When Good Intentions Are Not Enough: Confronting Ethical Challenges in Peacebuilding and Reconciliation

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In this article, I explore how moral values can play a problematic role in peacebuilding. My argument is that careful attention to values is necessary for peacebuilding to be transformative. I take "peacebuilding" to be an umbrella term referring to efforts undertaken in settings of conflict to transform relationships and structures to promote a just peace.[1] It includes work variously labelled as conflict transformation, conflict management, conflict resolution, peacemaking, and reconciliation. This work may be undertaken by actors who are either external to, or local to, the conflict setting.

I start by examining what "failure" means in peacebuilding through stories and definitions. I then explain why I began to look at moral values in peacebuilding to account for failure. Moral values, as philosopher Isaiah Berlin defines them, refer to "ideas about what it is good to be and do—about what sort of life, what sort of character, what sort of actions, what state of being it is desirable to aspire to."[2] People use moral values as a foundation for making judgments. I outline four ways the use and misuse of moral values can contribute to failure in that process. When I employ the term "ethics," it refers to critically assessing moral values and morality—appraising the "ideas of what it is good to be and do." I then offer ways to rethink how we engage with moral values, in order to be part of constructive peacebuilding and to understand the implications for contemporary reconciliation initiatives. The latter is especially important, given current efforts to come to terms with the legacies and effects of colonialism on Indigenous and settler peoples in Canada, which is also known as part of Turtle Island.

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[1] Definition drawn from John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: United Institute of Peace, 1997).

[2] Joshua Cherniss and Henry Hardy, "Isaiah Berlin," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2017 edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/berlin/notes.html, accessed Oct. 5, 2017.

A Grounding in Practice: Two Stories

Peacebuilding has good aims. It seeks peace through transformed relationships and structures; it seeks peace with justice. People who engage in peacebuilding are purposefully stepping into conflict settings in order to try to make things better. This is surely a good end to pursue. But as the saying goes, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions," or, in its older variant, "Hell is paved with good intentions." Do these adages relate to peacebuilding? Can peacebuilding efforts, so well-intended and aiming at such a worthy goal, be part of this proverbial road? Two short stories may help answer these questions. While these stories and others in this article are from people's lived experiences, I will use pseudonyms and general terms about locations and details to protect the anonymity of those who shared them.

Story One

A well-intentioned, bright, and thoughtful young couple were working in Southeast Asia for a non-governmental organization (NGO) in a country recovering from years of war. Their mandate was to listen to the community and support its efforts to improve and develop, and they were keen to do good work. A mushroom farmer approached a partner organization for a loan of a small amount of money and for some training. The couple decided that their NGO would support the partner organization to provide both the loan and support for training. The farmer began to prosper. Everyone was feeling good about this investment, and the farmer easily paid back the loan. But then he left, abandoning his wife, his family, and his community. He took his profits and moved away. His wife and family were left in poverty and shame, and his already struggling community was worse off than before, as it now needed to support his family as well. These were not exactly the hoped-for effects.

Story Two

Matt was a young US Peace Corps volunteer serving in Central America in the 1980s. He was working with a community displaced from their homes by government soldiers. The internally displaced persons (IDP) camp members were suspected of associating with the guerillas. There were food shortages in the camp, which was located next to a farm. Matt decided to approach the

farmer, whose fields bordered the camp, to ask if the camp could use some of the land for gardening to grow food. Matt saw the farmer on a bus and made his request. The farmer agreed, and Matt was delighted. Unfortunately, the young volunteer failed to realize that the bus was not a private space: the farmer was disappeared, and Matt was brought in for questioning by the military. It was a devastating outcome, nowhere near the good that he hoped to do.

In these stories the failure is not about good intentions that lead to inaction, but rather about good intentions that lead to action in complex situations that proved problematic. What could a peacebuilder have done? While one cannot predict the vagaries of human behavior, I argue that courses of action such as occurred in these stories are informed by moral values that contribute significantly to failure when neglected or imposed. If we as peacebuilders do not examine these values, then we will not see how they focus our attention and actions in settings such as those described in the above stories. Good intentions, it turns out, can play a significant role in failure.

