

## Call for Papers: Religious Perspectives on Effective Altruism

The [effective altruism](#) (EA) movement has received a lot of attention over the past years. It calls on us to put our resources to the service of others. It also calls on us – and these are its most distinctive features – to make the *most* out of every resource we put to this use and to assess what does so on the basis of *reason and evidence*. The movement has strongly secular roots. In this first workshop of its kind, we raise the question what religious views can learn from effective altruism and which aspects of the movement they should resist.

The workshop will feature invited presentations by Frances Kissling, Giles Fraser, and Markus Huppenbauer. We invite further contributions at the intersection of EA and religion. While we expect a majority of papers to be from the Christian faith tradition, papers outside this tradition are very welcome, too. We will give priority to papers which focus on the distinctive features of EA, including papers which are critical of its distinctive features. The following examples illustrate the kind of questions that fit well into this workshop:

- The focus on cost-effectiveness: what, if anything, is wrong in choosing less than maximally cost-effective charities for donations or less than maximally impactful causes for political advocacy?
- Is it morally permissible to donate to charities in one's home country if the same money could help many more people abroad?
- Reason and evidence: On what basis could one argue for a genuine moral duty to rely reason and evidence in loving one's neighbour?
- Cause neutrality: is there anything wrong in choosing a cause area (such as poverty, environment, or gender equality) on the basis of other criteria than how much benefit there is in working in this cause area?
- Long-term future: many effective altruists argue that efforts to shape the long-term future in a beneficial way should take priority over present-day concerns such as poverty. Is this correct?
- Career choice: What role for the concept of vocation in effective career choice? How to assess the concept of "Earning to Give?"
- Is it permissible – or even morally important or mandatory – to be public about one's altruism?
- While both the religious literature and EA literature feature a comparatively radical call to place love – or even self-sacrifice for the sake of others – at the center of one's life, the role models and precepts of EA and faith traditions differ dramatically. What explains the difference?
- EA emphasizes altruism towards distant, anonymous others whereas religious traditions emphasize the embeddedness of love in relationships. Can this be reconciled?
- We also welcome exegetical work on religious texts supporting or criticizing the EA message (say, the parable of the shrewd manager in Luke 16:1-13, or the basic command of the Abrahamic traditions to love "with all one's mind")
- In principle, we are also open to historical contributions which find traces of the current debate on EA ideas in earlier texts.

Please send abstracts of 300-500 words to [dominic.roser@unifr.ch](mailto:dominic.roser@unifr.ch) by 15 May 2019. We will send out notifications the latest by the end of May.

The workshop will last 1.5 days and take place on 3 and 4 September 2019 at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). There will be one hour slots for each presentation. There will be a public talk by Markus Huppenbauer on the eve of the workshop (in German). We are looking for options to publish selected papers in a special issue on the theme of the workshop but cannot guarantee to achieve this goal as of now.

The workshop is organized by Markus Huppenbauer of the Swiss Center for Religion, Politics, and Economics and Dominic Roser of the Institute for Ethics and Human Rights of the University of Fribourg.