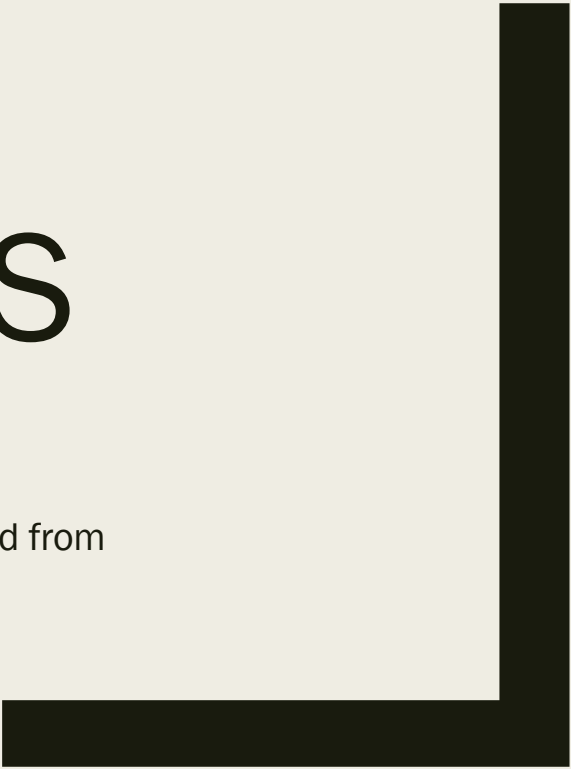




# SLA FRAMES

Frank Cookingham, 11 NOV 2015

Detailed information on this topic can be retrieved from  
[www.EvalFrank.com](http://www.EvalFrank.com)



# Overview

- Preliminary considerations: what are the major concepts?
- SLA Content: what are the major kinds of things to be examined?
- Constructivist principles for SLA process.
- Holistic principles for SLA process.
- Some advice.

# PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

# Assessment

“Assessment” often connotes valuation of some sort; as a tax assessment determines the estimated value of a building. FGC suggests that in SLA valuation is focused on priorities assigned to features of the setting’s spiritual landscape.

In particular, the features of interest are needs to be addressed to enhance facilitation of transformational development for child well-being.

# Needs Assessment

“Needs assessment” refers to a systematic exercise that describes

- Undesirable social conditions that a program could address. Note 12 NOV: Colleagues reminded me that “needs” can be weaknesses to be strengthened or things absent that need to be put in place; or valuable things that need to be enhanced. Preferably an assessment should include both negative and positive needs.
- Assets in the geographical area in which the program will be implemented that are relevant for addressing or enhancing those social conditions.
- Strengths and weaknesses in the lead implementing agency for addressing those social conditions. (Often this aspect of needs assessment is given inadequate attention.)

# Landscape, Spiritual Landscape

“Landscape” usually refers to a wide-angle view of terrain; it is what you see as you survey the horizon while turning your head from side to side.

“Spiritual landscape” can refer to:

- A spiritual interpretation of geographic environment. What stories are told about the ways in which geographic features influence the meaning of life and death?
- A wide-range view of social relations in some setting; what are the dominant values that guide how people relate to each other and institutions?

# Spiritual Landscape Needs Assessment

David R. Hodge, interpreted

“Spiritual assessment can be thought of as the process of gathering, analyzing, and synthesizing spiritual and religious information into a specific framework that provides the basis for, and gives direction to, subsequent practice decisions.” (Dodge, Template for Spiritual Assessment)

FGC suggests that SLA pay particular attention to:

- Undesirable aspects of the spiritual landscape that a program could improve, and desirable aspects that can be enhanced. (See SLA Frame by Jayakumar Christian; list of topics by Resseguie.)
- Assets in the geographical area in which the program will be implemented that are relevant for addressing those undesirable SL aspects or enhancing the desirable ones.
- Strengths and weaknesses in the lead implementing agency for remediating or enhancing high priority needs of the spiritual landscape.