Defining Failure and Success
To what does "failure" refer? I could argue that a failure to "improve things" is a failure for peacebuilding, a point made by Mary Anderson and Lara Olson in a multi-organizational effort to examine the effects of peace practice. They note that "so long as people continue to suffer the consequences of unresolved conflicts, there is urgency for everyone to do better."[3] While I agree with this assessment and concur that we must do better in peacebuilding, I am most concerned about the failures that occur when our interventions make things worse. If we are going to "make things better," first we need to stop making things worse. In the two preceding stories, interveners unintentionally made things worse.

As individuals and organizations working in and on conflict, peacebuilders can indeed make things worse, which results in harm to people. My focus is on those who were originally external to the conflict setting and

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[3] Mary B. Anderson and Lara Olson, "Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners" (Cambridge, MA: Collaborative for Development Action, Inc. Reflecting on Peace Practice Project, 2003), 10.

then entered it as peacebuilders. In such situations, we peacebuilders can be responsible for the loss of life. We can escalate conflict, undermine local solidarities, and promise things that do not happen and thus increase people's cynicism. We can divert resources and contribute to structural injustice, we can impose our values, and we can use people to advance our own ends or to stabilize the conflict. These are real possibilities, and they have all occurred at various times and places.[4]

On the converse side, what is "success" in peacebuilding? I suggest it occurs when decisions and actions reflect careful, open thinking that embodies important virtues and responds to context and power inequities; when decisions and actions reflect relationships of care and responsiveness within the conflict; and when actions and their effects are constitutive of collective flourishing.

Looking at Moral Values to Understand Failure

My initial interest in ethics in conflict intervention began in the 1990s when friends and I got together to talk about deficiencies we saw in our rapidly expanding field. In that post-Cold War decade, peacebuilding grew quickly as it aligned with state-building efforts undertaken by UN organizations and supported by Canada and other countries.[5] Peacebuilding was becoming increasingly specialized in technical areas, such as building post-war democratic institutions and legal or economic structures. This development changed the nature of the peacebuilding enterprise and attracted a much greater range of people to the field. I and my colleagues Lisa Schirch and Larissa Fast were puzzled that elements we regarded as important in peacebuilding—for example, modeling values like participatory engagement—were not self-evident to everyone.

Modeling values appeared clear in Mennonite and Quaker efforts. These efforts include initiatives in the 1980s and '90s at Conrad Grebel University College with the Mennonite Central Committee and Project

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[4] See Reina Neufeldt, *Ethics for Peacebuilders: A Practical Guide* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016): chapter 7, "Doing Good Well: Talking about the Real Issues."

[5] In some ways this is marked by a foundational document at the United Nations by then-Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "A/47/277 - S/24111 an Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-Keeping" (New York: United Nations, 1992).

Ploughshares. However, it was not widely adopted in the new, expanding literature and field practices. Many people thought that as long as you got the outcome you wanted, it did not matter how you did it or what others thought about it. This gap in thinking led us to publish a joint article in an attempt to put our thoughts on paper.[6] The shift in the field also led to a robust literature in International Relations that examined the peacebuilding aligned with state-building and a "liberal peace," and offered a normative critique of why international state-led actors were interested in building peaceful states.[7]

In 2007, I stepped back from peacebuilding fieldwork. During a fellowship at the Kroc Institute at the University of Notre Dame, I ruminated on past moments in the field when I had felt uneasy in the pit of my stomach but proceeded anyway. Did we do the right thing? Why did I think that was a good thing to do? I began thinking more carefully about moral values and ethics. I also began to hear people judging things as morally good and right in their work, but using language that did not name these qualities as values. In 2009 Tim Murithi, a South African scholar and practitioner, voiced a similar concern, arguing that the lack of assessment of the ethical dimensions contributes to peacebuilding's limited success.[8] There was a systematic gap in the field with respect to identifying, weighing, and discussing values and their effects on decisions and actions. It was not that people were generally amoral or immoral, but that at times their judgments of what was (or is) good, and the values undergirding these judgments, themselves contributed to failure. This was true of both external and local peacebuilders. How does this happen? How do well-motivated, smart people who want to be moral and ethical fail? Below I outline four ways that moral values can contribute to failure in peacebuilding.

