

MENNONITE RELIGIOUS VALUES AS A RESOURCE FOR PEACEBUILDING BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND EASTERN CHRISTIANS

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The relatively nascent study of religion, conflict, and peacebuilding seeks to activate religious values, principles, beliefs, practices, rituals, symbols, and narratives that can potentially mobilize religious leaders and laity to devise nonviolent ways of preventing or transforming conflict. A storehouse of Muslim and Orthodox Christian values and teachings offers resources for interreligious peacebuilding in regions where these two faith traditions live side by side. Further, the conflict transformation theory and methods of Mennonites, a historic peace church whose peacebuilding pedigree has earned them worldwide credibility, have been shaped by historically-conditioned religious values that have preserved their peace convictions and inspired them to work in relief, development, and peacebuilding. The Mennonite narrative may serve as a template for comparable peace-cultivating indigenous Islamic and Orthodox Christian values that can be incorporated into conflict transformation theory, methods, exercises, and initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

Eastern Christianity—Chalcedonian, Oriental, and Assyrian—has been in contact with the Muslim world longer than any other faith tradition, claiming a mixed heritage of both amicable and hostile relations that harken back to the seventh-century Arab expansion. The list of regions where tensions between Muslims and Christians exist is a long one. From post-conflict trauma healing and reconciliation in the Balkans and the sporadic

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