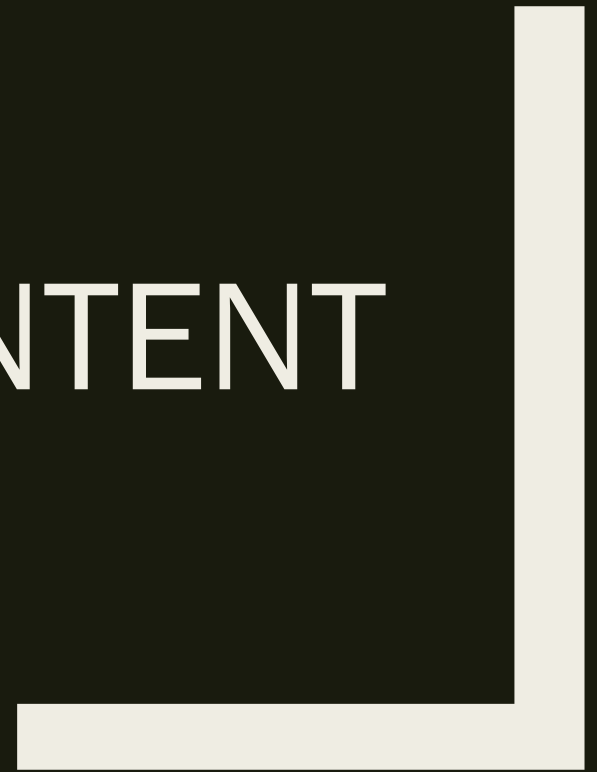
# SL Assessment, Another Perspective

Note 12 NOV

- The Hodge template emphasizes creating an informative framework to guide action.
- In discussion with colleagues another perspective emerged. We can view SL assessment first as an invitation to understand each other's views of spirituality and religion. As mutual understanding grows, discussion participants may discover a common will to improve their context in ways that nurture spiritual development. At that point activities to create an informative framework to guide action can be introduced.



# SLA CONTENT



# SLA Content Frame

Jayakumar Christian

Four factors

1. Ideologies regarding root causes of poverty
2. Public ideologies regarding the poor and children
3. Inadequacies in world views
4. Influence of principalities and powers

# Images in the Gospel of Luke

Note Nov 13

James L. Resseguie, *Spiritual Landscape*, Hendrickson Publishers, 2004 describes how the terrain and features of social life in the land and time when the Gospel of Luke was written reflect aspects of spirituality.

The book illustrates how “mapping” spiritual landscape involves creative inquiry and openness to diverse perspectives.

Resseguie explores six aspects of SL.

# SL in Gospel of Luke

James L. Resseguie

1. Topography; terrain
2. Journeys
3. Families and households; children
4. Meals and hospitality
5. Clothing
6. Consumption as the priority for economic systems

# SLA PROCESS

# Spiritual Metrics; Challenges

Dr. David Bronkema

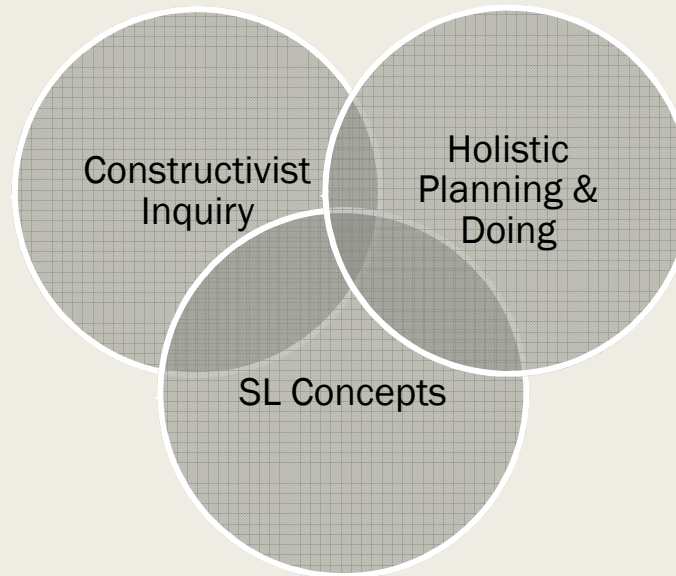
1. The range and scope of the possible kinds of spiritual impact make it difficult for organizations to define and prioritize them.
2. The kinds of spiritual impact [organizations] would like to have are subject to their own cultural and doctrinal biases and many times don't necessarily align with local ones.
3. Because of the scope and complexity of the variables that cause spiritual impact, it is very difficult for organizations to detail a robust theory of change, to detail a robust understanding of what kinds of activities will bring about the spiritual impact desired.
4. Given all of the above, it is very difficult for organizations to come up with a universal set of activities and objectives that will be impactful and relevant across cultures.
5. The spiritual impact measurement process itself is riddled with practical and theological difficulties, including the fact that spiritual growth is not a linear process.

# Meeting Spiritual Metric Challenges

Consider a process frame that can meet the five metric challenges by integrating SL features with principles of constructivist inquiry and principles of holistic planning and doing.

# SLA Process Frame

## Frank Cookingham





# CONSTRUCTIVIST PRINCIPLES

# Constructivist Assessment Principles

The primary objective of the constructivist approach to assessment is

- to enable groups of stakeholders
- to create constructions/descriptions of features of the context
- that are most relevant to their claims, concerns and issues.

# Facilitate and Enable Stakeholder Participation (go the extra mile)

- Agency staff
- Faith organizations and spiritual leaders
- Community leaders
- Parents
- Children
- Service agencies (education, health, agriculture, etc.)