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[6] Larissa A. Fast, Reina C. Neufeldt, and Lisa Schirch, "Toward Ethically Grounded Conflict Interventions: Reevaluating Challenges in the 21st Century," *International Negotiation* 7, no. 2 (2002): 185-207.

[7] For example, see Oliver P. Richmond, "The Dilemmas of Subcontracting the Liberal Peace," ed. Oliver P. Richmond and Henry F. Carey, *Subcontracting Peace: The Challenges of NGO Peacebuilding* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005); Susanna Campbell, David Chandler, and Meera Sabaratnam, eds., *A Liberal Peace? The Problems and Practices of Peacebuilding* (New York: Zed Books, 2011); Roger Mac Ginty and Oliver P. Richmond, "The Local Turn in Peace Building: A Critical Agenda for Peace," *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 5 (2013): 763-83.

[8] Tim Murithi, *The Ethics of Peacebuilding* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2009), 11.

How Moral Values Contribute to Failure in Peacebuilding

1. Moral character and organizational culture

Possessing and building moral character is integral to many religious traditions, including Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism. Humans build their moral character and embody virtues or traits that are excellent to possess, such as courage or humility. Classical Greek thinking also stressed virtues and included an emphasis on *phronesis*, the practical wisdom gained from experience and education that enables one to see what is morally salient in a situation. Personal moral character matters. Personal moral failures—such as those occurring when peacebuilders or peacekeepers engage in abuse—are important to stop. Here I recall the dilemma of Brother Adriano, who had become the de facto head of a large camp of internally displaced persons in Timor Leste in the mid-2000s. He was afraid to tell the authorities that the peacekeepers stationed at the front gates of the camp— who were there to protect the camp from external attacks—were apparently preying on young women in the camp, inviting them into their armored vehicle for sexual favors. Brother Adriano feared the UN would pull the security detail if he complained, and that would make the situation worse for everyone. The individual moral failings of the sentries made a bad situation worse.

Personal moral failings typically occur within communities, organizations, and systems that affect personal choices. The sentries were likely working in an organizational culture that permitted, or at least turned a blind eye to, sexual abuse—a problem that UN peacekeeping operations are working hard to address. However, it is not only UN peacekeepers who fail morally. Peacebuilders who work for NGOs and local peacebuilding organizations fail too. I failed at times because I felt that I had to do certain things to support an organizational norm. Personal moral character can contribute to failure if peacebuilders do not attend to *phronesis* and only act on particular virtues without discernment, and if their organizations are not nurturing positive ethical cultures.

2. Moral and ethical by definition

A less obvious problem is that we peacebuilders can think we are moral and ethical just by definition, and that this is good enough. In this line of

thinking, our assessment of morality stops with our intentions: we made a value-based choice, and now here we are engaging in action with no need to question further. However, insidious effects emerge from what Séverine Autesserre calls the "here to help" narrative.[9] Autesserre carefully researched international peacebuilding efforts in Congo, Burundi, Cyprus, South Sudan, Israel and Palestine, and Timor Leste. Her findings are sobering. She argues that how international actors live and act in everyday work environments produces significant problems that make them counterproductive, ineffective, and inefficient.[10] One part of her analysis draws attention to the undermining role that a sense of moral superiority plays. Foreigners enter into a conflict for "moral reasons"—"to help the host country and its citizens"—and in so doing claim the moral high ground, as captured in the saying "The hand that gives is always higher than the hand that receives."[11]

There are two important dimensions of the "here to help" narrative. First, it separates interveners and expatriates into one "club" that is different from the local community. Second, expatriates start to suggest that local communities lack capacity; are backwards, incompetent, or corrupt; are only self-interested and doing this work for professional advancement or pay; and are not altruistic like the foreigners. Power inequalities further reinforce these divisions. The problem is that moral and ethical deliberations begin and end with the decision to intervene, and the everyday practices and attitudes evade scrutiny. Ask about international peacebuilders and you will hear disturbing stories about how the international "club" acts.[12] Autesserre contends that it is not surprising in such contexts that local people frequently contest, resist, or reject international initiatives supposedly designed to help.[13] While her focus is on international peacebuilders, her insights can also apply to peacebuilders working within their own home settings.

