work of FBOs and their representatives?

[8] Here and throughout this chapter I refer to religious "traditions" to refer to religious scripture, practices, oral histories, and other components that inform and make up a particular system of meaning that many refer to as "religious traditions." However, scholars, when referring to the "religious values" sometimes use other terms like "religious doctrine." Thus, when discussing a particular group of literature, I will also use those terms that they employ.

For my analysis I draw on Milton Rokeach who defines values as "abstract ideals, positive or negative, not tied to any specific object or situation, representing a person's beliefs about modes of conduct and ideal terminal goals" (1968, 124). Connor and Becker differentiate values from "attitudes." They say values do not focus on "specific objects and specific situations," while attitudes do (1979, 72). Organizational values, in particular, those which I focus on within the context of the three FBOs included in this dissertation, "are values that are shared to some extent across a firm" (Maierhofer, Rafferty, and Kabanoff 2003, 6). While I am interested in the ways that organizational representatives conceptualize their individual values, my project prioritizes those formal FBO values that are embedded in organizational materials and discourses. In addition, though Connor and Becker analytically separate organizational values from organizational goals (Connor and Becker 1979, 73), I challenge the strictness of this separation—understanding organizational values of justice, reconciliation, and peace to be, in certain contexts, both an "abstract ideal" and an explicit organizational goal. Similarly, I find that within the context of my research, the "values" of justice, reconciliation, and peace not only inform FBO ethics but also can constitute ethical frameworks. For instance, IJM's conception of justice, as a value, informs what kinds of behaviors are considered just and *also* how to respond to injustice. Thus, while this chapter relies on the term organizational *values,* I understand values to have a close analytical and real connection to organizational goals and ethics, and my research touches on these subjects as well.

Moreover, I examine values that scholars would categorize as "religious," in particular, in order to respond to studies that make sweeping assumptions about what constitutes such values and how they influence religious actors. For instance, scholars studying FBOs often assert or imply that representatives of faith-based organizations are different from other organizational

representatives in that they are religiously motivated (Sider and Unruh 2004, 121). According to this argument, such religious motivations stem from, in part, some theological pressure to help others in a particular way and/or create a better world. These pressures are often linked to specific values like justice, peace, and charity, which according to scholars, FBOs draw from religious traditions. For these scholars, a value like justice, which may not necessarily take on a religious connotation in every context, becomes "divine justice" for FBOs (Petersen 2010, "Mission and Motivation," para. 1)—indicating the "religious" nature of such a value.

Scholars assume that FBOs rely on these religious values to motivate their work vis-à-vis the founding of the organizations and/or the individual motivations of FBO representatives. In addition, scholars note that in some cases such values shape the way that FBOs design and implement particular projects (Boesenecker and Vinjamuri 2014, 43; Linden 2008, 76; Paras and Stein 2012, 218; Tomalin 2013, Chapter 4). Indeed, one RfP affiliate I spoke with noted that in her Muslim FBO, organizational objectives are *determined* according to specific Islamic values.[9] Scholars have noted that such values, and their relative influence on FBO operations, might change over time due to external influences (Paras and Stein 2012, 212; Taithe 2012, 180). Yet, most scholars do not fully explore the ways that FBOs themselves give meaning to their own values and how such values shape and are shaped by FBO work and practices.

Similarly, in international relations more broadly, many scholars assert or imply that "religious values" shape religious motivations, worldviews, and actions. Samuel Huntington, for instance, famously argued that global civilizations compete over their particular cultural and religious values (1993, 29). Jonathan Fox contends that religious values influence the way that political actors think and act (2001, 59–65). And, in referring to post-Cold War politics, Robert Keohane asserts that state interests now "depend on the political and religious values to which

[9] Email correspondence, February 2014.

their publics are committed" (1998, 90). These are just some of the many ways in which IR scholars integrate a notion of "religious values" into their analyses. In fact, references to religious values and the effect of such values on global (as well as domestic) politics, can be seen in a range of IR studies, including those focused on peacebuilding, conflict, development, humanitarianism, global governance, and international law. However, many IR references to religious values are often under-explained—leaving the reader to make assumptions about what particular values mean to religious actors themselves and how they are constructed in specific contexts. There are exceptions, of course. For instance, Cecelia Lynch (2011, 217) has complicated the notion that FBOs view "charity" as an inherently religious term. This chapter builds on Lynch's work by examining the meanings and roles of FBO values within the context of broader assumptions about religious values.

Lynch argues that "[a] major problem…with contemporary approaches to religion is that they narrow any understanding of a given religious ethic and the common good or goods it seeks to promote, assuming that religious doctrine and ethics…are given rather than lived, experienced, and interpreted" (2009, 401). She contends that "religious traditions exist as living rituals as well as repositories of ethical guideposts," that "religious actors link these rituals and guideposts to interpretive moments in daily life," and that "interpretations of the ethical requirements of a religious tradition are shaped by ongoing political and economic practices…as well as communal debates about religious authority and legitimacy" (2009, 400). Similarly, I argue that focusing on the connection between FBO values and religious traditions, and conceptualizing such traditions as fixed systems of meaning, masks the role of interpretation in the inclusion/exclusion and reading of religious texts and teachings and, in particular, the ways in which a variety of contextual factors shape how FBOs interpret, or perhaps construct, religious

values. Asserting that notions of justice are connected to Christian biblical scripture, for instance, can lead to broad assumptions about how Christian FBOs conceptualize and enact justice in their organizations. Such assumptions can then lead to weak or outright erroneous assumptions about why particular FBOs (as well as other religious global actors) engage in specific kinds of behavior. These essentializing moves might, for instance, neglect the crucial differences between and among FBOs that are all drawing on the same religious text (e.g. the Christian Bible, the Qur'an) to inform their organizational values. With these concerns in mind, this chapter seeks to understand how FBOs assign meaning to their organizational values and how such values shape and are shaped by the strategies, goals, ethics, and actions of each organization.

To assess the meanings of religious values in service-advocacy FBOs, I draw on data gleaned from my observations of events hosted by Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission, the interviews I conducted with their representatives and affiliates, and a variety of FBO documents and texts, as well as secondary sources, to understand and analyze the meanings these FBOs assign to some of their primary organizational values. In particular, I primarily focus on these organizations' conceptualizations of justice, peace, and reconciliation, though I include references to other values where appropriate. I also examine the aspirations, strategies, and ethics of these organizations, paying attention to how each FBO references specific values within the context of organizational projects and goals. My findings show that FBO values, while often drawn from specific religious traditions, are also informed by the historical context of each organizational founding and the deep and significant influences of FBO leaders. Moreover, I show how such values are reflected in and/or enacted through FBO practices. Thus, I provide a richer description of how FBOs construct religious values and how such values shape the work of these organizations.

This chapter is organized as follows. Section II engages with FBO and broader IR studies on religious values and motivations. In Section III, I provide a descriptive overview of International Justice Mission, the Taizé Community, and Religions for Peace to lay the groundwork for the rest of the chapter and the dissertation. In Sections IV, V, and VI, I provide a detailed examination and analysis of how International Justice Mission, the Taizé Community, and Religions for Peace give meaning to and enact specific organizational values. I conclude with a more direct comparison between these cases as well as a discussion about the implications of my findings for the broader dissertation.

Section II: The Essentialization of Religious Values in International Relations

How do scholars conceptualize the role of religious values in international relations, and in transnational faith-based service-advocacy organizations, in particular? Barnett and Stein note that "religion is a source of meaning" (2012a, 10), and multiple scholars contend that religious values are foundational motivating factors for religious actors of all kinds, including FBOs. Within the context of FBO scholarship, religious values explain two primary aspects of FBOs. First, such values explain *why* FBOs and their representatives engage in the work they do vis-à-vis FBO motivations. Second, religious values inform *how* FBOs engage in their work. Such values might shape the content of a specific FBO program, for instance. But where do these religious values come from? Though scholars have noted the importance of religious values for a range of issues in global politics, they often neglect to closely examine how such values are given meaning by religious actors themselves; instead assuming that such values are derived from the scholar's own understandings of specific religious texts, doctrines, or traditions. As a result, scholars neglect the ways in which FBO values are shaped by a variety of factors *and* how

those values inform FBO motivations, strategies, goals, and programs. Essentializing religious values within the context of FBOs, or international relations more broadly, can lead to problematic generalizations about the motivations and behaviors of religious actors. One essentializing move might be to assume that there is one primary way to think about a Christian form of justice, for instance. However, these kinds of assumptions can reify diverse communities and the myriad factors that shape their values, identities, and practices. As such, I argue that more attention need be paid to the ways in which particular values are given meaning by FBOs. I also argue that scholars should examine how those values manifest in FBO behavior.

The FBO literature addresses religious values in several ways. Some scholars see an organization's inclusion of religious values as evidence that the organization *is* faith-based (Clarke and Jennings 2008, 5; Hefferan, Adkins, and Occhipinti 2009, 10–15; Stoddard 2003, 27). Scholars differentiate FBOs from secular organizations by noting that faith-based organizations are inspired by "the teachings and principles" (Clarke and Jennings 2008, 6) or "religious values" (Jeavons 1998, 88) of a particular faith tradition, while secular groups are not (Boesenecker and Vinjamuri 2014, 48; Hefferan, Adkins, and Occhipinti 2009). Boesenecker and Vinjamuri, for instance, argue that "FBOs are unique in the sources for their conceptions of justice," which inform their peacebuilding work (2014, 63). In particular, Boesenecker and Vinjamuri assert that such organizations draw from specific "faith traditions" (2014, 43) to inform their notions of justice.

Scholars often treat religious values as key motivating factors for FBOs and their representatives. For instance, Marie Juul Petersen writes "whereas non-religious NGOs tend to find their motivation in rights-oriented conceptions of justice, religious NGOs are often motivated by conceptions of a divine justice and man's duty to work for the realisation of this"

(2010, "Religiosity: Mission and Motivation," para. 1). Scholars even assert that the more "secular" FBOs (ones that include only a few religious characteristics) are still religiously motivated by FBO religious values (Sider and Unruh 2004, 121). In particular, FBO scholars argue that the motivations for the founding of FBOs and the reasons why individuals choose to work for FBOs, are grounded in religious values like justice, charity, peace, reconciliation, etc. In short, religious values are supposed to explain *why* FBOs and their representatives engage in the work they do.

In addition, scholars note that religious values can shape faith-based organizations in ways that go beyond mere motivations. In particular, religious values can influence *how* specific FBOs are structured, and how they implement their projects and programs. For instance, Boesenecker and Vinjamuri argue that FBO peacebuilding strategies are "grounded in faith doctrines" and that the specific notions of justice that are drawn from those doctrines determine whether or not FBOs include processes of reconciliation in those peace strategies (2014, 43). Emma Tomalin argues that FBO conceptions of poverty and development shape and are shaped by their notions of justice, charity, giving, compassion, and other values that are often, at least in part, drawn from religious doctrine (2013, Chapter 4; also Linden 2008, 76). And, Paras and Stein show how Caritas' "professional standards are deeply rooted in religious commitments" (2012, 218). These and other scholars contend that, in some cases, religious values determine how FBOs engage in their peacebuilding, development, humanitarian, and other work.

Some scholars argue that the inclusion of religious values by FBOs provides them with a comparative advantage over non-faith-based organizations. For instance, Gerard Clarke argues that FBOs "draw on elaborate spiritual and moral values that represent an important and distinct adjunct to secular development discourse," which results in the ability of such organizations to

speak in the same language as religious aid recipients who might not be swayed by secular discourses (2006, 845). Similarly, Ian Linden contends that religious notions of charity and justice are more inline with the poverty discourses that the rural and "newly urbanized poor" rely on (2008, 89). Such assertions support the notion that FBOs may be better-able to address humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding issues in particular communities because of such organizations' "cultural proximity" to the locals (Benthall 2012).

These and other examples show the myriad ways that scholars integrate the notion of "religious values" into discussions about FBO motivations and practices. In particular, scholars highlight specific FBO values as motivating and influential factors in the work of FBOs and their representatives. Moreover, scholars categorize FBO values *as religious* due to the fact that such values are often linked, in FBO discourses and documents, to specific religious texts, doctrines, or traditions. Petersen provides one way to think about how certain phenomena, like values, can take on religious characteristics.

Relying on Bruce Lincoln (2003), Petersen argues that nearly anything can be "religionized" by linking a specific object or subject to a "transcendental authority and truth" (2012, 129–130). Speaking about how specific objects and subjects can be linked with Islam, she says that, "in this perspective, something is Islamic or Muslim when it is constituted as such through discourses, practices, communities and structures that are concerned with matters of Islam (traditions, symbols, figures, concepts, rules, stories, etc.) and claim a transcendent authority by reference to Allah, the Qur'an and the *sunna*" (italics in original, 2012, 130). According to Petersen's logic, then, FBOs can "religionize" a value like "justice" by both constituting that value through specific religious discourses and linking justice to a religious authority.

In large part, Petersen's approach seems to be how scholars, more generally, decide that specific values are "religious" or not; however, such scholars often focus on the role of religious texts and doctrines in particular. In other words, scholars often assert or imply that specific values *are* religious because they are explicitly supported by religious texts or doctrine. For instance, Boesenecker and Vinjamuri imply that the type of justice the National Association of Evangelicals relies on is religious because the organization draws on biblical scripture to define justice (2014, 49–50).

While in many cases, FBOs use religious texts to support their conceptions of particular values as relates to their development, humanitarian, human rights, and peacebuilding work, such a focus can, I argue, neglect the other factors that shape how FBOs give meaning to those values. Boesenecker and Vinjamuri, as well as other FBO scholars, do not interrogate how FBOs *interpret* specific texts vis-à-vis organizational values. As Mona Kanwal Sheikh argues, "The danger in evaluating theological concepts through *a priori* analyses detached from their adherents is that they can end up being highly speculative about the link between religion and action" (italics in original, 2012, 377; also see Lynch 2009). By linking values to texts and theology, then, the scholar runs the risk of making authoritative claims about how scripture or doctrine is interpreted—often leading to broad assumptions about the motivations or actions of religious actors. The resulting problems of such essentializing moves can be seen in the broader international relations literature.

Especially since the events of 9/11, IR scholars have been asking "What motivates religious actors?" In particular, such scholars are engaging in debates about what prompts some religious actors and not others to engage in violence, peace, protest, humanitarianism, development, and other behaviors and activities. Samuel Huntington (1993) is perhaps one of the

more famous scholars to argue that religious (and other "cultural") values are a primary motivating factor in international politics. He identified seven different "civilizations"—each having a unique set of values. Huntington then predicted that those value differences would result in a clash of civilizations, in which "states from different civilizations compete for relative military and economic power, struggle over the control of international institutions and third parties, and competitively promote their particular political and religious values" (1993, 29). Scholars largely critiqued and condemned Huntington's thesis—pointing to its historical inaccuracies and racist portrayals. Unfortunately, as Hurd (2008) has convincingly argued, a broader civilizational discourse similar to Huntington's, which includes a significant focus on cultural and religious value differences, continues to shape global politics (through U.S. foreign policy, for instance) and international relations scholarship.

More generally, while many scholars are trying to be more attentive to the contextual variances within, as well as between religious communities, the practice of essentializing religious phenomena remains. One way scholars essentialize religion, I argue, is by assuming that FBO values are necessarily and directly drawn from religious text or doctrine, without including an analysis of how other factors contribute to the meaning-making of such values. Moreover, assumptions about the connection between religious values and religious texts and traditions also often results in other assumptions about how such values serve as motivating factors for FBOs and other religious actors. In other words, scholars make assumptions about what particular religious values mean (rather than interrogating those meanings for religious actors themselves), usually connecting such values to their own interpretations of religious texts, *and then* rely on these assumed meanings to make assumptions about how religious actors will act. As Petersen rightfully points out, "we know that for almost all religious NGOs, religiosity

plays a crucial role as motivation, but we cannot generalise about the ways in which this motivation is put in use" (2010, "Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research," para. 4).

Relying on an essentialized view of so-called religious values can also lead to normative ontological and epistemological assumptions about what constitutes legitimate or authentic religion. Sider and Unruh, for instance, note that in order to classify an FBO as internally religious (i.e., focusing on the internal beliefs and values of FBO representatives, rather than the external behaviors of these actors), one would need to "discover what religious beliefs and motivations [FBO representatives] bring to their work, and the extent to which the organization's practices faithfully reflect the tenets of its religious sponsors" (2004, 118). Such a formulation assumes that one could concretely determine the exact and complete substance of religious beliefs and motivations, and then assess how particular practices might or might not conform to such beliefs and motivations. However, as other scholars have noted, religious values (which can feed into FBO motivations) are not static entities, but are malleable and contested (Paras and Stein 2012).

In recent years, more IR scholars are taking critical approaches to the study of religion in global politics. Some of these scholars are, in fact, challenging the notion that religious actors are motivated solely by their religious identities, practices, and/or values or that religious values can change (Hurd 2015; Juergensmeyer 2001; Juergensmeyer 2008; Lynch 2011; Paras 2012). However, few would argue that religion (as manifested in identities, practices, values, beliefs, and a range of other phenomena) does not, in part, motivate and shape the actions of religious communities. For instance, Mark Juergensemeyer (2001) argues that modern terrorism is sometimes motivated by religious actors who view the cultural and moral values of the secular state to be incompatible with their own. Juergensemeyer and others (Lynch 2009; Lynch 2014;

Sheikh 2014; Wilson 2012) rely on innovative approaches for understanding why and how religious communities and individuals take particular courses of action over others. However, there is room to build on these approaches by examining and analyzing the meanings and roles of specific values for FBOs, in particular.

Some FBO scholars note that religious values are drawn from a broader template than that of mere scripture or theology. For instance, Ian Linden implies that religious values derive from religious narratives, which are, in part, drawn from religious texts, but also by the "founding histories" of religious communities (2008, 76). Similarly, Sider and Unruh assert that religious values "may be based on a religious heritage" (2004, 121). However, these and other scholars do not explicitly examine how such values are formed and how they shape FBO work. There have been some attempts to discuss how particular principles and values are interpreted by FBOs (Kroessin and Mohamed 2008), but more research is warranted—probing the details of how these organizations' rich contexts inform how they interpret religious texts and how those interpretations shape and are shaped by FBOs and their service-advocacy work.

In addition, some scholars have also highlighted how "religious" values are not static entities, but evolve and change as FBOs and other religious actors engage with broader international discourses. Paras and Stein, for instance, show that FBO values are shaped by international humanitarian discourses and "professional" values (2012, 222) and Erica Bornstein notes that Hindu notions of charity are "lived and changing" (2012, 144; also see M. Barnett 2012, 207–208; Taithe 2012, 180–181). Other scholars treat religious values as a possible source of contestation and debate. For instance, Llewellyn and Philpott highlight how different groups have divergent opinions on what constitutes justice. Many human rights activists understand justice to be based in "the judicial punishment of arch human rights violators," while others see

justice as a reconciliatory and restorative principle (Llewellyn and Philpott 2014, 5). Moreover, when such religious values are contested *within* a particular organization or community, specific development and peacebuilding projects "can suffer" (Llewellyn and Philpott 2014, 3). Such examples highlight the importance of understanding, with more precision, how particular values are assigned meaning *and* how such meanings inform the work of FBOs.

This dissertation argues that IR scholars ought to approach the study of religion and politics with reflexivity in order to reexamine the ontologies of religion in IR. Employing a reflexive approach means moving beyond an ontology of religion that assumes, in part, an unmediated and complete connection between religious texts and specific values. As such, in this chapter, I examine and analyze the meanings that International Justice Mission, the Taizé Community, and Religions for Peace assign to the values that are central to these organizations. I then assess how such meanings shape and are shaped by the practices, histories, and structures of each organization. I do not have the space here to fully examine and analyze each value associated with these three FBOs. Consequently, I chose to focus on three: justice, peace, and reconciliation. Not only are justice, peace, and reconciliation central to much of the work of all three organizations, but all of these values are often important for discussions about international relations, and politics more generally—making an examination of these three values especially salient.

Before turning to my examination of these values within the context of the three FBOs, I first provide an in-depth description of each organization included in this study to lay the groundwork for the chapter and the rest of the dissertation.

Section III: Organizational Cases— International Justice Mission, the Taizé Community, and Religions for Peace

In this dissertation, I articulate a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach to the study of transnational faith-based organizations that focuses on the terms, concepts, and meanings that these global actors assign to their values, identities, and practices. I argue that such an approach allows the scholar to delve into the ways that FBOs conceive of their work and why they employ certain strategies over others, while also moving past assumptions of what constitutes religious phenomena. In this way, the scholar is able to interrogate what particular values, identities, and practices are doing for so-called religious global actors, rather than focusing on the ways that certain phenomena are inherently irrational, magical, emotional, barbaric, prone to conflict or peace, etc. In this section, I outline the cases I rely on to show such an approach in action.

A. International Justice Mission

In 1994, Gary A. Haugen directed the United Nations investigation of the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide ("Leadership" 2014). This experience led Haugen, a human rights attorney, to found International Justice Mission—a Christian human rights organization working to protect the poor from violence. IJM focuses on six issue areas of violent crime, in particular: sex trafficking, forced labor slavery, property grabbing, police abuse of power, sexual violence, and citizenship rights abuse ("2014 Media Fact Sheet").

IJM engages in four active enterprises. First, IJM works with local law enforcement to *rescue victims.* The organization employs different strategies depending on the form of violence they are engaging with. As an example, IJM assists local police in the raiding of brothels housing underage or forced prostitutes. During these raids, victims are taken away and sent back to their homes or to safe houses and the perpetrators are arrested. In other instances, IJM simply tries to

make sure that victims of violence are taken out of the context of danger. Second, IJM helps to *bring criminals to justice* through local court systems. The organization's goal is to convict the accused and obtain jail sentences so that the perpetrators are no longer free to abuse or exploit others. To that end, IJM sends in their own legal teams to assist local prosecutors and other legal actors. IJM employees help to build cases and assist with any other legal issues that may arise. IJM also *restores survivors by providing after care*. After care includes trauma therapy and assistance in finding jobs or returning to school, as well as the restoration of any goods (e.g. land) that were stolen. Finally, IJM *strengthens justice systems* by providing "training and support to police, judges, prosecutors and other authorities" ("2013 Annual Report," 3). The organization also advocates for legal reforms. According to the 2014 Media Fact Sheet, "since 2006, IJM has rescued 19,000+ people from violence and oppression, and secured the convictions of 800+ violent criminals."

IJM has a large global presence. In terms of geography, IJM has offices all over the world. The organization is headquartered in Arlington, VA (though media materials state that the headquarters are in Washington, DC, and the organization's mailing address is a post office box in DC), with other administrative offices in Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK. These offices conduct the majority of the administrative and coordinating duties of the organization. IJM's local justice work is conducted in four global regions via 18 field offices—Africa (Nairobi, Kenya; Kampala, Uganda; Kigali, Rwanda; Gulu Uganda; Accra, Ghana), Latin America (Guatemala City, Guatemala; La Paz, Bolivia; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic), South Asia (Mumbai, India; Chennai, India; Bangalore, India; Kolkata, India; Delhi, India), and Southeast Asia (Chiang Mai, Thailand; Manila, The Philippines; Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Cebu, The Philippines; Pampanga, The Philippines) ("2014 Media Fact Sheet").

IJM does not conduct its justice work in Europe or North America. This is because within the organization there is an assumption that the poor in the Global South are more likely to be victims of the particular forms of injustice that it targets. In fact, International Justice Mission is interesting in that it counters popular discourses that suggest that poverty is ultimately responsible for violent offenses like sex trafficking, slavery, and property grabbing. One IJM social worker is quoted on the website as saying, with regards to sexual trafficking, in particular: "Blaming poverty for crimes like this is convenient—it seems to make trafficking a problem beyond our control. But I strongly believe that poverty is just one of the factors that makes people vulnerable to being trafficked, and that trafficking still exists because an effective public justice system doesn't exist in my country" ("Sex Trafficking" 2014). In fact, Haugen has argued in various venues that it is actually violence that leads to poverty, thus reversing the causal arrow of violence and poverty. And, because IJM assumes that the poor are most susceptible to violence, the organization only focuses on those regions and communities that are the poorest and have the biggest problems with violence and other injustices.[10]

IJM is a large organization with a significant budget and hundreds of employees. The annual revenue for 2013 was $48 million and the expenses totaled $41 million. The majority of IJM's funding (over 70%) comes from individuals, with the rest coming from foundations, IJM partner offices, churches, government grants, and other income ("2013 Annual Report," 15). IJM is made up of over 600 full time staff members. Approximately 95% of those work in their home countries ("2014 Media Fact Sheet"). Additionally, IJM has hundreds of local school and church affiliates in the US who "are deeply invested in IJM's work and building justice ministries in their own communities" ("2013 Annual Report," 11).

[10] Interview, Arlington, VA, August 2014.

International Justice Mission has a strong media presence. The organization is featured in numerous popular media outlets including the BBC, CNN, Forbes, Foreign Affairs, The New York Times, NPR and others ("2014 Media Fact Sheet"). U.S. News and World Report cite IJM as one of 10 non-profit organizations "making a difference" ("2013 Annual Report," 11). Haugen, the founder and current President and CEO also maintains a large media presence. He has written several books, including *The Locust Effect: Why the End of Poverty Requires the End of Violence,* has been featured in various media outlets, and delivered a TED talk titled "The hidden reason for poverty the world needs to address now" (Haugen 2015).

My research with IJM includes interviews with three staff members, participant observation, and textual analysis. I attended and participated in two IJM events: the 2014 Global Prayer Gathering and the 2015 Orange County Benefit. The Global Prayer Gathering was held over three days in April 2014 in National Harbor, Maryland, just minutes from IJM's international headquarters. Close to 1000 people attended, including IJM employees, as well as members of the general public. The meeting included large plenary sessions, where IJM employees discussed the work of the organization in various locales. During these sessions, attendees were asked to pray for ongoing IJM operations. Smaller breakout sessions were also held. Each one focused on a specific country. In these sessions, IJM staff spoke about specific victims of injustice, the communities that they lived, and asked attendees to pray for these individuals and their communities. The Global Prayer Gathering also featured worship sessions that included singing and biblical readings.

The 2015 IJM Orange County Benefit was a three-hour funding event, which took place at the Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach, CA. Several hundred people attended the event, including some IJM employees as well as donors. The program included stories from IJM

employees about specific rescue operations, a musical performance from a Christian duo, videos about IJM's ongoing work in various communities around the world, and a speech by Gary Haugen. At these events I was able to observe, and sometimes participate in, a range of practices including prayer and song. While in attendance, I also conducted informal interviews with several event attendees.

As part of my research on IJM, I also visited the organization headquarters in Arlington, VA. While there, I interviewed two employees, toured the facility, and attended the daily corporate prayer. Via telephone I interviewed another IJM employee. Finally, I examined the organization's website and other materials (e.g. brochures, manuals, pamphlets), books written by Haugen and other members of IJM, and secondary materials about the organization.

B. The Taizé Community

During the first years of World War II Brother Roger Schütz was studying theology in Lausanne and Strasbourg when he decided that he wanted to create a community that focused on prayer and serving those in need. In 1940, after looking at several properties, Brother Roger (as he is known by the Community) purchased the property that would become home to the Taizé Community. And it was here that Brother Roger took in war refugees and others in need, providing them with food and other aid (Spink 1986, 24–36). Several years later other brothers came to live and work with Brother Roger in the Community. Together, they served the local French population and lived the life of a monastic community—with a focus on prayer and simple living. In 1949, the seven brothers who now made up the Taizé community took their first vows, which include a commitment to celibacy, the sharing of community goods, and the acceptance of leadership through a prior (Spink 1986, 58). Since those early years, the

Community has continued to grow and today comprises over a hundred brothers from thirty nations. Additionally, while not an official part of the monastic community, several sisterhoods, including the Sisters of St. Andrew, the Polish Ursuline Sisters, and the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, live in Taizé and assist in the volunteer-based duties of the Community ("About Taizé: The Community Today" 2008).

The Taizé Community has a strong international presence, especially among Christians. The Community's special approach to meditative prayer and repetitive song has become popular with people all over the world. In the 1950s people, mostly between the ages of 18 and 35, began to visit Taizé. At Taizé, "pilgrims," as they are called by and within the community, engage in Bible study, communal work, and prayer. Today, tens of thousands (sometimes over 100,000) of pilgrims visit Taizé annually.[11] Additionally, prominent church leaders, including Pope John Paul II, several Archbishops of Canterbury, Orthodox metropolitans, and Swedish bishops of the Lutheran church, have all visited Taizé ("About Taizé: The Community Today" 2008).

Though the Taizé Community's geographical home, in Taizé, France, has become a popular destination for pilgrims, since the 1950s the Taizé Community has also embraced an ethos of living in the world by living and working in a variety of global locales. Currently, there are brothers living in Bangladesh, Brazil, Kenya, Senegal, and South Korea ("Brothers Living in Other Places" 2015). And, in the 1970s the Community introduced a new initiative known as the "pilgrimage of trust on earth." As part of this initiative the Taizé Community held prayer events in communities on every continent. In a Berlin meeting in 2011, the current head of the Community, Brother Alois, "inaugurated a new stage in the pilgrimage of trust" with a theme entitled "towards a new solidarity." The goal of this initiative through various events and meetings, is to "breathe new life into prayer groups [and] to integrate the challenges of today's

[11] Interview, Boston, April 2015.

world into a common reflection" (Löser 2012). In particular, Brother Alois calls on us (in the introductory letter, Brother Alois is not only talking to current "members" of the Taizé Community, but to humankind) to work towards greater solidarity between and among each other through self-reflection and, in particular, through prayer in order to ameliorate the increasing global unrest caused by rising global economic inequality. Brother Alois frequently references the role of prayer and solidarity in well-known political issues, including the fall of the Berlin Wall and the democratization of Latin America countries. The "towards a new solidarity" theme has been implemented through specific "pilgrimages of trust on earth" in places as diverse as Melbourne (Australia), Cochabamba (Bolivia), Kigali (Rwanda), Pine Ridge (South Dakota) and elsewhere. These events often last several days and include scheduled prayer meetings, Bible studies, workshops, and visits to prominent local sites.

The prayer services and other programs that the Taizé Community organizes in France and elsewhere are focused primarily on working towards reconciliation and trust between peoples. However, Taizé also engages in humanitarian aid and development work. In the early 1960s, in response to the high poverty rates in South America, the brothers introduced Operation Hope, a program focusing on providing money and aid to poverty-stricken areas around the world (Spink 1986, 88). Recent projects undertaken by Taizé through Operation Hope include providing school supplies to refugee camps in Jordan, organizing a collection of medicine for distribution in Cuba, delivering food supplies to North Koreans, and other projects ("Operation Hope: Portraits of Some Projects" 2015).

The Taizé Community is unlike my other field sites in that its structure and practices are less typical than those organizations usually studied by political scientists. For instance, Taizé does not have the same kinds of formal or informal ties that Religions for Peace has with

prominent international governing bodies like the U.N. Additionally, the Taizé Community does not operate like a typical NGO. They live solely by the work of their own hands. The brothers do not accept donations for their operating or event expenses ("About Taizé: The Community Today" 2008). The brothers earn all of the money they use for living expenses and trips by selling items they make while in the community. Any money that is left over is used to purchase supplies for Operation Hope. Operation Hope is also the only Taizé program that accepts donations ("Operation Hope: Portraits of Some Projects" 2015). That said, the Taizé Community *does* organize and implement programs and projects all over the world in ways that are very similar to Religions for Peace, International Justice Mission, and other faith-based non-governmental organizations making such a comparison useful.

My research with Taizé consists of observation and participation in one Taizé event, informal interviews with Taizé pilgrims, a formal interview with one of the Taizé brothers, and in-depth analysis of Taizé materials (e.g. official website, pamphlets, brochures) and secondary sources. I attended and participated in one of the "towards a new solidarity" event in Austin, Texas in March 2014. This event was three days long and consisted of several prayer services, communal meals, workshops on a variety of social, economic, political, and art-related subjects, and visits to local Austin sites.

C. Religions for Peace

Religions for Peace is "the world's largest and most representative multi-religious coalition advancing common action for peace since 1970."[12] The organization represents a wide variety of faith traditions including Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh,

[12] Unless otherwise noted, the information included in this section is borrowed heavily from the Religions for Peace international website: http://religionsforpeaceinternational.org

Shinto, Taoist, Zoroastrian, and Indigenous, as well as cultures and locales from all over the world. RfP also includes a quota in order to ensure a fair system of representation among the different religious groups (Jack 1993, 151–153). Though "peace" is the official goal of the organization, this term is defined quite broadly by the organization and can only be achieved by addressing a wide array of global humanitarian and development issues including HIV/AIDS, child health and mortality, nuclear non-proliferation and small arms disarmament, climate change, and economic justice. The organization's objectives are furthered through "multi-religious" dialogue—through meetings of various kinds—and "action programs" (unnamed marketing brochure, no publishing info, accessed August 26, 2013) that include education, training, and delivery of needed supplies (e.g., mosquito nets, hydrating salts, books and manuals). The Religions for Peace mission statement summarizes the organization's purpose this way: "Through Religions for Peace, diverse religious communities discern 'deeply held and widely shared' moral concerns, such as transforming violent conflict, promoting just and harmonious societies, advancing human development and protecting the earth. Religions for Peace translates these shared moral concerns intro concrete multi-religious action."

Religions for Peace is organized on multiple levels. The International Secretariat, based in New York City, oversees the activities of the rest of the organization and works closely with various United Nations agencies and other religious and secular non-governmental organizations based in the city to organize and fund Religions for Peace programs and projects. Other regional (6), national (90), and local affiliates, as well as Global Women of Faith and Global Youth Networks, focus on their particular geographic or issue area and, especially at the national and local levels, are more involved in the actual implementation of particular programs and multi-religious dialogues.

My research with Religions for Peace took place in three field sites and consisted of participant observation, interviews, and textual analysis. First, I interned at the International Secretariat office in New York City for four months where I worked 25 hours/week. I was assigned a variety of projects, including, but not limited to, grant proposal preparation for programs launched all over the world and preparation for the 2013 World Assembly. The internship not only afforded an opportunity to interact with Religions for Peace employees on a weekly basis, but enabled access to a large amount of organization documents, which included detailed descriptions of past, present, and future meetings and projects. I was encouraged to read through these organizational documents to better understand the work of Religions for Peace, providing me with in-depth insights into the history of the organization, the evolution of various organizational discourses, and future plans. I conducted interviews with several employees at the International Secretariat office, as well as the European regional office. I also interviewed local affiliates from Nigeria, Peru, Sierra Leone, and Washington, DC.

Interning at Religions for Peace provided the opportunity to participate in and observe the Ninth World Assembly, held November 2013 in Vienna, Austria. Religions for Peace has convened eight Assemblies since 1970, with the purpose of "forging a deep moral consensus on contemporary challenges… and advancing multi-religious action across and beyond the Religions for Peace network." The 2013 Assembly brought together over 600 religious leaders from a variety of faiths and geographic regions, as well as governmental and non-governmental representatives, and focused on the theme, "Welcoming the Other: Action for Human Dignity, Citizenship and Shared Well-Being." The Assembly included four commissions focusing on "Welcoming the Other" through: (1) conflict prevention and transformation, (2) just and harmonious societies, (3) human development that respects the earth, and (4) religious and multi-

religious education. While at the Assembly, I assisted in the organization and implementation of various event programs, and assumed a primary organizational role in the Women's Pre-Assembly. Though I did not have permission to conduct formal interviews while at the World Assembly, I spoke with delegates and other Assembly participants whenever possible, in informal settings. I also attended and observed the RfP sponsored event "World Interfaith Harmony: A Vital Key for Peace and Development," held at the United Nations Headquarters in February 2014.