# Negotiate Descriptions/Constructions of Spiritual Landscape Features

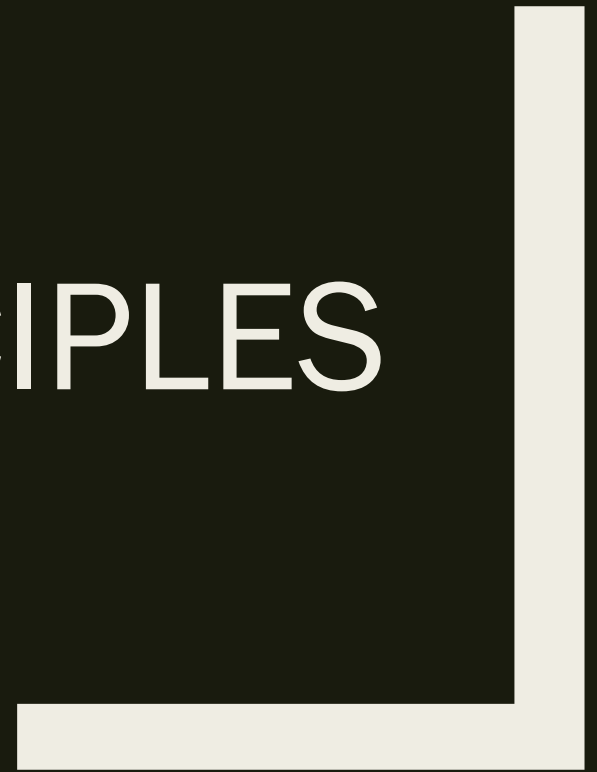
- There is no best construction. The assessment leader conducts one-one interviews within a group of stakeholders to identify the range of descriptions, gradually formulating a description or conflicting descriptions for that group. This process is completed for each group of stakeholders.
- In a second round of interviews the leader identifies the salient features of the emerging description or descriptions. Descriptions from other groups are introduced for critique.
- As the inquiry proceeds outside input can be introduced into the interviews to be critiqued.
- Eventually there will be a list of features with broad consensus, and a list of others where there is not consensus.

# Examine Claims, Concerns and Issues

Where there is not consensus conduct a detailed examination of high priority claims, concerns and issues.

- *Claims are statements that are assumed to be true until evidence is analyzed that shows they are at least partially not true.*
- *Concerns are features in the setting that cause anxiety. In an assessment activities are done to identify factors causing anxiety and what can be done to manage them.*
- *Issues are features in the setting about which there is disagreement of some sort. In an assessment evidence is sought that people agree will illuminate issues so that they do not impede moving forward in a constructive manner.*

# HOLISTIC PRINCIPLES



# Holistic Principles: Planning & Doing

1. Base both your plans and implementation of the plans on Scripture.
2. Focus the plan on relationships that enhance individual and social transformation. As planned activities are implemented pay particular attention to how the way the activities are done affect the potential for transformation.
3. Keep the bigger picture in mind, the theory of transformational change, throughout both planning and implementation.
4. Invite the Holy Spirit to lead the process, and follow the guidance provided.

## Holistic Principle 1

# Scriptural Foundation

In a holistic planning process the participants meditate on appropriate Scripture passages throughout the planning exercise. Weave this meditation throughout the activities of the day and week as a constant reminder that consistency with God's word is essential for any plan called holistic.

Likewise, when implementing a plan be guided by appropriate scripture. Failure to act in a holistic manner sucks the life out of a holistic plan



## Holistic Principle 2

# Focus on Quality of Relationships

Focus holistic planning products and processes on the quality of relationships, with special concern for holiness in those relationships; holiness, not shallow piety.

## Holistic Principle 3

# Keep the Big Picture in View

A holistic plan describes the context, or the bigger picture of reality [spiritual landscape], for implementing a particular program. Such a plan describes how intended results will enable individual and social transformation; transformation, not just better conditions.

## Holistic Principle 4

# Be Guided by the Holy Spirit

Planning a program holistically is much more than filling in the boxes in a logic chart. It is learning about what God intends for you, and for those around you, as you improve the spiritual landscape.

# Review

- Examine obstacles and assets for transformational development in the spiritual landscape of the program setting and in the lead program agency (viz. WV).
- Be guided by a constructivist approach to assessment: broad stakeholder participation in planning and analysis; negotiated descriptions of major features of SL; examination of claims, concern and issues.
- Be guided by holistic principles for planning and doing the assessment: Scriptural guidance, focus on relationships, relevance of the big picture including theory of transformational change and world views, and deference to the Holy Spirit.

# SOME ADVICE



# Advice

- Pressure to meet deadlines can subvert good work in progress. Move forward deliberately, not to meet deadlines but to move systematically toward achieving the goals.
- “Tool” is not a helpful image for this work. Meaningful assessment will involve a collection of processes and exercises, some of which will be unique in each setting. Different levels of assessment may be appropriate. Develop guidelines and frameworks, and then assist people to apply them in their setting.
- Continue the research activities. God has inspired people in different counties and environments at various points in time to develop relevant knowledge and practices. Be open to modifying what you have done based on new information.

# More Advice

- Note 12 NOV: Existing assessment processes and exercises, with guidance in doing them and analyzing results from a holistic SL perspective, may be the most practical way to move forward. Later we can explore if a constructivist approach to inquiry will add enough value to justify the extensive amount of time and expertise required.
- Principles of Transformative Evaluation can be applied to this work to keep it grounded in understanding TD at progressively deeper levels.
- Become aware of how science epistemology can create obstacles to understanding TD. Cause-effect relationships in the physical world are the essence of science, while loving God and neighbor are the essence of TD.

# Praise God!