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[9] Séverine Autesserre, *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014).

[10] Ibid., 13.

[11] Ibid., 195.

[12] See also Mary B. Anderson, "Can My Good Intentions Make Things Worse? Lessons for Peacebuilding from the Field of International Humanitarian Aid," in *A Handbook of International Peacebuilding: Into the Eye of the Storm*, ed. John Paul Lederach and Janice Moomaw Jenner (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

[13] Autesserre, *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*, 13.

3. The problem of thinking we know what is right

A third way moral values contribute to failure occurs when peacebuilders think they know what is right and act upon their assumptions without deliberation. This can happen individually or in groups; the personal variant of this failure is commonly called dogmatism. Anthony Weston regards dogmatism as one of three common substitutes or counterfeits for ethical thinking (the other two are relativism and rationalization).[14] Dogmatists believe they already know the answer to a moral question before it is raised. They cut off open and careful consideration of moral issues because they know what is right regardless of the specific case or circumstances. Any arguments are then simply attacks on another person or position, irrespective of what else might be morally salient.

There are dogmatists in peacebuilding, just as in other fields. For example, some practitioners are so committed to nonviolence that they do not engage with difficult counter-arguments about the use of force. Nonviolence is one of the values that I defended dogmatically early in my career. During an intense debate, a concerned Serbian colleague queried me: "Why are you people so committed to nonviolence?" He thought my dogmatic commitment blinded me. Having lived through war and dogmatisms run amok, he had insights that I did not yet possess. When we agree with the values that dogmatists hold, we want to broadcast them (maybe retweet them), and when we disagree we think they should be silenced (close their Twitter accounts). In both situations, merely clinging to values without careful, open-ended thinking means giving answers before even grasping the questions.

The second version of this problem manifests itself in faulty group decision-making processes, which social psychologist Irving Janis memorably named "groupthink."[15] Groupthink occurs when group pressures lead to a deterioration of "mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment."[16] Various conditions can produce this dynamic, but what

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[14] Anthony Weston, *A 21st Century Ethical Toolbox*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2013); Anthony Weston, *A Practical Companion to Ethics*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011).

[15] Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982/1972).

[16] Ibid., 9.

generally happens is that team members value unanimous agreement and group cohesiveness over open and reasoned debate or problem-solving. The group ignores contradictory information, becomes overconfident, believes itself inherently moral, and stereotypes outside opinions and groups. The resulting decisions are irrational and problematic. Groupthink can become especially problematic if head office personnel are insulated from field complexities and make decisions under pressure. As individuals and groups, the conviction that "we know what is right" is blinding.

4. A single moral value in settings marked by division
A fourth way that moral values contribute to failure occurs when peacebuilders are guided by only one moral value in a conflict setting. They are trying to do good but see only one way to do so, without being consciously aware of their "my way or the highway" orientation. Another story may help illustrate this difficulty.

In the early 2000s, I worked as a peacebuilding technical advisor for a Catholic relief and development organization. My position focused on fostering high-quality peacebuilding programs, either stand-alone or integrated with the organization's emergency relief and development work. On one occasion, I was rushed off to provide technical input to a delegation of Burundians in the United States on a three-week training and planning visit. It was part of a unique collaboration between the Catholic Bishops conferences of Burundi and the US and my organization. The aim was to support the Burundian Church in developing a vision for, and a capacity to build, peace in their conflict-riven state. A long history of support already characterized this relationship, and the Burundian Church had been active in in-country negotiations and dialogue. My organization was eager to continue to support the Burundian Church, as part of a longer-term response to the 1993 violence and its aftermath—in 1993, roughly 300,000 civilians were killed, half a million were displaced, and a similar number fled to neighboring countries.

