

<p>Institution: University of Cambridge</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: UoA33</p>
<p>Title of case study: Scriptural Reasoning</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) David Ford's research on Scriptural Reasoning, a form of inter-faith dialogue in which Muslims, Christians and Jews meet to discuss extracts from their respective scriptures, has led to the creation of Scriptural Reasoning groups in multiple non-academic contexts, from UK prison chaplains to Israeli and Palestinian doctors, and so to deepening engagement and learning between people from different religious traditions. Those groups engage in the practice which Ford and others have developed, putting the underlying research into practice in a variety of local conditions, and thereby fostering peaceful and fruitful inter-faith relations.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) In the mid-1990s, David Ford (Regius Professor of Divinity, 1991 to present) was part of a small group of Christian, Jewish and Islamic scholars who developed a postliberal inter-faith dialogic practice known as Scriptural Reasoning. Ford is now the leading UK researcher writing about Scriptural Reasoning, and directs the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme, the main seedbed internationally for research related to Scriptural Reasoning. The research explores how a practice of shared reasoning can be developed between participants who have been formed in, and remain loyal to, religious traditions with different sources of authority and reasoning practices, without requiring prior commitment to a supposedly neutral account of the possibility or process of such shared reasoning. It is a contribution to inter-faith research, and more broadly to accounts of the nature of reasoning in the secular and religious public sphere.</p> <p>Ford argues that the most important resources for inter-faith engagement are people who appreciatively inhabit their own tradition or community, whether religious or secular, whilst recognising that it is not without problems. Ford and his team have sought to establish:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a conception of religious tradition which challenges arguments postulating the irrationality or stability of religious thought; 2. a recognition that different religious traditions need to understand their own ethical positions as part of a process of development involving ongoing disagreements, rather than a stable unchanging morality; 3. the utility of public discourse especially in so far as it requires learning each other's patterns of disagreement. (Nicholas Adams, <i>Habermas and Theology</i>. Cambridge University Press, 2006) <p>The practical outcome of these lines of research exercises impact most directly on cultural life (interpreting cultural capital, especially strategies for reading sacred texts) and public discourse. It crystallises as inter-faith engagement which occurs amongst those seeking in their own tradition resources for the exploration and transformation of that tradition, and the transformation of the relation between that tradition and others; and amongst those committed to exploring partnerships of difference with other traditions for the sake of such transformation. Scriptural Reasoning groups provide a context for such engagement to take place. Ford argues that such engagement leads to a fourfold deepening, as participants are drawn deeper into their own tradition, into the traditions of others, into the common good of creation and humanity, and into partnerships of difference.</p> <p>Ford edited (with Chad Pecknold, Research Associate and Postdoctoral Fellow in the Faculty, 2004–2006) and contributed to <i>The Promise of Scriptural Reasoning</i> (2006), the first book-length treatment of Scriptural Reasoning; he has recently discussed Scriptural Reasoning in relation to Christian theology in chapters in <i>Christian Wisdom</i> (2007), <i>Shaping Theology</i> (2007) and <i>The Future of Christian Theology</i> (2011). In these and other publications, Ford has explored the possibility that Scriptural Reasoning can function as a form of collaborative pursuit of wisdom for a secular and religiously plural world. He argues that it allows the deep sources of authority and</p>

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reasoning within differing religious traditions to be drawn on for the sake of their own flourishing and of the world they share, without differences between those traditions being erased or elided.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

David F. Ford and C.C. Pecknold, (eds) *The Promise of Scriptural Reasoning* (Malden, MI / Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), including Ford, 'An Interfaith Wisdom: Scriptural Reasoning Between Jews, Christians and Muslims', 1–22.

David F. Ford, *Christian Wisdom: Desiring God and Learning in Love* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007).

David F. Ford, *Shaping Theology: Engagements in a Religious and Secular World* (Malden, MI / Oxford: Blackwell, 2007).

David F. Ford, *The Future of Christian Theology*, Blackwell Manifestos (Malden, MI / Oxford: Blackwell, 2011), esp. ch.7

David Ford, 'Scriptural Reasoning and the Legacy of Vatican II: Their Mutual Engagement and Significance', *Modern Theology* 29.4 (October 2013).

All outputs can be supplied by the University of Cambridge on request.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Ford's research (and other Scriptural Reasoning research hosted by CIP) has led to SR activity in multiple contexts outside academia. The underpinning research explores the nature and implications of SR; it has now been put into practice in these varied contexts. The flow is not simply one-way, however: reflection on the experience of SR in these contexts feeds into on-going research and shapes extension of SR to new audiences. In this way, diverse audiences are drawn into SR practice, and into the process by which SR theory and practice are refined and extended.