In this sub-section I have outlined just some of the characteristics and histories of International Justice Mission, the Taizé Community, and Religions for Peace. In the rest of this chapter, and in the broader dissertation, I will delve into my examination and analysis of these three organizations and their values, identities, and practices. In the next three sections, in particular, I conduct an in-depth analysis of the meanings and roles of such values for each individual organization. I conclude by elucidating how such meanings and roles have important implications for, among other topics, how the religious and secular are conceptualized in engagements of difference and how values, more generally, are manifested in international relations.

Section IV: IJM and God's Legal Justice

Justice is obviously central to International Justice Mission, as evidenced by the organization's name. But what does an IJM conception of justice mean within the context of the organization's Christian identity and its human rights goals? In this section I examine and analyze IJM meanings of justice, the role of IJM leadership and religious interpretation in shaping those meanings, and how such meanings inform and are enacted in IJM's practices and

human rights work. In particular, I show that IJM's conception of justice is grounded in specific interpretations of Christian biblical scripture that align closely with an evangelical political philosophy and are shaped by Gary Haugen's personal views about human nature, punishment, and law enforcement.

A. Background

One can see multiple references to "justice," as well as "injustice," throughout the IJM website, and in the organization's marketing materials and other documents. For instance, the IJM logo includes the phrase, "*quaerite iudicium subvenite oppresso*," "seek justice, rescue the oppressed." As one IJM representative told me, the official organizational definition of justice is "the use of power with moral excellence." According to this representative, Gary Haugen proposed this definition when he founded IJM.[13] At first glance, such a definition does not necessarily connote a religious tradition, as there are no references to specific deities, communities, or scriptures. Indeed, this same IJM representative noted that IJM's definition of justice could be applied to a wide range of cultural, religious, and geographic contexts, not only those that are Christian. He said:

> I think the reason that definition is helpful is that it can be universalized, if that makes sense. There's no appeal to any sort of outside authority. So, if you're dealing with a problem of corruption you could say we need to uphold the standard of justice, which is: the power that the police are given needs to be used with moral excellence….[14]

An external viewer who relies on this definition of justice might assume that IJM relies on a "secular" notion of the term. However, the Latin phrase featured in IJM's logo is a direct

[13] Interview, via telephone, May 2015.
[14] Interview, via telephone, May 2015.

reference to the biblical verse Isaiah 1:17.[15] In fact, as I will elaborate below, an IJM notion of justice is very clearly connected to specific biblical scriptures. In particular, in an IJM context, justice refers to the way in which God's good and perfect moral authority intervenes into an inherently wicked human world. As one IJM representative explained: "[W]hat you find with IJM's staff is a collection of people who, motivated by their faith in Jesus, have a desire to see the DNA of God, with respect to justice, work out on planet earth."[16] In this way, IJM relies on God to fix the problems found among humans, in our immanent relations. To enact this notion of justice on earth, IJM employees rely on, in part, scriptures from the Christian Bible. However, IJM representatives note that biblical scripture does not necessarily directly inform what justice *means* for IJM. Instead, they say that scripture provides the authority and means for IJM employees to engage in the work of justice.

For example, some FBOs (though not all) require employees to sign a "statement of faith," which outlines the religious motivations and values of those organizations. Rather than a statement of faith, IJM uses a Statement of Biblical Foundation (which employees are not required to sign), providing a general narrative about justice and how IJM employees can fight injustice. The Statement relies heavily on biblical scripture; however, it does not serve the same purpose as those statements of faith used by many other FBOs. As one IJM representative noted, "that statement itself is more about the scriptures giving us the authority to do the work of justice, [rather] than 'here's our statement about how the scriptures are valued by us as people.'"[17] In other words, though the Statement is heavily grounded in biblical scripture, it does *not* indicate how individual IJM representatives might interpret such scripture to inform their own conceptions of particular religious values or morals. Instead, the Statement of Biblical

[15] Interview, via telephone, May 2015.
[16] Interview, via telephone, May 2015.
[17] Interview, via telephone, May 2015.

Foundation is a source that shows why IJM has the authority to conduct God's justice work. Similarly, IJM relies heavily on the Apostle's Creed to show "a commitment to the scriptures as the basis for the authority to do the work of justice."[18]

Yet, the specific biblical verses referenced in IJM documents, as well as the ways in which such verses are grouped together and discussed shape how the organization as a whole, and IJM employees themselves, conceptualize justice and how the organization can realize it. The Taizé Community, which, like IJM, is comprised of a mix of Protestant and Catholic members, focuses more on structural social justice issues (i.e. economic and political justice) *and* on trust, forgiveness, and reconciliation, rather than judgment and punishment; while IJM focuses on God's immanent justice vis-à-vis law enforcement and punishment. Why the disparities? I argue that IJM conceptualizations of justice are heavily shaped by Gary Haugen's own life experiences and exhibit an evangelical political philosophy.

B. Gary Haugen's Justice

Gary Haugen is the founder and president of IJM. IJM documents show, and my interviews confirm, that Haugen remains a central influential figure in IJM today. His original goals and aspirations for the organization inform IJM's projects and Haugen continues to take a hands-on role in many aspects of the organization. Given his continued influence on IJM, an examination of Haugen's personal views on justice is warranted. Haugen's time spent as a young man in South Africa in 1985, and as an attorney investigating human rights violations during the Lupao massacre of 1987 and the Rwandan genocide of 1994, were profoundly influential on his views regarding justice (Power 2009, para. 25–28). At times he explicitly refers to these experiences in order to justify his views on human nature, the existence of evil, the primary

[18] Interview, via telephone, May 2015.

contributing factors to violence and poverty, and the best solutions for dealing with these issues, which are also often central to IJM discourses and strategies.

In their very successful book, *The Locust Effect,* Haugen and his co-author Victor Boutros recount some of Haugen's experiences in Rwanda to talk about issues of violence and poverty, and how the international community might go about tackling human rights violations. For Haugen and Boutros, "the locust effect" refers to "the unique pestilence of violence and the punishing impact it has on efforts to lift the global poor out of poverty" (2014, xi). In this context, the "locusts" are criminals engaging in "sexual violence, forced labor, illegal detention, land theft, assault, police abuse, and oppression" (Haugen and Boutros 2014, xii). Such "common, criminal violence" is especially problematic, Haugen and Boutros argue, because it affects the "global poor" disproportionally, impedes the ability of poor persons to "climb out of poverty," and is largely ignored by the international community (2014, xii) who have created a in a "culture of impunity" (Haugen and Boutros 2010).

In their book, Haugen and Boutros portray these kinds of violent acts as an inescapable part of human nature that is directly linked to disparities in strength and power (which cannot be ultimately overcome) and the ingrained human desire to harm. For instance, they write that "there will always be someone stronger, more aggressive, more cunning, or better equipped….you usually forget that the human population in your city is actually quite capable of tremendous predatory violence…." (2014, 48). These and similar passages imply that those people who are stronger will necessarily be a (violent) threat to others.

In addition, Haugen and Boutros often generalize the perpetrators of violence they are discussing. Though Haugen and Boutros acknowledge that criminal violence is "a highly complex social phenomenon with many contributing factors" (2014, xvi), the authors do not

provide the perpetrators of violence with histories and contextualized identities of their own. For them, criminals are "locusts of lawless violence" who "have been allowed to swarm unabated in the developing world (2014, 109).

Such a worldview does not leave a lot of room for options other than legal reform and enforcement through measures promoting "perpetrator accountability" and the "structural transformation" of local judicial systems ("International Justice Mission: Social Justice Curriculum for High School Students" 2016, 26–27). If violence will always exist, because it is ingrained in human nature, then *economic* structural changes will not solve the problem; and if criminals are not also understood to be, in many cases, victims, with their own complicated stories, then a focus on preventing violence in the first place (through poverty reduction, social programs, or other means) does not make much sense. Haugen and Boutros acknowledge that other approaches are helpful in curbing violence, but they also strongly argue that such programs are, by themselves, insufficient (2014, 122). As such, for Haugen and Boutros, the most direct solution (though it will never be a completely successful one) for addressing violence lies with law enforcement (2014, 46). They use an analogy of a disease and a vaccine to illustrate their argument:

> [Y]ou have become quite unconscious of the fact that you are mortally vulnerable to an aggressive, microscopic organism that is held at bay every minute by that invisible, forgotten vaccine….[If there is no law enforcement,] then you are left vulnerable to forces of violence, and it is only a matter of time before you are victimized. Like germs in the air, harsh weather, and invisible contaminants—violence is endemic to the human social condition, and if you do not have the resources (public or private) to secure protection against forces of violence, you are not safe, and your well-being is not secure. In fact, your *ill-being* is quite assured (2014, 48).

Haugen and Boutros use these kinds of narratives throughout their book to argue that the international community must address issues of global violence against the poor through an increased focus on law enforcement.

To provide even more impetus for the international community to act on human rights abuses, Haugen and Boutros also assert that such abuses have broader economic implications. In particular, they argue that violence "is one of the core reasons [people] are poor in the first place, and one of the primary reasons they stay poor" (2014, 43). Based on this assertion, Haugen and Boutros critique an international approach to poverty that does not also seriously and substantially address issues of violence. They say: "It turns out that you can provide all manner of goods and services to the poor, as good people have been doing for decades, but if you are not restraining the bullies in the community from violence and theft—as we have been failing to do for decades—then we are going to find the outcomes of our efforts quite disappointing" (2014, xiii). In short, for Haugen and Boutros, development and humanitarian programs are insufficient for addressing poverty because they do not address the factor that Haugen and Boutros see as a root cause of poverty—violence. Here Haugen uses his own experience in Rwanda to drive home this point. He says,

> What eventually emerged for me, and changed me, was a point of simple clarity about the nature of violence and the poor. What was so clear to me was the way these very impoverished Rwandans at their point of most desperate need, huddled against those advancing machetes in that church, did not need someone to bring them a sermon, or food, or a doctor, or a teacher, or a micro-loan. They needed someone to restrain the hand with the machete—and nothing else would do.
>
> None of the other things that people of good will had sought to share with these impoverished Rwandans over the years was going to matter if those good people could not stop the machetes from hacking them to death. Moreover, none of those good things (the food, the medicine, the education, the shelter, the fresh water, the micro-loan) was going to stop the hacking machetes. The locusts of predatory violence had descended—and they would lay waste to all that the vulnerable poor had otherwise struggled to scrape together to secure their lives. Indeed, not only

> would the locusts be undeterred by the poor's efforts to make a living, they would be fattened and empowered by the plunder (2014, x).

This is a powerful statement—Haugen paints a portrait of inhuman evil that sweeps over the poor and vulnerable, leaving death, destruction, and poverty in its wake.

Anyone coming into contact with the horrors of genocide would undoubtedly be confronted with questions of how to stop such atrocities from happening in the first place. For Haugen, aid and development programs have failed to prevent such events. Moreover, he and Boutros imply that such measures can *never* fully grapple with the problems of violence, because economic inequalities are merely an "exacerbating factor" (2014, 46–47). Consequently, for Haugen and Boutros, the solution to endemic violence lies in the support and reform of local law enforcement.

In addition, Haugen, in his book with Boutros, as well as in his own speeches and with his work for IJM, focuses on very specific kinds of violent situations and solutions. In particular, Haugen is concerned with human rights violations (including human trafficking, slavery, property grabbing, etc.) against, what he calls, "the poor." According to one IJM representative, Haugen founded the organization with the desire to focus his efforts on justice for the poor, in particular.[19] In general, Haugen often frames the poor as fundamentally separate from the perpetrators of violence. In their book, Haugen and Boutros continually portray the poor as victims. There is never any substantial discussion about the ways in which perpetrators of violence can themselves also be economically disadvantaged. The poor are also framed as being fundamentally different from "us"—those who are reading Haugen's book and/or those who live in economically prosperous areas.

[19] Interview, via telephone, May 2015.

One final point to highlight about Haugen's conception of justice centers on the approaches he advocates for. In particular, the solutions that Haugen and Boutros propose are very much grounded in Western conceptions of what are considered effective and appropriate approaches to violence. For instance, Haugen and Boutros caution against "indigenous, non-state mechanisms and informal local procedures," noting that some of these procedures "have been rejected in developed societies throughout the world for a host of reasons," including the ways they might disadvantage the poor, women, or minorities (2014, 124–125). So again, "we"—the developed world—are supposed to help "them"—the poor—in ways that we deem best.

The influence of Haugen on the trajectory of IJM cannot be over-stated. In discussions with IJM representatives it is apparent how much Haugen shaped the original structuring of the organization and its programs, and how much influence he continues to have. The worldview that Haugen outlines in *The Locust Effect* and elsewhere are reflected in IJM approaches, strategies, and goals, and in many ways such views are very much inline with specific Christian interpretations that are brought to bear in IJM narratives about justice. Though I do not argue that Haugen's worldview preceded or even directly affects the ways in which Christian scripture is interpreted in IJM contexts, examining Haugen's personal experiences vis-à-vis violence, as well as his personal ideas about human nature, can help us to understand what certain values mean within an IJM context.

C. An Evangelical Conception of Justice

IJM discourses about human nature are in line with Haugen's assertions in his personal writings and speeches, but also coincide with a broader evangelical political philosophy. Nicholas Wolterstorff (2005) argues that an evangelical political philosophy derives from

specific interpretations of biblical scripture that understand God's justice to relate to the judgment and punishment of evildoers, specifically. In addition, according to this evangelical interpretation, "God's rendering of judgment is in good measure mediated by human beings and human institutions" (2005, 147), including governments (2005, 143).

In many ways, IJM notions of justice, which include specific representations of God, evil, and punishment, mirror the evangelical political philosophy that Wolterstorff lays out. For instance, IJM's Statement of Biblical Foundation states the following:

> From Scripture we learn that the Creator is a God of justice and righteousness; that he measures the acts of individuals against an absolute standard of divine holiness…..We learn, too, that all persons are fallen creatures, with evil inherent to their natures. We learn that the sinful nature of humankind and the fallen state of the world are manifest in the evil that humans visit upon one another. We learn that this is a world in rebellion against God, a world in which power and deceit are used to take from men and women those good things given to them by their Creator; namely, life, liberty, dignity, and the fruit of creation, love and labor…..We learn that the Creator God judges, condemns and punishes those who so abuse others. Out of His love for both the vulnerable and those tempted to abuse them, God establishes human governments as His agents in bearing the sword of punishment to rightly restrain wrongdoers from evil and to call them to repentance. In support of this work of justice, God raises up righteous prophets to plead with, exhort, encourage and confront rulers…..so that such authorities might rightly execute their ministry of justice on behalf of the weak and oppressed, and so that such authorities might refrain from abusing such power for unjust gain or treating offenders in ways that deny the dignity they at all times retain as those who bear the image of God…..Upon this foundation, therefore, International Justice Mission offers its sacrifice of mercy and service in obedience to Christ, in support of His Gospel, and for the advancement of His Kingdom ("Statement of Biblical Foundation" 2016).

This passage highlights several justice narratives that can be seen throughout IJM materials, events, strategies, and goals. First, evil is part of human nature: "all persons are fallen creatures." Second, God is one who "judges, condemns, and punishes." Third, God relies on governments to punish those who commit acts of violence, and on "religious prophets" to influence and direct those governments. These three themes are representative of IJM's general conceptualization of

justice and how to achieve it. In particular, fighting for justice means fighting evildoers, and because evil is part of human nature, the best way to fight it is through governmental punishment (i.e. law enforcement).

Much of the Statement of Biblical Foundation relies on biblical scripture (from both the Old and New Testaments of the Christian Bible); however, the general story that it tells is not one that all Christian organizations tell with regard to justice. There are, of course, many other biblical verses that reference justice, but IJM chose these particular verses, and interpreted them in specific ways to create this narrative. And, as I have noted, a similar narrative can be found in some evangelical theological interpretations. So, one might be tempted to say IJM's evangelical identity is what explains its conceptions of justice. However, such an assumption would neglect the fact that IJM does not self-identify as evangelical, and that the organization is, in fact, made up of representatives from a variety of Christian backgrounds—including mainline Protestant and Catholic. Furthermore, Gary Haugen himself is a member of an Anglican church and does not self-identify as evangelical. In fact, in my research, the only place I came across references to IJM's evangelical identity was in external descriptions, by journalists for instance. Now, that is not to say that an organization must identify as evangelical in order to exhibit evangelical traits. Why IJM promotes a discourse that is inline with evangelical interpretations of Christian doctrine is not entirely clear. However, examining the similarities between evangelical theology and IJM interpretations of justice can provide more specificity in understanding what justice means for the organization. A cursory examination of IJM's religious values—one that simply focused on the fact that IJM is a Christian organization relying on a biblically-grounded notion of justice—could very likely miss the specific narratives of human nature, punishment, and law enforcement that are all part of an IJM conception of justice.

Moreover, IJM's conception of justice also informs conceptions of other IJM values. For instance, IJM links peace to justice. One IJM document highlights this connection:

> Being a peacemaker is not a passive, quiet stance. In fact, the Scriptures describe peace through a different perspective. Peace is likened to a river (Isaiah 66:12)—unstoppable, flowing, covering rocks and debris, shaping its own course. It is the God of *peace* who will soon crush the evil one under his feet (Romans 16:20). Peace is the part of the armor upon which we stand, the footwear allowing us to be ready for challenges ahead (Ephesians 6:15). And Jesus ultimately leaves his disciples with *his peace* in preparing them for his departure and the work ahead (John 14:27). Peace is a more powerful force in terms of intensity and impact than any oppression. It is for this reason justice-seekers must be carriers of peace, makers of peace and dwellers in peace. We must be marked by peace and thereby known as children of the Prince of Peace himself ("Just Prayer: A Journey through the Work of Prayer and Justice," n.d., 22).

This passage highlights how IJM interprets Christian doctrine on peace in a way that coincides with its broader discourses about violence, evil, and punishment. Here, peace is not referring to a passive or pacifist approach. Peace is not even necessarily referring to the absence of conflict. Instead, peace is a method to fight injustices on earth.

D. Enacting IJM's Justice

IJM discourses of violence, poverty, judgment, and punishment have obvious implications for how the organization conceptualizes justice, peace, and other values. This is important because such values influence how IJM engages in its transnational human rights work. IJM's conception of justice, in particular, shapes the organization's strategies and goals in ways that I highlight below. In addition, my findings show that IJM values shape and are reflected in IJM prayer practices.

Two examples highlight the ways that an IJM conception of justice shapes the strategies of the organization. First, for Haugen, and IJM more broadly, the fight for justice is primarily waged on behalf of the oppressed and poor. As noted above, Haugen often draws a conceptual

line between the poor "over there" and "us." One IJM document, for instance, suggests that "we" (the readers) do not have the same concerns and fears that "they" (the poor victims) do ("Just Prayer: A Journey through the Work of Prayer and Justice," n.d., 21). Furthermore, the IJM narrative often includes the idea that it is "our" (e.g. the reader, the IJM employee, the IJM supporter) God-given duty to help "them." In the words of one IJM representative, "we believe that we have a….directive and a call from God—a biblical mandate to seek justice, to rescue the oppressed, to defend the orphan, and to plead for the widow."[20] The IJM narrative focuses this justice work on the poor, in particular. Thus, while the representatives I spoke with acknowledge that injustices also happen in the U.S., they implied that the injustices happening to "the poor" are more pressing. One of the consequences of such a worldview is that IJM only works in the Global South, where, as the IJM narrative goes, the poorest and most oppressed live.

An IJM conceptualization of justice also clearly separates the perpetrator from the victim. Though it is acknowledged that perpetrators of violence are human, IJM narratives often neglect to provide histories of the perpetrators themselves, or to seriously engage with how such people might need restoration or rehabilitation themselves. For example, according to one IJM leader:

> When there is a conviction in one of our cases, when someone is actually found guilty and they are forced to deal with the reality of what they've done and now the consequences of it, it's never a happy moment…. The abuse that they were committing was destroying the people that they were abusing, but *it was also destroying them.* And the hope then is that now that they are forced to confront it, they'll repent of what they've done. They'll find healing, they'll find forgiveness, and they'll find a new life. But that's up to them; those are their choices to make.' We must always remember the human faces of injustice—that slave-owners and rapists are men and women just as we are. But, while we acknowledge their human flaws, we are caught in a tension between showing mercy and advocating for justice on behalf of those they have abused….. ("Just Prayer: A Journey through the Work of Prayer and Justice," n.d., 18).

[20] Interview, Arlington, VA, August 2014.

In this excerpt, the IJM representative tackles an issue that is not often addressed in official organizational documents or discussions—the effects of IJM's justice work on the perpetrator's life. Such issues are not at the forefront of IJM concerns because the organization's justice discourse focuses heavily on the idea of fighting on behalf of the victim, who is conceptually distinct from the perpetrator. One result of this discourse is that IJM provides restoration services for the victims it "rescues," but no such restoration services for the perpetrators of violence it helps to capture and convict.[21]

IJM prayer practices are also shaped by and reflect an IJM conception of justice. IJM prayers, for instance, often reflect, and perhaps even *reinforce,* the particular conception of justice promoted by IJM and Haugen, in particular. As noted earlier in this chapter, Haugen is committed to a specific understanding of justice and violence in which an inherently violent human nature coupled with a culture of impunity cause a range of global ills, including poverty. Starting from that premise makes it difficult to think about how a variety of socio-economic conditions might have led criminals to engage in the acts that they do. In other words, why a criminal does what she does (outside of the legal impunity within which she operates) is largely left out of the picture. This perspective shapes IJM's broader organizational discourses and behaviors in at least three ways. First, it encourages a narrative that there is no other way to solve problems like human trafficking and slavery other than to capture and prosecute those who are committing the crimes. Second, it portrays criminals as "locusts of violence"—evildoers without history. Third, it leads IJM to focus on the care of "victims" and ignore the care of "criminals."

[21] Samantha Power noted a similar narrative in her interview with Gary Haugen. In particular, with regards to perpetrators of violence Haugen told Powers "There aren't actually two sides to every story. Sometimes there is just evil—plain, unvarnished, intentional evil" (Power 2009, para. 86)

These discourses and strategies are expressed in and reinforced by IJM prayers. Evidence for these claims can be seen most readily in the Global Prayer Gatherings (GPGs), where participants (which include IJM employees as well as members of the public) are asked to pray for specific items. In both the plenary sessions and the focused prayer rooms, prayer requests are articulated and projected on screens. The audience is then asked to take some time (usually immediately during that session) to pray for each of these requests. During my observations of the 2014 Global Prayer Gathering, as well as my analysis of videos from the 2016 GPG, I noted that the majority of these prayers reflected a very particular narrative of justice.

For instance, IJM representatives and their supporters at the Global Prayer Gatherings are not asked (by the organization) to pray that God's will be done in matters of criminal capture and prosecution. Rather the organization asks GPG participants to pray that these "perpetrators" will be caught and sentenced; leaving no room for other possibilities. In one of the prayer rooms at the 2014 GPG, for example, participants were asked to "Pray to find the perpetrators and advance the process of seeking justice for our beneficiaries." In the same session, participants were asked to "Pray that the suspects would be ordered to pre-trial detention when necessary."[22] Moreover, some of the IJM prayers I witnessed were asking that the convicted criminals receive certain kinds of punishment. For instance, during a corporate prayer session at IJM headquarters, one representative prayed that a perpetrator would receive the maximum sentence for his crimes.[23]

IJM prayers also reflect and reinforce the "locust" narrative that, I argue, portrays criminals as evil and without their own complicated histories. Two examples in particular support this claim. In one of the plenary sessions of the 2014 GPG, participants were asked to

[22] Personal observation, Washington, DC, April 2014.
[23] Personal observation, Washington, DC, August 2014.

"Pray that IJM employees will be able to 'see in the dark.'" At the same time that this request was articulated, two photos were projected to the audience. One was of a dark screen; the other was through the perspective of night vision. In the latter, the audience was confronted with a human "predator." This purpose of this photo, as I understood it, was to represent the ways in which criminals can be lurking anywhere, and that we may not always see them.

Later, in the same session, GPG participants were asked to "Pray that God will allow us to see the human beings on the other side of those walls of lies and despair." That request was articulated alongside photos of African men wielding machetes, Latino policemen beating a man, and a Southeast Asian man who represented the owner of a slave-operated brick-making factory.[24] These and other photos, which accompanied specific prayer requests, likely shape how prayer participants think about the criminals that IJM is focused on capturing and prosecuting. In particular, IJM portrays these men (I have yet to see IJM portray a woman as a perpetrator) as nameless and menacing, without compassion or other positive human qualities.

Finally, in my research, IJM prayers rarely focused on healing or caring for those the organization labels as perpetrators. On its website, for instance, IJM lists several "Critical Prayer Requests." One of those requests says: "Ask God to give IJM staff a great love for one another, for the victims that they serve, and for those they comfort" ("Critical Prayer Requests" 2016). Note here that there is no discussion of asking God to help IJM staff love the criminals they help to capture and prosecute.

These and other examples highlight the ways that IJM prayers reflect the underlying value commitments of the organization, and, in particular, the particular notion of justice it promotes. Given the importance that IJM and its employees place on prayer, it is also likely that such practices act as a discursive reinforcement of these commitments. Moreover, the GPG is

[24] Personal observation, Washington, DC, April 2014.

open to the public, and is part of IJM's broader advocacy work, which encourages people to pray for specific IJM goals[25] (this includes working with students on college campuses). Thus, the organization's narrative of justice is spread to individuals and groups external to IJM, who *through* prayer engage in and promote a particular discourse about justice, violence, poverty, and impunity.

It is clear that justice is central to International Justice Mission's transnational human rights work. It is also clear that IJM's notion of justice is, in part, drawn from biblical scripture. However, as I have shown here, there are other factors that shape how IJM conceptualizes justice and how justice informs the organization's strategies and goals. Thus, in this context, simply categorizing justice as a "Christian value" would likely miss the complex ways that justice is given meaning by IJM leaders and representatives and enacted in IJM's work—both within the organization, as well as through its external advocacy projects. In the next section, I examine the values of the Taizé Community, another Christian organization, which happens to conceptualize justice, peace, and other values in a way that is very different from IJM.

Section V: The Taizé Community

We might expect the Taizé Community, more than International Justice Mission or Religions for Peace, to be insulated from the outside world and/or from so-called secular value systems because the Taizé Community is a monastic brotherhood. In some ways, this assumption bears out. The Taizé Community does not rely on the same kinds of donor relationships that the other two organizations do (though the Community accepts small donations, it is largely self-reliant), and it does not run in the same kinds of NGO circles as RfP and IJM. However, this

[25] IJM's 2013 Annual Report notes that, due to their advocacy for prayer, "Over 100,000 people in India are now praying regularly for IJM's work" (2014, 11).

does not mean that the values of the Taizé Community are somehow closed off from influences arising outside of the Church. Like all religious organizations, there are a range of factors that shape the specific interpretations of biblical scripture that inform Taizé's conceptualizations of particular values like reconciliation, justice, and peace *and* how those values are manifested in the Community's projects. Brother Roger Schütz, in particular, and the circumstances surrounding the founding of the Taizé Community have been influential in the shaping of the Community's values. Drawing on his experiences with his family and World War II, Brother Roger promoted specific religious values with an eye to both inner spiritual development and engagement with the outside world. Moreover, Brother Roger promoted an idea of human nature and God that focuses on love, forgiveness, trust, and goodness, which shape Taizé narratives about justice, peace, and reconciliation.

A. Brother Roger: Family and War

Brother Roger Schütz, founder of Taizé, was greatly influenced by his family as well as his experience of living in a divided Europe during and after World War II. In particular, he saw some of the Catholic/Protestant tensions first hand through the life of his father, a Swiss Protestant pastor, and his French maternal grandmother, who took in refugees during the first World War. When World War II broke out, Brother Roger drew on these and other examples from his family to promote reconciliation and peace through a small monastic brotherhood that came to be known as the Taizé Community.

As a young man in the late 1930's, and possibly due to the advice of his father, Brother Roger attended theology school at Lausanne and then Strasbourg. It was during his studies that Brother Roger developed an interest in prayer and monastic living, which partly developed out of

his own struggles with prayer. While attending theology school, Brother Roger increasingly took on leadership roles. He was first approached to head the Christian Student Association. This then led to the founding of the Grande Communaute, a small group of theology students who focused on spiritual living and theological discussions, where Brother Roger was also one of the leaders. Shortly after the founding of the Grande Communaute, World War II erupted. Brother Roger's family on his mother's side was French. In addition, some of Brother Roger's siblings were living in France during the war. Because of his family's close connection with France, "the defeat of France awoke in him powerful emotions," and out of that experience, as well as his previous theological education and leadership roles, Brother Roger conceived the idea of creating a community focused on reconciliation (Spink 1986, 28).

Brother Roger was familiar with the animosities between Catholics and Protestants in Europe. As a child and later as a young man, he was exposed to such tensions through his father's experiences as a Protestant pastor (Spink 1986, 21–23). Brother Roger did not want to exacerbate those tensions, so when he first began discussions with some friends about the kind of community he was envisioning, he specifically avoided including theologians in the discussions because he did not want to focus on those issues that he felt contributed to the continued split of the Christian Church (Spink 1986, 31). Brother Roger wanted to reconcile Catholics and Protestants, and was involved in specific Catholic/Protestant reconciliation dialogues throughout his life; however, he did not want to engage too directly with this issue in the community he envisioned. As one Taizé brother notes, "For Brother Roger, the search for reconciliation among Christians was not a topic for reflection: it was something evident to be done" ("Homage to Brother Roger" 2016). Moreover, by not focusing solely on the Catholic/Protestant split, Brother

Roger opened the door for a broader interpretation of reconciliation that encompassed more than just the Christian Church.

In addition to his focus on reconciliation, Brother Roger incorporated the two ideas of inner contemplation and struggle into his vision for the Community. The notion of engaging in both prayer and work has a long Christian history. For instance, Benedictine communities required their monks to engage in equal amounts of work (i.e. manual labor) and prayer (Vest 1997, 43). However, Brother Roger also witnessed this combination of inner transformation and outer engagement more personally, through the experiences of his grandmother. He says,

> My mother's mother was a woman of courage. During the First World War her three sons were fighting at the front. She was a widow and she lived in the north of France, where they were under shell-fire. But she insisted on staying, so that she could open her home to refugees—old people, children, pregnant women. She did not leave till the last minute when everyone had to flee. Then she went to Dordogne.
>
> She was penetrated by the deep desire that never again would anyone have to go through what she had experienced. In Europe, divided Christians were killing one another; let them at least be reconciled, to prevent another war.
>
> She came from old Protestant stock: in the house where my mother was born, guests were still shown the secret chamber where in times past the pastor was hidden during periods of persecution. To bring about an immediate reconciliation within herself, she used to go to a Catholic Church. It was as if she had known intuitively that, in the Catholic Church, the Eucharist was a source of unanimity of the faith.
>
> The miracle of her life was that in reconciling within herself the stream of her original faith with the Catholic faith, she did not become a symbol of repudiation for her family…..Those two gestures of hers—taking in the most distressed and achieving reconciliation within oneself—had a lifelong effect on me…."(Fidanzio 2006, 73–74).

This passage shows the importance of Brother Roger's grandmother for his own worldview. In particular, this story highlights the three broader themes that became central to Taizé: the reconciliation of the Church, the cessation of hostilities together with a broader reconciliation of

human kind, and the inner reconciliation of individuals. Later, Brother Roger followed in his grandmother's footsteps, promoting inner contemplation through prayer, the reconciliation of Catholics and Protestants through the Taizé model, and a direct political engagement with the world, through among other things, Brother Roger's own experiences assisting and hiding refugees escaping from Nazi occupation (Spink 1986, 44). These themes of inner contemplation, struggle, and reconciliation, which are drawn from the historical context of Taizé's founding, as well as Brother Roger's own personal experiences, have shaped which values are central to Taizé, and how those values are interpreted and manifested in the Community's day-to-day living and long-term projects.

B. Taizé's Forgiveness, Peace, Reconciliation, and Structural Justice

For the Taizé Community, values like peace, justice, and reconciliation are all connected. Moreover, each value draws on Brother Roger's particular view of reconciliation, which includes a significant focus on trust, forgiveness, and the inherent goodness of humankind. For instance, in some Taizé contexts, peace refers specifically to the absence of violence (Fidanzio 2006, 76–77). Unlike IJM, however, the Taizé narrative often focuses on promoting trust and alleviating poverty in order to attain peace. Speaking about the continual project of European reunification, Brother Roger noted the importance of trust for maintaining peace. In particular, he wrote how vital it was to avoid humiliating the "other" side in a post-conflict environment: "We can never say it enough: no one people is more guilty than another. Such a thing does not exist, and never will" (Brother Roger of Taizé 2006, 98). Here Brother Roger is referring to state-level conflicts; however, the general ethos of the Taizé Community includes a focus on forgiveness, mercy, and trust, rather than judgment and punishment. That is not to say that the brothers condone acts of

violence or oppression; they do not. However, they differ from IJM in that their general approach to dealing with oppression and injustice is to search for reconciliation instead of punishment (Brother Roger of Taizé 2006, 122–123) and to focus on "the profound goodness of human beings" (quoting Brother François of Taizé, Brother Roger of Taizé 2006, 133) instead of the inherent evils of human nature.

Similar to IJM, the Taizé brothers acknowledge the existence of evil in the world vis-à-vis physical violence (Fidanzio 2006, 84); however, the solutions for these evils is not punishment through law enforcement. In part, this is because Taizé does not promote an image of God as one who primarily judges and punishes, at least not here on earth. As one brother told me, the Community does not focus on immanent justice from God, because the brothers assume that God will mete out these judgments in the afterlife.[26] As such, when relying on portrayals of God to inform how humans should live on earth, the brothers focus on God as a being of love, forgiveness, compassion, and mercy, rather than one who "instills fear" ("Homage to Brother Roger" 2016).

The Taizé approach focuses on forgiveness over punishment, and a God of love over a God of judgment. However, this does not mean that the Community is against a proactive approach to attain justice, peace, and reconciliation. Many of the Taizé brothers, and Brother Roger in particular, have been very involved in political affairs through dialogue with a range of political and religious leaders. But while Gary Haugen highlights the failures of development and economic programs in adequately addressing problems of violence and poverty, the Taizé Community actively promotes global solutions that focus on economic and political justice. In fact, the Community explicitly links a meaningful and lasting peace with just economic and

[26] Interview, Boston, April 2015.

political systems. At times, this is manifested in more general statements about the role of poverty in global affairs, as one of Brother Roger's letters highlights. He writes,

> More and more people throughout the world are becoming aware of how urgent it is to come to the aid of the victims of poverty, a poverty that is constantly on the rise. This is a basic necessity to make peace on earth possible. The disparity between the accumulation of wealth by some and the poverty of countless others is one of the most serious questions of our time. Will we do all in our power for the world economy to provide solutions? Neither misfortunes nor the injustice of poverty come from God… (Fidanzio 2006, 67).

And in a 1983 message to the ambassadors of the Soviet Union and the U.S., Brother Roger wrote the following:

> …the whole human family wants peace, and never war. Those who want war are only a few. There are multitudes of people, young and old, who know that world peace is engendered by confident trust between all the peoples of the earth, and that this peace depends as well upon a fair distribution of the goods of the earth between poor regions and rich regions. And there are multitudes of people who would like to open up paths of trust and also take part in this fair sharing (as quoted in Spink 1986, 167).

In these statements Brother Roger notes that peace is dependent on the amelioration of poverty. For Taizé, peace is dependent upon trust and trust is dependent upon an equitable economic system. Similarly, one of the Taizé brothers told me that trust is critical for justice and reconciliation, and referenced these values within the context of political and social "transformation."[27] In short, Taizé brothers are calling upon world governments and agencies to promote trust by creating a more just (i.e. equitable and fair) economic and political system.