The workshop I was called in to join was designed to foreground spiritual reflection, working with the Church as a spiritual community, training in trauma and conflict transformation, envisioning peace and reconciliation, and developing a three-year action plan. The workshop

planners had spent most of their time working on the spiritual reflection aspect, and then on the components that involved exploring trauma, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding. They had not spent much time thinking about how to develop the action plan. A problem arose when people in my organization feared the workshop would not produce a good, technically sound outcome. My organization needed additional financial resources, and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) was an interested partner. This meant there was pressure to ensure the project met peacebuilding technical standards. We found ourselves with a clash of values in the midst of the workshop, something I now see only with hindsight. At the time, I viewed my work as necessary to improve the technical quality of the proposal that the group was supposed to develop. Technical quality was assumed to be a value-free good that the organizers and Burundian contingent should want. However, conflict arose, and the organizers, and to some degree the workshop participants, were nonplussed as project planning techniques were belatedly injected.

We muddled through, and the group eventually produced a project idea that was developed, funded, and had significant reach in Burundi. However, the negative effect was that we had demonstrated valuing efficiency and ends—understood as "total number reached"—over the Burundian and Catholic Church values that stress solidarity with the disadvantaged and subsidiarity (the notion that those closest to a problem take the lead in resolving it). This episode reinforced questions about the ability of those in the US to walk alongside the Burundian church. The conflict would have been better understood if we had examined our contested values. We could have then been more productive in brainstorming options that valued solidarity, subsidiarity, spirituality, and care as moral goods not subsumable under the value of our pre-identified ends.

Stepping back to look more broadly, values are part of the reality in all conflicts, particularly deeply-rooted conflicts. People fight to defend themselves against injustice and oppression or for justice and freedom. Operating out of a narrow moral value—one that we peacebuilders may not even recognize—contributes to failure because we are unable to listen and to hear what values are important to other stakeholders. In this inability, we can contribute to difference, distrust, and schisms.

Thus far, I have diagnosed the problems of moral values at some length because these matters receive little attention either in the literature or in field practice. Yet, to paraphrase Aristotle, the whole point of thinking about ethics is not just to know what is good but to become good. How can peacebuilders use moral values in a transformative way? I will try to answer that question by offering three responses to the problems noted above.

Using Moral Values in a Transformative Way
The following responses have implications for peacebuilding in general. I also explore the implications specifically for efforts in Canada to act on recommendations of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission, given its importance and the call to action at universities.

1. Hear moral values
All the areas of failure explored above involved inadequate attention to moral values. The first response, then, is to do better at *hearing* moral values; that is, to listen for the foundational ideas (things considered important or worthy) upon which judgments are made. This is a skill worth practicing and can involve textual analysis. The first example below uses text from the United Nations Burundi Configuration, a sub-group of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, and the second a Government of Canada document.

The Burundi Configuration is composed of ambassadors representing such nations as Australia, Bangladesh, and Switzerland, as well as UN officials and representatives of regional and international bodies such as the African Union and the World Bank. Their 2015 statement is an aspirational document intended to send operational signals to Burundian leaders regarding the then upcoming elections. It was written in a period when the President of Burundi had decided to stand for elections a third time, shortly after a failed coup attempt and during a time of heightened tensions and escalating violence. The President's decision was highly controversial and argued to be against the 2005 constitution. Three paragraphs of the 2015 statement read as follows:

> The PBC Burundi Configuration highlights the importance of dialogue and reconciliation among all Burundians to address the root causes of the current crisis. It stresses the need to find

a lasting political solution that ensures Burundi's hard gained progress in peace consolidation and peacebuilding.

The PBC Burundi Configuration calls on all Burundians to urgently establish, through open dialogue and a spirit of compromise, the necessary conditions for the holding of free, transparent, credible, inclusive and peaceful elections.

. . .

The PBC Burundi Configuration will continue to follow the situation closely and stands ready to help Burundi at this critical juncture of its journey towards sustainable peace and development.[17]

This excerpt contains a number of important claims about what is commonly agreed upon as good and right by the Burundian Configuration members—a particular set of actors, speaking into Burundi.