Examples include:

1. **Schools and young people.** Following discussions with Ford and CIP, London-based inter-faith group, The Three Faiths Forum, developed (from 2008) a form of SR aimed at schools: 'Tools4Dialogue', drawing on Islamic, Christian and Jewish texts on themes relevant to school children. Their most popular programme is 'Bling! Beauty, Modesty and Clothing'. They reach c. 5000 children in 70 schools each year, in 17 London boroughs and some districts beyond. The programme's effectiveness was confirmed by an independent team from the University of Warwick's Religions and Education Research Unit, led by Julia Ipgrave; she found that 'contrary to common assumptions about the lack of appeal of sacred texts to young people', the programme enabled teenagers to 'engage in detail with the texts' in ways that interested them and facilitated dialogue (Ipgrave, 2011, 8 [4]).
2. **Medical practitioners in Israel/Palestine.** CIP has funded a project by the Middle East branch of The Three Faiths Forum. In 2010, following discussions with Ford and CIP, 10 Scriptural Reasoning groups, each comprising 20 to 40 doctors, nurses and medical students from Israel and the Palestinian territories, were created in Hadassah Hospital, Ein Karem, and Kaplan Medical Centre, Rehovot (with a similar level of activity in subsequent years). The impact of the activity is described in (Feldman-Kaye, 2011 [2]). As one participant summarised it, 'I have never studied Torah with Christians and Muslims, even though they are good friends of mine. It was difficult but in the end eye-opening, challenging ... I am now rethinking the way I view others in Israel, and my interactions with them in hospital when I become a doctor ... it was completely new, enjoyable, and surprising – every student should do this.' Stephen Shashua, Director of the Three Faiths Forum, said that SR was 'highly innovative as a model for engagement and pushes participants to explore areas that oftentimes they have never explored before.'
3. **Local communities.** CIP has facilitated the creation of community Scriptural Reasoning groups around the country, and is in regular contact with groups in Manchester, Birmingham, Preston, Dundee, St Andrews, York, Durham, Berlin, Tübingen, Heidelberg and elsewhere and in touch with groups in Blackburn and Bolton, Bradford, Kirkby Stephen, Edinburgh, and several groups in London. CIP currently employs a part-time SR facilitator to assist new and existing groups.
4. **St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace.** St Ethelburga's is an inter-faith centre in central London, with which CIP has been working since 2006. Thanks to that partnership, Scriptural Reasoning has become a key strand of St Ethelburga's work. It is part of their 'Faith and Citizenship Training' (in co-operation with London Citizens) (Diocese

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of London, 2012) and part of their core approach to 'build[ing] inter-religious relationships [5; see also 1].

5. **Prisons.** Since 2012, CIP has been developing a programme of Scriptural Reasoning with prison chaplains (trailing SR with regional chaplains at Highpoint, contributing to the National Offender Management Service regional prison chaplain training and beginning a programme of SR with chaplains and staff in Whitemoor and prisoners (a trial SR group with 25 Christian and Muslim female prison inmates in Holloway). The chaplain to Whitemoor Prison said, 'I would judge the experience of SR as the most significant development towards a deeper level of multi-faith working within chaplaincy teams that has taken place since their instigation some ten years ago when the guiding principles were set out' and that his hope 'would be that SR becomes established as a regular tool in the working of prison chaplaincies and used at prison team meetings and Regional meetings / national conferences.' [6].
6. **Online SR.** CIP was awarded £288,680 from the Research Councils UK Digital Economy 'Research in the Wild' Programme to develop an online implementation of Scriptural Reasoning. The programme ran for 18 months from September 2011, during which time 15 groups, comprising a total of 60 individuals, participated in SR groups on the system (Higton, 2013 [3]); Online SR is now an established component of the programme (see <http://www.scripturalreasoning.org/scriptural-reasoning-goes-virtual>).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[1] Diocese of London (2012), 'Response to Commitments: St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace', available at www.london.anglican.org/London-Challenge-Response_7147

[2] Feldman-Kaye, Miriam (2011) 'Scriptural Reasoning with Israelis and Palestinians', available online at www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/en/resources/papers/3ffme

[3] Higton, Mike (2013) Report on 'Online Interfaith Dialogue Platform' project, EP/I031820/1, Research Outcomes System, <https://researchoutcomes.rcuk.ac.uk>

[4] Ipgrave, Julia (2011), Tools for Trialogue 2009/11, University of Warwick Religions and Education Programme (confidential report).

[5] Email from Person 1, Director, St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace.

[6] Letter from Person 2, Chaplain, Whitemoor Prison