Economic concerns are often at the center of the Taizé Community's external engagements. In fact, the Community's material and discursive focus on "the poor" is somewhat similar to that of IJM. As Brother Roger asserted, "Since the first day, we have always been quite certain that we cannot follow a road towards Christ without being with the poor" (Brother Roger of Taizé 2006, 45). Engaging with the poor is, for the Taizé brothers, one way to engage with

[27] Interview, Boston, April 2015.

struggle in the world. But, unlike IJM, the brothers do not often frame their relationship with the poor through a savior narrative. That is, they do not often talk about fighting for justice on behalf of the poor. As Brother Roger says in his discussion about how the brothers leave Taizé to live in poor communities around the world: "Why go to live in such conditions and remain for years and years, perhaps for an entire lifetime? Not to bring solutions, but above all to be a simple presence of love" (Brother Roger of Taizé 2006, 95). Such an approach does not mean that the Taizé brothers do not act within the communities they live in. On the contrary, they often encourage and engage in a range of activities.[28] However, the brothers try to approach the people within these "poor" communities as equals—respecting their own cultural and religious traditions, "listening" (Brother Roger of Taizé 2006, 62–64) to their stories, and promoting trust—all in the name of promoting reconciliation.

For the Taizé Community, values like justice, reconciliation, and peace are all connected, and are all based in an underlying narrative focusing on trust and forgiveness. In addition, the Community approaches the attainment of justice, reconciliation, and peace through both inner contemplation and a direct engagement with the political world. For Taizé, it is through inner contemplation that one gains the inner peace and strength to work towards fairness, an equal distribution of resources and power, and peace and security for all (Brother Roger of Taizé 2006, 126–127).

C. Promoting Justice and Reconciliation in the World

While the Taizé Community is primarily known for the Community's unique kinds of prayer, the underlying philosophy of the group includes a focus on struggle or engagement with the social and political world. Though the brothers are part of a monastic community, this does

[28] Interview, Boston, April 2015.

not stop them from involving themselves in specific matters of peace and justice. For instance, Kathryn Spink, who spent a lot of time with Brother Roger and wrote a book about Taizé notes that:

> Taizé has always been careful to avoid all visible links with the power of money or politics. Yet Brother Roger recognizes that there is a distinction, for example, between belonging to a particular political party and making a stand for human justice. No attempt is made to deny the reality of political power and, when it is a question of defending a victim of injustice or preserving the peace between nations, Brother Roger does not hesitate to intervene with those who hold it…. (1986, 165).

Indeed, the Taizé Community more generally has not hesitated to promote its own notions of justice and peace through direct social and political engagements. In their own local community in France, the brothers helped their neighbors develop a milk co-operative (Spink 1986, 81–82). In other geographical locations, they have worked with trade unions (Spink 1986, 161). But the brothers also work towards justice and peace through broader global political engagements. For instance, in 2008, Brother Alois delivered a message to the European Union wherein the Taizé Community laid out its desires for the region and strongly asserted that European institutions were critical to maintaining and continuing to build peace in Europe. He also noted that "the more complex the economic and financial system becomes, the more it has to be coordinated and regulated to promote the common good of the entire human family. Supranational bodies that set ground rules ensuring greater justice are henceforth indispensible" ("For an Open Europe, a Land of Solidarity" 2016).

Such calls for economic and political justice are, I would argue, grounded in the founding histories of the Taizé Community, and, in particular, Brother Roger's experiences during and after World War II, as well as in the brothers' continued engagement with specific community struggles around the world. In particular, the brothers rely heavily on biblical scripture that

focuses on forgiveness, trust, and solidarity with humankind (especially the poor). They rely on these passages to support their promotion of specific political institutions, approaches, and historical narratives. For instance, in a recent letter written by Brother Alois to the Taizé Community and its supporters, Brother Alois references specific biblical verses to support his call to "extend mercy to its social dimensions." He writes:

> For a worldwide solidarity to become a reality, it is indispensable to strengthen the international institutions that set rules democratically in order to ensure greater justice and to keep the peace.
>
> The debt of poor countries is often caused by more powerful nations and corporations exploiting their resources. Even if it seems impossible for us to do anything to change this, we can remember that forgiving this debt is a way of restoring justice. In a context different from today's, the Bible reminds us: "If any of your kin become poor and are unable to support themselves, help them as you would a foreigner and stranger, so they can continue to live among you" (Leviticus 25:35).
>
> Across the world, women, men and children are being forced to leave their homelands. Their plight generates in them a motivation stronger than any barriers. Rich countries must become aware that they bear a share of the responsibility for the wounds of history that have led to massive migrations, notably from Africa and the Middle East (Löser 2016).

Here, Brother Alois is relying on biblical scripture to promote a specific notion of justice that is directly linked to political and social equity. Similar to IJM, the Taizé Community uses biblical verses to ground its specific calls for action. But while IJM incorporates verses that focus on evil, judgment, violence, and punishment, the Taizé Community tends to use verses that are focused on issues of trust, forgiveness, and mercy.

Taizé's conceptualizations of justice, peace, and reconciliation are also reflected in how Taizé brothers engage in prayer. Like RfP and IJM, the meanings and roles that the Taizé Community assigns to prayer is informed by (and perhaps reinforces) its broader value and ethical commitments. In particular, when visiting and living in other countries, or when in the

company of people who are not Christians, the Taizé brothers are very careful about respecting the local peoples, their cultures, and religious traditions. This means that the brothers, when necessary, will actually block off people from their prayers—by closing the doors to the sanctuary, for instance—in order to avoid any undue proselytizing pressures.[29] In addition, over the years the Taizé brothers have translated their chants into multiple languages, which is a direct reflection of the brothers' inclusive approach and their goals for the reconciliation of all humankind.

In addition, Taizé values are reflected in the substance of their prayers. For instance, the Community sends out monthly emails that include summaries of Taizé activities as well as suggested prayers for Taizé supporters. Some of these prayers refer directly to issues of justice, violence, and peace. One prayer reads:

> Be praised, Christ Jesus, for all the peoples whom you gather in one communion, the Church, which is your body. It fortifies our hope that you are renewing the face of the earth. At this time of great upheavals, when conflicts and the menace of violence are rife, kindle in us a passion for communion so that your work of peace may shine out across the world.[30]

This prayer reflects other Taizé writings and discussions about how to respond to violence in that it promotes reconciliation and peace. Similarly, another prayer reads:

> God of goodness, at Christmas we remember that you sent Jesus into the world to bear witness to your infinite mercy. The violence of the world was unleashed against him, but it could not overcome your love. Stay close, today, to the countless victims of human violence; may faces expressing compassion be for them reflections of your presence. Show us how we can contribute without delay, both near at hand and far away, to the shining forth of your peace amidst humanity and in the whole creation.[31]

These and other Taizé prayers acknowledge violence, but advocate for mercy, compassion, and peace.

[29] Interview, Boston, April 2015.
[30] From a Taizé mass email dated January 18, 2016.
[31] From a Taizé mass email dated December 21, 2015.

The above examples reveal just some of the ways that the Taizé Community promotes and reflects its own conceptions of reconciliation and justice. However, my research suggests that Taizé values do not only inform behavior, but are, in some cases, perceived as a kind of action. For instance, as I also discuss in Chapter Four, the Taizé Community promotes reconciliation through its prayer events, which are held in locations all over the world, as well as through the work the brothers engage in "abroad." However, the Community also *enacts* reconciliation through the existence of the Community itself. That is, the brothers view the Taizé Community as a model of reconciliation, where reconciliation is manifested through the daily activities of the brothers and the visiting pilgrims. In fact, Taizé is often referred to as a "parable of community" that both encompasses the value or ethic of reconciliation, while also representing the kind of reconciliation that the brothers hope will eventually engulf all of the humanity ("About Taizé: The Community Today" 2008).

These findings are interesting in that they portray a different relationship between value and action than that which scholars often employ. As noted earlier in the chapter, FBO scholars often argue that "religious values" are consequential for FBOs because they motivate or shape FBO action. However, the Taizé example suggests that in certain cases, values not only inform action, but can *be* action.

As I have shown, the Taizé Community's values have very different meanings and connotations than that of IJM. For instance, Taizé narratives suggest that justice is achieved through structural political and economic reform, rather than through criminal justice processes. More generally, the Taizé brothers approach injustices and violence with trust, love, and forgiveness. In addition, Taizé places a high priority on reconciliation—both for the Christian Church and for broader humanity. These values are reflected in Taizé prayers, as well as in their

broader work in the world. A comparison of the IJM and Taizé cases highlights the important differences between the two. Though both rely on biblical scripture to inform their value systems, their conceptualizations of such values often diverge, resulting in very different approaches to projects of peace and justice.

Additionally, the Taizé example has important implications for broader theories related to values. In particular, my research reveals how, in some contexts, values do not only inform action, but are forms of action themselves.

The next section examines a completely different kind of organization—Religions for Peace. While IJM and the Taizé Community both self-identify as Christian, leaving them free to draw on Christian doctrine, Religions for Peace, due to its multi-religious structure must approach the issue of organizational values from a different perspective.

Section VI: Religions for Peace

Examining the religious values of a multi-religious faith-based organization introduces interesting questions. For instance, some scholars categorize FBOs *as* faith-based because they incorporate religious values into their organizations. Multi-religious organizations, however, are trying to attain common goals, while also maintaining the separate religious identities of their members. What kinds of *religious* values can such organizations rely on to inform their work that could encompass members of each religion, while also respecting their own identities? Perhaps the only solution is to rely on values that the organizations themselves perceive as neutral, public, or "secular." Yet, if a multi-religious organization relies on such values to motivate and shape its work, can the organizations still be categorized as religious or faith-based? This chapter does not attempt to answer such a question; however, in this section I do examine the ways in

which Religions for Peace navigates the tensions between the organization's religious identity and its adherence to maintaining a respectful separation among each religion the organization represents. I find that RfP values are shaped significantly by the ways in which the organization tries to navigate such tensions, which includes the incorporation of a model employing what RfP leaders call "secular" language, but which also draws on religious traditions. The RfP approach highlights the ways in which one inter- or multi-religious organization navigates the tensions between religious commonalities and distinctiveness. Such an approach provides an alternative conception of the role of religious language and values in engagements of religious difference.

A. Background

In the mid-1960s a group of religious leaders—primarily men from Christian and Jewish faiths (Jack 1993, 34–37)—started to talk about their individual desires to bring together other religious leaders to discuss and take action on some of the pressing global political and social problems of the time. Of particular concern was the arms race and nuclear weapons (Jack 1993, 147). One of the first meetings of this group, which went on to found the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP)—and later became Religions for Peace—was the National Inter-Religious Conference on Peace, held in Washington, D.C. in 1966. Homer A. Jack, one of the founding members and the first Secretary General of WCRP, describes the conference:

> There were four purposes of the National Conference: (1) to bring together clergy and laity of all peace-oriented viewpoints to discuss the relations of religion to peace; (2) to analyze in depth the basic religious statements on war and peace and on the moral principles in world order, to find parallel moral principles, and to seek appropriate guidelines; (3) to discuss current problems from the viewpoint of these principles and proximate norms; and (4) to analyze existing religious programs in Washington, at the U.N., on the local level, and in the world community, and to recommend further cooperation so that organized religion could play its role in governmental decisions affecting war and peace (1993, 39).

This basic outline roughly corresponds to the approach and goals WCRP adopted during the organization's first official assembly in Kyoto in 1970, as well as to how Religions for Peace continues to operate today. That is, RfP brings together religious leaders to discern common values. The organization then relies on those common values to determine which global issues to tackle *and* how to act on those issues (through policy recommendations, as well as through RfP's own development, aid, advocacy, and education programs).

Religions for Peace is fundamentally different from International Justice Mission and the Taizé Community in that the latter two organizations' members are all Christian. Religions for Peace, on the other hand, is a multi-religious organization. That fact, in itself, means that RfP can not rely only on Christian scripture to inform its organizational values. Instead, RfP's official approach is to discern common values. However, the organization also claims to avoid deep theological discussions. How then are common values determined?

As noted throughout this dissertation, the Religions for Peace approach focuses heavily on "expressing consensus through shared values" ("Ninth World Assembly Workbook" 2013, 4). These shared values then inform how RfP delegates and affiliates will "act." Yet, as I also discuss in Chapter Four, RFP's organizational leadership shapes the process of discerning shared values. Here, I would like to suggest that this process is also shaped by the founding history of the organization, which includes a cautious approach to multi-religious engagement and theological dialogue, as well as RfP's close relationship with the United Nations.

B. Theology, Leadership, and Discerning Common Values

Formally, Religions for Peace does not engage in theological discussions. According to Jack, the original WCRP "formula" shied away from theology (1993, 147). He says the

organization "was reluctant to discuss theology; its leaders even pointed out how, at its meetings, theology was bypassed in order to emphasize action and avoid controversy" (1993, 141). RfP leaders thought that engaging in theological dialogue might lead to tensions between and among religious leaders, so they chose to avoid doing so.

Today, RfP representatives continue to assert that Religions for Peace is not the type of organization that focuses on theological dialogue.[32] Within specific multi-religious meetings like the World Assemblies, that is correct. Delegates do not discuss and debate specific theological teachings in any substantial manner. However, Religions for Peace does put forth specific theological doctrines and ideas in its organizational materials. For instance, the workbook for the Ninth World Assembly contains multiple references to specific religious texts. Such references are meant to justify the proposed organizational value of "welcoming the other" ("Ninth World Assembly Workbook" 2013, 16–19). More generally, while working as an RfP intern, I came across multiple documents that would say things similar to "Islam promotes equality and dignity for women." These kinds of statements make authoritative and normative judgments about the ways in which specific religious traditions support a particular value. In fact, such statements imply (or sometimes outright express) that certain interpretations of religious texts or teachings are more legitimate or desirable than others.[33] What makes certain interpretations more legitimate than others is often left unexplained. Consequently, though officially RfP does not engage in theological dialogue*,* the organization does make theological assertions, which are often used to support specific RfP values.

[32] Interview, Oslo, September 2012.
[33] Here I use the term "religious texts" in the broad sense—not only encompassing written scripture and other documents, but also oral histories, songs, and other practices that comprise a comprehensive system of meaning within a particular religious tradition.

In addition, there is a tension between the values that are connected with individual religious traditions and those that are representative of RfP as a whole. On the one hand, some RfP representatives note that each religion holds certain values in common. For instance, one local Christian RfP affiliate based in West Africa spoke about the experiences in her local RfP-affiliated interfaith group of women. She said,

> [T]he things we normally promote in our group is the commonalities because we keep telling ourselves "Whether you are Buddhist, you are a Jew, you are a Christian, you are a Muslim, the belief that we have is like the same character, we have common values among these religions." We have shared values among these religious organizations. And some of these values we have, let us promote it, where we agree, where we have common values. Let us now work together, join our hands together in fellowship to promote it. We have the value of justice, value of love, compassion, reconciliation, and all that. Let us now come together as a group and promote these values.[34]

Some RfP documents make similar claims. For instance, the Ninth World Assembly Workbook notes that faith communities have a "commonality of many overall values (e.g., charity, hospitality, or justice)" ("Ninth World Assembly Workbook" 2013, 40). This narrative suggests that certain common values are inherent to and shared by all religious traditions and communities.

However, other RfP documents, as well as the personal writings of William Vendley (the current RfP Secretary General) tell a slightly different story—one that acknowledges both the differences and commonalities among religious communities. For instance, one RfP document notes that specific conceptions of peace vary among religious communities, but that the more general value of peace is shared by all:

> Each religious tradition represented in *RfP* has its own positive vision of Peace, which includes its understanding of human dignity, individual and communal flourishing, the obligation to be in harmony with others and the natural world, and its notion of ultimate fulfillment. In *RfP,* each religion's positive vision of Peace is respected as being sincerely held by the believers of that religion. While great

[34] Interview, via Skype, February 2014.

> care is taken to avoid a 'syncrestic' blending of the beliefs of diverse religions, *RfP* recognizes that diverse religious visions of Peace do provide the bases for carefully discerning elements of a positive, multi-religious vision of Peace (italics in original, "Ninth World Assembly Workbook" 2013, 4).

In his own writings, Vendley implies that religious values of all kinds, though perhaps similar across communities, are also unique to individual communities. Those unique values are *not* held in common (1992, 17). According to this narrative, a consensus of specific values does not seem possible. However, RfP employs a multi-religious approach that (1) attempts to maintain the distinctiveness of religious values vis-à-vis particular communities, while also (2) discerning broader shared values. Here, Vendley describes the RfP model:

> The work of *Religions for Peace* relies on a deceptively simple, yet powerful, recent advance in religious creativity. Many religious communities have opened the door to effective religious cooperation by becoming bilingual. Every faith has its own primary language that defines the religious community. But primary religious language is not a language for engaging other religious communities or the public. Representatives of religious communities are now also learning to speak in public language. A shared public language provides a medium to clarify agreements and differences on important moral issues, and serves as a basis for cooperative action. Becoming bilingual allows religious communities not only to speak a common public language, but also to act on issues of common concern. Working together is an opportunity for religions to creatively and faithfully re-express their own tradition in a common language for a common purpose…..Public language is the language of cooperation, and cooperation is essential to the resolution of conflict (italics in original, 2005, 91).

For Vendley, within the context of multi-religious engagement, to be "bilingual" means to both rely on one's own religious community's values and narratives to inform moral frameworks, but also to search for consensus among other religious communities through a "secondary language." Vendley describes this secondary language as "secular" and "universal":

> The secondary language is the language increasingly shared by today's modern pluralistic societies. It is the language presently used by governmental institutions, our public schools, and our nightly news programs. It no doubt varies from country to country, but it is becoming increasing universal. It serves, for example, as the language of international organizations such as the United Nations, the Red

> Cross, or Amnesty International. It can be banal or express such elevated notions as universal human rights. In a word, it is "secular" language (1992, 25).

According to Vendley, successful multi-religious engagements will occur when religious communities are able to translate their own religious values and concepts into a universalized, secular language. Employing a secular *language,* however, does not mean that RfP values are disconnected from specific values held by religious communities. Nor does such an approach assume that all religious communities will share a specific vision of a particular shared value. Dr. Eboo Patel, April Kunze, and Noah Silverman[35] explain:

> It is heresy to the world's traditions to suggest that they are all the same or to work for the establishment of some new, syncretistic religion that is devoid of all particularity and thus meaning. It is, however, equally blasphemous to suggest that our traditions are so disparate that they have nothing in common. What is precisely so interesting about the phenomenon of shared values is that they require the unique language of each of our religious and moral traditions to infuse them with true meaning and significance; in their general universal form, shared values like compassion appear almost vacuous and devoid of real consequence…
>
> On a practice level, this is the challenge of facilitators of this methodology. They must be adept at pushing each participant to articulate how his/her community identifies, articulates, and embodies a given shared value (2008, 124).

According to this approach, shared values are expressed in secular language. However, the values themselves are not conceived as inherently secular as they can be found, in various iterations, in all religious communities.

Where does this "secular language" come from? Some scholars would argue that such secular language is not neutral, but carries specific authoritative weight and particular histories that are linked with religious traditions (Hurd 2008). As evidenced in a previous quote, the secular language that Vendley refers to is very much linked with international organizations and

[35] To my knowledge, Patel and Kunze are not representatives of Religions for Peace. However, in this passage, the authors specifically refer to the RfP model as an example of an approach to interreligious dialogue. In addition, Silverman was formerly employed with the World Conference of Religions for Peace. Furthermore, this piece is included in a book edited by Rev. Bud Heckman, former Executive Director of Religions for Peace USA.

NGOs like the United Nations, the Red Cross, or Amnesty International. Religions for Peace language and discourses, in particular, especially at the international level of the organization, are heavily shaped by the organization's association with the United Nations.

RfP's relationship with the United Nations goes back to the founding of WCRP. As Jack notes, WCRP founders intentionally relied on the language and strategies of the U.N. to elucidate the goals and aspirations of WCRP vis-à-vis peace. He says,

> If religion is sometimes hard to define, so is peace. Many different things fall under the rubric of 'peace'…. As the U.S. leaders of WCRP were seeking a way to organize their efforts [in the early years of the organization], they realized the treasure they had in the U.N. Early on, they held a modest symposium under its shadow. Soon it became obvious to them that peace would be an abstraction unless they dealt with the topics used by the U.N. itself—disarmament, development, human rights, regional conflict, etc. Thus at WCRP I, the three major commissions dealt not with vague notions of peace, but with the specific areas of disarmament, development, and human rights….Furthermore, discussions at world assemblies were aided by carefully crafted preparatory materials, sometimes reflecting U.N. documents and pending U.N. debates (1993, 153).

This passage highlights the problem a multi-religious organization like Religions for Peace confronts when trying to discern common values like peace. If the organization wants to avoid a syncretistic blending of values, but also wants to discern common values, there must be some external source that the organization can latch on to. For RfP, that was, and is, the language and agenda of the U.N.

From its founding, the WCRP purposely tried to work closely with the U.N. As Jack notes, "One reason the WCRP I decided to become a continuing organization, and especially to establish an international office in New York, was so that it could relate to the U.N. and its multiple agendas" (1993, 171). Today, the U.N. remains a strong influence on Religions for Peace, as RfP holds consultative status with ECOSOC, sometimes partners with UNICEF and UNHCR, and holds RfP-sponsored events at the U.N. building in New York. In addition, many

current Secretariat employees previously worked for or with U.N. agencies like UNHCR, UNICEF, and UNDP ("International Secretariat" 2016). Though there are many strong influences shaping the discourses and strategies of Religions for Peace, the United Nations plays a large role.

C. A Holistic Conception of Peace

Religions for Peace strives to both protect the unique religious differences of its members, while also discerning common values. In order to achieve these two goals, the organization has developed a model that continually navigates the tension of drawing on the values and beliefs of religious communities, while also adhering to, what Vendley calls a "secular language" that is, in part, shaped by that of the U.N.[36] The result of these tensions can be seen in the ways in which RfP gives meaning to particular organizational values like peace.

One RfP leader explains what peace means for the organization:

> Peace is broadly defined within Religions for Peace. If you look at the global sense of Religions for Peace, this is just to make some elements visible and understandable…..Conflict transformation is working towards peace. And peacebuilding in post-conflict situations is part of building peace. And we just talked about reducing the number of weapons and the threat of weapons. We have one category called 'Just and Harmonious Societies,' because if justice is not there human rights are not being observed. If injustice is, in fact, the situation in society….and others, for example, Buddhists would call for less justice—they have difficulties using that word. But harmony would very much come into it. And therefore, violence against women, children, that is disturbing harmony and also is from another part of justice. So these are the issues that we need to address—these injustices in society—be it on the domestic level and gender violence and so forth, or other human rights abuses…..Third is, if some are disastrously poor and others are, I don't know what word to use….rich….you see the haves and the have nots, the gap—injustice gap, in terms of government and wealth, and lack of human development, so that is extremely important for peace,

[36] Though Vendley calls the language of the United Nations "secular," others (Maritain 1998) would not necessary portray the U.N. and the idea of universal human rights in the same way. In addition, a 2014 University of Kent study found that there was a substantial bias in favor of Christian organizations and actors at the U.N. (*The Guardian* 2014).

> and is one element we're discussing and are addressing. And the fourth would be then….if we don't treat Mother Earth in appropriate ways, we cannot talk about long-term peace at all. Now, this doesn't mean that Religions for Peace is an environmental organization, as such. It's not a development organization. It's not purely a human rights organization. But, the question is: "How do these elements impact peace?"……Peace is broad and we should not limit what is within the perimeter of religious concerns. It doesn't mean that the religious council can engage all over the place with the same energy and with the same resources. We don't have those resources, so we have to make priorities from pragmatic considerations. But the concern is there—to see peace as a broad range of challenges and then to have to address those if we really mean peace.[37]

This excerpt highlights two important aspects of Religions for Peace. First, it shows how RfP maneuvers in order to try to respect and represent the varied value systems of a range of religious actors. As this RfP representative notes, a Buddhist might not want to use the word "justice." Thus, in order to adhere to RfP's broader goals, while also maintaining a multi-religious approach, the organization has included the notion of "harmony" into its formal value system. Second, the interviewee's remarks clearly show a peace agenda that is very much inline with the goals of the United Nations. For instance, focusing on human rights issues (including violence against women and children), global development, and environmental sustainability were all part of the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals ("What They Are" 2016).

Due to the fact that the RfP model of multi-religious engagement results in a continual navigation between the values of specific religious communities and the shared, common values of the organization, it is difficult to pin down what specific RfP values mean in all contexts. But what is clear is that the meanings of such values are shaped by religious traditions as well as broader international discourses—like that of universal human rights. RfP draws upon each religious tradition to support a specific organizational value or goal. Yet, at the same time, broader RfP values and goals, which often also rely on external sources, shape which religious

[37] Interview, Oslo, 2012.

interpretations are incorporated into RfP discourses (which I lay out in more detail in Chapter Four).

D. A Multi-Religious Approach in Action

The Religions for Peace approach to multi-religious cooperation, which navigates between the values and desires of specific religious communities, and that of the RfP organization more broadly, has interesting consequences for the structure of RfP, its on-the-ground programs, and its practices.

In particular, regional and local representatives and affiliates design and implement many RfP projects. As noted in the Religions for Peace "Mission," "each inter-religious body affiliated with *Religions for Peace* is self-led, but also part of the global *Religions for Peace* network" (italics in original, 2015, para. 6). This means that RfP leadership maintains a certain amount of discursive and programmatic authority, but that local representatives and affiliates also make decisions about how to tackle a particular problem. Thus, there is some leeway regarding which strategies are used in a particular peacebuilding or development contexts. For instance, the workbook for the Ninth World Assembly suggests that both "retributive justice" and "restorative justice" are legitimate options in post-conflict scenarios ("Ninth World Assembly Workbook" 2013, 38). Thus, while RfP strives for justice as a broader shared value and goal, local representatives and affiliates have significant influence in how that is achieved. At the same time, RfP leadership maintains significant control over the broader organizational discourses about RfP's goals and values. These tensions result in RfP goals that encompass both the values and issues that are important to their local affiliates and specific religious communities represented in the organization (which includes structural concerns about economic and political

equity in the international system [Curtis and Lissu 2008; "Ninth World Assembly Workbook" 2013, 21]), as well as those prioritized by the International Secretariat.

My research also shows that the way that RfP approaches religious values informs the organization's religious practices. Though RfP does not promote specific prayers like the Taizé Community and IJM, the ways in which prayer is conceptualized and employed by RfP leaders is very attentive to the organization's multi-religious approach, which could be considered a broader RfP value or an ethical commitment that respects the distinctiveness of religious communities and avoids syncretism. In my observations and interviews, I found that RfP representatives at the international level are (1) less likely to speak about the notion that prayer might be employed to facilitate divine intervention, and (2) more likely to engage in moments of silence in lieu of other prayer practices, than those at the local levels (even controlling for religious affiliation and geographical/cultural differences). RfP leaders are more cautious when it comes to multi-religious engagement. Prayers might be performed at international-level RfP events; however, those prayers will only be used in such settings if they signal that the event will be multi-religious—one that is respectful of religious communities that are conceived as bounded, distinct, and representable.[38] Yet, this may not have always been the case in RfP international events. Jack noted that the early World Assemblies often included religious and meditation services; and rather than have a variety of prayers performed in one session, each session would include a religious service featuring *one* religious tradition (1993, 170–171). Jack implies that the shift to a more cautious multi-religious approach to prayer in RfP assemblies is due to tensions and complaints from delegates in earlier assemblies (Jack 1993, 171). Thus, it would make sense that RfP leaders would approach the use of religious practices with caution.

[38] Interview, Oslo, September 2012.

In this section I have examined and analyzed how Religions for Peace gives meaning to its organizational values. The RfP case, in particular, has interesting implications for theories about FBOs as well as theories about engagements of religious difference. In particular, my research shows how Vendley's characterization of RfP values complicates the notion that faith-based organizations rely on religious values to motivate their work. The organization portrays its values as religious, in that they are informed by religious traditions and shared by religious communities. However, the values are articulated in language that the organization considers secular. Thus, Religions for Peace provides a unique perspective into how such an organization navigates between *both* what it considers to be the religious and the secular to inform its values and strategies. In the next section, I conclude with a more in-depth discussion about these findings, as well as a more direct comparison of values vis-à-vis International Justice Mission, the Taizé Community, and Religions for Peace.

Discussion and Conclusion

International relations scholars continue to grapple with how to study religion in global politics. One critical aspect of these debates centers on how religion is defined—i.e. what constitutes religion. Despite such debates, many scholars, including some of those who are more critical of the religious-secular binary, continue to make assumptions about which actors, identities, behaviors, texts, and values are religious and how they are so. Some scholars assume that certain organizations and communities are religious, in part, because they draw on religious values to motivate and inform their actions. However, how religious actors conceptualize specific values is often left unexamined, leading to broad generalizations and assumptions about what constitutes a religious value *and* how it shapes FBO behavior. I argue that scholars ought to

pay more attention to the ways in which religious communities—in particular, FBOs—assign meaning to specific values, rather than assuming a relationship between such values and particular interpretations of religious text or tradition.

To that end, in the previous sections I examined and analyzed the meanings of justice, peace, reconciliation, and other values for International Justice Mission, the Taizé Community, and Religions for Peace. In particular, I showed how a complex, malleable, and evolving mix of historical, structural, and ideational influences shaped how these FBOs assign meaning to their organizational values. Moreover, my research shows the important similarities and differences among these organizations—both in how they conceptualize specific organizational values and how they enact such values in their approaches to development, humanitarianism, peacebuilding, and human rights programs. Employing a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach to the examination of FBO values reveals several important findings related to the conceptualization of the religious and secular, human rights and divine authority, and the proper role of the state. My findings also bring up interesting questions about how values manifest in FBOs.

First, my examination of Religions for Peace's values complicates common assumptions about how religious texts and traditions shape FBO values. FBO scholars often argue that faith-based organizations can be distinguished from their secular counterparts by their employment of religious values, which scholars note are drawn from religious texts or traditions. However, RfP Secretary General Vendley characterizes RfP values as values that are shared by religious communities and traditions, but articulated through secular language. Moreover, the language of universal human rights and other broader international discourses, which many scholars view as secular (though there are exceptions), shapes the secular language that RfP employs.

Such findings reveal an alternative way to think about the relationship between the religious and the secular. Scholars often categorize religious values and other phenomena as religious because they are shaped by religious texts, doctrines, or traditions. However, according to Vendley's formulation, RfP draws from specific religious traditions, as mediated through religious leaders, but then translates those teachings into a common, secular language. Yet, such values are still ultimately conceptualized as religious in that they are shared by all religious traditions. These tensions introduce interesting questions about the substance of inter- or multi-religious engagements. In particular, the RfP approach suggests that the "problem" of religious diversity is not the incommensurability of varied religious values (as Huntington seems to suggest), but rather that such values are often not translated into a common language that everyone can understand and support.

Similarly, an examination of IJM complicates scholars' reliance on an analytical and empirical distinction between human rights discourses and religious values. Some scholars portray human rights discourses as providing a different kind of moral or ethical authority than those relied on by religious communities (Petersen 2010, "Religiosity: Mission and Motivation," para. 1). Yet, IJM identifies itself as a human rights organization, and refers to the importance of human rights, while also grounding its human rights work in what the organization refers to as God's justice and authority. This example shows that certain groups integrate aspects of both human rights and divine authority into their organizational discourses, suggesting an alternative way to think about the relationship between human rights and religion.

A comparison of how each organization conceptualizes particular values also reveals important findings. For instance, a comparison of the Taizé Community and IJM raises questions about Christian FBOs and the extent to which they should be analytically grouped together, as

they often are. Taizé and IJM both self-identity as Christian organizations and both include members of Protestant and Catholic denominations. Yet, the Taizé Community portrays an image of God that is different from that of IJM. Both groups acknowledge that God is the ultimate judge of human action. However, the Taizé brothers believe that judgment will not come until the afterlife. Thus, promoting IJM's kind of immanent individual justice does not make sense for the brothers. IJM, on the other hand, focuses on God's judgment here on earth. So, while IJM focuses on God as one who "judges, condemns and punishes" ("Statement of Biblical Foundation" 2016), the Taizé brothers portray God as one who loves, forgives, and shows compassion.

In addition, the two organizations arose out of very different historical contexts. Brother Roger founded the Taizé Community within the context of World War II—a war that highlighted the political and economic tensions among European (and other) powers. On the other hand, Gary Haugen founded IJM out of his personal experiences investigating human rights abuses in the late twentieth century, which included the Rwandan genocide. These and other factors led IJM and the Taizé Community to conceptualize justice in very different ways, resulting in divergent strategies: IJM pursues justice through law enforcement, while the Taizé Community pursues justice through the promotion of fair economic and political systems.

Such findings highlight *why* it is so problematic to essentialize so-called religious groups. In many ways, the Taizé Community and International Justice Mission share many similar characteristics. In particular, both groups draw from the Christian Bible to inform their conceptions of justice. However, an in-depth examination of how each organization gives meaning to the notion of justice reveals the different ways they conceptualize the value and how to achieve it. Thus, talking about "Christian" or "biblical justice" would not be sufficient for

understanding these organizations and their work. My research shows, in fact, that biblical justice can take on many forms and lead to very different FBO actions.

Similarly, an examination of how Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission conceptualize justice reveals how the same values can lead to different perspectives on organizational and service-advocacy strategies. For example, IJM portrays justice work as a hierarchical process, wherein God works through IJM employees "to bring his justice to those desperately waiting for an advocate" ("Just Prayer: A Journey through the Work of Prayer and Justice," n.d., 11). Religions for Peace and the Taizé Community are not without their hierarchies as both organizations rely heavily on leadership to inform their strategies and goals. However, IJM is different in that the organization portrays justice work as an inherently hierarchical process, wherein God provides authority to IJM employees to work for justice on behalf of others. Furthermore, Haugen argues that the best approaches to human rights justice work are found in developed countries; implying that IJM is bringing more advanced or enlightened techniques to the communities where the organization works. Religions for Peace and the Taizé Community, on the other hand, are much more focused on a democratic and pluralistic coming together of people on earth to address global problems of justice—thus, these organizations work in areas all over the world, in the Global North and the Global South.

In addition, each organization's conceptualization of justice also informs how each group conceives of the role of the state. Here we find important similarities and differences. Scholars of non-governmental organizations and global governance more generally have noted the ways in which NGOs have taken over roles that were previously held by the state. While this may be true, my examination of the Taizé Community, International Justice Mission, and Religions for Peace shows that these organizations all view the state as having a very important role in

achieving justice—though their different conceptualizations of justice lead to different theories about what this role should be. For instance, IJM focuses on the ways in which states can act as God's "agents" of justice—"bearing the sword of punishment" ("Statement of Biblical Foundation" 2016). In particular, IJM promotes the protection of human rights by states and other local political and law enforcement actors ("Just Prayer: A Journey through the Work of Prayer and Justice," n.d., 23). The Taizé Community, on the other hand, focuses on the ways in which states, through fraught histories, have created or maintained injustices through political and economic inequities, as well as the ways in which states can mend those injustices through cooperation and policies that promote economic and political equity. Religions for Peace, interestingly, because of its attention to diverse interpretations of values vis-à-vis religious traditions and communities, employs both conceptions of justice—individual notions of justice through human rights protections, and social and economic justice vis-à-vis states.

Furthermore, though I go in into more detail about the critical roles that prayer plays in the work of the three organizations in Chapter Five, I think it is also worth highlighting here the relationship between FBO values and practice, and, in particular, the ways in which FBO values shape and are shaped by prayer. My examination of FBO values and practices reveals the ways in which FBO values inform the substance and form of prayers for IJM, Religions for Peace, and the Taizé Community. For instance, how Religions for Peace approaches the practice of prayer is shaped by the organization's broader multi-religious approach. In addition, IJM and Taizé prayers reflect the dominant narratives they attach to notions of justice and reconciliation. Thus, FBO values are spread through prayer to peoples outside of these organizations (e.g. IJM supporters attending the Global Prayer Gathering), and may even be reinforced through the practice. More research is needed to assess whether and how prayer actually reinforces (rather

than merely reflects) FBO values. In addition, more attention should be paid to the role that prayer plays in the spreading of values, or what some might call "proselytization."