In paragraph one, nonviolent means of dispute settlement are valued as right and good in the phrase "dialogue and reconciliation," and again in paragraph two with the call for "open dialogue and a spirit of compromise." A negotiated political comprise is thought to be the right technical response. This implies an underlying value, namely political order and stability, held dear by the Burundi Configuration and by the UN. A necessary condition for political order is carefully specified in paragraph two: it entails "the holding of free, transparent, credible, inclusive and peaceful elections." In this sentence, several values are espoused, including (again) nonviolence, participatory democracy, and transparency. These are understood as good and right means. As well, a statement about good ends is embedded in the final phrase of the third paragraph above: "sustainable peace and development." There is also a strong statement about the wrong thing to do, namely to undermine or lose the "hard gained progress in peace consolidation and peacebuilding." Finally, there is an assertion that it is right and good for this set of international actors to speak into Burundian politics and to expect that

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[17] From the "Statement by the Burundi Configuration of the UN Peacebuilding Commission," New York, May 15, 2015, available at: https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2015-05-15/statement-burundi-configuration-un-peacebuilding.

Burundi will respond. In sum, nonviolent dispute settlement, political order and stability, participatory democracy, transparency, sustainable peace, and development are among the main moral values presented in the document (there may be others).

One way to identify moral values is to listen to the reasons or justifications that actors give for why it is important to act and for what they judge to be right action. Another way is to analyze how a problem is framed. For example, in introducing the context of Burundi I emphasized problematic political dynamics. The same thing occurs in the letter itself. This framing of the problem prioritizes political order as the most important moral good. While this is understandable, given the actors and context in which they are speaking, it is a limited moral claim. It does not speak to other key components of what it means for Burundians to flourish, including personal well-being, recovering from trauma, relational healing, and nurturing community. All of these were important for the Burundi contingent who participated in the workshop. When peacebuilders listen for moral values, we must listen not only to the strongest voices—such as those that speak from the UN or a Presidential palace, which are easy to hear—but also those that are quiet, disadvantaged, or marginal.

What are the implications of hearing and listening for moral values in the journey towards Indigenous-settler reconciliation in Canada? Here too, hearing moral values may be the first step to getting out of a "my way or the highway" orientation. In *Conquest of America: The Question of the Other,* Tzvetan Todorov investigates what made it possible for European explorers to engage in mass extermination and conquest.[18] He names values as forming one of three axes of alterity or "otherness" to help solve this puzzle. Values justified conquest for Christopher Columbus and Hernan Cortés in Mesoamerica; values were at the center of Ginés de Sepúlveda's arguments for why Spaniards had a right and duty to impose their Christian-informed understanding of good on others in a hierarchically-organized world of superiority and inferiority.[19] Even the counter-arguments of the Dominican bishop of Chiapas, Bartolomé de Las Casas, against Sepúlveda at a public

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[18] Tzvetan Todorov, *Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, trans. Richard Howard (Norman, OK: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1999).
[19] Ibid., 151-53.

debate held in Valladolid, Spain in 1550, assumed that the Spanish possessed the highest moral values.[20]

There is an identification of "*my* values" as "*the* values" that are then to be imposed. "Yet is there not already a violence in the conviction that one possesses the truth oneself," Todorov asks, "whereas this is not the case for others, and that one must furthermore impose that truth on others?"[21] This question reflects the challenge noted above with state-led and UN pronouncements on what is good in peacebuilding and reconciliation.[22]

This problem of assuming our values are *the* values was apparent in establishing the Indian Residential Schools in Canada and the imposition of certain educational and cultural values. More recently, there is a shift in some perspectives, which is evident in certain statements; there are good words being used, many centering on values. For example, consider the preamble of a statement titled "Principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples, issued by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada," from the Department of Justice. It begins:

> The Government of Canada is committed to achieving reconciliation with Indigenous peoples through a renewed, nation-to-nation, government-to-government, and Inuit-Crown relationship based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership as the foundation for transformative change.[23]

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[20] Ibid., 151-56.

[21] Ibid., 168.

[22] I use Todorov here as part of the interrogation of actions occurring within the context of settler colonialism in Canada because his focus is on conquest in the Americas. While his insights are relevant for peacebuilding and can be used to examine the relations occurring within peacebuilding elsewhere, not all initiatives occur within this same context and the analysis requires more attention than I can give it here. For examples of others who have explored some of this terrain, see Roland Paris, "International Peacebuilding and the 'Mission Civilisatrice,'" *Review of International Studies* 28, no. 4 (2002): 637-56; Meera Sabaratnam, "History Repeating? Colonial, Socialist and Liberal Statebuilding in Mozambique," in *Routledge Handbook of International Statebuilding*, ed. David Chandler and Timothy D. Sisk (London: Routledge, 2013).

