

THE MULTIFAITH MOVEMENT: PEACEBUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

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While scholars largely ignored the role of religion in contributing to and ameliorating social problems in the 20th Century, religion came to occupy a prominent place in the public sphere at the turn of the 21st Century largely due to its association with violence. Although religion continues to play a role in perpetuating cultures of violence, both direct and structural, the peacebuilding capacity of religion is often overlooked within academic discourses. This paper examines the multifaith movements' commitment to peacebuilding activities, particularly countering violent extremism, advancing gender equity and climate change, in order to illustrate that religions have long played, and continue to play, a role in addressing injustices and conflict transformation. A significant body of literature on religion and peacebuilding emerged in the 1990s, in response to crisis events, which remains highly relevant today. This paper will revisit this literature and apply insights derived from it to contemporary issues. It will also draw from work undertaken as part of the more recent *Netpeace* study, which examined the multifaith movement's response to global risks. A total of 54 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with leading multifaith practitioners in Australia, the UK and the USA. The findings of this study demonstrate that multifaith and multi-actor peacebuilding networks, including religious and non-religious actors, have transformed crises into peacebuilding opportunities. Finally the paper examines the critical role that education about diverse religions and worldviews can play in schools to advance peacebuilding principles and how insights from the multifaith youth movement can inform peacebuilding pedagogy and practice.