Finally, several of the above examples highlight the ways that values shape FBO perceptions and behavior. However, my research with the Taizé Community complicates the notion that values can only *inform* action. For many scholars, values are consequential because of the way that they shape or inform identities or behavior. However, the Taizé Community portrays reconciliation as both a value that motivates their work, as well as an action and way of being. In particular, the brothers view the Community itself as a model of reconciliation, wherein reconciliation is enacted through the way the Community behaves. Here, reconciliation not only informs action, but it *is* action.

In this chapter I have argued that the meanings and roles of FBO values, for FBOs themselves, do not always conform to scholarly assumptions "religious values." Notions of "divine" or "Christian" justice, for instance, vary greatly across Christian organizations (even those that have similar Catholic/Protestant populations). In addition, though religious values are often viewed as religious by FBOs, the language that they are framed in is not necessarily conceptualized as such. My findings also build on other studies highlighting the specific ways that values can inform the behavior of religious actors. Yet, my research also shows that FBO values, and perhaps values more generally, do not only inform action, but are, in certain contexts enacted *as action.* Such findings reveal the ways in which current approaches to and conceptualizations of religion may lead scholars (and others) to neglect the varied ways that values are conceived and enacted by FBOs and other so-called religious actors, more broadly.

CHAPTER FOUR

Revisiting Religious Pluralism through an Examination of FBO Identity

Religious identity is often central to studies of religion and politics, in IR and the broader political science discipline, as well as in both quantitative and qualitative studies. Scholars want to know what motivates a Muslim, Christian, or Buddhist—suggesting that such identities result in specific beneficial (e.g. peace-inducing) or problematic (e.g. conflict-inducing) behavioral differences. Such studies tend to essentialize religious identity—implying that all Muslims hold particular values, for instance. These studies also often assume that religious identity is the most salient factor in determining behavior (over other forms of identity). In studies of FBOs, in particular, assumptions about the religious identity of organizations often lead to other assumptions about how such organizations might engage with groups and communities that are different from (or similar) to themselves. In other words, assumptions about religious identity can inform assumptions about how FBOs engage with religious diversity.

This chapter engages with these assumptions and debates by examining the meanings that FBOs assign to their own terms and concepts of self-description. I then assess how such meanings shape how FBOs engage with religious diversity, shedding light on the extent to which religious identity might lead to problematic or beneficial encounters of difference and assessing the implications for the dominant model of inter-religious engagement—religious pluralism. In particular, I ask: (1) What do specific terms of self-description mean for the faith-based organizations that use them? and (2) What are the implications of such meanings for how these organizations conceptualize and engage with religious diversity?

Transnational faith-based organizations and their representatives often encounter peoples and organizations that self-identify with a different religious tradition or community than their

own. Whether related to internal debates over theological doctrine (Lynch 2000b) or the ways that FBOs interact with outside communities, organizations, and governments, FBOs are forced to confront ethical and strategic decisions about how to manage these encounters with difference. The issue of inter-religious engagement is especially important for FBOs given two unsettled debates related to the role of FBOs in global politics. For one, scholars and policymakers are often "fueled by a perception that religion today is highly politicized and related to many contemporary conflicts" (K. Marshall 2008, 200). The issue of religious diversity, for instance, and how to manage it underlies much of the religion and politics scholarship. Scholars like Samuel Huntington (1996) portray religion as something inherently divisive. Those who subscribe to this view of religion as inherently prone to conflict, make particular assumptions about its appropriateness in public life, and the extent to which religious divisions exist and should be managed. Within this popular narrative, FBOs are viewed as organizations with highly charged identities that reinforce religious divisions (Flanigan 2010), often leading to conflict. Yet, other scholars stress the ways that FBOs can be important contributors to peacebuilding, reconciliation, and pluralism (Marshall 2008; Philpott and Powers 2010; Toft, Philpott, and Shah 2011, Chapter 7; also see Johnston and Sampson 1994). Within this narrative, FBOs are viewed as essential to the peacemaking process. Both of these essentialist views of religion, and religious identity, in particular, contribute to popular frameworks of religious pluralism—which promote the idea that religious communities should engage in a particular kind of inter-religious engagement.

The second debate about the problematic nature of FBOs centers on their potential roles as proselytizers, particularly in development and humanitarian sectors. While some scholars assume that faith-based organizations engage in some sort of proselytism (Hopgood and

Vinjamuri 2012), others provide more nuanced accounts of evangelism, proselytism, and witness in the work of FBOs (Bornstein 2005; Flanigan 2010; Hefferan, Adkins, and Occhipinti 2009; Lynch 2011; Lynch and Schwarz forthcoming; K. Marshall 2013, 189; Paras 2014). Concerns about the possibility of such practices often center on notions of power, asking whether it is ethically problematic for faith-based organizations to try to spread their own religious beliefs or practices to individuals that may be relying on these organizations for some kind of assistance. Examining how FBOs conceive of and manage so-called religious difference, then, has important implications for both their potential roles in religious division and conflict, as well as for questions about the extent to which such organizations want to convert others to their own religious traditions.

Additionally, faith-based organizations are not homogenous entities, but are comprised of individuals with diverse religious identities and belief systems. While typologies of transnational FBOs may provide a framework for more easily identifying some of the primary differences among these organizations, they do very little for understanding how FBO representatives, employees, and affiliates engage with one another over various ethical issues and organizational strategies. Though the literature looking at the internal dynamics of these organizations is growing (some examples include Bornstein 2005; Flanigan 2010; Hefferan, Adkins, and Occhipinti 2009; Lynch 2000a; Lynch 2011; Paras 2012; Paras 2014), questions still remain about how these organizations conceptualize and engage with religious diversity *internally*. Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission all have religiously diverse members or employees. Additionally, each organization confronts religious diversity in its transnational work in the field. Thus, it is worth asking how these organizations engage with

and respond to such diversity and what their underlying motivations for responding in such ways are.

To answer these questions I draw on data gleaned from my observations of events hosted by Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission, the interviews I conducted with their representatives and affiliates, and a variety of FBO documents and texts to understand and analyze how these FBOs conceptualize their own religious and organizational identities and purposes. I examine and analyze the terms, concepts, and meanings RfP, the Taizé Community, and IJM use to describe their own organizations and to distinguish themselves from other organizations and communities. I also examine the goals and strategies of these organizations, paying particular attention to the values, principles, and ethics these organizations rely on to determine specific courses of action. In particular, I examine the links between religious self-perceptions and the reasons why these organizations engage with religious diversity in the ways they do. I show that the meanings of FBOs' self-descriptions are informed by particular interpretations of theological values, organizational hierarchies and strategies, as well as the political situations "on the ground." I then assess how such self-descriptions inform FBO conceptions of religious diversity (both internally and externally) and their strategies for engaging with it. I argue that understanding the meanings surrounding FBO self-descriptions, as well as the political contexts where they work, is critical for understanding how these organizations conceive of and engage with religious diversity.

My research challenges some of the common assumptions and narratives grounding theories of religious pluralism. I show that RfP relies on a range of approaches to engagements of difference, some of which are very much inline with the religious pluralism model and its focus on linguistic dialogue. However, my research shows that the language-focused approach so

central to dominant theories of religious pluralism is, in certain contexts, limited in its ability to bridge fundamental lines of difference. These problems arise from the influence of RfP leadership, the unintended consequences of organizational everyday practices, and the ways in which discussions of difference can sometimes strengthen identity difference.

On the other hand, preliminary findings from my research with RfP and the Taizé Community show that both organizations also rely on what I call "experiential practices" in their inter-religious engagements, and both groups indicate the importance of such practices for fostering trust, cooperation, and peace.[39] Taizé, in particular, prioritizes prayer and communal work to open up new possibilities for peaceful encounters of difference.

Finally, the IJM case provides an interesting example that lies outside of the peacebuilding framework. My research shows how IJM, due to political constraints, often shies away from engaging with others *through* an encounter of religious identity, while, at the same time integrating its Christian values and practices into various aspects of IJM programs and strategies. The IJM example provides important insights into an area that scholars of prescriptive religious pluralism often overlook—those religious actors who do not explicitly activate their religious identities in encounters with others, but who still participate in inter-religious engagements.

My findings enrich theories of faith-based organizations, moving beyond typologies and broad generalizations to show the varied and complex ways that FBO identities are given meaning and how such identities shape how faith-based organizations understand and engage with religious diversity. I argue that current theories of religious pluralism, which scholars and policymakers rely on as an explanatory and normative framework for successful inter-religious

[39] I thank Cecelia Lynch for suggesting the use of the term "experiential" to differentiate practices like prayer from the broader conception of the term employed by scholars in their discussions of "the practice turn."

engagement, need to pay more attention to the shortcomings of focusing on dialogue, which often assumes the existence of a neutral or value-free space for all parties involved. Scholars need to take seriously alternative approaches that include experiential practices. I also argue that such scholars ought to think about expanding their frameworks to include those inter-religious engagements that do not focus primarily on religious identity differences as a point of departure.

This chapter is organized as follows. Section II engages with prevailing theories of religious identity, diversity, and pluralism in international relations, and the social sciences more broadly, paying attention to the dominant narratives and assumptions these theories rely on. Sections III, IV, and V delve into the meanings of the terms these FBOs use to describe themselves. I then describe and analyze how these organizations understand and engage with religious diversity, showing how their organizational self-identities shape and are shaped by their conceptions of such issues and the strategies they employ. The chapter concludes with a short discussion about the implications of my findings for religion and IR and theories of religious pluralism, in particular. I discuss the limits of approaches to religious pluralism that prioritize linguistic dialogue and religious identity (over other forms of identity). I also highlight the critical role that certain practices can play in inter-religious engagements.

Section II: Religious Pluralism and Identity

In recent years, religious pluralism has emerged as the dominant model for inter-religious engagement in academic and policy circles. Though the term "religious pluralism" is sometimes used by scholars to describe the mere existence of religious diversity, here I am referring to a specific type of active inter-religious engagement (Banchoff 2008, 5) modeled and, in many cases, endorsed by scholars and others (Netland 2001, 12; Riis 2007, 253). Diana L. Eck

delineates four aspects of religious pluralism for Harvard University's "Pluralism Project." She says (1) [religious] pluralism goes beyond the existence of diversity to include "*the energetic engagement with diversity,"* (2) [religious] pluralism goes beyond tolerance to include *"the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference,"* (3) [religious] pluralism is not the same as relativism, rather pluralism is "*the encounter of commitments,"* in the sense that different religious commitments are viewed with the context of relationship with others, and (4) [religious] pluralism is "*based on dialogue,"* where "dialogue" is defined as "both speaking and listening" (all italics in original, "What is Pluralism?"). Though this definition is vague in some ways, the components largely mirror other discussions on religious pluralism. In particular, there is an idea that religious pluralism goes beyond tolerance to move into an active engagement with other religious communities and scholars and others understand this active engagement to be based on peaceful (linguistic) dialogue.

Moreover, this focus on religious pluralism is not confined to academic discussions or research forums like the Pluralism Project. For instance, various academic courses and centers are emerging that focus on a kind of inter-religious engagement that goes beyond tolerance to form a deeper commitment among groups (e.g. Center for Engaged Religious Pluralism, Saint Mary's College; "Interfaith Relations and Religious Pluralism" presented by the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education). Moreover, there are multiple organizations and events in the private and non-profit sectors dedicated to an active engagement among diverse religious actors. The Parliament of the World's Religions, for instance, has been held in a variety of locations since the late nineteenth century, with the intent of promoting peace and reconciliation through dialogue (Mujahid 2015). Similar groups include The Interfaith Alliance, the International Interfaith Centre, and United Religions Initiative. Though these groups and

programs vary in their programs and goals, they all rely on similar notions of religious pluralism. In particular, they further the idea that religious pluralism goes beyond tolerance to move into an active engagement—through dialogue—with other religious communities. In addition, though these and other religious pluralism models and programs do not necessarily exclude other kinds of interactions, the term "dialogue," when used in such contexts, often refers to linguistic communication (Banchoff 2012, 204).

Other scholars have similarly pushed beyond tolerance for a more robust engagement among religious groups; however, some, like Scott Thomas and William Connolly have opened the door to thinking more about the role of non-linguistic practices in pluralist encounters. For instance, Thomas argues that modern definitions of religion separate beliefs and principles from communities and practices. He says

> ….virtues and moral judgements in 'religion' are not 'declaratory' propositional, moral statements, to which rational (autonomous) individuals give their intellectual assent. What they mean is shaped by the linguistic conventions of a community, connected to the practices of a religious tradition, and are only intelligible because they are recognised types of behaviour (practices) passed on through the narratives that shape the identity of the community (2000, 823).

According to Thomas, religious language cannot be separated from the practices and communities that they are linked with. Thus, for him, religious pluralism must inevitably move beyond a thin engagement of religions. Drawing on the social theory of Alasdair MacIntyre (1985; 1988), Thomas introduces the notion of "deeper pluralism," which he says "goes further by engaging 'the other', by engaging the 'thick' social practices of the main world religions in ways to promote order and justice instead of adopting the Westphalian presumption which ignores, marginalises, or tries to overcome them by an ethic of cosmopolitanism" (2000, 840). This "virtue-ethics" approach, as Thomas calls it, involves situating practices within "the moral life of particular, real existing, communities" (2000, 841). Here, rather than operating within a

supposedly neutral space of cosmopolitanism, the values and practices of different communities are actively engaged with, while also respected.

William Connolly's "politics of becoming" similarly moves beyond a thin pluralist engagement to one that fosters an "ethos of critical responsiveness to the movement of difference" (1999, 58–59) through "deep pluralism." Connolly says that deep pluralism occurs among "numerous constituencies honoring different assumptions and moral sources," and that such an engagement "depends upon reciprocal acknowledgement by a significant set of partisans of uncertainty and profound contestability of the metaphysical suppositions and moral sources they honor the most" (1999, 185).

Like Thomas, Connolly's conceptualization of pluralist encounters opens up more conceptual space for a range of practices through his attention to "visceral" registers of subjectivity. Drawing on Talal Asad (1993), Connolly critiques "secular understandings of discourse, analysis, and argument," which, he says, only "capture….one dimension of thinking, intersubjective judgment, and doctrinal commitment" (1999, 25). According to Connolly, "it may be important to underline how representational discourse… including the public expression and defense of fundamental beliefs, affects and is affected by the visceral register of intersubjectivity" (1999, 26). Here, Connolly relies on Friedrich Nietzsche's (1968) attention to the importance of instincts. Connolly says these "proto-thoughts" (i.e. instincts) create "an infrasensible subtext from which conscious thoughts, feelings, and discursive judgments draw part of their sustenance" (1999, 27).[40] Though Connolly does not directly refer to specific religious (or other) practices here, his attention to visceral experiences provides a path to think about how a range of practices—including non-linguistic practices—might play a role in pluralist

[40] Also see Slavica Jakelić (2016) for an erudite discussion of Connolly's "deep pluralism" as it relates to possibilities for religious-secular pluralism.

encounters. Yet, Connolly still seems to (largely) prioritize linguistic approaches to engagements of difference—by repeatedly using terms like "debate" or "discussion" (Connolly 1999, 185).

While the religious pluralism model is growing in academic circles and elsewhere, critics have also begun to note two primary problems with the model. First, according to critics, proponents of religious pluralism (as well as many scholars of religion and IR more generally) tend to treat religions as self-contained and bounded entities (Klassen and Bender 2010, 13–15), or they treat religious identity as the most important identity for a given individual or community. Such assumptions often lead to other assumptions about religion and religious diversity. For one, some scholars then see religious difference as necessarily meaning that peoples of different religious *identities* have opposing, exclusivist worldviews (Koenig and De Guchteneire 2007, 13) or will engage in fundamentally different behavior than those outside of their community (Appiah 2008, 45). Yet, as Cecelia Lynch (2000b; also see Riis 2007, 253) has shown, not all religious groups believe that they have the one and only truth. Relying on an exclusivist model of religion is not only factually inaccurate in many cases, but also contributes to the narrative that religious groups are necessarily dogmatic and conflict-prone, and can ignore possibilities for hybridity or syncretism. In addition, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd notes that in many cases religious identity is not the salient factor determining behavior, and focusing on religious identity can mask the other factors at play (2015, 38–39, 103–104).

A second problem with the religious pluralism model is its neglect of the power relationships at play within any inter-religious engagement. That is, according to critics, proponents of religious pluralism often portray such encounters as inherently inclusive. After all, the purpose of religious pluralism is to avoid conflict through active engagement with difference. However, Klassen and Bender argue that "the political projects of pluralism (whether religious or

otherwise) hinge on exclusions and occlusions of various religious and political actors (2010, 12). Thus, the religious pluralism approach cannot, according to this critique, be a totally inclusive project. Furthermore, Kate McCarthy stresses that "encounters between participants in one religious tradition and those of another are always situated in larger social contexts in which asymmetries of power and underlying theological assumptions act as powerful regulators" (2007, 18). Thus, inter-religious engagements cannot happen within a neutral or value-free space. Certain values, perspectives, and assumptions will always be present and will undoubtedly shape the outcome of such encounters.

This chapter, in part, assesses to what degree these criticisms of religious pluralism are borne out in the internal and external inter-religious engagements of FBOs. I examine how Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission, *as* organizations that include staff or members from a variety of faiths or denominations, conceive of their own religious identities, as well as how they think about religious diversity and difference. I assess whether these organizations conceptualize religious communities and traditions as bounded entities with competing truth claims. Furthermore, I investigate how various modes of difference are understood and managed by these three FBOs.

Section III: Religions for Peace, A "Multi-Religious" FBO

One concept is central to the Religions for Peace organizational identity: the notion that the organization is "multi-religious," rather than inter-religious or interfaith. My research shows that the term "multi-religious" is instilled with specific meanings that shape how Religions for Peace conceptualizes and engages with religious diversity vis-à-vis syncretism, commonalities among diverse religious groups, and the interpretation of religious doctrine. In particular, I find

that RfP employs a variety of methods for managing religious diversity and fostering interreligious trust, peace, and cooperation, and that such methods are designed in a way that, in theory, should respect religious differences while also striving for commonality. Though RfP is successful in many of its conflict resolution and development endeavors, my research reveals some of the tensions that result from the RfP multi-religious approach as well as the limitations of prioritizing linguistic dialogue.

A. What does it mean to be "multi-religious"?

Faith-based organizations that represent more than one religious community or tradition are known by a variety of terms: interfaith, inter-religious, multifaith, and multi-religious. Scholars and others often used such designations interchangeably to denote an organization or engagement where multiple religious traditions or communities are involved. Though distinctions are sometimes made, they are not uniform. For instance, the Archdiocese of Chicago's Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs defines "interfaith relations" as "relations with members of the 'Abrahamic faiths'" and "interreligious relations" as "relations with other religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism" (Archdiocese of Chicago, Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs 2015). However, the World Council of Churches uses the terms "interfaith," "multifaith" (Ariarajah 2002), and "inter-religious" (see the WCC's *Current Dialogue Magazine*)[41] to speak about engagement among peoples from Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, and other backgrounds. In short, there are no universal definitions for terms such as interfaith or inter-religious. As I elucidate below, Religions for Peace purposely relies on the term "multi-religious" to describe the organization and its particular approach to what scholars

[41] Current and back issues can be found here: http://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/current-dialogue-magazine (accessed March 2015).

often call "interfaith" or "inter-religious" engagement. More importantly, my findings show that the meanings RfP assigns to "multi-religious" engagement shape RfP's approach to syncretism and proselytism, common prayer and dialogue, and the discernment of common values.

The religions represented in Religions for Peace are categorized according to "the world's major faith traditions" ("History" 2015). However, unlike similar organizations that include members from multiple religious traditions, RfP is usually described (on its websites and in official organization documents) as engaging in "multi-religious," rather than "inter-religious" cooperation and/or dialogue ("Mission" 2015). As relayed to me by an RfP representative, the term "multi-religious" is critical to the organization's identity because it indicates that RfP works according to a specific ethos in which the distinctiveness, separateness, and equality of each religion is recognized and maintained.[42] Moreover, each religious community is perceived as being representable. That is, the RfP approach assumes that specific individuals and institutions can and do represent the values, traditions, and beliefs of their respective religious communities, which enables these individuals and institutions to legitimately inform the goals and mission of Religions for Peace ("Building New Inter-Religious Councils" 2015).[43] This kind of representative system, which provides clear markers of religious identity for RfP representatives and affiliates, not only helps to maintain the distinctiveness of particular traditions that is so important to Religions for Peace as a multi-religious organization, but it can also provide a check on the organization—making sure that all traditions, groups, and sub-groups are included (if

[42] Informal discussion, September 2013, New York.

[43] Religions for Peace relies on the notion of "representativity" to indicate the specific ways that religious communities and traditions are integrated into the conceptual and material organizational apparatus. In particular, representativity refers to the idea that specific individuals and institutions can and do represent the values, traditions, and beliefs of their respective religious communities, which enables these individuals and institutions to legitimately inform the goals and mission of Religions for Peace ("Building New Inter-Religious Councils" 2015).

necessary). Such representative markers can also serve, for the organization, as evidence that RfP is representative and inclusive in the broader context of global religious traditions. Religions for Peace self-identifies as one of the largest and most inclusive organizations representing a multitude of religions ("Strategic Plan: Different Faiths, Common Action." 2007). Using identifying markers for specific Religions for Peace council members and affiliates is one way for the organization to show just how representative it is.

For RfP then, a multi-religious approach means that religious communities are conceived as bounded and separate entities that are represented by specific religious leaders who can speak on behalf of the community as a whole. Moreover, this is a normative position, wherein such a description is assumed to be the best way for such communities to interact. In short, the RfP multi-religious approach promotes the idea that religious communities *are* and *should remain* distinct entities. Such an approach, I argue, shapes RfP strategies vis-à-vis syncretism, proselytism, the search for commonality, and religious practice.

B. Syncretism, Proselytism, and Discerning Common Values

The RfP multi-religious approach to religious diversity, because of its promotion of religions as distinct and bounded, includes an avoidance of syncretism and proselytism. Moreover, RfP's commitment to maintaining the distinctiveness of religious communities and traditions while also searching for commonalities is evident in the specific strategies the organization employs to engage with religious diversity and creates a tension that shapes how commonalities are discerned. My research reveals two interesting, and perhaps even troubling results from the ways in which RfP facilitates multi-religious encounters. First, the RfP multi-

religious discernment process is heavily influenced by Religions for Peace leadership,[44] as well as the "mundane elements" or "everyday practices" (Autesserre 2014, 9) of the organization's Assembly preparations—resulting in the silencing of some dissenting voices within the organization. Second, my findings show that RfP's attempt to discern common values may, in fact, shape religious communities and traditions, compromising the organization's own ethical stance on maintaining the distinctiveness and boundaries of specific religious communities.

The official RfP organizational discourse does not encourage hybridity or syncretism. In fact, "great care is taken to avoid 'syncretistic' blending of the beliefs of diverse religions" ("Ninth World Assembly Workbook" 2013, 4). The avoidance of syncretism is implicitly expressed in four of the five core principles of RfP (listed in no particular order): (1) "Respect religious differences," (2) "Preserve the identity of each religious community," (3) "Honor the different ways religious communities are organized," and (4) "Support locally led multi-religious structures" ("Mission" 2015). These principles highlight the importance RfP places on protecting people's religious beliefs, practices, identities, and institutions by maintaining a balance between commonality and distinctiveness. Such an approach shapes how RfP deals with the practice of proselytism. One representative told me that peoples of different faiths may have a desire to convert others to their own religious traditions. But, he also noted that respect for religious difference means (1) understanding that someone may have a legitimate reason for wanting to convert others, but that (1) those who want to convert others should not act on those desires.[45] This ethos of respect for religious difference is central to the RfP concept of multi-religious cooperation and engagement, which brings different groups together, acknowledges the

[44] Here when I refer to Religions for Peace leadership, I am referring specifically to those organizational leaders who are based at the International Secretariat in New York City. There are, of course, other Religions for Peace leaders based all over the world; however, they do not have the same decision-making capabilities.
[45] Interview, Oslo, September 2012.

differences among them, and actively works to protect those differences ("Strategic Plan 2014-2018" 2014).

One way that Religions for Peace balances its goals to find and strengthen commonalities among diverse religious groups, while also maintaining the distinctiveness of those groups, is by discerning common values. For the organization, relying on a cosmopolitan notion of values and rights that are not necessarily grounded in specific religious traditions (Appiah 2006) is insufficient for tackling salient global issues. Thus, one of the primary purposes of Religions for Peace and its final guiding principle is to "discern 'deeply held and widely shared'" values and concerns and act on them ("Mission" 2015). These shared moral values and concerns then inform the rest of the organization's peacebuilding work. Discerning common values provides the organization with a way to respond publicly to or advocate for certain issues on behalf of all the religious communities represented in Religions for Peace.

The Religions for Peace World Assemblies act as the primary RfP spaces where religious leaders from all over the world come together to work towards developing an overlapping consensus (similar to Rawls 1993, 150–151) regarding particular shared "public" values, and then decide how their respective communities should proceed to promote and protect those values. The RfP approach, according to William Vendley, the organization's Secretary General, assumes that religious communities have their own primary languages that put forth particular values. However, these primary languages are "not….for engaging other religious communities or the public"; instead, as Vendley notes, religious communities must become "bilingual," in order to engage across religious faiths (2005, 91). This means that the actual values that RfP promotes are not conceptualized by RfP as religious values *per se,* though they are grounded in and supported by the theological texts, doctrines, and "faith-based imperatives" ("Ninth World

Assembly Workbook" 2013, 16) of each community represented within the organization. For instance, in the official 2013 World Assembly workbook, verses taken from religious texts and quotes from religious leaders were used as evidence to show how each religious tradition contains specific values and principles that support the 2013 World Assembly call to "Welcome the Other." Thus, the discerning of common values involves primarily developing common public values that each religious community represented by RfP can agree to support. (I discuss the particulars of this approach in more detail in Chapter Three.)

Through Religions for Peace strives for inclusivity—meaning that the organizational ethos prioritizes the inclusion of all voices represented in the organization—my research reveals that, in some cases, this does not bear out in practice. When RfP representatives voice their value differences, such concerns do not always lead to meaningful change within the organization. At the 2013 World Assembly, for instance, some representatives noted their concern about adding the notion of "Welcoming the Other" to the roster of RfP values and goals. One delegate, for instance, contended that not all religious communities distinguish the Self from the Other; thus, the notion of welcoming the Other does not make sense within those communities. The women from the Women's Pre-Assembly even went so far as to suggest, in their official declaration, that the Assembly theme be changed to "welcoming *each* other" ("Women of Faith Shared Commitment, Religions for Peace Ninth World Assembly" 2013). Assembly delegates brought up such concerns in various contexts; and while Religions for Peace leaders (and Secretary General William Vendley, in particular) acknowledged such concerns, they were largely brushed to the side. The organization's leadership held no substantial discussions on this issue at the Assembly, and ultimately did not make any changes to the theme.

This outcome is problematic given the organization's official commitment to inclusiveness and representativity.[46] However, as Séverine Autesserre (2014) convincingly argues, sometimes the daily practices of peacebuilding organizations can have detrimental effects on those organizations' goals. The RfP approach to discerning common values is a process where, in theory, common values are revealed through discussion and debate, rather than handed down in a top-down manner. However, in practice, such values are formalized in official Assembly materials (e.g. workbooks, brochures, draft statements), largely developed and compiled by the International Secretariat team (as well as some external consultants chosen by RfP leadership) *before* the Assembly is held. Thus, making any changes to those materials (which the organization distributed to over 600 people during the Ninth World Assembly) after printing would be very costly. In fact, the practice of writing up and printing the Assembly materials provides a disincentive to making any changes during the event. If all the marketing and educational materials already bear the Assembly theme of "Welcoming the Other," it does not make much sense to change the theme post-publication. In fact, it is perhaps more likely that this situation creates an incentive for RfP leaders to justify why the theme should be maintained and formally adopted, which I observed in Assembly meetings.

RfP's multi-religious approach to the discernment of common values is also significant for the way it shapes religious traditions and communities by encouraging specific interpretations of religious traditions—interpretations that are inline with RfP's broader values and goals. For instance, while working in the International Secretariat I noted that there was a very heavy focus

[46] Religions for Peace relies on the notion of "representativity" to indicate the specific ways that religious communities and traditions are integrated into the conceptual and material organizational apparatus. In particular, representativity refers to the idea that specific individuals and institutions can and do represent the values, traditions, and beliefs of their respective religious communities, which enables these individuals and institutions to legitimately inform the goals and mission of Religions for Peace ("Building New Inter-Religious Councils" 2015).

on including religious education in the World Assembly. For RfP, religious education, in part, is meant to promote particular values. According to the 2013 Assembly workbook on Multi-Religious Education: "Tasks for religious communities….are first to vitalize their own principles of belief in an open way that opposes intolerance" ("Welcoming the Other through Religious and Multi-Religious Education" 2013, 99). In other words, RfP encourages its affiliates to promote particular interpretations of their religious traditions. Organizational documents reaffirm this stance by explicitly claiming that all religions support certain convictions. As one workbook passage notes: "Being committed to non-violence and respect for life, to solidarity and a just economic order, to tolerance and a life of truthfulness and to equal rights and partnership between men and women—these convictions are common in different religious traditions (and still often wait for realisation in the religious communities themselves)" ("Welcoming the Other through Religious and Multi-Religious Education" 2013, 99). Here, the organization asserts that notions like equality of rights for women can be found in all religious traditions; and this may be true if one understands that religious traditions are interpreted in a variety of way. However, not all religious individuals or communities would agree with the notion that their own religious traditions promote those kinds of values. Yet, RfP legitimizes those interpretations that accept the values that are compatible with those of the organization, and rejects others.

Another tactic that RfP takes in order to reconcile the values of the organization with diverse religious values is to suggest that certain religious values or mandates should be rethought or ignored altogether. For instance, in 1994, Vendley co-authored a chapter with David Little, wherein they acknowledged the complexities found in religious traditions and acknowledged the importance of interpretation. Though Vendley was not writing in an official RfP capacity, his perspective on religious interpretation is important to note, especially given the

strong influential role Vendley has had and continues to have in RfP. I include here one telling excerpt from the chapter. Vendley and Little say,

> Religious traditions are storehouses of diverse and sometimes contradictory messages. Their symbols and stories have often been interpreted in very different ways. If religious communities are to realize their potential for peacemaking, they will need to reexamine their primary language self-critically…They will need to search their scriptural and doctrinal foundations and their own histories to discover the motivation, guidance, and resources for making peace…
>
> The challenge for religious people committed to making peace, then, is to disentangle the themes of conflict in their traditions from the themes of peace and to employ the latter, *while disregarding or modifying the former* (italics mine, 1994, 309).

Here Vendley and Little encourage a selective, rather than a literalist, approach to doctrinal interpretation.

Additionally, Religions for Peace, through organizational speeches or official documentation, often suggests that certain religious actors do not engage with religious teachings legitimately. In his opening address to the Eighth World Assembly, Vendley said, "Our religions, all of them, are always, are perpetually, vulnerable to being hijacked. I am not speaking of any one religion at any one time, but of all religions across time. Today, our religions are being hijacked by religious extremists, hijacked by unscrupulous politicians, hijacked by the sensationalist media….Our vehicles of faith must be rescued from the hijackers' grasp" (*UCA News* 2006). This notion, that religion is somehow being perverted for nefarious ends, is a common one that can most easily be seen in current debates in the public sphere about what constitutes "true" Islam (Zafar 2015). However, multiple scholars have challenged the idea that religious traditions can be so neatly defined (Lynch 2000b; Bender and Cadge 2006; R. Marshall 2014). Through these and other practices Religions for Peace is engaging in an authoritative discourse that determines which religious perspectives and interpretations are better or worse for

RfP goals, as well as for the broader "common good" (Lynch 2009). Such practices arguably shape religious traditions, which is problematic given the RfP ethos to protect the uniqueness, distinctiveness, and boundaries of each religious tradition and community. By influencing the ways that religious communities interpret and legitimize specific religious texts, teachings, and practices, Religions for Peace is, in some ways, interfering with the distinctiveness of these communities, and perhaps even actively blurring the lines between religious traditions and communities without knowing it.

The RfP multi-religious approach to encounters of religious diversity is, in certain contexts, very similar to the religious pluralism model. In particular, the organization's search for common values through Assembly dialogues resembles the approaches advocated by scholars and practitioners of religious pluralism. However, my research reveals the problems of such an approach. My findings confirm religious studies scholarship critiquing the religious pluralism model because of its inattention to relations of power and assumptions that such engagements are held in value-free or neutral spaces (Klassen and Bender 2010, 12; K. McCarthy 2007, 18). The influence of RfP leadership, coupled with the everyday practices of the organization, shape their inter-religious engagements in ways that can be problematic for the organization's own inclusive ethos. Moreover, my research highlights the ways that the RfP multi-religious approach is imbued with tensions—resulting in situations where RfP may be shaping religious traditions in ways that violate its commitment to maintain the distinctiveness of religious traditions. In the next sub-section, I examine RfP strategies in other contexts, and analyze the benefits and problems of employing certain methods in multi-religious encounters.

C. Dialogue and Practice

The Religions for Peace World Assemblies are not the only place that Religions for Peace employs a dialogical approach to multi-religious engagements. In fact, the organization is known for its conflict resolution programs in Iraq, Sierra Leone, and other locales. These contexts are fundamentally different from the colloquial environment of the Assemblies, which feel more like an academic conference than a space where violence could (re-)erupt. And, in fact, in many respects, RfP has been successful in these conflict-prone areas—developing Inter-Religious Councils or other kinds of national groups in both Sierra Leone and Iraq ("National Councils & Groups" 2016). However, these examples also reveal the ways that RfP representatives themselves view *linguistic* dialogical processes as sometimes insufficient for building bridges among diverse communities. In fact, RfP representatives note the importance of experiential practices like praying and communal meals for fostering trust and cooperation.

For example, in Iraq, post-2003 U.S. invasion, strong conflicts developed and remained among Shi'a, Sunni, Christian (and other) communities. Religions for Peace put together a multi-day meeting in Amman, Jordan, aimed at bridging some of these conflicts and differences. One representative who attended that meeting noted that in the initial dialogue sessions there were many tensions and disagreements. The representative went on to say,

> So, then we….explored the possibility to deepen the conversation. In most cases it takes a long time. So, one day is not enough….but, once they had meals together and the discussion entered into humanitarian assistance for children…then the atmosphere shifted slightly. So, Sunni, Shi'a,…and the Christians, [there was] this interesting expression of Iraqi identity. "We are all Iraqis regardless of religion or sect." So that atmosphere came out. And they went to the meditation room—Sunni and Shi'a…together and prayed….Prayer is already an integral part of interreligious dialogue/discussion on very important issues on Iraqi or sectarian violence.[47]

This representative notes the ways in which other kinds of practices, like prayer or sharing a meal, can build bridges across lines of difference when dialogue does not work.

[47] Interview, New York, February 2014.

In fact, as I discuss in more detail in Chapter Five, all of the RfP representatives and affiliates I interviewed noted the importance of practices like prayer for conflict resolution, reintegration, and other programs and organizational projects in locales all over the world.[48] In multiple interviews, I was told that Religions for Peace affiliate groups often included prayer at the beginning and end of each inter-religious activity. The local representatives I spoke with asserted that this was a very normal activity for their groups, and that inter-religious prayer was actually a critical part of their engagements.[49]

At the same time, in certain contexts, RfP representatives approach communal practices like prayer with caution. Because of the organization's multi-religious approach, which explicitly avoids any practices that might be viewed as syncretistic, Religions for Peace representatives sometimes avoid engaging in practices that might make certain groups uncomfortable—like opening an event with a Muslim or Christian prayer. In the plenary sessions of the 2013 World Assembly, religious leaders did not begin with prayers. Additionally, a separate prayer room was available for Muslims, which, as a RfP representative told me, was to give Muslims a separate space to pray.[50] My impression, while interning at the International Secretariat, was that RfP leaders were anxious about the possibility of offending members of different religious groups, and, as such, sometimes shied away from including common prayer or other practices that a particular community might have a problem with.