[23] Government of Canada Department of Justice, "Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples," Government of Canada, Issued July 14, 2017, available at http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/principles-principes.html.

Recognition, rights, respect, cooperation, and partnership are all valued as moral goods. These values are regularly named in recent government statements and documents, and sound like worthy ones to pursue. However, a close textual reading indicates other values are also invoked in this document. The analysis here focuses only on Principle 2 of ten principles. It reads:

> 2. The Government of Canada recognizes that reconciliation is a fundamental purpose of section 35 of the ***Constitution Act, 1982***
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> Reconciliation is an ongoing process through which Indigenous peoples and the Crown work cooperatively to establish and maintain a mutually respectful framework for living together, with a view to fostering strong, healthy, and sustainable Indigenous nations within a strong Canada. As we build a new future, reconciliation requires recognition of rights and that we all acknowledge the wrongs of the past, know our true history, and work together to implement Indigenous rights.
>
> This transformative process involves reconciling the pre-existence of Indigenous peoples and their rights and the assertion of sovereignty of the Crown, including inherent rights, title, and jurisdiction. Reconciliation, based on recognition, will require hard work, changes in perspectives and actions, and compromise and good faith, by all. [24]

There are many values here. Respect and mutuality are evident, as are a valuing of history and acknowledgment of wrongs. There is a valuing of rights and of law and legal procedures, which embraces part of the current legal system as a good (the Constitution, Indigenous rights, other rights, jurisdiction, title). There is also a valuing of the Crown—the sovereign nation-state—as a basic good, with Indigenous sovereign nations existing within a "strong Canada." The first sentence prioritizes a political order, similar to the Burundi statement. The end is envisioned as Indigenous nations within Canada, both co-existing and strong—although "strong"

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[24] Ibid.

is not defined. There is an interesting allusion to the virtues of hard work, adaptability, and compromise.

The statement also values the idea that issues in tension will be reconciled. Paragraph two suggests even contested land titles. Values hidden behind this reference include those of individual interests and economic production, both of which are in tension with collective stewardship, multigenerational values, and land care. This tension is already noticeable in resource-related conflicts. While I am not pointing out anything new here, I find it interesting that what is valued is land title itself, not the values behind it that are also in tension. This suggests that Canadians generally do not yet know what all the necessary values are for engaging in reconciliation. This lack of knowledge reinforces the need to listen for, and to hear, how people frame the problem and judge the potential solutions.

2. Attend to plurality

When I speak of moral values, I am advocating an approach in line with Isaiah Berlin's value pluralism. Rather than argue for one moral theory as is common in philosophy, Berlin contends that there are many genuine values to consider in ethical deliberation. This approach means that value clashes are inevitable: "we are faced with choices between ends equally ultimate, and claims equally absolute."[25] Mercy can clash with justice, quality of life can clash with order, and so forth. There is no a priori ordering in which one good is better than another. Thus what is needed is openness, careful thinking, and deliberation. This entails exploring facts and context, hearing a broad set of voices, and engaging with rationality, emotionality, and spirituality as part of moral discernment.

To help listen for moral values and attend to plurality, I will introduce Rick Hill, a Tuscarora Knowledge Keeper, artist, museum curator, and leader at the Indigenous Knowledge Centre at Six Nations Polytechnic, Six Nations of the Grand River, in Brantford, Ontario. He describes traditional Haudenosaunee knowledge as valuing a good mind but also other attributes such as compassion. Hill speaks of the importance of valuing soft words, thankfulness, and performing one's duties as part of creation. While I may not understand the full meaning and implications of these teachings, I am

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[25] Isaiah Berlin, *Liberty* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002), 213-14.

beginning to hear values that address some of the deficits and challenges we face today. Valuing soft words, for example, would be a welcome change in the face of fast-paced, bombastic, and social media-enhanced dogmatism.

There are Haudenosaunee values that resonate with Mennonite values such as humility and performing one's duties as part of a larger community. In Hill's account, I hear overlapping and mutually enhancing moral values, and I sense the potential for conversations about values to help build bridges between communities in the Haldimand Tract, upon which Conrad Grebel University College is located.[26] Hearing and then attending to plural moral values offers an opportunity to clarify, deepen, and enrich our own values and our subsequent decisions, actions, and judgments as part of a journey towards reconciliation.

3. Practice creative problem-solving when values conflict

At the heart of creative problem-solving is "both-and" thinking.[27] Generally, people do not look to negotiate values; as a colleague once quipped, you cannot decide that "I will be unjust only on Tuesdays." Many of us hold certain moral values and imperatives as sacred, such as "love thy neighbor." These values help define who we are, what our character is, and what our commitments are. However, religious teachings and moral principles operate at a general level, and peacebuilders need to discern how they apply in a given situation. There is space to think creatively and non-dichotomously.

One recent example of creative problem-solving comes from a situation in a youth-community peacebuilding project. Located in an urban area, this project involved NGO workers being pressured by an informal local leader not to proceed with the work. There was both physical intimidation and verbal threats. Angry that a contract had not been awarded to his organization, the informal leader demanded that all work be stopped. Here a peacebuilding effort seemed to be exacerbating conflict

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[26] The Haldimand Tract refers to land extending six miles on either side of the Grand River (mouth to source) that was granted in perpetuity by the British to the Six Nations (Haudenosaunee) in 1784. For details see http://www.sixnations.ca/LandsResources/HaldProc.htm.

[27] See Anthony Weston, *Creative Problem-Solving in Ethics* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007). I was pleasantly surprised that conflict resolution techniques for creative problem-solving show up in the ethics literature.

in the neighborhood. Valuing its open and transparent bidding process, the NGO took the complaint seriously. The NGO did not want to be intimidated or pay a bribe, and also valued the lives and security of the staff and the community. What could have been seen as a narrow dilemma around corruption or security was reframed: NGO staff members asked, What all is going on here? By exploring the situation more fully, they saw that another value was more important to the local leader, namely the value of respect. The NGO's response had to combine demonstrating respect to the leader with resisting his demands.

The implication of such an example for us in Canada is that we must be ready to think creatively in working towards reconciliation, and to establish processes to help do this when values conflict. This is already happening. For example, in the Laird area of Saskatchewan, farmers and members of a landless band, the Young Chippewayan, have been working for three decades to develop creative responses to a land conflict. Their efforts are captured beautifully in a short film called *Reserve 107*.[28] Looking at the broader picture, in the government document noted above there is a strong commitment to state-level processes, legal frameworks, and an emphasis on rights. I wonder if we are moving towards a legal and increasingly technical response to reconciliation in Canada, and if we grasp what this means and its unintentional effects.

One implication might be that it limits our ability to identify and discuss values in tension, and to engage in creative problem-solving. For instance, when we try to get into the history of a place, such as the Haldimand Tract in Ontario, it can be the researchers who know the most who must be careful of what they say because of court proceedings. Restorative justice advocates have found that legal processes can limit the degree to which moral values are fully heard, as well as the degree to which creative problem-solving can take place. How will this affect people's ability to engage with one another?

A second implication might be that our everyday practices and attitudes remain unscrutinized, and that we settlers leave the problem-solving to others elsewhere. We advocate or respond when asked, but otherwise we do not think about how our lifestyles, where we eat, how we view people and the world, how we talk, and what we do on "our land" affects, or is affected by,

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[28] Available for viewing online at https://www.reserve107thefilm.com/.

Indigenous peoples and values. Perhaps the efforts by universities and faith groups to respond to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will prove otherwise. However, I cannot help but wonder, given the experiences of many well-intended peacebuilders who were "here to help" but acted in harmful ways, that our good intentions for reconciliation may have us looking elsewhere and not at ourselves.

Analyzing moral values—and the ways that these values not only focus our attention and actions but also contribute to failure—is crucial if peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts are to be transformative. Whether called peacebuilders or not, working at home or abroad, as internationals or locals, the challenge is to hear moral values, to understand their importance, to attend to their plurality, and to respond in creative ways that help constitute flourishing.[29]

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