Additionally, the more influential RfP leaders I spoke with discussed prayer as if it were personal and explicitly connected to certain religious traditions, and, therefore, should be used with caution in multi-religious engagements, or be substituted with something more "neutral"

[48] Interviews, New York, February 2014; via email, telephone, and Skype February and March 2014.
[49] Interviews via e-mail, telephone, and Skype, February and March 2014.
[50] Informal discussion, New York, October 2013.

like a moment of silence.[51] In short, though prayer and other practices that RfP representatives perceive as "religious" are employed in Religions for Peace contexts, they are often approached with prudence—in order to avoid the perceptions of syncretistic practice and to respect the boundaries of each religious tradition and community. The cautious stance towards religious practices, in particular, is likely a result of some tensions and complaints from delegates in earlier assemblies about the use of religious services in multi-religious settings (Jack 1993, 171).

Yet, I want to reiterate that this was not always the case at all levels or in all contexts of Religions for Peace. Prayer and other religious practices are prevalent in many RfP local contexts. The 2013 Women's Pre-Assembly also began with prayers representing several different religious traditions. However, this was not the case in the main assembly. The reasons for this are unclear, though there were different organizers for these events. Secretary General William Vendley was very involved in the main assembly and not in the Women's Assembly. In addition, for obvious reasons, the organizers of the Women's Assembly were primarily women, while the organizers of the main assembly were a mix of women and men. In general, Religions for Peace's (often male) leaders seemed anxious about the possibility of offending members of different religious groups, and therefore often shied away from including common prayer or similar practices in the main Assembly program; though other experiential practices, like eating together remained.

In addition to the employment of experiential practices like prayer and communal dining, one of Religions for Peace primary goals is to advance common action ("Mission" 2015). The organization does not only focus on bringing together different religious communities to discuss their perspectives on a variety of political and social matters, but also develops specific political and social programs that organization representatives and affiliates with diverse religious

[51] Interview, Oslo, September 2012 and informal discussions and observations Sept-Dec. 2013.

identities implement together. For instance, the Nigeria Women of Faith Network, a local branch of the Religions for Peace-run Global Women of Faith Network, is comprised of Muslim and Christian women who work on a variety of projects together, including tree-planting for climate change advocacy.[52] Though these kinds of local Religions for Peace branches engage in linguistic dialogue sessions, they also implement specific projects in their local communities. To what extent working together actually fosters more trust among the multi-religious participants is unknown. However, RfP's reputation for being a leading, successful multi-religious organization suggests that further research on the effects of common action on inter-religious engagements is warranted. Current scholarly studies often look at similar inter-religious political or social endeavors as the *product* of trusting relationships developed out of specific dialogue programs. However, common action may, in fact, be a tool to initially build trust. Similar to theories of participatory democracy, which argue that critical learning can happen through participation (Pateman 1970)—it may be in the *doing* that true interreligious learning takes place.

In the next section I examine how the Taizé Community conceptualizes and manages religious diversity. I argue that the Taizé approach to encounters of religious, cultural, and political diversity, which prioritizes practice—through prayer and communal work and living—provides an alternative model of religious pluralism that opens up more possibilities for bridging lines of difference.

Section IV: The Taizé Community - Reconciliation through Inner Contemplation and Struggle

The Taizé Community is an ecumenical Christian monastic brotherhood. However, to say that Taizé is "ecumenical" without interrogating the foundational terms of self-description that

[52] Interview via Skype, February 2014.

the Taizé brothers rely on themselves, can lead to misconceptions about how the group might conceptualize and/or engage with religious diversity—both internally and externally. In particular, my research shows that the Taizé brothers often talk about reconciliation rather than ecumenicism, which is indicative of the way in which the Community strives to reconcile not only the Christian Church, but also all of humanity. Moreover, the Community's focus on inner contemplation and struggle, rather than inter-religious dialogue, provides an example of how one FBO conceives of and engages in inter-religious engagement in ways that challenge, or perhaps enrich, the religious pluralism model. In particular, while Taizé continues to rely on religious classifications of Christian, Protestant, and Catholic, the brothers use prayer and communal work to move past these differences. They maintain a delicate balance between their own theological commitments to a life focused on Jesus Christ, a respect for peoples of other cultures and traditions, and a broader desire and perceived duty to reconcile all peoples—Christian and not.

A. Inner Contemplation and Solidarity/Struggle for Reconciliation

One might describe the Taizé Community, in the most basic terms, as an ecumenical monastic order. All of the brothers of Taizé are Christian; however some self-identify as Catholic and others as Protestant. Thus, the Community as a whole self-identifies as "ecumenical." In his typology of religious service organizations, Ram A. Cnann defines an ecumenical coalition as one in which denominations join together for "purposes of community solidarity, social action, and/or providing large-scale services that are beyond the scope of a single congregation" (1999, 32). This definition suggests that ecumenical organizations may represent multiple Christian denominations out of a functional need—i.e., more representation provides access to more resources. This interpretation or use of the term is then merely descriptive. However, for Taizé,

ecumenicism does not only refer to the empirical reality of two or more denominations working side by side. Instead, it denotes a normative ideal of reconciling the Christian Church. In particular, the Taizé brothers primarily engage in an approach to inter-religious engagement that strives for reconciliation through inner contemplation and human solidarity (or struggle).

The Taizé Community is comprised of both Catholic and Protestant brothers, who spend much of their time living simple lives filled with prayer, bible study, and daily chores. However, speaking to the brothers opens up the complexity and richness of the Community, in terms of how it engages with people all over the world. Though the brothers consider themselves to be "ecumenical" and, in some ways, "monastic," they do not often reference these terms when describing the community. Instead, they rely on three specific themes, or values, that guide their behavior and organizational goals. These themes have been expressed through a variety of terms since the founding of Taizé, but generally include reconciliation/community, human solidarity/struggle/responsibility, and inner contemplation.

From its founding to today, two of the three pillars of the Taizé Community have been human solidarity and inner contemplation. The use of the specific terms has changed over the years, but the underlying meanings have remained the same. Brother Roger founded the Taizé Community with the idea that inner contemplation, specifically through prayer, must always go along with human solidarity or struggle.[53] Human solidarity refers to the ideas of "developing within ourselves a greater sensitivity to those who remain wounded by our roadsides" (Löser 2014), "belonging to each other, or depending on one another" and taking care of each other by engaging in "specific actions" to "express concretely" this solidarity ("2012-2015: Three Years of Searching" 2012). Thus, for Taizé, human solidarity encompasses three ideas: one, that the human race is and should be connected emotionally, socially, and spiritually; two, that we should

[53] Interview, Boston, April 2015.

strive to feel that connection, to empathize with our fellow human beings; and three, that we should actively work to help those who are suffering or in need. Though it is unclear how long the first two meanings of the term have been expressly articulated in the community, the third meaning—that of actively helping those in need—has long been part of the foundational ethos of Taizé, and has been articulated in a variety of terms including "struggle" and "responsibility." In short, Brother Roger founded Taizé with the express purpose of actively engaging social and political challenges—whether those be due to the effects of poverty, injustice, war, or other circumstances.

At the same time, Brother Roger encouraged a life of inner contemplation through prayer. Prayer is at the heart of Taizé, and, in fact, is what has made the Community famous. Taizé is known for engaging in a particular kind of chanting prayer that has been exported and copied around the world. Prayer is critical for the brothers, in their work and for those they engage with. It is through prayer that "possibilities" are opened up. However, though Brother Roger believed that prayer was a necessary part of the Taizé Community, he did not view it as sufficient. He argued that prayer must always be accompanied by human solidarity or struggle. Thus, for the brothers, it is important to both engage in inner contemplation and struggle for things like reconciliation, justice, forgiveness, and trust.[54]

If human solidarity and inner contemplation are the Taizé blueprints for how the brothers envision the best kind of life, reconciliation is the ultimate goal of Taizé (Santos 2008, 60–63). Brother Roger preferred the term "reconciliation" to "ecumenicism" and believed that the Christian church must be reconciled in order to be able to successfully do God's work (Emile 2008). The Taizé Community, itself, is a model of togetherness, where the brothers work towards reconciliation (both within and outside of the community) and *are* reconciliation through the

[54] Interview, Boston, April 2015.

particular kind of "community" they construct and reconstruct. In this way, "the community is a 'parable of community' that wants its life to be a sign of reconciliation between divided Christians and between separated peoples" ("About Taizé: The Community Today" 2008).

Yet, reconciliation, for the brothers, does not only apply to the Christian Church. As Brother Alois notes, "By his cross and resurrection Christ has established a new solidarity between all human beings. In him the fragmentation of humanity into opposing groups is already overcome; in him all form one family. Reconciliation with God entails reconciliation among human beings" (Löser 2012). So, while this notion of active reconciliation applies to the Christian church—working to bring together Protestants and Catholics, as well as Orthodox members—this mission of reconciliation also encompasses all of humanity, regardless of one's religious identity.

Thus, the Taizé Community conceives of religious diversity in common terms—the brothers view Protestants and Catholics, for instance, as part of a broader religious tradition, but also as distinct. However, at the same time, the Taizé brothers see these differences as malleable, and the Community actively works to reconcile these groups, as well as the broader human family. This kind of movement—conceptual and material—between religious distinction and reconciliation of difference is representative of the Taizé approach to religious diversity more generally. That is, the Community both acknowledges and protects the religious identities and practices of others, while also actively working for reconciliation between and among lines of difference. Moreover, the Community relies on both prayer and communal work to achieve their goals of reconciliation.

B. Promoting Reconciliation Abroad and Evangelism

One of the primary goals of the Taizé Community is the reconciliation of all peoples—Christian and not. One way the Community does this is through an active engagement abroad. That is, brothers sometimes leave the Community's base in France to live and work in communities in other areas of the world. While there, they engage with the local communities, and promote their ideals of reconciliation and trust. However, they also strive to respect and protect the cultural and religious differences of others by, for instance, taking extra steps to ensure that they are not implicitly proselytizing to vulnerable populations (e.g. children). Thus, the brothers do not advocate for a blending of Christian doctrine with other religious traditions, and they in fact promote their own interpretations of religious scripture through various events and organizational material. However, at the same time, they take steps to ensure that they do not force their own practices and beliefs on others. In short, the Taizé Community approach to religiously diverse engagement entails holding two positions in tension—that of living and promoting Christian values and goals, while also respecting the differences of others.

Similar to RfP, the reconciliation that the Taizé brothers promote does not include a blending of Christian beliefs or a syncretism of Christianity with other religions. Taizé encourages a reconciliation of the different peoples of the Church, and unity and unanimity is called for through Brother Roger's writings, but this does not mean that differences are ignored or that members of the community are expected to conform to one interpretation of the Christian faith. For Brother Roger, there is a "central core" (Schütz 1967, 16), a "common foundation" (Schütz 1967, 14), or a "pivot" (Schütz 1967, X) around which all members of the Church should focus and strive, and that commonality is Jesus Christ. This is what brings all people of the Church together. The other differences—of doctrine, of interpretation, of practice—are not for the Community to engage with. However, practicing this kind of pluralism—leaving

Christians of other denominations to practice or believe what they will—without actively striving for reconciliation and unanimity is insufficient according to the goals that Brother Roger laid out for the Community (Schütz 1967, IX). Thus, the brothers, as well as the broader Christian community, must respect the differences within the Church, while also striving for unity in Christ. Within the Taizé Community, such unity is found through common practice (e.g. prayer and manual labor) and working towards common goals of, among other things, trust, reconciliation, and solidarity.

However, as one might expect, this notion of a central pivot, or a commonality in Christ, does not and cannot extend to those peoples who are not a part of the Christian church. Yet, the Taizé brothers actively work to reconcile all peoples. For them, human solidarity entails the idea of actively engaging with those who are suffering or with those who are religiously or culturally different. Brother Roger founded the Taizé Community with the intent of helping those who were suffering the effects of the Second World War. During the war, he took in Jewish refugees, and after, he fed and helped war orphans, as well as German prisoners. In the 1950's Taizé brothers went to Algeria to help those suffering during the Algerian Revolution. They later went to Brazil, parts of sub-Saharan Africa, Bangladesh, and elsewhere.[55] Brother Roger used a French phrase to articulate this idea of actively engaging with challenges and difference: "Non pas fuir, mais accourir," which was translated to me as meaning, "Not to run away, but to run towards."[56] Thus, the brothers encourage each other and Taizé pilgrims to actively go towards challenges and difference. As Brother Alois wrote in a letter outlining the Community theme for 2012-2015, "A New Solidarity," "To initiate solidarity, we need to go towards others, sometimes with empty hands, listening, trying to understand the man or woman who does not think like us… and

[55] Interview, Boston, April 2015.
[56] Interview, Boston, April 2015.

already a deadlocked situation can be transformed" (Löser 2012). In some cases this means actually traveling to and possibly living in areas where the brothers are confronted with religious difference and/or communities that are struggling.

For Taizé, helping others in need includes providing aid and assistance, but it is more about putting oneself out there, opening oneself to others and to God. Human solidarity means both living as a human community and striving to be a human community through shared experience and openness. According to Brother Alois: "The impetus towards a new solidarity is nourished by deeply held convictions: the need for sharing is one of them……Understanding for example that Western countries are not called so much to give humanitarian aid to Africa as to ensure justice to the continent." He then goes on to say, "This is an imperative that can bring together believers of different religions as well as believers and non-believers" (Löser 2012). So, for Brother Alois, and Taizé more generally, helping others is viewed through a lens of community, sharing with others on their terms, and opening oneself to their needs and wants. Though the idea of actively engaging with others through aid and justice work is not something that Taizé does with the pilgrims that participate in their gatherings, the brothers do, through their prayer times, scripture readings, workshops, and approach to shared work life, encourage Taizé pilgrims, and especially the large numbers of youth who participate in Taizé events, to go out and actively work for reconciliation, solidarity, and even for things like economic and social justice. As Brother Emile told me, "We feel not so much it's our call to say 'This is what you must do, specifically, but it's to sow seeds.'"[57] Brother Alois notes that this kind of work—going elsewhere to help others—must be done with sensitivity and respect. He says, "this service means taking the opposite tack from all that dehumanizes society, it is undertaken above all and

[57] Interview, Boston, April 2015.

always in a respectful and constructive dialogue with the different cultures of the world and of each historical period" (Löser 2012).

To what extent engaging with others entails spreading Christian beliefs and practices could be debated. Evangelism (the term the brothers use, rather than proselytism) is a complicated matter for the Taizé Community. On the one hand, the brothers very much value notions of trust and respect and make decisions based on these values. For instance, several of the brothers, while living in a Muslim community in Senegal and providing various services for the children, took great care to make sure that none of the Muslim children were inside the building when the brothers prayed.[58] This example shows how the brothers try to be vigilant in their sensitivity to local customs, traditions, and practices.

On the other hand, the brothers also believe that it is their Christian duty to evangelize. It is through inner contemplation and a very specific understanding of evangelization that the Taizé brothers reconcile these two seemingly contradictory stances of evangelizing and respecting the religious identities of others. The brothers note that today the term "evangelize" is often used to reference the practice of converting through the use of specific pieces of doctrine or religious wisdom. However, they argue that this is the wrong way to evangelize. Rather, one should "make someone aware of Christ's resurrection…..and the value he or she has in God's eyes" through witness ("What Does It Mean to Evangelize?" 2007). First and foremost, evangelization begins with the inner life of the evangelizer: "It is first of all by our life, and not by our words, that we witness to the reality of the resurrection" ("What Does It Mean to Evangelize?" 2007). As Brother Roger noted when recounting his experience of living with Jewish refugees during World War II, "When you are living in the same house you cannot help but bear witness. The gospel teaches us to show the way, to point like John the Baptist beyond ourselves to the way of

[58] Interview, Boston, April 2015.

Christ" (Spink 1986, 43). Yet, the brothers also acknowledge that words are sometimes necessary; but, caution that sensitivity is required by the brothers in these matters ("What Does It Mean to Evangelize?" 2007). The way the Taizé Community approaches evangelization is very similar to the way that the Community promotes reconciliation among Christians and in the world more broadly. That is, the first step is to work on oneself and one's own community—to be an example and to witness to others. However, the Community does not stop there. They actively work, through various prayer events, workshops, and other means, to reconcile the Church and the broader human family. Once again it comes back to two of the main pillars of the Community: inner contemplation and struggle.

C. Inner Contemplation and Struggle through Prayer and Communal Work

Through Religions for Peace and the Taizé Community both strive for peace and reconciliation, they prioritize different approaches. Though Religions for Peace employs various practices in its multi-religious programs and events, the organization prioritizes linguistic dialogue. The Taizé Community, on the other hand, prioritizes communal prayer and work to mitigate lines of difference and to reconcile peoples from various religious, cultural, and political backgrounds. The Taizé brothers agree that dialogue can be an important part of inter-religious engagement, but they also contend that communal practices are often more effective in bringing people together and building trust.

Inner contemplation and struggle play a very important role in the Taizé approach to reconciliation through prayer and work. Every year, hundreds of thousands of "pilgrims" visit Taizé, or attend one of their many events throughout the world, in order to participate in Taizé prayers. The brothers and the pilgrims participate in a communal prayer service at least three

times per day. In part, prayer is important for an individual's inner life and for the brothers; transformation must begin from within. However, prayer also brings people together in a shared practice and opens up possibilities for trust, forgiveness, and reconciliation. One of the brothers provided the following example about the experience of Croatians and Serbians coming together for a Taizé event not long after the Yugoslavian war ended:

> [O]ne brother who traveled a lot in those countries… would say, "When you travel to Bosnia you get one side, one version. You travel to Serbia and you get one version. Everyone is more or less right." And you could lose your mind almost because everyone's right. So, if we invite them to Taizé or invite them to these gatherings, and if you created a kind of debate of ideas, probably you'd get more entrenched positions, people would go away more divided than before. But they come to pray. And you don't know who's sitting next to you and you discover, only after three days, "This is a horrible Serb. I thought all Serbs were horrible," or "This is a horrible Croatian," and you discover, "These are human beings. I prayed with them." And, it's not only the prayer, of course. Prayer is part of it. You start to look at others differently and prayer opens you up to the possibility of something that is more than a knee-jerk reaction to what your people have suffered and opens up new possibilities.[59]

So for Taizé, prayer as inner contemplation does not only refer to the notion that one should work on one's own spiritual development in a way that is inward looking and individual. In the sense the brother describes above, inner contemplation through prayer also facilitates a very community-based sense of shared space and shared practice.

Brother Roger noted that "[i]ntelligence only enables us to understand the surface of another. In the life of the gospel, intuition is there to support compassion, to make compassion possible, to avoid unnecessary dialogue" (Spink 1986, xi). This quote highlights the way that the Taizé brothers think about prayer and dialogue. For the brothers, dialogue is one way to engage with others; however, they also note its limitations in certain contentious situations. Prayer can be an alternative communal practice to linguistic dialogue in situations where speaking is too difficult. For instance, after the Rwandan genocide, a group of Christian Rwandans asked the

[59] Interview, Boston, April 2015.

brothers to hold an event there. The brothers responded saying they would go and pray, but that they would not hold dialogue sessions about reconciliation and forgiveness. As one brother explained to me: "Because after genocide how can you speak? But we can pray together." He said, "Opening up to God's spirit of prayer is certainly going in that direction, where you no longer build or base your decisions on fear, but you tap into something else—the spirit of trust."[60] Thus, for the brothers, where inter-religious, inter-cultural, or inter-ethnic dialogue may fail or even lead to more entrenched biases and prejudices, prayer can provide an alternative means of coming together in a safe space where differences and relations of power continue to exist, but are not so evident. Engaging in shared practice highlights the commonalities among peoples who may be used to focusing on their differences.

Struggle and responsibility through shared work also facilitates reconciliation for the Taizé community and their pilgrims. The brothers, themselves, especially when living in Taizé, live very simple lives where much of their day is spent praying or conducting some kind of work to support the Community. This can include anything from preparing food, cleaning the grounds and buildings, to welcoming visitors, or updating the website. However, it is not only the brothers who engage in these activities. The pilgrims who visit Taizé or participate in Taizé gatherings elsewhere are often asked to volunteer for certain daily duties, as well. In this way, those who visit Taizé or participate in Taizé events can become a part of a larger community for a time (Santos 2008; Spink 1986, 40). Through this communal living, which is often focused either on prayer or the specific duties of maintaining the community or preparing for an event, people are able to share space and practices—providing common purpose and an alternative lens for surveying their neighbor. So, in this way, struggle and responsibility through specific shared work can facilitate an opening, a possibility for trust, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

[60] Interview, Boston, April 2015.

What is the Taizé Community? One could talk about the community in the simplest of terms—as an ecumenical monastic order of brothers who engage in humanitarian, development, and peace work all over the world and are known for their unique style of prayer. However, such a description leaves out the heart of the community and how the brothers view themselves. For the founder, Brother Roger, and for the brothers today, Taizé is about reconciliation, human solidarity, and inner contemplation. The brothers of Taizé are continuing the work started by Brother Roger to bring all the peoples of the Christian Church together. They acknowledge the religious diversity within Taizé. However, when the brothers speak of Taizé as being "ecumenical," they are referring to more than a simple empirical reality. Ecumenicism as reconciliation is both what the community is, and what the community is striving to achieve through prayer and work. Additionally, the ethos of reconciliation that undergirds the daily lives of the brothers and the broader goals of the Community is not only applicable to Christians. The Taizé Community also strives for solidarity with all the peoples of the earth, whether they be "believers of different religions" or "non-believers" (Löser 2012).

Thus, the Taizé approach to inter-religious engagement hinges on inner contemplation, through prayer, and struggle, which includes the practice of communal work and living. This is a different approach to that promoted by advocates of religious pluralism or RfP's multi-religious approach. My research does not assess whether or not this approach "works" or "works better" than traditional dialogical models of inter-religious engagement. However, preliminary observations and analyses suggest that the Taizé approach, or another approach that includes a significant focus on communal experiential practices, might be a beneficial avenue for scholars and practitioners of religious pluralism to explore. The Taizé approach is obviously not suitable for all inter-religious engagements. Even the brothers themselves understand that in order to

respect the culture and religion of particular groups they must be willing to maintain certain boundaries. This is evident in the way the brothers purposely send away Muslim children from their prayer services to ensure that they are not encroaching on the children's cultural and religious identities. On the other hand, the brothers have, in certain instances, prayed with adult Jews, Muslims, and peoples of other faiths, who wanted to join the prayer services. Additionally, the brothers' approach does not only focus on communal prayer, but also communal work and struggle. As was noted in the interview excerpt above, the brothers understand that dialogue can actually reinforce rather than take down barriers. Consequently, the brothers and their affiliates focus on other ways to bring peoples together—whether they are from different Christian denominations, different religious traditions, or different sides of a political conflict. The Taizé approach provides an example of a different approach to inter-religious engagement—one that moves beyond linguistic dialogue.

In the next section, I examine how International Justice Mission conceptualizes and manages religious diversity to, in part, assess how a faith-based organization *not* focused on peacebuilding engages with religious difference.

Section V: International Justice Mission, A "Christian" FBO?

International Justice Mission is clearly different from Religions for Peace and the Taizé Community in that IJM is not a peacebuilding organization. That is, IJM's mission is not explicitly one of promoting or furthering peace or reconciliation among its own employees or with the local communities it comes into contact with. This makes IJM an interesting comparison case for the other two. How does an FBO *not* working explicitly toward inter-religious peace or reconciliation conceive of and engage with religious diversity? Additionally, unlike the other two

organizations, IJM is not referred to as an inter-religious or ecumenical organization. All IJM employees self-identify as Christian. Thus, most scholars and policymakers would likely treat IJM as a mono-religious group. However, IJM *is* inter-religious in that its employees self-identify with a variety of Christian denominations. In fact, IJM employees come from both Catholic and Protestant traditions. Dominant historical narratives suggest that such doctrinal differences between religious denominations can lead to the same kinds of catastrophic religious conflicts as those between more distinct religious traditions—say Christian and Islamic, for example. For these reasons, examining how an organization like IJM conceives of and engages with religious diversity, especially in a comparative capacity with the other two organizations included in this study, is not only warranted but desirable. Such a study can shed light on to what extent inter-denominational organizations behave like inter-religious or ecumenical groups *and* how FBOs not focused on peacebuilding, but operating in religiously diverse environments (both internally and externally), manage engagements with religious diversity.

In this section, I examine IJM's terms of self-description and assess how IJM's self-identification shapes its conceptualization of religious identity and diversity, as well as how the organization manages religious difference. My research shows that IJM's organizational identity includes a complex relationship between (1) the Christian identities and practices that IJM employees engage with in their everyday work lives, and (2) IJM's organizational goals of justice, which are themselves heavily grounded in specific Christian values and practices, but that require IJM to make certain strategic decisions about its Christian identity in order for the organization to be effective. IJM encounters with religious diversity shape and are shaped by understandings about what it means to be "Christian" for IJM. They are also shaped by the overall tension of whether and to what extent IJM *should* self-identify as Christian given that

such an identification, when asserted in an international discursive environment in which such designations are often viewed with skepticism, might impede the attainment of IJM organizational goals. In short, for IJM employees, the human rights work of the organization is top priority, pushing any goals for sharing of employees' Christian faith commitments to the periphery. Such findings support Hurd's caution against focusing on religious identity as *the* salient factor for religious communities and individuals (2015, 103–104). In addition, the internal dynamics of IJM, similar to the Taizé Community, show a strong commitment to practices like prayer, scripture reading, and song. While such practices play an important part in the cohesion of IJM's Christian identity, the power dynamics inherent in IJM's organizational structure result in the promotion of certain kinds of practices over others. My examination of IJM further supports my findings that all three FBOs included in this study must contend with expectations (their own as well as those imposed by international norms of human rights, peacebuilding, or aid work) of how to ethically engage with religious diversity. However, the IJM example also highlights the importance of organizational goals and power structures in determining whether and how to engage with religious diversity—both internally and with communities external to IJM.

A. Uncovering IJM's Christian Identity

At first glance, one may not immediately recognize IJM's ties to Christianity. It is not until about two-thirds down the "Who We Are" section of the organization's website that one sees reference to the divine. "We're inspired by God's call to love all people and seek justice," it says. There are also a few references to church educators and pastors on the page, but they are lost within larger lists of justice workers and volunteers. Digging a bit further reveals that the

Christian faith is actually a central component of IJM organizational identity. However, there is an obvious tension between the organization's Christian identity and the extent to which it broadcasts that identity. On the one hand, self-identified "Christian" beliefs and practices are firmly ingrained in IJM culture. On the other hand, IJM is very strategic about when and how it presents itself and discusses its faith connection with outside actors.

International Justice Mission employees refer to IJM as "Christian"[61] and the official website describes IJM as a "non-sectarian community of faith" ("FAQs: Careers" 2015). Gary Haugen founded IJM with the intention that the organization should be based in Christian values and practice. Today IJM is an organization in which all the employees are mandated to "practice a mature orthodox Christian faith, as defined by the Apostles' Creed" ("Join Our Team: Equal Opportunity" 2015), prayer is a central part of everyday office life and in the yearly Global Prayer Gathering, and where the justice work is viewed as part of God's biblical call "to seek justice, to rescue the oppressed, to defend the orphan, and to plead for the widow."[62]

The above description of International Justice Mission would, for many people (scholars and others), indicate that IJM is a Christian organization in that its employees identify it as such, and it incorporates a range of values and practices often thought of as Christian. However, in the field and in its organizational branding, marketing, and other materials the Christian aspects of IJM's identity are not always clearly visible. The name of the organization, for instance, is just vague enough that one may not necessarily identify IJM as a Christian organization. The same could be said for the IJM logo. However, a more in-depth investigation of the organizational name and its logo reveal that both are actually very much grounded in a Christian perspective,

[61] Interview via telephone, May 2015.
[62] Interview, Arlington, VA, August 2014.

even if they are not always expressed as such, and point to some of the underlying values that are critical for understanding why and how IJM employees fight for justice.

Each part of the International Justice Mission name is important for understanding the goals of the organization and the way it approaches the attainment of those goals. For IJM employees, fighting for justice is the central and most important aspect of IJM. The organization is specifically focused on justice, which IJM employees define as: "the use of power with moral excellence."[63] Here, the notion of moral excellence is directly tied to a Christian-based moral framework. The IJM UK website includes a Youth Work magazine article on defining justice which provides a useful summary for how IJM employees understand the link between social justice and a particular Christian perspective. It says,

> God is the ultimate authority in the universe, so justice occurs when power is exercised in conformity with his standards. In fact, in the Old Testament the Hebrew words for justice and righteousness are almost interchangeable. Justice occurs when power and authority between people occurs together with God's high moral standards (Youthwork Magazine 2015).

Thus, for IJM, justice can only exist within a moral framework that is determined by God. Yet, the definition that IJM uses, as noted above, is "the use of power with moral excellence," which does not reference God. Though it is unclear whether or not this particular definition was used because it does not reference God and, is thus, more relatable across cultures and religions, one IJM employee noted that the definition is "helpful because it can be universalized."[64] IJM's ambiguous definition of justice is one of many examples in which terminology and materials used by the organization are expressed in a way that is vague and does not necessarily point to a Christian foundation, even though the IJM conception of justice is very much tied to a particular Christian interpretation of scripture.

[63] Interview via telephone, May 2015.
[64] Interview via telephone, May 2015.

The term "mission" is another ambiguous term that has Christian meaning for IJM representatives, but that may not necessarily be interpreted as Christian by outsiders.[65] International Justice Mission is "inspired by God's call to love all people and seek justice" ("Leadership" 2014). It is the notion of a calling from God that underpins IJM's Christian identity. The employees I spoke with referenced this calling in our interviews. One representative said "we feel pretty clearly that God has called us to achieve certain things."[66] For IJM employees, the work of the organization is directly responding to God's call for justice and this call is actually reflected in the name of the organization itself: International Justice *Mission.* The term "mission" refers to a specific mission of the church.[67] However, as one employee pointed out, "there's all kinds of different missions, not just a Christian mission."[68] Mission, then may connote Christian practices of going out and doing God's work; however, the term may not necessarily be interpreted that way by those external to the IJM organization.

The "international" component of International Justice Mission should not go unnoticed. IJM is very clear that it only works in the poorest countries, where the organization perceives justice systems to be more problematic. Thus, International Justice Mission does not work in places like the U.S. or Western Europe. "International" can then refer to how the organization is based in the United States, but doing work "over there." Though IJM acknowledges the injustices that also happen in the United States,[69] and some of the IJM workers are local to the communities they are working in, the prevailing narrative, both at IJM's founding and continuing today, is that IJM employees are physically going to where "the poor" live to fight for justice on

[65] For instance, "mission" may relate to a more general meaning of the term as used in organizational mission statements.
[66] Interview via telephone, October 2014.
[67] Interview via telephone, May 2015.
[68] Interview via telephone, May 2015.
[69] Interview, Arlington, VA, August 2014.

their behalf. It does not appear that this notion of going elsewhere, rather than fighting for justice in one's own community, is explicitly derived from any philosophical or theological values for IJM. However, the general IJM approach of "going elsewhere" to rescue and rehabilitate is something interesting to note given the long historical Christian tradition of missionizing in foreign countries.

Similar to the organizational name, the IJM logo includes specific and carefully chosen parts that bear Christian meanings. However, an outsider may not grasp these meanings, given how they are presented. At the center is a picture of the world, with Europe and Africa sharing the center. The world represents the international component of IJM work and broader "global movement" that IJM is a part of.[70] At the top, the world is surrounded by a Latin phrase all in capital letters: "QUARITE JUDICIUM, SUBVENITE OPPRESSO," which IJM translates to "seek justice, rescue the oppressed." This is taken directly from Isaiah 1:17, which, in the New International Version of the Christian Bible says: "Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow." Underneath the Latin phrasing on the left and right sides of the IJM logo are two books. One represents books of the legal code and the other the Bible.[71] Finally, the bottom is framed by oak leaves, barbed wire, and an olive branch, signifying strength, oppression, and peace, respectively.[72]

Obviously, IJM incorporates specific Christian meanings and symbols into its logo, including references to biblical scripture. However, like the organizational name, these meanings are not necessarily explicit for those who are not looking for them or for those who are not educated in IJM culture and values. This is another example of how IJM, as an organization,

[70] From the IJM "Brand Book," an excerpt of which an IJM employee provided to me via email, May 2015.
[71] Interview via telephone, May 2015.
[72] From the IJM Brand Book.

positions itself in such a way so that its Christian identity is not always clearly visible. For IJM, the first priority of the organization is the justice work, as opposed to making the Christian identity of the organization widely known. This has important implications for how IJM engages with religious diversity, both within the organization and in its external dealings with a variety of individual, organizational, and governmental actors.

B. A "Neutral" Approach to Religious Diversity?

Internally, IJM representatives are very aware of the religious commonalities and differences within the organization. However, the primary goal of the organization is its justice work. Thus, to mitigate these differences, IJM often relies on an approach that is conceived as neutral and which allows easy entry for all participants. In a somewhat similar manner, IJM employees use a kind of religiously-neutral approach in the field. That is, IJM employees understand that some of their clients hail from non-Christian communities, and, consequently, IJM representatives tend to push their own religious identities to the periphery in order to conform with certain geographical norms and expectations and to avoid putting the human rights work at risk. IJM employees understand that religious differences exist among IJM employees and their clients; however, this is not the focus of their engagement with these peoples and communities. So, while IJM does encounter religious difference, the religious identity of the organization is not always a salient factor in those engagements. However, as my research shows, even when religious identity is not an explicit factor in inter-religious engagements, it can still affect those engagements in significant ways. In particular, the values of the organization, which are, in part, drawn from Christian doctrine, shape how the organization engages in its

human rights work (as I show in more detail in Chapter Three). Thus, even though IJM might seem to push its Christian identity to the periphery in certain contexts, its Christian roots remain.

Unlike Religions for Peace or the Taizé Community, IJM's goals do not include bringing together peoples of different religions or denominations for reconciliation or dialogue. However, the organization and its employees acknowledge and engage with the religious diversity present within IJM, as well as in the varied cultural and geographical contexts that they work. Internally, IJM is comprised of Christians; however, the representatives I spoke with acknowledged that not all of these Christians hailed from the same denomination and that, in fact, employees had varied theological commitments that were brought up in discussions pertaining to certain organizational approaches or practices.[73] Thus IJM employees acknowledged both the commonalities they shared within a broader Christian tradition as well as their separate denominational differences. Similarly, the Global Prayer Gathering, which is open to the public and is attended by IJM staff and supporters of the organization, is also geared towards the Christian community at-large, but is represented by various denominations, including Baptist, Catholic, charismatic, Pentecostal, and Protestant.[74]

Having such a diversity of denominations represented in and affiliated with the organization leads to some differences of opinion, especially as relates to certain theological commitments. In general, the way that IJM manages these religious debates is by trying to employ religious language and practices that are perceived as neutral within the context of a Christian community. As two employees told me, the organization tries to promote a kind of communal prayer, for instance, that produces the least barriers for all members to participate.[75] This means that IJM employees do not practice certain formalized rituals present in various

[73] Interviews, Arlington, VA, August 2014 and via telephone October 2014.
[74] Interview, Arlington, VA, August 2014.
[75] Interviews, Arlington, VA, August 2014 and via telephone October 2014.

Christian denominations—call and response scripture reading, for instance. There are some exceptions to this neutral approach, however. For instance, IJM includes communion in two events—the Global Prayer Gathering and at the end of the commissioning service for new staff. One IJM representative noted that some of the more conservative Catholic employees were uncomfortable that communion was included in any IJM events. In the end, the organization decided to continue to include communion in these events, and all parties involved "agree[d] to hold this tension together."[76] In this case, the concerns of the conservative Catholics were taken into account, but no organizational change was made. In other cases, certain organizational practices are modified to accommodate employee concerns or cultural differences.

For example, the employees in several African IJM offices apparently did not feel comfortable with the IJM practice of thirty minutes of solitude—one of the four spiritual disciplines that all IJM employees engage in daily, in which individuals pray or reflect alone. The IJM representative who relayed this story to me said that for these African employees, the practice of being alone for thirty minutes did not make sense within their communities because these individuals were used to communal prayer practices. The African employees viewed solitude as too individual and perceived it to be a "Western" practice. To accommodate for the African employees' concerns, IJM administration suggested a slightly revised version of solitude. Now the employees in the African offices hold their thirty minutes of solitude immediately preceding the communal corporate prayer, and solitude is held in a communal space. For those thirty minutes the employees are silent; however, they are silent together. Once solitude commences, they move directly into corporate prayer.[77] In this case, IJM organizational practices were modified in order to account for employees' personal preferences.

[76] Interview via telephone, May 2015.
[77] Interview via telephone, May 2015.

In general, the IJM approach for managing internal religious diversity centers on the notion that religious expression and practice within the organization should be as neutral as possible, in that everyone should be able to participate or support the way that religion is expressed in and by the organization. IJM management supports this neutral approach by placing the Christian aspects of IJM within the broader context of their employees' lives. In particular, Christian practices are very much incorporated into the everyday work life and culture of IJM; however, these practices are meant to be supplemental to employees' spiritual lives outside of IJM.[78] Such an approach is inline with the broader IJM identity as a Christian organization that focuses on "the work." On the one hand, Christian practices are a very important part of IJM, but on the other hand, they are meant to be neutral or perhaps even ambiguous within the context of Christian diversity. In theory, for IJM, what is most important is that all IJM employees are able to participate, as opposed to furthering some specific theological commitments.

As noted, IJM employees are religiously diverse, even though they all identify as Christian; however, due to the substance of its work, IJM also actively partners with and/or encounters a variety of governments, communities, and individuals across the world that identify with religions other than Christianity (or none at all). As a Christian organization that sometimes works in areas where Christians are not the majority, IJM is confronted, on a daily basis, with religious diversity. But, IJM's general approach is actually, in many cases, *not* to explicitly engage with religious diversity. Once again, IJM's Christian identity seems to take a backseat to the justice work of the organization. Though this is the case formally, the Christian motivations of IJM complicate this picture.

[78] Interview via telephone, May 2015.

IJM has clear policies against proselytizing;[79] however, this is not because IJM representatives are, in principal, against the idea of actively trying to convert people to Christianity. As one senior representative told me, the IJM policy against proselytizing is not in place because of some theological commitment against proselytizing. Rather, it is a strategic policy that is in place in order to facilitate the organizational justice work. In particular, IJM employees have to be very careful, not only in how they engage with IJM clients, but also how they talk about proselytism. This is because some governments, especially in South Asia, are likely to evict IJM from their countries if they think that IJM employees are proselytizing.[80] It is crucial for IJM to maintain access to those communities it deems in need of assistance.

Additionally, on a more micro level, IJM employees want to make sure that they do not scare individuals away. IJM employees understand that it may be awkward or off-putting for others if IJM representatives talk about their faith in the context of IJM day-to-day justice work. Therefore, not only do IJM employees refrain from proselytizing, but in many cases, they avoid talking about their faith or identifying themselves as Christian altogether. As two representatives told me, IJM has a general policy of leading with the work, but never purposefully hiding the organization's Christian identity.[81] In practice this means that an IJM employee, while interacting with someone external to the organization, will only speak about the justice work. However, if asked about his/her faith, or the religious identity of IJM, the employee would then not only be allowed to speak about Christianity and IJM, but would, in fact, be ethically obligated to disclose IJM's Christian identity.

Irrespective of whether individual IJM employees actually adhere to the non-proselytizing policy, one might be tempted to argue that IJM's work has nothing to do with

[79] Interview via telephone, May 2015.
[80] Interview via telephone, May 2015.
[81] Interviews, Arlington, VA, August 2014 and via telephone October 2014.

religious conversion. However, the reality is more complicated. For IJM employees, the work they do is God's work, and by engaging in it and conducting themselves in particular ways, they are "invoking the kingdom of God."[82] In particular, for one representative I spoke with, engaging in the justice work of IJM is God's work and can be visible to people *as* that and/or can open the door to discussions about the Christian faith and the (Christian) motivations of IJM and its employees.

However, one should not go too far with this. While the results of IJM work may be, in some cases, religious conversion—though I have no evidence to prove that conversions have or have not happened as a result of IJM work—conversion is not the organizational goal. The first priority for IJM is fighting for a particular conception of justice. As noted, IJM does not proselytize, primarily because doing so would likely seriously impede the organization's justice work. For IJM then, working towards justice is the primary goal of the organization. Making the organization's connections with Christian values and practices known is less of a priority. However, as noted above, the concept of justice that IJM employs is heavily grounded in specific interpretations of the Christian tradition, as well as the idea of a justice "mission" *as* God's calling to fight for justice. So, one might say that the values embedded in IJM culture are still manifested in the justice work, even when the explicit Christian identity of the organization is hidden.

International Justice Mission balances its Christian identity, values, and practices, with the work of the organization, which includes rescuing and rehabilitating victims of violence and reforming legal systems. The organization's representatives understand that FBOs need to be careful in how they talk about the role of their faith in their work, as some governments may prohibit proselytization. In addition, focusing on the faith aspects of IJM may turn people off to

[82] Interview via telephone, May 2015.

the work that the organization does. Such political factors directly shape how IJM presents itself and engages with those outside of the organization. IJM is presented, through its marketing materials and by its employees, as, first and foremost, an organization that fights for justice. In many ways, IJM's Christian identity is hidden, or, at the very least, presented in such a way that it is not readily apparent. However, as I have shown, Christian values and practices are critical to IJM's founding, its employees, and its everyday internal operations.

The religious pluralism literature often seems to assume that religious identity differences are at the forefront of inter-religious engagement; however, this is not necessarily the case. When IJM employees engage with non-Christians in the field, they (usually) do not activate their religious identities in any overt way. Many people who engage with IJM do not even realize the organization identifies as Christian. Yet, as I explore in more detail in the other empirical chapters of this dissertation, the Christian values and practices of the organization are important for determining how IJM conceives of and enacts its transnational justice work. The IJM example suggests, then, that the religious pluralism framework may need to be reassessed to more fully account for inter-religious engagements that are not explicitly focused on prescriptive religious pluralism, but nonetheless, have implications for encounters of difference.

Conclusion

The questions posed at the beginning of this chapter were: (1) What do specific terms of self-description mean for the faith-based organizations that use them? and (2) What are the implications of such meanings for how these organizations conceptualize and engage with religious diversity? I have shown that the terms used in self-descriptions of Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission, have meanings that go beyond common

conceptions of what it means to be "inter-religious," "ecumenical," or "Christian." My research also shows that these meanings and values inform and shape how these organizations conceptualize and engage with religious diversity, both internally and externally. Moreover, I have shown how such findings have important implications for theories of religious pluralism. In particular, I show that theories of religious pluralism do not properly capture the variety of ways FBOs conceive of or engage with religious diversity. First, theories of religious pluralism often focus on the benefits of inter-religious dialogue, but neglect the problems with such encounters and the ways in which some religious actors themselves might see experiential communal practices as critical to the success of inter-religious encounters. Second, my findings indicate that FBOs do not necessarily activate their religious identities in inter-religious engagements, suggesting that a reassessment of the importance of religious identity for religious actors themselves is in order.

International Justice Mission, Religions for Peace, and the Taizé Community all include members or employees that self-identify with a variety of religious traditions or denominations and each organization also engages with a diversity of religious actors in their transnational justice, peacebuilding, and development work. My findings show that how these organizations understand religious difference and the strategies they employ to manage religious diversity are shaped by the meanings of the terms and concepts that relate to their organizational self-descriptions.

For instance, as a "multi-religious" and "representative" organization, Religions for Peace strives to maintain the distinct religious identities of all religious communities in their network, while also searching for common values. The organization treats religious communities and traditions as entities, which are *and* should be separate institutionalized entities. Thus,

Religions for Peace discourages syncretism. However, Religions for Peace also strives to discern common values and concerns. The search for commonalities is a goal, in and of itself; however, it also facilitates Religions for Peace's other development and peacebuilding goals. In order to address social and political problems, the organization must first come to an agreement on what those problems are and how to address them. RfP does this through a particular discernment process, which often takes place at the organization's World Assemblies. However, my findings show the ways that organizational power dynamics and everyday practices disrupt the inclusive process that RfP strives for. In addition, RfP's multi-religious approach creates a tension between protecting the distinctiveness of particular religious communities and searching for commonalities. While RfP strives to protect the distinctiveness of religious communities and traditions, the organization promotes specific interpretations of religious texts and teachings, which contradicts that goal.

In addition, Religions for Peace employs a linguistic dialogue approach similar to that found in religious pluralism models. However, the organization also includes other kinds of experiential practices, including prayer and communal dining. Moreover, one of the organization's primary missions is to advance and implement common action programs, where organization representatives and affiliates representing diverse religious traditions work together towards a common social or political goal. My research with Religions for Peace suggests that common conceptualizations of prescriptive religious pluralism need to expand if they are to reflect the range of linguistic and experiential practices that religious actors use in their own interreligious engagements.

The Taizé Community is an ecumenical monastic brotherhood. However, the brothers not only focus on bringing together the Christian Church, but they also work for the reconciliation of

the broader human community, through a specific approach that includes human solidarity/struggle and inner contemplation. With the founding of Taizé, Brother Roger articulated a view of community in which engaging in social and political struggle, and running towards the challenges facing humans of all cultures and all religions, is a necessary part of the Christian life. Yet, at the same time, the Community does not endorse syncretism or the blending of faith—in fact, they promote a Christian worldview. To manage these tensions, the brothers continue to engage in Christian practice, while also respecting local cultures and religions. They conceptualize religious groups as separate and distinct, but also part of a larger human family that should be reconciled. In addition, Taizé relies heavily on prayer and communal work to build trust and reconcile peoples and groups that may be at odds. Though, like Religions for Peace, they understand that inter-religious dialogue can be helpful in certain circumstances, the brothers also note that dialogue can exacerbate differences. It is in these contexts that the brothers prefer to begin inter-religious engagements with prayer and/or to focus on other communal activities, like manual labor.

My research with Religions for Peace and the Taizé Community suggests that common conceptualizations of religious pluralism need to expand if they are to reflect the range of linguistic and experiential practices that religious actors use in their own inter-religious engagements. Moreover, preliminary findings suggest that a linguistic dialogical approach may, in certain contexts, be insufficient for addressing entrenched lines of difference. In fact, in some cases, other interventions of experiential practice might be beneficial. Future research might investigate such practices further, analyzing the meanings and effects of prayer, common work, and other practices for local populations that are tackling issues related to religious diversity.

Finally, my research shows that International Justice Mission maintains a very delicate balance between its deeply embedded Christian identity and its focus on the human rights work of the organization. On the one hand, Christian values and practices are at the heart of IJM and are expressed in the circumstances of the founding of the organization, the ongoing motivations for the justice work, the plethora of Christian practices that IJM employees engage in on a daily basis, and the broader organizational culture. On the other hand, IJM representatives believe that broadcasting the organization's Christian identity in certain contexts may actually be detrimental to the successful attainment of IJM's justice goals. According to IJM employees, this is because, in some contexts, governmental officials and others are skeptical of faith-based organizations, or Christian organizations, in particular. Additionally, IJM employees do not want to scare away individuals they might be able to work with or rescue by bringing religion into the conversation. Internally, IJM tries to accommodate a wide range of Christian theological perspectives, so that its employees feel comfortable and can engage with the organization's goals and practices. For IJM, the justice work is top priority. Consequently, the organization presents itself in a way that is somewhat ambiguous. Ultimately, one might see two different IJMs depending on where one is looking. Internally, the organization's Christian identity is very apparent, though differences among IJM employees also surface. However, in the field, the organization often shies away from explicitly highlighting its Christian identity in order to facilitate IJM's human rights work; yet, this does not mean that IJM's Christian values and practices do not influence how it engages in its work. In fact, in later chapters of this dissertation I show the opposite. Such findings suggest that the religious pluralist approach to inter-religious engagement, which assumes that religious actors overtly express their religious identities in these engagements, or that they *should*

do so, may be neglecting other peaceful approaches to inter-religious engagement that do not focus on religious identity.

Studies of religious engagement, including those that rely on or promote a religious pluralist approach, need to account for peaceful encounters of religious difference where religion is not a salient factor. In particular, how might such encounters challenge or expand our understandings of why so-called religious actors behave how they do, especially when coming into contact with religious others? In particular, more studies need to probe how aspects of religious identity might manifest in interactions where neither party outwardly identifies with a specific religious community or tradition. Such engagements might examine why those identities are not expressed to the other party and how such behaviors shape those engagements. As my research shows, religious identity matters, but perhaps not always in the ways that scholars and others assume. By focusing on how specific groups conceive of themselves and others, my research challenges assumptions about the inherent danger of religious diversity. In addition, my research complicates scholarly perceptions about how religious actors themselves behave *due to* their religious identities and the conceptions of religious difference that scholars assume go along with those identities.

In this chapter I have highlighted the complexity of FBO identities—showing how categories of "interfaith," "ecumenical," "Christian," and other categories actually tell us very little about how an organization self-identifies *and* how such identities might shape FBO programs and strategies. In the next chapter I show how FBO practices like prayer similarly complicate common assumptions about such practices.

CHAPTER FIVE

"Prayer is Where the Action Is": Pushing the Ontological Boundaries of Religious Practice

This chapter examines the meanings and roles of prayer in the work of faith-based organizations. Scholars pay little attention to the role of so-called religious practices,[83] like prayer, in the work of FBOs or other global religious actors. When scholars *do* address prayer or other practices, these practices are often assumed to be in material and analytical opposition to the secular, public, "work" of FBOs. For example, providing HIV/AIDS medicines is considered to have real effects on the local populations who receive such goods, while the use of prayer in similar contexts (where people are suffering from HIV/AIDS), is not. More generally, scholars treat prayer as inconsequential for questions of international relations and politics. Consequently, scholars do not fully examine prayer to understand the range of meanings and uses such a practice might include. Yet, numerous examples indicate that prayer is a salient and meaningful part of public life all over the world, including in the work of organizations like Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission. However, because prayer is viewed as separate from the "real" work of FBOs and inconsequential in international relations, we have few insights into why FBOs pray—including how relations of power might affect this—and how prayer might influence FBO operations and programs. This chapter addresses this gap in the literature by asking the following research question: (1) What are the meanings and roles of prayer for transnational service-advocacy FBOs?

[83] For the rest of the chapter, I will refer to practices like prayer, meditation, scripture reading, etc. as "religious practices." However, here I am referring to the categorizations that scholars and others often assign to such practices, rather than making an ontological claim about what counts as a "religious" or "secular" practice.

In international relations, and political science, more broadly, religious expression and practice are often assumed to be outside the realm of consequential and/or legitimate political action. Though it may not be stated expressly, scholars and policy makers assume that "real" political action is limited to particular acts and practices. For example, while the role of religious actors and discourses in global governance and humanitarianism is increasingly viewed as legitimate areas of study in international relations, few IR scholars or international policy makers would give much credence to the notion that prayer is a significant and consequential political action in the world. Yet, there are many examples of prayer being used in global political contexts—most notably, perhaps, within the faith-based organization community. For instance, prayer has played an important role in the World Evangelical Alliance's 2010 campaign promoting the success of the referendum for South Sudanese independence ("Announcing a Season of Prayer for Sudan with Specific Requests Following" 2013), and in joint promotion of interfaith dialogue and solidarity on behalf of the United Nations and a variety of non-governmental organizations to fight the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS ("At Prayer Breakfast, Deputy Secretary-General Urges Religious Leaders to Speak Out Against Stigma, Discrimination in HIV/AIDS Epidemic" 2011). These and numerous other examples show that prayer is an important form of political and religious expression for faith-based organizations in their global work.

In analyzing the meanings and roles of prayer for FBOs, my research uncovers how and why religious practices are included in the internal everyday activities of FBOs as well as in their projects and programs with local communities, other organizations, and governments. I find that, contrary to dominant assumptions about religious practice, prayer has a range of meanings and roles that are political, public, and part of FBO "work." Thus, I argue that practices like prayer

cannot easily be categorized according to common analytical dichotomies of religious-secular, private-public, life-work, primary-peripheral, rational-emotional, spiritual-physical, which are often relied on in IR and development scholarship, as well as in funding requirements for NGOs and in broader global governance discourses. Moreover, I argue that an examination of prayer shows how such dichotomous frameworks can neglect the important roles that prayer and other practices can play in, among other areas, post-conflict reintegration projects, inter-religious bridge building, psychological health, and maintaining and reinforcing organizational identities. By framing certain FBO practices as more or less appropriate or consequential for service-advocacy sectors and workplaces, scholars and donor agencies neglect practices that are integral to many of these organizations. In fact, my research shows that many of these practices are not merely "alternative" or additional practices, but are actually, in certain contexts, mainstream and central to Religions for Peace, International Justice Mission, and the Taizé Community. In many cases, prayer does not only facilitate the work of the organization; prayer *is* the work. Yet, in IR scholarship, such practices remain hidden and unexplored for the possible benefits and problems they might entail. Consequently, I argue for a reexamination of the ontology of religious practice in international relations, which must include critical discussions about other analytical dichotomous framings that are ingrained not only in international relations, but also in broader humanitarian and development discourses.

To assess the meanings and roles of prayer in service-advocacy FBOs, I draw on data gleaned from my observations of events hosted by Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission, the interviews I conducted with their representatives and affiliates, and a variety of FBO documents and texts, as well as secondary sources, to understand and analyze the meanings and roles these FBOs assign to prayer. I also examine the goals and

strategies of these organizations, paying particular attention to how the three FBO representatives talk about prayer within the context of specific organizational goals. My findings show that prayer has a range of meanings and purposes for each FBO and is shaped by doctrinal interpretations, organizational histories, ideological commitments, and secularist and neoliberal discourses. In many cases, prayer is not a peripheral act to the "real" work of the organization, but is the "real" and "consequential" work itself. As such, my research suggests that scholarly ontologies of religion—i.e. what counts as religious and why—should be reexamined.

This chapter is organized as follows. Section II assesses how prayer is studied (or not) in international relations and other disciplines. In Section III, I lay out an overview of how prayer is manifested in each of the three organizations. Section IV introduces my main argument—showing how prayer is relevant for FBO projects and international relations more generally. I conclude with a discussion of the implications of my research and suggestions for future research.

Section II: What is Prayer?

Prayer has taken on many meanings, as exhibited in the works of political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, and other scholars. In Bruce Benson and Norman Wirzba's edited volume, *The Phenomenology of Prayer* (2005), the contributing authors find multiple meanings and motivations for Christian and Jewish prayer including prayer as: praise, a gift, passion, an attempt to create a metaphysical space, a community building exercise, a different way of communicating, a religious expression, a way to access authenticity, a performance, a response from God (as speaking through us), an act of love or hope, a way of listening, and a request or a question. Other scholars found prayer to be a "form of male socialization….and social control"

(Manoukian 2005, 69), a tool of nation-building (Starrett 1995, 962), an emotive practice that provided respite from the weight of earthly emotions (Garrett 1993), and a tool to convert and encourage Christian testimony (Howard 2005). Talal Asad examines the role of religious practice for medieval monks and finds that prayer was used as a "disciplinary activity of human bodies" (1993, 35), while Émile Durkheim saw prayer as a way to influence spiritual beings (2001, 31–32). William Connolly argues that the way prayer is conceived and performed may contribute to how one perceives God. For example, for those who believe prayer can influence their god, the act itself "may suggest a god who listens, thinks anew, and periodically changes his mind" (2008, 60). In her study of Egyptian women's piety movements, Saba Mahmood (2005) found that the women believed prayer to play an important role in subject-building. That is, prayer not only signified religious piety—thus performing what one believes/feel internally—but it also *created* the pious person. Anthropologist Lara Deeb found not one, but many meanings and uses for Islamic prayer for Shi'i piety groups in Lebanon. She found that prayer (1) is a tool used in order to build relationships with God and between community members (2006, 105), (2) can be "a display of political strength, within the Lebanese polity and internationally" (2006, 106), and (3) can "sacralize space" and be an important time-keeping device (2006, 59). International relations scholar, Ron Hassner, has noted the importance of prayer for sacred time, which often includes prayer rituals. In his study, he showed that the timing of sacred practices and rituals can be an important factor in determining when groups will initiate military engagements and attacks (2011). In addition, scholars from various academic disciplines are paying attention to Pentecostal and/or evangelical forms of prayer. For instance, Miller and Yamamori argue that prayer is an important social ritual that blurs the boundaries of the sacred and profane (2007, 134; also Luhrmann 2012; R. Marshall 2009, 151). Finally, the

Social Science Research Council, with a grant from the John Templeton Foundation, just concluded an initiative on "New Directions in the Study of Prayer," which incorporated a group of interdisciplinary scholars to "enhance knowledge of the social, cultural, psychological, and cognitive dimensions of prayer, and its origins, variations, and manifestations in human life" ("New Directions in the Study of Prayer" 2016). Out of this project came interesting discussions about, among other things, categories of prayer (e.g. aggressive prayer), spaces of and environments specifically built for prayer, and methodological approaches for studying prayer (Bender 2014; R. Marshall 2013; Roychoudhuri 2015).

These examples show some of the different meanings and roles of prayer and its importance in a range of social contexts. However, despite examples such as these, which show the prevalence and salience of prayer in public life, prayer is still largely ignored in international relations. This omission is, in part, to the dominance of the Enlightenment narrative, which often focuses on the historical emergence of science, reason, and rationality and the decline of religion, faith, and irrationality. According to this narrative, the Enlightenment was a major step forward for humanity; pulling humankind out of a period dominated by the Crusades, a schism within the Catholic Church, and holy wars. The emergence of the scientific method and empiricism was viewed and continues to be understood by many as fundamentally antithetical to the faith- and doctrine-dominated period preceding the Enlightenment. The secularization narrative, which asserts that as society progresses religion will decline, only bolstered the idea that religion and science, or faith and reason, are fundamentally at odds with one another. Today the secularization narrative has been problematized and reworked by many scholars (P. L. Berger 1999; Bhargava 2004; Casanova 1994; Casanova 2006; Davie 1999; Norris and Inglehart 2011; Toft, Philpott, and Shah 2011); yet, the faith-reason binary persists in international relations. As

a consequence, many scholars view prayer, often conceived as a practice only concerned with the transcendental, as analytically and materially separate from "real" action or work. In addition, many scholars conceive of prayer as inconsequential for public, political life, which, especially in the international sphere, is perceived to be a space for encounters of secularized reason.

The study of religion, more generally, has gained some traction in international relations in the post-Cold War era, as scholars are trying to grapple with events like 9/11. Some scholars argue that religion should simply be integrated into international relations like any other variable, while others are taking a more critical approach—noting the different ways that religion can manifest in international relations (Byrnes and Katzenstein 2006; Hatzopoulos and Petito 2003; Hurd 2015; Juergensmeyer 2008; Lynch 2011; Lynch 2014; Sandal and Fox 2013; Sheikh 2014; S. M. Thomas 2000; S. Thomas 2005; Wilson 2012). Yet, even those studies that try to avoid an essentialization of religion focus heavily on belief, identity, or institutions, while largely ignoring prayer or simply mentioning it in passing, without fully exploring what prayer means and does in any given context. For instance, Daniel Philpott examines the role of religion, including prayer, in truth and reconciliation commissions; however, he does not delve into the specific meanings and roles of these practices for peacebuilding and reconciliation strategies and outcomes (2012, 97–98). In other IR studies, prayer might be included in a definition of religion—i.e. as one of the elements that constitutes religion (Toft, Philpott, and Shah 2011, 21)—but these studies do not examine the meanings, uses, and roles of prayer, or other religious practices, specifically.

In his book on sacred sites, Ron Hassner gives prayer more of its due than is usually the case in IR. However, Hassner's study of prayer is external to the act itself—examining how locations of prayer might influence inter-religious engagements, for instance. Here, the religiousness of prayer remains unquestioned. A definition of prayer is not provided, though

Hassner does note that sacred spaces (which he seems to link with practices like prayer) "offer the possibility of communicating with the divine, receiving divine favors, and achieving insight into the deeper meanings of their faith" (Hassner 2009, 3). Such assumptions about what constitutes prayer can mask the varied meanings and roles of such practices in the work of faith-based organizations and in international relations, more broadly.

Studies of faith-based organizations, which come from a range of social scientific disciplines and sub-disciplines, including IR, might include prayer in their examinations of such organizations. However, scholars of FBOs do not often meaningfully incorporate prayer into their analyses. Walker *et al.* tentatively argue that faith-"supporting" tools and practices can improve humanitarian outcomes related to the trauma experienced by locals (2012, 132). However, the role of prayer is only mentioned in passing in their study, and is not fully examined.

Some typologies of FBOs point out that prayer is "intrinsically religious" (Sider and Unruh 2004, 118). Thus, scholars see the existence of prayer in a particular organization as one way to identity that organization *as* faith-based; however, they do not interrogate the meaning of prayer (Sider and Unruh 2004, 118; Thaut 2009). Other FBO studies also refer to prayer as a religious method or practice, but do not closely examine the practice to understand why and how FBOs pray (Clarke and Jennings 2008, 3; Petersen 2010).

By and large, prayer is not studied in IR and in FBO scholarship. Because of its focus on states, the prevailing Enlightenment narrative and its related "Westphalian presumption," which assumes the religion has been and should be effectively removed from state political institutions (S. Thomas 2005, 33), the broader trend is to avoid the study of religion altogether in IR. It is hard to deny that there has been a reemerging interest in the subject, especially when examining

religious identity and institutions; however, even with an increased focus on other global actors (e.g. governmental leaders, civil society), there remains an implicit assumption that IR scholars should study subjects who engage in "real" actions through foreign policy, protests, debates, dialogue, aid, material incentives, shaming, norm promotion, sanctions, etc. Prayer is perceived to be part of individual, transcendental life, and thus not a "real" action or a part of "real" FBO work. As such, prayer has been relegated to the private sphere. When prayer invades the public sphere, especially in the U.S. or Western Europe, scholars and others often perceive this to be a violation of the church/state separation and even, in some cases, an act of extremism. In FBO scholarship, which includes studies from IR, as well as anthropological, sociological, and organizational disciplines, religious practice may be referenced, but is not examined in depth. Even FBO studies that problematize the religious-secular binary only focus on the religious characteristics and effects of prayer *or* they simply ignore it altogether. In general, scholars do not view prayer as having real influence on real-world events (outside of some studies focusing on the effects of prayer on medical recovery).

In addition, scholars examining workplace settings have noted the ways in which dichotomies of private-public and rational-emotional often determine workplace expectations and norms (Ashcraft 2000, 348; Burrell 1984, 99; Mills and Chiaramonte 1991; also see Prokhovnik 2003 for a discussion of how such dichotomies derive from historical mind-body distinctions). As Mills and Chiaramonte note:

> [R]ationality has become a central *organizing* principle of capitalist organizations. Rationality is a major discourse in organizational life…..[E]nds-means calculations are applied to a number of activities that are undertaken under employment contracts. Hence a major aspect of preparation for the world of work involves being socialized to the need to adopt a logical and calculative approach to life. In the event, rational-legal forms of bureaucracy have come to stress the need for efficiency and impersonality, the divorce of organizational from domestic life, and the purging of emotionality from the workplace (Mills and

> Chiaramonte 1991, "Rationality, Competition, and Control," para. 9, relying on Burrell 1984).

Because religion is often perceived as something that is irrational and emotional (Wilson 2012, 142), scholars and others consider it to be inappropriate for the service-advocacy sector, and for the organizational workplace more generally. Scholars portray prayer, in particular, as a practice that intentionally strives to engage with the transcendent, or something beyond humanity (Toft, Philpott, and Shah 2011, 21), as well as an internal, "spiritual" act that is associated with the emotive and possibly psychological parts of people. Thus, prayer is relegated to those kinds of practices that are inappropriate for the workplace, and also inconsequential for and/or analytically separate from material "work" or "action."

Despite the general discourses relegating prayer to the private sphere, as well as the inattention of IR and other scholars to such practices, FBOs continue to engage in prayer, in a variety of contexts that directly or indirectly influence international politics. As such, prayer is a valid and important subject of study. An examination of prayer can highlight some of the ontological difficulties scholars continue to have when studying religion in international relations by highlighting the ways in which religious practice both shapes and is shaped by a range of factors both internal and external to FBOs. Moreover, a study of prayer highlights some of the unexplored ways in which FBOs uniquely contribute to peacebuilding, humanitarian, development, and human rights projects. Though FBO practices are not unproblematic, there may be lessons to be learned from how these groups employ other strategies to achieve goals of global governance.

As Erin Wilson notes, "The main goal for theorists wishing to engage seriously with religion and its relationship with politics should be generating frameworks that encourage more comprehensive understandings of the complex and multifaceted nature of religion, religious

actors, religious communities, religious theology, philosophy, doctrine and history that all continue to impact on the actors and processes that currently constitute global politics" (2012, 188). Wilson is right. If we want to better understand the role of what we often call "religion" in international relations, scholars must look beyond essentialized notions of what religion is and does. Yet, in looking at Wilson's call, I am left wondering why she neglected to mention religious practice. Are religious practices like prayer too far along the transcendental spectrum for legitimate social scientific inquiry? I think not, though Wilson's omission highlights the ways in which religious practice has been sidelined, even in critical approaches to religion and politics. In the next two sections, I highlight the ways in which one form of religious practice, prayer, is manifested in international relations vis-à-vis service-advocacy FBOs.

Section III: An Overview of Prayer in Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission

Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission all employ prayer in a wide range of organizational contexts. Before delving into the particular meanings and roles of prayer within the context of these organizations' goals and strategies, I first provide a general overview of how prayer is integrated into each organization—a "thick description" to facilitate a better understanding of how prayer is integrated into the daily and long-term operations of each FBO.

A. Religions for Peace

The meanings and uses of prayer for Religions for Peace and its affiliates are wide-ranging. Prayer and prayer-like activities like meditation and moments of silence are practiced in business meetings, multi-religious dialogue sessions, reconciliation processes, and development

projects. Prayer is present across all levels of the organization and is practiced by members of all religious groups represented in the organization. That said, there are differences in perceptions of prayer and in the ways prayer is employed in different RfP contexts. For instance, moments of silence are more often to be found at the international and upper levels of the RfP organization; whereas the use of Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and other prayers[84] are used more readily by local representatives and in local settings. Additionally, perceptions of what prayer is and does varies, with some representatives focusing more on the expressive and representative elements of prayer and others focusing on the relationship between prayer and divine intervention, for example. My research highlights the complexity of prayer for Religions for Peace. I show how prayer moves beyond common definitions of what counts as religious practice to play a critical role in areas of conflict resolution, peacebuilding, development, and spiritual and psychological health.

Though prayer is not as prominent at the international level of Religions for Peace, prayer and prayer-like activities like meditation are often part of the organization's work more broadly. RfP representatives' conceptions of prayer vary. For one RfP regional leader, prayer is "an expression of our spirituality,"[85] while, for a local representative, prayer is a form of communication or dialogue with the divine.[86] Some RfP representatives noted that there was, in fact, some difficulty in determining what kinds of practices are included in prayer. For instance,

[84] I employ a reflexive approach to the study of prayer. Throughout the research and analysis process, I have kept several questions in the back of my mind at all times: What is prayer? What do I and others mean when we use the term "prayer"? I have made the conscious decision to include practices like meditation and moments of silence in this study. However, I acknowledge that not everyone would agree that those practices are prayer. Thus, my research *begins* with the acknowledgement that the study of prayer will include a range of conceptual difficulties, and, in fact, relies on some of these difficulties to show how practices often perceived as religious do not always conform to common definitions of what counts as religious.
[85] Interview, Oslo, September 2012.
[86] Interview via Skype, February 2014.

one representative noted, "prayer can be there even without knowing that it's there, depending on how you define it."[87] RfP leaders also acknowledge that "prayer" may not mean the same thing to all. As one representative articulated, "some would say I don't use the word "prayer" at all – I use the word "meditation," I use the word "reflection,"……and there are different expressions within the different religious traditions.[88] Yet, for all of these differences, each RfP representative I spoke with noted the importance of prayer for the work of RfP.

Several RfP representatives noted that prayer was foundational to everything they do within the organization as well as in their work with other local organizations. RfP representatives are somewhat unique in that they often work across multiple organizations. So, their strategies relating to prayer, as well as their conceptions of prayer, often translate across these organizational borders. What they think works in one environment shapes how they engage with their RfP work. Several RfP representatives told me about the role of prayer in their local programs and projects—both those meetings and events that are formally affiliated with RfP and those that are a part of their other organizational activities. One person called prayer "the ultimate,"[89] another said that prayer is the basis for everything they do,[90] while still another said that prayer is "their number one priority."[91] These representatives noted that many events in their home countries often incorporate prayer, which is ingrained in local culture. Representatives from African countries, in particular, often noted that in their countries and communities, prayer is a normalized practice that is employed in all sorts of civil society and government meetings and events.[92] For instance, one local Kenyan group brings together women who are victims of

[87] Interview, New York, February 2014.
[88] Interview, Oslo, September 2012.
[89] Interview via Skype, February 2014.
[90] Interview via Skype, January 2014.
[91] Email correspondence, February 2014.
[92] Interviews via Skype February 2014 and telephone March 2014.

violence in order to provide a support system for those women—through friendship as well as other means (e.g. through the provision of goods). These meetings begin and end with prayer.[93]

At the international level of the organization, prayer is less prominent and, when included, is sometimes practiced separately. For the 2013 World Assembly, for instance, RfP designated a separate room in the conference hotel where Muslims could go to pray. However, there was not a separate prayer room for peoples of other faiths. A more common strategy, which aims to maintain a cautious distance and neutrality among religious traditions, is to employ a moment of silence, which is viewed as religiously-neutral. Including a moment of silence instead of a Christian, Muslim, Hindu or other prayer is perceived by many (especially those at the top levels of the organization) to be more inline with the RfP's "multi-religious" approach, which promotes a conception of religious traditions that is separate and distinct. As one former RfP leader told me:

> [I]nterfaith prayer or multi-religious prayer is rejected in certain settings. The risk of syncretism is real in certain communities, so we are very careful. If we have friends from religious communities who are sensitive to those issues, then let's have a moment of silence instead. And, if even just one person prays from one tradition, and another person comes, that kind of prayer is not always appreciated.[94]

In order to avoid possible conflicts that might arise from offending participants and "infringing on each other's religious deepest identity,"[95] RfP meetings and events at the top levels often rely on a moment of silence instead of individual prayers.

For RfP representatives at different levels of the organization, prayer is often considered to be necessary—though not always within the work of the organization itself. For instance, one senior representative noted that sometimes religion could be instrumentalized in international

[93] Interview via Skype, January 2014.
[94] Interview, New York, February 2014.
[95] Interview, Oslo, September 2012.

sectors of humanitarianism, development, human rights, and advocacy. He said that religion was sometimes just used as another category of legitimacy—to say that religious or faith-based actors were included in a given activity. Including prayer in an activity, for this representative, can ensure that religion is not instrumentalized in these contexts since prayer actually *does* something by "creating the positive energy of genuine collaboration and the atmosphere has to be created through the power of prayer.[96] Yet, another RfP representative did not feel that it was necessary for prayer to be included in RfP events. However, she still noted the importance of prayer in the work of RfP, as it can bring out the "inner spirit" that is important for motivating religious work.[97] However, this representative noted that such practices can be done by the individuals themselves in non-RfP environments.[98] Even for those who promote moments of silence, or who do not think that it is necessary to have prayer during an RfP event, prayer is still perceived to be a vital part of RfP work. For instance, one senior RfP representative told me that prayer still has to be present in the life of an RfP representative, even if it is not included in the institutionalized setting.[99]

In these and other ways, RfP representatives perceive prayer as critical to the work of the organization. Prayer not only distinguishes RfP from secular organizations;[100] it also builds on the work of RfP by, among other things, providing the right mindset for conflict resolution, motivating RfP representatives in their work, strengthening communities and bridging religious divides, and calling for divine assistance.

B. The Taizé Community

[96] Interview, New York, February 2014.
[97] Interview, New York, February 2014.
[98] Interview, New York, February 2014.
[99] Interview, New York, February 2014.
[100] Interview, New York, February 2014.

While visiting a Carthusian monastery during his university days in 1940, Brother Roger Schütz (known as Brother Roger) was captivated by the monastic life of prayer, and began to form the idea of founding his own community—one that would help the needy and the poor, while also focusing on daily prayer as a way to live the gospel (Spink 1986, 27–28). In addition, through his own experiences and those of his family—some of whom lived in France—Brother Roger saw first-hand the suffering that resulted from World War II, which made him even more determined to create such a community. Out of that desire was born the Taizé Community (Spink 1986, 28). Brother Roger's grandmother's strong influence compelled him to center Taizé on a notion of reconciliation—both between Catholics and Protestants, as well as the broader human family (Fidanzio 2006, 73–74). In addition, when Brother Roger founded the Taizé Community, and compiled the written materials outlining the type of community it would be, he relied on the Benedictine maxim of "*oreat labora"*—meaning "prayer and work" (Spink 1986, 46). This maxim is what defines and sustains the Taizé Community today.

The Taizé Community is known all over the world for the specific types of prayer that the community engages in. As one Taizé pilgrim notes, "Taizé prayers center on a sung liturgy" (Santos 2008, 55). The chanting verses are sung over and over again (in one Taizé service, I counted over 20 repetitions of the same prayer) and often accompanied by musical instruments. The settings of the prayers often include orange-colored cloths hanging in the back of the church (or other buildings where the events are held) and the services are usually lit by candlelight. After several prayers have been sung, there are breaks for an extended moment of silence, and sometimes one of the brothers reads a small portion of scripture. In many of the services, the brothers bring out a wooden cross and lay it on the ground. Brothers and pilgrims then come forward to pray around the cross. Some participants lay their foreheads on the cross while

praying, which is supposed to represent placing all one's burdens on Christ "who is in agony with mankind until the end of time" (Spink 1986, 137). In the Taizé Community, prayer services are held three times per day—once in the morning, once at midday, and once in the evening. During Taizé Community events, in which tens of thousands of people come together in cities around the world to pray, prayer services are held only twice per day. In both settings, prayer services usually last between 30 and 60 minutes, although some brothers and pilgrims will often stay longer to continue praying (Santos 2008, 41).

The Taizé events are held all over the world, but their largest events are comprised of their "European meetings," which are reserved for young people. Such events take place over several days, usually in several sacred spaces around the designated city, and include daily prayer, Bible study, other workshops and meetings, and some tourist-type programs. Participants often stay with local families and the accommodations and resources are sparse. One such meeting was described as such:

> Approximately 30,000 participants flocked to Italy to stay with families and communities in and around Rome, to share in the life of the parishes and to pray together. Prayers were held twice a day simultaneously in the basilicas of St John Lateran, St Mary Major and St Mary of the Angels. Brother Roger spoke in each of them in turn, and his address in each case was relayed immediately to the others. In Rome special emphasis was given to the link with the early Christians, and on 29 December a day was spent in the spirit of prayer and recollection in the city's catacombs. The pilgrimage represented a direct response to Brother Roger's invitation in his 'Letter from Italy' to seek a 'childhood of the Church', a childhood that was not, however, a nostalgia for the Church of the early ages, but rather a state of openness to heartfelt confidence, simplicity, the wonder of love, jubilation, the love of life closely linked to the desire for a living God (Spink 1986, 144).

The Taizé brothers acknowledge that the specific types of prayer they engage in are special. However, for the brothers, the prayers are not merely a beautiful practice to engage in as an exercise peripheral to their other practices and projects. Rather, prayer, together with "work"

or "struggle," is the very foundation upon which the community was founded and continues to be one of the primary tools the Community employs today to achieve its organizational goals.[101] In especially challenging areas of peacebuilding, reconciliation, and forgiveness, prayer is viewed as the first step in a very long process that will also involve other acts like communal work, humanitarian aid, and dialogue.[102]

C. International Justice Mission

Prayer is integral to the work of IJM, and has been since the conception of the organization. As two IJM employees told me, after acting as the lead U.N. investigator for the Rwandan genocide, Gary Haugen decided that he wanted to continue to work on issues of violence and injustice, but from a uniquely Christian perspective. However, he was unable to find such an organization and decided that he might try to create one himself. However, Haugen wanted to make sure that he had support from other Christians, and that the organization itself would be based in Christian practice and the idea that this was God's work. As was relayed to me:

> [W}hen [IJM] came into being, one of the very first things that [Haugen] did was say "I'm not going to start this thing unless I can get 100 people to pray for me, while I'm doing it." So, built into the foundational aspects of who we are, there's that sense that without the appropriate support of people that love us and will pray for us, it's not gonna make much sense to do this at all.[103]

As such, the very founding of the IJM organization was grounded in the practice of prayer (as an integral part of the founding process itself) and the idea that prayer needed to be central to IJM. For the organization, prayer is the act of "simply talking to God about the work we're doing

[101] Interview, Boston, April 2015.
[102] Interview, Boston, April 2015.
[103] Interview via telephone, October 2014.

together,"[104] and the "work" is broken down into two facets—the work that is being done internally in the individual and the human rights work on the ground.

In the first years after the founding, Haugen was very involved in the daily life of the employees, and would often lead them in prayer. However, as the organization grew, Haugen was pulled in many different directions and was incapable of continuing to lead the organization's spiritual practices. He introduced, what IJM employees refer to as, "spiritual disciplines" (which include a heavy focus on prayer) as a way to maintain the strong Christian focus in IJM. Today, prayer continues to be "the undercurrent" of IJM,[105] as it is heavily embedded in the daily organizational life of IJM employees. In particular, IJM includes four "spiritual disciplines" as part of its formal organizational practices. They include daily solitude, corporate prayer, a quarterly spiritual retreat, and the day of solitude.[106]

Every morning, in every IJM office around the world, employees engage in thirty minutes of silent solitude. Haugen introduced this practice in 2004 because, as one representative described, Haugen "had the sense that there was more that God wanted to do, but as an organization we weren't ready… to receive it, so he built in the discipline of receptivity like sitting in silence to prepare for the day, and to receive from God what it was that he wanted for us in that day.[107] During this daily solitude exercise, IJM employees spend 30 minutes alone, usually in their respective offices. Following solitude, often several hours later, each IJM office engages in corporate prayer, where IJM employees come together to pray on issues that have

[104] This definition is drawn from one provided by the now-deceased professor of philosophy, Dallas Willard (Interview, via telephone, October 2014).
[105] Interview, Arlington, VA, August 2014.
[106] Daily solitude is a different exercise from the day of solitude. The former is a 30 minute daily exercise that takes place in IJM corporate offices. The latter describes the practice of each employee taking one day off per year to engage in a day of personal solitude in their own homes (or at a place of their choosing).
[107] Interview via telephone, October 2014.

been highlighted through employee prayer requests. Prayer requests can include more personal issues—having to do with the individual lives of IJM employees outside of work—or with issues directly related to IJM projects and goals.

There are two other spiritual disciplines that do not take place on a daily basis—quarterly retreats and a day of solitude. The quarterly retreat, similar to corporate prayer, is a communal exercise, where IJM employees gather together outside of IJM offices to engage in prayer and Bible study. The day of solitude is more akin to the daily practice of solitude, as it is focused on IJM individuals and their relationship with God. During the day of solitude, IJM employees are encouraged to stay home and use the time to reflect and pray.

Though not one of the spiritual disciplines, the Global Prayer Gathering (GPG) is another event that is central to IJM's work and is heavily focused on prayer. This event, which IJM has held annually for over a decade, includes IJM employees, clients, supporters, and any others who are interested in attending. In recent years the GPG included close to 2000 participants and was held in the Washington DC area. In the GPG plenary sessions participants engage in a worship service (a Christian musical group leads the crowd in Christian songs), listen to guest speakers (which often includes Haugen, other IJM employees, as well as people who have been rescued by IJM or have had other dealings with the organization), pray for specific IJM goals and clients, and engage in communion. In GPG break-out prayer room sessions, participants are assigned to different prayer rooms, where they hear from IJM employees working in specific regions and countries. Materials are offered from each region that tell the stories of trafficking victims or that show the culture of the region (for instance, in the Bolivia prayer room in 2012, participants were encouraged to take key chains that were attached to small woven lama figurines). IJM employees talk about some recent IJM successes, but focus mostly on ongoing cases and projects, and, in

particular, the challenges they are facing in the field. Participants are then asked to pray for specific clients and outcomes, and they do so in small (5-10 people) groups.

In addition to the spiritual disciplines and the Global Prayer Gathering, prayer is a part of the mobilization materials that IJM provides to its supporters, which include IJM Campus Charters. Hundreds of U.S. campuses have IJM Charters and they represent a wide range of college types, including private and public universities, Christian and non-Christian ("College Students" 2016). In the "mobilization" materials for the charters, IJM encourages groups to hold prayer gatherings that include a "prayer wall." The prayer wall is a map of the world with IJM prayer requests specific to different areas. In these materials, IJM notes the importance of prayer to IJM's overall goals, stating that prayer gatherings "can be a significant way to engage your campus in actively advocating on behalf of victims of oppression" ("Justice Week Toolkit," n.d., 16).

Prayer is both central to and consequential for IJM employees, their daily work, and the broader goals of the organization. Though an initial encounter with IJM—on the main pages of their website or through an exchange with their employees—does not always reveal the Christian practices embedded in the organization, for those who are looking, such phenomena soon start to appear everywhere. Even IJM annual reports, which summarize the organization's fiscal status as well as their accomplishments in the field, include references to the importance of prayer in the organization ("2013 Annual Report" 2014, 11). Prayer was a central founding practice for Haugen and his associates, and remains vital to the IJM organization today. A quote by Oswald Chambers, included in some of IJM's Campus Charters mobilization materials, succinctly sums up the perceived role and effectiveness of prayer in the human rights work of IJM: "We tend to use prayer as a last resort, but God wants it to be our first line of defense. We pray when there's

nothing else we can do, but God wants us to pray before we do anything at all" ("Justice Week Toolkit," n.d., 16).

It is clear that prayer is important for Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission; though the ways in which prayer is understood and practiced varies. In the next section, I more fully explore the meanings and roles of prayer for each organization vis-à-vis specific goals and projects.

Section IV: The Meanings and Roles of FBO Prayer

Multiple scholars have noted the secularist bias that informs mainstream international relations scholarship (Fitzgerald 2011; Hurd 2008; Wilson 2012). However, in recent years, studies have emerged that try to engage with religion and secularism in ways that take account of a secularist bias, and, in fact, try to move past it (Lynch 2011; Lynch 2014; Paras 2014; Sheikh 2014; Wilson 2012). Still, prayer remains an under-explored and under-examined religious practice. The neglect of prayer in IR is due to the religious-secular split, but also to broader dichotomies about what constitutes reasonable and consequential action in service-advocacy organizations. Similar to the religious-secular separation in IR scholarship, Andrea Paras (2014) has noted, in her examination of Canadian FBOs, that due to donor pressures some development FBOs are increasingly buying into the "secular fiction" and are attempting to separate their secular activities from their religious activities. Such actions are, in part, due to concerns about the propensity of FBOs to proselytize. However, such norms, which encourage a separation of the religious and the secular, manifested in both external (e.g. donor) and internal sources, are also based in assumptions about the appropriateness and effectiveness of certain practices in the workplace. Those acts and ideas that are perceived to be religious are associated with the

spiritual, transcendental, emotional, and irrational, and are thus, deemed inappropriate for, and, in many ways inconsequential for, public life.

Such pressures to conform to common notions about what is legitimate and appropriate action or work is not lost on FBOs. But despite those pressures, my research shows that prayer can be a vital part of FBO projects and a primary contributor to FBO broader goals. FBO representatives sometimes do rely on dichotomies between prayer and other kinds of practices or work; however, such concepts and dichotomies are not fixed, even for the same representative, indicating the ways in which such distinctions may be uniquely problematized by FBOs. In addition, the meanings and roles that prayer takes on in Religions for Peace, International Justice Mission, and the Taizé Community, indicate that prayer is a critical part of service-advocacy. Ultimately, I argue that prayer is very much part of the "real" and "consequential" work of FBOs, and is, thus, relevant for issues of peace and global governance. The below sub-sections will (1) examine how FBOs define prayer and its relationship to real or consequential action or work, and (2) explore what meanings and roles prayer takes on in specific projects.

A. Prayer and Action

I assert that prayer is under-explored in IR and other literatures focusing on FBOs. Even in those few studies that mention prayer, what such a practice means and does in various FBO contexts is unexamined. In effect, prayer is analytically separated from the other acts that FBOs engage in, leaving the reader to assume that prayer is unimportant and/or inconsequential for FBO projects and goals. Prayer is treated as the opposite of "real" action or work because scholars assume that it is purely focused on the transcendental. However, such assumptions are not always borne out when examining how FBOs themselves conceptualize the role of prayer in

their organizations. Definitions of prayer relied on by representatives from Religions for Peace, International Justice Mission, and the Taizé Community often include the notion that prayer is an interaction or communication with the divine or transcendental. Yet, for these representatives, such practices are not necessarily separate or analytically distinct from the real or consequential work of the organization. Moreover, when such prayer-action/work dichotomies *are* employed, they do not always include the notion that prayer is somehow less important or vital for FBOs than other practices and strategies.

What is prayer? For the FBO representatives I spoke with, prayer involves some sort of interaction or direct communication with the divine, though there are different kinds of prayer that include this kind of direct communication. One RfP representative, for instance, explained that there is a difference between intercessory prayer, thanksgiving prayer, and warfare prayer (the latter is used to "break down every stronghold" that deters peace). She noted that in order to obtain your goals, you have to engage in the right kind of prayer.[108] In some cases, the pray-er (or a group of pray-ers) is asking for something specific—for a divine intervention in order to further a particular goal, for "God's direction" or guidance in a particular organizational meeting, or for the hiring of a new FBO employee.[109] In other instances, prayer is not so much of a direct communication with a deity, as much as a meditative exercise between oneself and the divine.[110] In the latter context, there is an engagement or interaction with the transcendent, but less of an actual conversation with God.

The Taizé prayers are interesting in that they seem to be a kind of mixing of these two types of prayer. On the one hand, there is a very distinct idea that prayer is communication with the Christian God, but on the other hand, Taizé prayers are not comprised of specific requests for

[108] Interview, via telephone, March 2014.
[109] Interviews: via telephone, October and March 2014, and Arlington, VA 2014.
[110] Interviews, Oslo, September 2012 and New York, February 2014.

the divine. One Taizé pilgrim describes his prayer life before and after encountering Taizé prayers:

> I realize now that I was either trying to praise God with adoration or ask for something from God through petition or intercession. What I failed to learn how to do was to sit before God and listen and remain in the stillness of the moment and allow God to penetrate my soul. Being task-oriented is contrary to the prayer life at Taizé. The prayers are aimed at creating a space for us to simply be before our King (Santos 2008, 118).

Each discussion about or reference to prayer I encountered in interviews and organizational materials confirmed that prayer, for these organizations and their representatives, is a practice that involves the divine or transcendental—something that is beyond humanity and complete human understanding. However, contrary to how religious practice is often treated in social scientific scholarship and in broader secularist discourses, the FBO representatives I spoke with did not necessarily conceptualize prayer as something that was fundamentally different from their organizations' other practices. The representatives were aware of the common dichotomy between material action and religious action, but some of the representatives challenged the notion that other forms of work are somehow more real or consequential than practices like prayer. For instance, one IJM representative asserted that,

> [I]t seems sort of like human hubris to say that the real work is the stuff that the humans do, because I know myself to be a person who is not wise enough, not caring enough, not loving enough to do what needs to be done. So, if that's the case, then there's a huge gap between what I can accomplish myself and what I want to see accomplished. So, I'm just going to assume that God has built that desire into me and I'm going to pray that he would see it through. Both what needs to change about me and what needs to change in the world.[111]

This representative highlighted the ways that prayer contributed to the broader goals of IJM and indicated that prayer was just as important as other IJM activities, if not more so. That said, this representative and another I spoke with, though acknowledging that prayer was part of what IJM

[111] Interview, via telephone, October 2014.

does and should not necessarily be separated from the other work they do, seemed to fall back into common work-prayer dichotomies. Both representatives alternated back and forth between talking about the "real work" or the "practical day-to-day work" and prayer as a primary part of IJM "work,"[112] indicating that such dichotomous conceptualizations are very much ingrained in the way we talk about prayer.

Similarly, the Religions for Peace website says that the organization "goes beyond dialogue and bears fruit in common concrete action" ("Mission" 2015), and throughout their materials, RfP uses the term "action" to indicate that the organization engages in activities that "go beyond" dialogue. This suggests that there are some practices that RfP representatives see as more "concrete" and consequential than others. Yet, what is considered "common" or "concrete action" is often unstated. Rather, it is simply implied that certain actions will be best suited for particular global problems and contexts; leaving open the possibility that prayer might be conceived as real work. In fact, though RfP representatives did not indicate that prayer could be considered action or real work, they did talk about the ways that prayer contributes to broader RfP goals vis-à-vis specific reconciliation, peacebuilding, and development projects, which suggests that RfP representatives *do* consider prayer to be consequential for the organization's broader goals.

The Taizé Community, in ways that are different from IJM and RfP, very distinctly separates prayer from work. As I discuss more in Chapters Three and Four, the Taizé brothers rely on two inter-related notions of "inner contemplation" and "struggle," where inner contemplation refers to prayer, and struggle (or what is sometimes called human solidarity) refers to work. This separation is drawn from a Benedictine practice of delineating the three parts of life: work, prayer, and sleep (Applebaum 1992, 208), where the waking life is comprised of

[112] Interview, Arlington, VA, August 2014.

work and prayer. Indeed, as noted earlier, Taizé founder, Brother Roger, was inspired by the Benedictine phrase "*oreat labora"* when founding the community (Spink 1986, 46). For the Community, prayer indicates the contemplative practice that each brother engages in daily. Work, on the other hand, refers to engaging with human challenges and struggles.[113] Yet, I would argue that the Taizé separation between prayer and work does not take on the same kind of normative implications usually associated with work-life or rational-emotional dichotomies. Those dichotomies are imbued with hierarchies—wherein life and emotion are not appropriate for the rational workplace. The Taizé Community makes no such normative judgments about which is better for the purposes of their goals. If we think about work as something one does to accomplish a goal—a means to an end—prayer can be that for the Taizé Community. Through prayer, brothers and pilgrims are able to further their projects of peacebuilding and reconciliation, not only by preparing the pray-er to go out and engage with the world (i.e. "work"), but also through prayer as a practice itself. Thus, prayer *is* the work, but also separate from it. Prayer and work do and *must* go together. As one brother told me, "You don't have to choose [between prayer and work]. It's not either/or."[114]

These examples show the ways in which conceptions of prayer and work are manifested in International Justice Mission, Religions for Peace, and the Taizé Community. These meanings, in some instances, seem to mirror or reinforce common dichotomies that would relegate prayer—as a transcendental act—to the private, emotional, and irrational. However, in other cases, prayer takes on meanings that challenge these dichotomies. The next sub-section further problematizes the notion that prayer is inconsequential for FBO work and for

[113] Interview, Boston, April 2015.
[114] Interview, Boston, April 2015.

international relations more broadly by showing the myriad ways that prayer contributes to FBO projects and goals.

B. Prayer in Service-Advocacy

We might be tempted to assume that prayer *facilitates* the real work of FBOs, perhaps by providing certain religious motivations for the representatives, reinforcing FBOs' religious identities, or other means—and that assumption is, in part, correct. However, prayer has many roles within International Justice Mission, Religions for Peace, and the Taizé Community, some of which, I argue, constitute real, effectual action. In addition, the varied roles that prayer plays in these organizations challenge some of the other common assumptions about prayer. For instance, in some instances, prayer is focused on the relationship between the pray-er and the divine. However, prayer is sometimes also focused on the relationships between and among humans. In addition, contrary to the notion that prayer is purely a spiritual or psychological act, my research shows that prayer is sometimes perceived to have a physical effect on the human body.[115] Thus, even when prayer is focused towards the divine or the otherworldly, there can be meanings and perceived effects that are very much related to human life and human activity, as well as themes central to international relations, including issues of peace and conflict, and global governance.

At the most basic level, prayer is important for FBOs because the practice helps to distinguish them from other organizations. FBO representatives acknowledge and are often proud of the ways in which religious phenomena, including prayer, distinguish their

[115] This notion is not new in other disciplines. There are, for instance, studies funded by the John Templeton Foundation have examined the effects of prayer on, for instance, medical patient outcomes (Benson *et al.* 2006). However, these studies often focus solely on the individual, while my research highlights the ways in which prayer can have communal effects on the body.

organizations from non-faith-based groups where religion is often thought of as something private and inappropriate for public work life and/or broader service-advocacy projects. One RfP representative, referring to the symbolic prayer performances held at the beginning of certain RfP events, confirmed that prayer is important for distinguishing RfP from its secular counterparts: "What we do is, we say we celebrate your religion. Take it with you. It is part of who you are as a person. It's part of your identity. It's not something that should be shunned. It's something that actually is….something that contributes to your work."[116] For this representative, prayer is tied to one's religious identity, and bringing one's religious identity into the workplace (and, in this case, into the context of peacebuilding and development), is beneficial—it actually helps Religions for Peace achieve some of its goals.

In addition to reinforcing the religious identities of FBOs and their individual representatives, prayer also plays a role in specific FBO projects. For instance, RfP sometimes employs prayer to enable bridge-building across lines of difference through a kind of religious education framework. In these contexts, peacebuilding and reconciliation participants are exposed to different practices, including prayers from various religious communities. For instance, at the 2013 Women's Pre-Assembly to the World Assembly, representatives from Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim traditions took 2-3 minutes to say a prayer from each of their own faiths. Through exposure to different practices, participants are better able to understand fellow participants from other religious, ethnic, or political communities. As one representative explained:

> [P]rayer could be about the pure basic factor to understand each other, because here we don't understand each other….we see this in processes where religious leaders, of different faith traditions, have no tradition of being together. No tradition of more systematically speaking together, let alone acting together. And in that, there is a distance, and there is this unknown territory which is outside my

[116] Interview, New York, February 2014.

> own. There is this "we" and "them" – very clearly "we" and "them." To break down that "we" and "them" also you will see that prayers, again not common prayers, but prayers for understanding, and using prayers to explore. And in some cases, the prayers are being explained. What is the function of the prayer? What is the content of the prayer? So that it is the sharing, not only symbolic, but in fact, in substance.[117]

In this context, "ceremonial prayers" are used as a way to educate participants about the Other, to show how different peoples engage in religious practice. Such a conception of prayer is very much inline with RfP's more general adherence to the notion that religious education is a key factor in establishing peace and reconciliation between and among religious communities. Prayer is viewed as one way to move beyond religious barriers through a teaching-learning process, though this does not mean that individuals or communities of different faiths pray together (at the same time) or meld their respective prayer traditions into one common prayer. Such practices would be inherently problematic for RfP as they connote a syncretistic practice, which goes against RfP's multi-religious approach.

The performance of prayer in multi-religious settings is not only about education. RfP representatives also conceive of such practices as setting the stage for a peacebuilding or reconciliation activity by creating a sacred space for multi-religious dialogue. One senior RfP official remarked that "[A] multi-religious atmosphere is created by prayer at the beginning, or a moment of silence."[118] Prayer not only makes people more sensitive and open to each other, but can create "the positive energy of genuine collaboration."[119]

For instance, some of the FBO representatives spoke about the ways that prayer and similar practices can transform the individual to be better prepared for the task at hand. As a brother from the Taizé Community noted, "Prayer gives you the vitality, the energy, the hope"

[117] Interview, Oslo, September 2012.
[118] Interview, New York, February 2014.
[119] Email correspondence, January 28, 2014 and interview, New York, February 2014.

that is necessary for engaging in the challenges ahead.[120] Moreover, prayer can make you "more awake to the challenges."[121] At the senior levels of RfP, a prayer or a moment of silence can be used as a time of spiritual devotion, meditation, or reflection for the individual participants, which can result in a strengthening of or increased clarity for an individual.[122] A senior representative said, "As Religions for Peace staff, we have to maintain the peace in our mind as peacemakers……prayer is an important part of our job to prepare and equip ourselves to be a peaceful, neutral, impartial and dedicated peacemaker."[123]

In addition, according to some of the FBO representatives I spoke with, the work of engaging along lines of difference about contested and sensitive topics (i.e. HIV/AIDS, ethnic and religious conflict, human rights issues) can be quite challenging. For these representatives, prayer offers one way to prepare and strengthen oneself for these kinds of difficult exchanges. Some RfP representatives, for example, especially those who do not believe in a deity, use prayer or meditation as a contemplative exercise that helps them to prepare themselves for the work to be done.[124] A Peruvian RfP affiliate, who works primarily through a local Bahá'í group, said that prayer can be a way to help people make better decisions within the context of the community and the organization, rather than focusing on their own self-interests. She noted that prayer can remind us that "somos seres trascendentes" (we are transcendental beings) and not only focused on material interests.[125] For these and other representatives, then, prayer is, in part, viewed as an act that can bring strength, wisdom, or clarity to the individual who is participating in a given peacebuilding or humanitarian project.

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[120] Interview, Boston, April 2015.
[121] Interview, Boston, April 2015.
[122] Interview, Oslo, September 2012.
[123] Interview, New York, February 2014.
[124] Interview, Oslo, September 2012.
[125] Email correspondence, January 28, 2014.

More specifically, prayer is sometimes employed by FBOs as a way to maintain the emotional and spiritual health of FBO representatives. Working in humanitarian, human rights, and peacebuilding sectors can be emotionally and psychologically taxing. In his detailed account of Amnesty International, Stephen Hopgood talks about the severe mental stresses that employees are put under due to long work hours and sometimes-hostile work relationships among employees, as well as the psychological pressures created by working on cases having to do with human suffering. Talking to victims of political violence can be very distressing for Amnesty workers (Hopgood 2006, Chapter 2). Employees of International Justice Mission confront similar kinds of emotional and psychological stresses as those faced by Amnesty employees. IJM is in the business of rescuing people (including children) from horrific circumstances of sex trafficking and abuse, slavery, and other violent contexts. Many IJM workers are confronted with these acts of violence day after day, which takes an emotional toll. However, as one IJM staff member relayed to me, the spiritual disciplines that IJM incorporates into its organizational daily life, which are focused heavily on prayer, help to take some of the pressure off of employees. As she put it, prayer functions as a daily reminder that IJM staffers themselves are not ultimately responsible for the human rights work of IJM. Instead, IJM workers view themselves as doing God's work. This employee compared her experience of working at another non-profit and working at IJM:

> [B]efore I came to IJM I was at another non-profit doing similar work that was not faith-based….there everyone worked ridiculous hours and people burned out so fast. And even after I left there it took three months to recover because you don't realize how much it's affecting you and it was a mentality of like "We need to solve this" and "Look at what we did" and "These are the results that we made happen." You don't realize it, but it's a huge burden on yourself. So, coming to IJM, where they truly believe that it's God's work and that we're being invited into it to do his work just is….You're like "Oh, ok. I'm gonna try my hardest,

> but…this is not up to me. I am not going to be the one to move mountains." So, I think that, in itself, is huge.[126]

This employee went on to talk about the "horrific stories" that staff members in the field were exposed to on a regular basis. She said that IJM quarterly prayer retreats, daily stillness, and corporate prayer were, at least in part, ways to help those people manage the emotional and psychological stresses that those kinds of experiences can result in. One representative described IJM's work and how work life would change if prayer were not a part of the organization. He said,

> IJM staff are praying because they're confronting a kind of challenge in the work, a kind of pain and suffering in the work, and a kind of secondary trauma in the work, where, if they, particularly our frontline staff, but also staff back at headquarters, did not have a kind of loving God to cry out to and a whole set of Psalms to read from where Psalms is just crying out on behalf of the oppressed and the injustice in the world, it would feel like lonely, lonely work…..You would be less encouraged on a daily basis, less courageous on a daily basis, less kind to one another on a daily basis. Because if you're just responsible for the work all by yourself it's going to crush you at some point. Careers in human rights, especially in work that deals with violence against the poor, whether you're a prosecutor in a special victims unit or whatever, the longevity is just not very long. Our hope and our sense, given the spiritual disciplines that are built into the system, and from what we've learned about staff care, is that these things are core to who we are because they are absolutely necessary for our survival and for us to thrive.[127]

Some of these examples highlight the ways in which prayer can be very helpful for mentally, emotionally, and spiritually strengthening FBO employees.

In fact, IJM's approach to prayer is somewhat unique in that the organization allocates specific times for each employee to work on her own relationship with God through, in part, prayer. In these contexts prayer is much more individualized, wherein the practice is focused on the needs of the individual employee. However, the effects of prayer in these contexts have a much broader scope. Though these kinds of prayer do not have a direct effect on the

[126] Interview, Arlington, VA, August 2014.
[127] Interview, via telephone, October 2014.

organizational goals of IJM, they do have a mediated effect, through the ability of IJM employees to do their jobs effectively and without "burning out." And, as one of the FBO representatives pointed out in an excerpt above, without prayer, service-advocacy work can soon become too much to bear. If the employees are not mentally and spiritually healthy—which, for IJM employees, is directly linked to the idea that the ultimate responsibility for IJM's work rests with God—it is likely that the organization (and its goals) will feel the effects.

Yet, prayer does more than facilitate successful service-advocacy work by improving employee health or setting the stage for a particular project. It can also play a much more direct role in FBO programs, especially in peacebuilding and reconciliation projects in post-conflict environments. For instance, prayer was prevalent in reintegration programs implemented in Sierra Leone. As one RfP representative told me, in the aftermath of the civil war (1991-2002) communities were struggling with reintegrating community members who had wronged other members of the community in some way—in many cases this involved some sort of violent assault. Religions for Peace, through their locally-affiliated Inter Religious Council, began to implement reintegration programs to bring members back into their communities. Prayer was a critical part of the process. As a symbolic action, prayer allowed the individuals who had committed the wrongful acts, as well as the individuals who were the targets of those acts, to "cross the divisive barrier" that was between them. Yet, prayer was not only symbolic. It was also performative (Austin 1975). As a public act, prayer acted as a social contract between the two groups. The contract stipulated that each side would accept the other person or group; regardless of their past transgressions. According to this representative, in this context,

> [Prayer] signifies, in a way, the threshold of being accepted and visibly saying, "Now you're part of our community again. You were lost and now you're back. And you don't have to ask whether or not we have accepted you. Everybody knows what you've been through. Everybody knows what you've done. But

> we've accepted. You have to accept what it means to be back into the community." This is part of the symbolic action that's put in place. And that's where, if you have a full community around that, you would, in many cases, find people of different faith traditions, and that's where also expressions of prayer, meditation, commitments, spiritual commitments, would be not only one – but would be more than one. Because it is a common acceptance ceremony. Of course now we are digging down into a particular setting, which is not necessarily the same and happening all over the place, but as one example of the function of prayer in reintegration.[128]

In this context, prayer functioned as a way to seal a contract of reintegration, which was vital to the overall reconciliation project in Sierra Leone. As this same representative noted, this function of prayer could be fulfilled in ways that are not "religious" in other contexts. For instance, he noted that helping to rebuild houses in a particular community might fulfill the same function. However, in Sierra Leone, prayer and other religious practices, in particular, function as rites that indicate a formal step of reintegration. Prayer is a visible symbol acknowledging the acceptance of the individual back into the community, and the individual's understanding of what that entails.[129] In this case, prayer plays a critical part of the reconciliation process that does not necessarily conform to expectations of prayer as a practice that is only focused on the transcendental and inconsequential for real action. Here prayer is, in part, analogous to building houses—an overtly material and consequential act; though it also includes aspects of the transcendental.

Similar to RfP, from a Taizé perspective, prayer is critical to the peacebuilding and reconciliation process. However, in the Taizé context, prayer does not seal a reintegration contract, but rather, it opens up participants—enabling them to move past internal roadblocks. Furthermore, these processes are not only mental—as is often assumed of prayer. Instead, the Taizé brothers perceive prayer to affect both the mind or spirit *and* the body (or bod*ies*).

[128] Interview, Oslo, September 2012.
[129] Interview, Oslo, September 2012.

According to one Taizé brother, in settings where people are engaging across lines of religious or ethnic difference, participants often bring many entrenched ideas about others that are not conducive for successful and meaningful engagement. It is prayer that allows people to move past those mental roadblocks. Taizé prayers, in particular, are thought to be especially conducive to this kind of trust-building and opening-up experience, due to their focus on beauty and song. As the brother articulated,

> [T]here's something about prayer at Taizé because it's mostly prayer with song and there's a certain beauty in the singing, no? In that sense, prayer that includes an element of beauty is disarming. Because beauty's disarming. You don't protect yourself from beauty. You want to open up to beauty. I think if lots of people opened up at Taizé to hope, to trust, it's because of that dimension of beauty that is involved in the prayer.[130]

So, for the Taizé brothers, prayer is not some ascetic experience, separate from the pleasurable experiences of the world. Rather, the brothers believe that prayer (and the Church more broadly) should include beauty and "poetry" (Spink 1986, xi), and this experience of beauty is at the same time both mental and physical. The pray-ers encounter beauty through the rhythms of the singing chants and the visual stimuli vis-à-vis candles and fabrics in the prayer chapels. These encounters then disarm the pray-ers, bringing down those mental roadblocks that assign negative connotations to particular religious, ethnic, or political groups.

For the Taizé Community, prayer also involves the physical body much more directly than other kinds of prayer, as Taizé prayers require participants to sing. One Taizé brother described the following:

> [T]here's something physical about prayer. You're actually opening up. If you want to sing you have to breathe properly. So there's something about opening your lungs, opening your heart. There's something physical about prayer too……..You might not know what's possible. Can I forgive this person? You

[130] Interview, Boston, April 2015.

> might not know in advance, but there's something about prayer that opens you up to possibilities that you didn't imagine before.[131]

In essence, the singing aspects of the prayers opens the body. In fact, prayer is opening the bod*ies* of all the participants in a given Taizé event, which then facilitates an opening of those minds to possibilities for reconciliation. In this way, prayer becomes an act that not only focuses on the body, but it becomes a *communal* bodily act, which scholars have not addressed, even in those studies in other disciplines that have examined the effects of prayer on the body (e.g. the variety of studies focusing on prayer funded by the John Templeton foundation).

For the Taizé brothers, there is a very clear link between the spiritual and the physical (Spink 1986, 69). This link problematizes common notions of work or effectual action, as well as broader mind-body distinctions. Such dichotomies tend to divorce physical action from the spiritual—legitimizing the former but not the latter within the context of public life. In the Taizé context, the singing/chanting and aesthetic aspects of prayer are incredibly important because they can have *both* mental and physical effects on participants—opening their minds and bodies up in ways that are fruitful for sometimes-difficult encounters and engagements with others and building trust. Moreover, in these instances, prayer is not peripheral to peacebuilding and reconciliation—facilitating the real work of reconciliation. Rather, the act of prayer *is* building peace and reconciling.

My interviews show that prayer plays a wide range of roles in the work of Religions for Peace, International Justice Mission, and the Taizé Community. Contrary to assumptions that prayer is inconsequential for service-advocacy work, I have shown that, for FBOs, prayer is a tool that plays a vital role in specific areas of reconciliation, reintegration, religious education, and psychological and mental health. Such findings indicate that scholars should pay more

[131] Interview, Boston, April 2015.

attention to prayer and other practices that are often side-lined in the literature, in order to better understand why specific FBO strategies of peacebuilding, humanitarianism, development, and human rights are more or less effective and/or beneficial to the communities that are at the receiving end of such efforts.

In this section I have argued that treating prayer as separate from the real work of FBOs neglects the ways in which such categorizations are problematized, blurred, and debated by and in FBOs themselves. As my research shows, FBO representatives sometimes distinguish prayer from work, but these categorizations can shift or may have different normative connotations than those often assigned to dichotomies relating to appropriate or consequential work life. In addition, assuming that prayer is inconsequential and/or essentializing prayer—i.e. assuming that such a practice is easily defined—can neglect the varied ways that prayer contributes, directly or indirectly, to organizational goals. In the next section I discuss some of the implications of my research for international relations and other scholarship and suggest areas of future research.

Conclusion

There are many other meanings and uses of prayer in and for Religions for Peace, International Justice Mission, and the Taizé Community. Here, I have only highlighted some of them. Yet, just from these examples we can see that prayer takes on a variety of complex roles in peacebuilding, humanitarianism, development, and human rights. In most cases, prayer is "focused towards God";[132] however, how prayer impacts the organizations' employees and projects goes beyond what might be perceived as a mere spiritual or transcendental impact. Prayer can facilitate and/or deepen important human relationships across religious and cultural divides, for instance. More than an ancillary practice used by FBO representatives as a symbol of

[132] Interview via telephone, March 2014.

their respective faith commitments, my research shows that prayer is a complex organizational practice that has specific and sometimes strategic meanings and uses in a wide range of areas and has, or is perceived to have, a direct influence on the work of each FBO. For instance, it is through prayer and other practices (like the IJM day-long spiritual formation event) that IJM not only asserts its Christian identity, but also continually (daily) asks for God's help and intervention in specific IJM projects.[133] Prayer is not a peripheral practice, but is, in many contexts, the very foundation of the work being done by these organizations. In some cases, FBOs are strategic in their uses of prayer; in others prayer becomes a normalized way to be, live, and work for FBOs and their representatives. Prayer is used at all levels (though in varying capacities and degrees) of each FBO and throughout the world vis-à-vis their local offices and projects. As one RfP representative noted, "[Prayer] is such an important, integral part of whatever we do from beginning to the end."[134]

Such findings have important implications for international relations, as well as specific areas of research in areas of peace and conflict, and global governance. Most importantly, my findings suggest that ontologies of religion in IR requires reassessment. Though religion is no longer completely absent from IR scholarship, the religious-secular dichotomy continues to pervade assumptions about what constitutes religious practice and other phenomena. Prayer is defined as a religious act that is purely focused on the transcendental. Scholars assume it is irrational and separate from real action. As a result of these assumptions, prayer is sidelined in IR studies. If not ignored altogether, it is essentialized and treated as inconsequential for politics, and international relations, in particular. In studies of FBOs, prayer is simply referenced as a way to identify a faith-based organization (in opposition to its secular counterpart), and is not fully

[133] Interview via telephone, October 2014.
[134] Interview via telephone, October 2014.

examined. By treating prayer as a practice that is solely focused on the transcendental and separate from real and consequential action or work, scholars lose site of the ways in which prayer plays important roles in the everyday operations of FBOs, as well as in their on-the-ground projects. In order to take into account practices like prayer, scholars must take a reflexive approach to religion; wherein certain "religious" phenomena are not essentialized but are instead closely examined for the meanings and roles they take on for the subjects (in this case FBOs) themselves *and* how such practices inform specific strategies, identities, and projects.

As such, my findings suggest that further studies should be done on the meanings and roles of prayer in three specific areas: peacebuilding, humanitarianism and development, and human rights. First, peacebuilding studies are no longer limited to the secular "liberal peace" framework—focusing on states, formal diplomatic sessions, and ceasefires. Scholars are introducing new frameworks including those of strategic peacebuilding, just peace, everyday peace, and local peace. As a result, more scholars are noting the important role of religion and religious actors in peacebuilding endeavors. Yet, while many of these scholars acknowledge the use of prayer and other religious practices in peacebuilding, the study of these practices in these contexts is underdeveloped. This chapter sheds light on the various ways prayer, in particular, is employed by two peacebuilding organizations (as well as one organization not focused on peacebuilding)—one Christian, and one multi-religious. Further research might examine the ways in which prayer is used in other peacebuilding contexts. Such research would not only shed more light on the ways in which prayer problematizes the conceptual dichotomies often imbedded in ontologies of religion in IR, but might also provide insights into how alternative practices can further facilitate successful peacebuilding projects.

Second, there is an increasing focus on the unique role of FBOs in humanitarian and development sectors and whether or not such organizations are beneficial or problematic. The debate over whether such organizations proselytize is often at the center of such discussions (either explicitly or implicitly). My research highlights some of the myriad ways that a particular religious practice—prayer—is employed in humanitarian and development contexts. Future research might (1) examine the specific ways in which prayer might confirm or problematize common conceptions about FBOs and their propensity to proselytize *and* (2) assess to what extent prayer might help or hinder specific aspects of humanitarian and development projects. Such research would not only inform scholarly debates about the value of FBOs, but could also provide important policy recommendations for governmental donors like USAID and their requirements for grant recipients vis-à-vis "religious" aspects of FBO work.

Third, the literature on the relationship between human rights and religion tends to (1) talk about the religious heritage of modern human rights principles, and/or (2) treat modern human rights as secular, neutral, and universal. There is very little discussion of how religion and human rights interact more directly in contemporary settings. My research shows that IJM, one of the leading human rights organizations working on issues of human trafficking and slavery, not only employs prayer in its work, but does so on a daily basis. More research on why and how organizations and communities are employing prayer to address human rights concerns is warranted.

My findings also have broader implications, as prayer is not confined to FBOs. Though prayer, in some contexts—particularly in the Global North—is sometimes conceived as a very private religious activity that has nothing to do (and *should* have nothing to do) with public spaces (this can most readily be seen in the ongoing debates about prayer in U.S. public schools),

many examples show that prayer is very much part of public and political events in various locales. Not only are a large number of domestic and transnational prayer campaigns, networks, and events emerging all over the world, but state leaders and legislators from many countries participate in public prayer rallies. For instance, one of my interviews indicated that prayer is an important symbol or signal of common political action when religious leaders from her country come together to pray for peace or to pledge their commitment to address a specific social or political problem.[135] Women who do not often have a voice in their communities also use prayer. As one RfP representative noted, men often dominate religious hierarchies in Christian and African traditional religious communities. In these contexts, women come together not only to create a community that focuses on and promotes issues that are salient for women, but also to give them a chance to lead through prayer.[136] These examples show that rather than being pushed to the fringes of IR scholarship, the meaning and role of prayer in public and political spheres deserves scholarly attention.

Furthermore, the future research trajectories I suggest should not stop with prayer. There is a range of so-called "religious" practices that bear further inquiry. Such practices include various forms of worship, the recitation of religious texts, declarations of faith, and other practices. In addition, my research may bear implications for other kinds of practices that are not necessarily viewed as religious, but that are often outside the scope of what is considered a legitimate topic of study in IR.

In this chapter I have argued that prayer does not always fit the conceptual mold that it is often assigned to. Rather than being a purely private, individual, transcendental, irrational act that is inconsequential for politics, I have shown that prayer can take on a range of critical and

[135] Interview via Skype, January 2014.
[136] Interview via Skype, January 2014.

consequential meanings and roles for FBOs in their transnational projects of peacebuilding, humanitarianism, development, and human rights. Such findings highlight the ways in which current ontologies of religion may lead scholars (and others) to miss a vital practice of peacebuilding and global governance, and suggest that further research on prayer and other practices is needed.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

How does religion affect international relations? In particular, how does religion influence the work of transnational faith-based organizations working in peacebuilding, development, humanitarian, and human rights sectors? These kinds of questions are often at the center of studies in religion and IR, as well as in FBO scholarship; however, I assert that such questions are inherently problematic. In this formulation, religion is treated as an independent variable. For instance, in broader religion and IR studies, one might ask whether and to what extent the existence of a Muslim majority population might lead a specific country to be more prone to conflict than others. Or, as relates to FBOs in particular, one might question whether Christian values uniquely contribute to development programs. I agree with critical scholars of religion and IR who argue that such questions often reify religion—treating a complex group of actors, beliefs, discourses, and practices as easily identifiable and bounded entities, and often framing religion as analytically separate from the secular and political. At the same time, I would challenge scholars like Timothy Fitzgerald (2011) who critique such a treatment of religion in IR, but do not provide an alternative way forward. The question becomes, how do we study these phenomena that we (e.g. scholars, practitioners) often call religious without falling into the same trap of reifying such phenomena?

This dissertation calls upon scholars of religion and IR to approach our research with reflexivity. In particular, I suggest that we need to reassess our own ontologies of religion—i.e. what assumptions and categorizations we use to describe and analyze religious phenomena. Even more critical scholars often fall back into our own analytical biases—assuming that certain ideas or acts are religious without interrogating what that would mean and why that would matter

(analytically and materially). For instance, we might assume that a group that identifies as Christian adheres to certain values over others, which leads us to other assumptions about what kinds of behavior such a group might engage in. A reflexive approach to religion and politics would, instead, assess the validity of such assumptions in the first place. One way to do this is to examine what specific "religious" phenomena mean for the subjects of our studies themselves, while also paying attention to how such meanings are shaped by a range of contextual factors. This kind of reflexive approach allows the scholar to move past her own assumptions about the religious to understand the meanings of a range of acts and ideas for so-called "religious" actors themselves, providing greater specificity into why and how such actors choose specific courses of action over others.

Debates about faith-based organizations and the benefits they can provide or the problems they can cause often rely on assumptions about how specific religious characteristics manifest in those organizations. FBO typologies attempt to highlight the differences among these organizations; however, they often continue to make assumptions about which characteristics are religious or not. Assigning categories of "religious" or "secular," entails relying on certain ontological assumptions about the religious or secular—how such phenomena are defined and what those phenomena do in a given situation. Relying on a reflexive approach to the study of religion in FBOs, this dissertation moves past common assumptions about religious phenomena to provide greater understanding into the meanings of such phenomena for FBOs themselves. In particular, I examine and analyze the meanings Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission assign to their own values, identities, and practices. Understanding the meanings of these specific religious identities, values, and practices provides more insight into how and why these three FBOs engage in their development, humanitarianism,

peacebuilding, and human rights projects and programs, and has important implications for international relations and political theory vis-à-vis prayer in politics, religious pluralism, funding policies for FBO projects, and questions about how to conceptualize and study religion in international relations.

In the rest of this chapter, I reexamine some of my primary findings, discuss some of the broader implications for theory and policy, and suggest avenues for future research. The chapter is organized as follows. In Section II, I articulate my dissertation's main findings, which challenge scholarly assumptions about (1) the definition of the religious, and (2) the implications of those definitions vis-à-vis the political and the secular. Section III connects these findings to broader debates about prayer in politics, religious pluralism, USAID funding policies, and approaches to the study of religion in IR. Section IV discusses some options for future research projects that might employ a similar reflexive approach and/or that might continue to (re)assess the ontologies of religion in IR. I conclude with some final thoughts about the role of "religion" in global politics and the importance of approaching the study of religion with reflexivity.

Section II: Summary of Findings

Scholars in international relations and other disciplines are increasingly interested in the role of faith-based organizations in key areas of global governance including development, humanitarianism, peacebuilding, and human rights. Many of these scholars question whether and to what extent such organizations might be engaging in problematic or beneficial behavior due to their religious characteristics. Yet, often these "religious" characteristics are assumed, rather than examined and interrogated. My dissertation fills this gap in the literature by asking two primary questions: (1) What are the meanings that faith-based organizations assign to their own identities,

values, and practices?, and (2) How do such meanings shape the peacebuilding, humanitarian, development, and human rights projects of such organizations?

To understand the meanings that FBOs assign to their own values, identities, and practices, I examined and analyzed interview transcripts, organizational website and documents, secondary sources, and my own observation notes. I paid attention to official FBO discourses as manifested in documents and speeches, as well as unofficial understandings as expressed by individual FBO representatives and affiliates. I also examined how such meanings are shaped by a range of factors, including organizational founding histories, leadership hierarchies, and international humanitarian and development norms. I then examined FBO projects and programs to see how the meanings of specific organizational values, identities, and practices are enacted through particular goals and strategies. My research findings provide more specific insights into how FBO acts and ideas are interpreted and enacted by FBOs themselves. I found that those values, identities, and practices often assumed to be "religious" by scholars often include meanings and roles for FBOs that challenge conventional understandings of religion as being materially and analytically separate from the secular, political, public, and rational.

First, I investigated the meanings each FBO assigns to concepts of justice, peace, and reconciliation, and examined how such concepts are manifested in the work of the three organizations. I contextualized these values, not only showing that they have multiple meanings, but also that how these values are manifested vis-à-vis specific projects depends on a complex interweaving of theological interpretation, founding histories, and organizational politics. My research shows that FBO values, though conceptualized as religious in certain contexts, are also sometimes articulated in language that FBOs perceive as secular. Religions for Peace, for

instance, encourages religious communities to translate their primary (religious) languages into a common "secular" language when discerning common multi-religious values.

My findings also speak to studies focusing on the specific ways that values inform the behavior of religious actors. In particular, my research shows that FBO values, and perhaps values more generally, do not only inform action, but are, in certain contexts enacted *as action.* The Taizé Community, for instance, conceives of reconciliation as being both a value (and goal) to work towards, as well as an act that can be lived through the Community itself. Such findings reveal the ways that conceptualizations of religion may lead scholars (and others) to neglect the varied ways that FBO values are conceived and enacted by FBOs and other religious actors, more broadly.

In addition, I highlight the importance of founding histories and organizational leadership in constructing FBO values. In particular, I show how conceptions of justice for IJM and the Taizé Community vary, in part, because of the ways in which their founding histories shape how biblical scripture about God and punishment are drawn on and interpreted. While the Taizé Community promotes the idea that God primarily punishes in the afterlife, IJM frames God as one who judges and punishes here on earth. These and other factors lead to two very different conceptions of justice—one that centers on social and economic equity and another on law enforcement and criminal justice. The findings from this chapter not only complicate essentialized conceptualizations of FBO motivations and values, but also show how specific interpretations of peace, justice, and reconciliation, and other values inform *how* projects of conflict resolution, reconciliation, and humanitarianism are shaped and put into practice on the ground.

Second, I examine how Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission conceive of and manage religious diversity by analyzing how they describe themselves as organizations and differentiate themselves from others. I show how FBO identities shape conceptualizations of and strategies for religious identity. In particular, my research shows how Religions for Peace's multi-religious approach, and the Taizé Community's focus on inner contemplation and struggle lead these two organizations to prioritize different kinds of engagement. While RfP employs experiential practices like prayer, it continues to prioritize linguistic dialogue in its multi-religious engagements. The Taizé Community, on the other hand, prioritizes prayer and communal work and living, which, according to the brothers, opens up space for meaningful and inclusive engagement between religious, as well as rival ethnic and political groups. Such findings suggest that both explanatory and prescriptive theories of religious pluralism might be strengthened by moving past a dialogue-focused model to include the role of communal practices in inter-religious engagements.

Moreover, my examination of IJM reveals how the organization navigates the tension between its Christian identity and its human rights work, the latter of which is constrained by a range of political factors and norms. My research shows how IJM, in many contexts, avoids explicitly referring to its Christian identity in order to further the organization's goals. Yet, at the same time, IJM's approach to justice and a Christian workplace, shape how the organization engages in its human rights work. Thus, while the Christian identity of the organization is sometimes hidden from outsiders, other Christian aspects are ingrained in the organization and likely affect interactions with IJM clients and partners. Such findings lead to interesting questions about the salience of religious identity in inter-religious encounters, and, in particular,

challenge theories of religious pluralism and broader theories of religion and IR that often assume religious identities are always salient and overtly expressed.

Third, I examine the meanings and roles of prayer for the three FBOs included in this study. Scholars often assume these acts to be solely focused on the transcendental and, thus, materially inconsequential. My research, however, pushes the ontological boundaries of religious practice. I show how, for FBOs, such acts are not always or only communication with the divine, but also include a wide range of meanings and roles. For instance, prayer plays an integral role in peacebuilding practices for Religions for Peace—preparing individual peacebuilders mentally and spiritually and sealing reintegration "contracts" in post-conflict communities. The Taizé Community relies on prayer to open up the body and mind of prayer participants, creating spaces of trust and possibility. For IJM, prayer is an important tool in maintaining the mental and spiritual health of its employees—reminding them that God is ultimately responsible for the work the organization engages in and taking some of the pressure off of employees. These and other examples highlight the ways that, for these FBOs, prayer is not conceptually or materially separate from the "real" work of the organizations, which challenges common assumptions that link religious practice with the private, irrational, and inconsequential.

The findings from this dissertation highlight the myriad ways that FBO values, identities, and practices are given meaning and enacted in FBO structures and programs—providing greater and more-specified insight into those phenomena that scholars often categorize as religious. Moreover, I show that such phenomena do not always conform to common scholarly definitions of what constitutes the religious. FBO identities can be shaped by both theological doctrine and international discourses related to the appropriateness of religion in transnational service-advocacy. FBO values can be shaped by both biblical scripture and the personal experiences of

the founder(s). Finally, FBO practices like prayer can be both a transcendental communication with the divine and a tool for literally opening up the human body to new possibilities of trust and reconciliation. These findings suggest that talking about the problem or benefits of including "religion" in service-advocacy work does not make much sense. A better approach to such discussions, and broader discussions about the role of religion in international relations, would be to reflexively assess what we mean by "religion" and how such designations might include foundational assumptions that mask the complex and varied ways that specific practices and ideas are enacted by individuals and groups themselves. This dissertation shows that such an approach can open up ontological space to greater and more in-depth insights about how and why FBOs, and other actors, engage in certain behavior over others, and can provide some preliminary understanding of how those behaviors might shape transnational peacebuilding, development, humanitarian, and human rights goals.

Section III: Academic and Policy Implications

My research speaks to two different audiences—academics and policymakers—in four thematic areas. First, my findings suggest that scholars need to pay more attention to the important roles of prayer and other kinds of experiential practices in transnational service-advocacy work, as well as international relations more broadly. Second, my research shows the limits of the dominant theories related to religious pluralism and encounters of difference, and indicates that such theories need to account for a wider range of practices as relates to such engagements. Third, my findings have important implications for how U.S. government donor agencies like USAID engage with questions of religion and the state. Finally, my research enters into debates and discussions with other academics—those who are grappling with questions of

how to study religion in international relations, as well as those who are more generally interested in understanding the role of religion in politics. I elaborate on my contributions to these four areas below.

A. Paying Attention to Prayer and Other Experiential Practices

My research emphasizes the importance of prayer and other experiential practices for FBOs, which has important implications for common assumptions related to the religious, theories of religious pluralism and communicative action, and the practice turn in IR.

First, my research challenges common assumptions that prayer is solely focused on the transcendental and, thus, analytically and materially separate from "real" FBO work and broader forms of action. In fact, I show that, in certain contexts, FBOs perceive prayer to be both focused on the transcendental *and* part of the real work of the organization. This conceptualization directly challenges those scholarly ontologies that assume that (religious) acts focused on the "transcendental" are automatically separate from "real" work or "secular/political" projects of development, humanitarianism, and human rights. Moreover, it suggests that such dichotomizations can blind scholars to the varied roles of prayer in politics—especially vis-à-vis specific areas of conflict resolution, post-conflict reintegration, and the promotion and reinforcement of FBO values.

Second, my research challenges common models of explanatory and prescriptive religious pluralism (Banchoff 2008; Eck 2006; Riis 2007), as well as broader discussions of encounters of difference (Habermas 1984; Habermas 2011; Rawls 1993), which often focus on dialogical engagements. My findings not only highlight the limits of dialogical approaches in

certain contexts, but reveals how some FBOs see prayer as critical for building trust across lines of religious, cultural, and political difference.

Though the practice turn (Adler and Pouliot 2011; Bourdieu 1977; Neumann 2002; Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, and Savigny 2001) has opened up space for scholars to think about the role of varied practices in international relations, IR scholars continue to largely ignore practices like prayer. In part, this is likely due to the ontological assumptions about prayer I outline above. However, it may also be linked to a broader secularist bias that pervades academia, as well as international discourses of development, humanitarianism, and human rights. My research challenges these scholarly and policy communities to rethink their neglect of prayer, in order to more fully assess the ways that this practice has important meanings and roles for international relations. Moreover, my work suggests that scholars should reevaluate what practices, in general, they view as consequential and not for international relations.

B. Rethinking Prescriptive and Normative Theories of Religious Pluralism

Though my dissertation reveals the important role of prayer and other practices in encounters of religious difference, my findings also have other implications for theories, discussions, and assumptions relating to the issue of religious diversity and possibilities for conflict and peace. In particular, my research introduces a new way to think about the secular in such contexts, and challenges the idea that religious identity is always explicitly expressed in peaceful engagements of religious difference.

First, my research with Religions for Peace speaks to broader discussions and assumptions about how to manage religious diversity, especially in an era of increasing globalization. Scholars assume that religion is necessarily divisive and therefore must be

managed. The prevailing view in political science, which mirrors discussions in political theory a la Habermas (1984) and Rawls (1993), is that the management of religious diversity comes about through a kind of secular neutrality. As the narrative goes, if secular language is used, there is less chance of bias and other power inequities that can lead to discord and violence. My research shows that Religions for Peace, an inter-religious organization, employs secular language in its projects and programs. However, the conceptualization of "secular" as outlined by William Vendley is different from that relied upon by scholars. For RfP "secular" language is not necessarily a space that is devoid of religion, as scholars tend to assume. Rather, it is a common language that often draws upon and then translates the primary languages of religious communities. Critics (Barnhart 2004; Taylor 2011) of Habermas and Rawls have already pointed out the problems with theories of communicative action and an overlapping consensus, and, in particular, the ways in which such theories have neglected or misconstrued the role of religion in the public sphere. However, my research introduces a new way to think about "the secular" in such contexts. For RfP, "the secular" is not necessarily divorced from religion, but is a common language that draws on religious traditions, but which everyone can understand and support.

Second, my research builds on Hurd (2015, 103–105) who argues that religious identities are not always the dominant form of identity in any given context. In particular, my examination of IJM shows how some FBOs do not always broadcast their religious identities, challenging an implicit assumption of religious pluralism that engagements of religious difference will necessarily prioritize religious identity. This highlights one of the prevailing problems with the prescriptive religious pluralism model. It assumes that the best way to achieve inter-religious peace is to focus on religious identities. However, the model neglects does not take into account other peaceful encounters of religious difference that largely ignore such designations. In short,

my research suggests that current theories of religious difference and pluralism are limited in their conceptualizations of the religious, the secular, identity, and practice. In order to more accurately reflect encounters of difference, scholars need to broaden their ontologies of the religious and the secular.

C. Implications for Government Funding Regulations of Faith-Based Organizations

My dissertation also has important implications for policy vis-à-vis U.S. foreign policy and global governance. My research provides important insights into some of the challenges involved when government agencies like USAID regulate transnational faith-based organizations and their programs and projects. I would like to highlight three implications of such regulations, in particular: governmental interventions in determining what is religious or not, the material and conceptual problems involved in separating religious aspects of global governance from other non-religious aspects, and the neglect of the possible benefits of practical applications of certain practices.

In 2004, USAID introduced its "Rule" for Participation by Religious Organizations, which outlines the steps FBOs need to take to conform to USAID standards, and thus, be eligible for funding by the agency. In part, the Rule says:

> Faith-based and community organizations may not use direct financial assistance from USAID (or any other Federal agency) to support *inherently religious* activities, but are otherwise free to engage in such activities. Inherently religious activities would include worship, prayer meetings, religious instruction and proselytization. These activities must be separated either in time or location from USAID-funded programs, and participation by actual or potential program beneficiaries must be voluntary (italics mine, "USAID 'Rule' for Participation by Religious Organizations" 2014).

Here, the U.S. government is trying to maintain a formal separation between the church and the state, by requiring FBOs to separate their "inherently religious" activities from their other

activities in time or location, when using federal funds. The Rule then provides some examples of what such inherently religious activities might entail (i.e. worship, prayer meetings, religious instruction, proselytization).

One implication of such rules is that the government is determining what *is* religious. As Elizabeth Shakman Hurd (2015) and Winnifred Fallers Sullivan (2014) both argue with regards to religious freedom legislation, such determinations are inherently paradoxical. The U.S. government, while trying to avoid any formal involvement with religion is actually wading heavily into debates about what counts as religious and what does not. My research builds on Hurd and Sullivan to show why such determinations are problematic. In particular, making assumptions about what counts as religious can mask the ways in which such categories overlap for religious actors themselves. Additionally, such an approach can also neglect the myriad meanings and roles that so-called "inherently religious" acts play in service-advocacy sectors.

As Andrea Paras has shown, faith-based organizations do not always conceptually separate their (secular) development work from their religious work. She says, "For such organisations, digging a well is an act of faith…." (2012, 244; also Paras 2014). In some of these cases, then, USAID's formulation of what counts as religious does not coincide with how FBOs themselves think about these things. But this is not only a matter of conceptual differences. USAID is also a powerful donor and international influence. As Paras also shows, such donor requirements can actually change how FBOs themselves think about what counts as religious and what is appropriate or not in development and aid work (2012; also Paras and Stein 2012). Thus, agencies like USAID are not only making determinations about what counts as religious for themselves, but they are actually, in some cases, *shaping* religious organizations—which

ostensibly directly contravenes the U.S. government's (in Paras' study, the Canadian government's) underlying goal of avoiding entanglements with religion.

My research builds on Paras and others who show that trying to make distinctions between the religious and the secular *in practice* is more challenging than one might think. I show that prayer, for instance, is considered to be communication with the divine; however, for the FBOs included in this study, it also has meanings and roles that scholars and policymakers would likely not view as inherently religious. Thus, separating out what constitutes the religious and the secular (or non-religious, political, etc.) may not be so easy.

Moreover, even if we could completely and definitively separate the religious from the secular in government-funded service-advocacy work, should we? My dissertation shows the complex ways that FBO identities, values, and practices shape the work of these organizations. In some cases, the outcomes of these relationships are more problematic—breeching international norms of cultural respect or individual choice, for instance. However, in other cases, there are obvious benefits—using prayer to build trust is one example. The purpose of my research is not to make prescriptions about whether or not those phenomena we call religious should or should not be included in transnational service-advocacy organizations and their work. That said, the findings from this dissertation suggest that scholars and policymakers need to look beyond their own assumptions about what counts as religious—and the problems or benefits that such actors link with religion—in order to better understand *how* specific values, identities, practices and other phenomena might be beneficial or problematic for achieving long-term goals of, among other things, peace and justice.

D. Building on Critical Conceptual and Methodological Approaches to Religion in IR

This dissertation provides both a conceptual and methodological contribution to the study of religion in international relations. Scholarly debates about the religious-secular and religious-political binaries have permeated discussions about how to study religion in IR. Consequently, IR scholars continue to grapple with the best way to conceptualize and study this thing we call "religion" as it relates to matters of global politics. This dissertation draws from and builds on these debates, by showing how a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach to the study of religion can open up critical ontological space to rethink scholarly assumptions about the religious in IR.

A reflexive approach to the study of religion in IR entails an explicit engagement with three inter-related questions: What ideas, acts, actors, etc. am I (explicitly or implicitly) identifying as religious in my research? How might those analytical choices—of identifying some things as religious and others as not—include certain ontological assumptions? How would the answers to those questions affect my research design and practices? The answers to such questions have both analytical and normative implications. First, identifying a given object of study as religious is an authoritative act that entails making certain assumptions about the characteristics of that object—perhaps linking it with the private, irrational, or emotional and/or delinking it from the secular or political. Such assumptions can then lead the researcher to ignore the ways that the object in question has meanings and/or roles that might problematize the private/public or other dichotomous characterizations. Second, those kinds of descriptive dichotomies often include implicit hierarchies—where the public is deemed to be more consequential or more important than the private, for instance. Thus, framing an object as religious (or secular/political) can not only mask the myriad characteristics of the object, as well as how that object interacts with other issues and actors that are important in international

relations, but can also have critical normative consequences by assuming that object is good or bad in international relations or altogether inconsequential. A reflexive approach to the study of religion in IR, then, helps the scholar to see how she is characterizing particular phenomena, in order to avoid these kinds of reifications and assumptive moves. A reflexive approach also opens up critical ontological space to re-assess what constitutes the religious and secular in international relations.

Employing a reflexive and bottom-up approach in my research has produced interesting findings about three transnational service-advocacy FBOs, which have important implications for theories of religious pluralism, prayer and politics, and the funding policies of USAID and other agencies. Moreover, my research suggests that a reassessment of the ontologies of religion in IR is warranted. Perhaps rather than trying to pin down religion for academic study by coming up with new definitions, a better way to conceptualize the religious would be to understand it as a set of authoritative discourses that include their own overlapping and sometimes-competing ontologies of religion. Religious categorizations cannot be understood outside of the authoritative frameworks within which those designations are assigned. This dissertation has shed light on how two primary discourses, in particular—one based in dominant frameworks of IR and religion, and the other in FBOs—sometimes rely on similar ontological assumptions about religion and sometimes have very different perspectives. Moreover, my research suggests that even within these broader authoritative discourses there are sub-discourses and divergent ontologies of religion. A reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach to the study of "religion," then, provides a way forward that accounts for these conceptual nuances, complexities, and debates.

In this section, I have highlighted several contributions of my dissertation to broader conceptual and methodological questions as relates to prayer and politics and religious difference, as well as to policy issues vis-à-vis U.S. foreign policy and transnational faith-based organizations. One other key contribution, however, is the broader approach to the study and conceptualization of religion in politics, which I outline throughout the dissertation. There are many different avenues of future research that might emerge out of the approach I have outlined. I discuss just a few of these avenues in the next section.

Section IV: Future Research

This dissertation lays the groundwork for several research trajectories. One path might more-fully explore the meanings and roles of phenomena often conceived as religious for transnational service-advocacy work; or it might delve more deeply into how FBOs conceptualize the religious and the secular. Another path might continue to push the boundaries of the religious-secular divide by comparing the meanings and functions of NGO identities, values, and practices between so-called "faith-based" organizations and their "secular" counterparts. Future research employing a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach to better understand the characteristics and motivations of a range of other religious global actors is also warranted. I explore each avenue of research in more detail below.

One aim of this dissertation is to elucidate how particular values, identities, and practices are given meaning and employed by faith-based organizations in their transnational peacebuilding, humanitarian, development, and human rights work. My findings show the variances in the meanings of such phenomena both across and within each organization included in this study, and how such meanings are informed by a range of contextual factors, including

founding histories, organizational leadership, and international humanitarian and development discourses. I also highlight the ways that such meanings shape the work of Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission. What my dissertation does not do is assess how the recipients or clients of FBO projects and programs view the various components of such programs—in particular, those aspects that are often conceived as religious. Future research is needed to assess how participants in Religions for Peace's reconciliation prayers view these events, for instance. Do they see prayer as a necessary part of these programs? Why or why not? More research is also needed to assess, if possible, the ways in which such practices and other phenomena help or hurt specific peacebuilding, development, or other goals. While my research assesses why and how FBOs integrate certain phenomena into their organizational identities and behaviors, more research could assess whether the inclusion of certain values and practices are beneficial or problematic in service-advocacy work.

Another possible avenue for future research centers on how religious actors themselves construct the religious, secular, and political. My own work touches on this subject—paying attention to when FBO representatives frame a certain behavior as religious or secular, for instance. However, that is not the focus of my study. Other scholars examine how FBOs themselves frame the religious and the secular (Lynch 2011; Paras 2012; Paras 2014), but more work on this subject, both for FBOs as well as for global religious actors more broadly, is warranted. Articulating how definitions of "religion" "secularism" and "politics" are created, stabilized, and destabilized will help us to understand the ways that religious communities or institutions may conceive of, or engage in, practices that challenge dominant assumptions related to various notions including, but not limited to, humanitarianism, development, agency, and

modernity. In short, such studies would shed more light on a range of authoritative discourses and their ontologies of religion.

Further research might also examine the extent to which so-called secular organizations can be linked to ideas and acts that could also be defined as "religious," according to common conceptions of that term. This dissertation, in part, challenges the notion that certain phenomena can be definitively categorized as inherently religious. Thus, a reexamination of the ontologies of religion in international relations might entail more of a comparative examination between "religious" and "secular" practices, ideas, and actors. For instance, scholars have noted that secular NGOs often exhibit a similar kind of "faith" to FBOs (Paras and Stein 2012). More studies are needed to assess what other similarities or differences one can see between FBOs and their secular counterparts, especially when using a reflexive approach. In particular, scholars might use a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach to assess how "secular" NGO values, identities, and practices may or may not function in the same or similar ways to FBOs. In short, such a study could assess and possible challenge claims that FBOs and secular NGOs are different *enough* to warrant an analytical separation.

Finally, and most importantly, my dissertation articulates a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach to the study of religion in international relations, which might be used to (re)examine and (re)assess the meanings and roles of religion in global politics more broadly. The approach I outline here, and, in particular, my call for reflexivity, can help scholars of religion and politics to see "religion" through a new lens—one that begins by asking, "What makes this actor, idea, value, identity, practice religious? And what is at stake in characterizing this object/subject as religious?" Moreover, a bottom-up conceptual approach could lead scholars to reconsider what counts as religious in their analyses—providing greater understanding of how

a range of global actors, including so-called religious extremist groups, religious political parties, or religious lobbyists, give meaning to their own values, identities, and practices. Such an approach could provide greater and more-specified insights into how and why such actors choose certain behaviors over others.

Ultimately, this dissertation calls for a reassessment of the ontologies of religion in international relations. I argue that scholars of religion and politics need to strive for more specificity and understanding of how specific acts and ideas are enacted by those individuals and groups that we call "religious," rather than relying on our own assumptions about what constitutes a religious (or secular/political) object or subject. A reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach can help us to move beyond the ingrained assumptions many of us hold about Islam or Christianity, for instance, in order to understand what identifying as a Muslim or Christian might mean for different actors in different contexts.

Conclusion

It is not only scholars who are interested in understanding the role of religion in global politics today. With the emergence of extremist groups like al Qaeda and the Islamic State, the continued importance of religious identity in U.S. presidential elections, and the influence of Pope Francis and other religious leaders, policymakers, media pundits, and everyday citizens are talking about religion and its relationship with politics and public life. Yet, the interdisciplinary definitional turn in studies of religion and politics is challenging scholars to rethink how we talk about and study this thing we call religion. While scholars like Talal Asad have convinced many scholars that we must approach characterizations of religion with caution, such critical approaches risk leaving us with no way forward in understanding how specific actors, ideas, and

practices shape the world we live in. Some scholars are responding to such omissions by introducing innovative sociological approaches to the study of religion. This dissertation builds on such approaches, but calls on scholars of religion and international relations (and political science more generally) to reflexively engage with religion. In particular, I suggest that, as scholars of religion and politics, we must engage with our own assumptions about the religious (or secular/political). Ignoring such questions can lead us to neglect the myriad meanings and roles that so-called religious phenomena can have.

In fact, my research uses a reflexive and bottom-up conceptual approach to show the ways in which particular values, identities, and practices are assigned meaning and employed by three transnational faith-based organizations: Religions for Peace, the Taizé Community, and International Justice Mission. My findings show that such phenomena have a wide range of meanings and roles in the peacebuilding, development, humanitarian, and human rights work of these organizations, many of which do not conform with common scholarly ontologies of religion. In addition, my findings show the importance of prayer in transnational service-advocacy work and the limits of dominant theories of religious difference. As such, this dissertation suggests that scholars of religion and international relations should reassess our own ontological assumptions about religion in order to facilitate a greater understanding of why and how so-called "religious" actors choose certain courses of actors over others.

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