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EDITED BY
**Jolyon Mitchell, Suzanna R. Millar,
Francesca Po and Martyn Percy**

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PART I

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Religion and the Search for Peace

Jolyon Mitchell and Suzanna R. Millar

When it is peace, then we may view again
With new-won eyes each other's truer form
And wonder. Grown more loving-kind and warm
We'll grasp firm hands and laugh at the old pain,
When it is peace. But until peace, the storm
The darkness and the thunder and the rain.¹

These lines from the poem *To Germany* (1914) reflect a deeply felt tension between the yearning for peace and the painful reality of conflict. Like so many of the young soldier poets of the Great War, amidst the unfolding despair and devastation, Charles Hamilton Sorley hoped that his verse would give voice to the men mown down prematurely in this conflict, those he described as the 'millions of the mouthless dead.'² A year after he penned these six lines, he was killed by a sniper's bullet to his head at the Battle of Loos. He was only 20 years old. This sonnet reflects aspects of his own personal experience, swept as he was from his Edwardian boyhood years of peace and prosperity to an adulthood immersed in the brutality of modern warfare from libraries to trenches and from friendship to enmity. In the months before the First World War, Sorley had travelled and studied in Germany, declaring when he got home that he felt he was German and could 'perhaps' even 'die for Deutschland.'³ Only a few months later, he had enlisted in the British Army and was being ordered to fight and kill the people whom he had grown to love and to admire. His loyalties were divided: 'I regard the war as one between sisters, between Martha and Mary.'⁴ In the previous eight lines of *To Germany*, he refuses to apportion blame to either side: 'We stumble and we do not understand', concluding with:

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And in each other's dearest ways we stand,
And hiss and hate. And the blind fight the blind.

The sestet that follows potently conveys his hope for a lasting peace, where the present enemy is not demonised but viewed afresh in a far kinder and more generous light. His 'faintly' biblical hope for 'new-won eyes'⁵ and his vision of future reconciliation combine with a recognition, mature beyond his youth, that there is still much agony, much darkness, to be endured.

The daily wielding of bayonet and rifle, the seeming insatiability of the machine guns, quickly taught Sorley and his contemporaries to recognise the glib jingoism of government propaganda as dangerous and deadly on both sides. As the bodies piled up, each poem became a clarion call to peace and 'an indispensable guidebook to the infernal cellars of the age',⁶ which gave rise to new horrors in the form of mechanised and chemical warfare. For Sorley, the only plausible response to this conflict was a steadfast refusal to romanticise sacrificial deaths and the saying of 'soft things'.⁷ He is often described as one of the transitional war poets. In calling 'a spade a spade',⁸ Sorley passionately promoted the search for peace by actively exposing and decrying such large-scale, unprecedented violence. Rejecting heroic patriotic poems, which celebrated the honour of fighting for one's country and peace, he wrote instead of the realities of 'battered trenches', the 'gashed head', and 'life crushed'.⁹ Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon believed him to be 'the first poet capable of writing the truth of war unembellished'.¹⁰ Like other soldier poets, Sorley's craft was shaped by his experiencing first-hand the fog and 'pity of war.' In this setting, peace is not an easily won or found experience.

Regarded widely as one of that brilliantly gifted group of young officer poets to have lost their lives in the Great War,¹¹ Sorley is less well-known than Wilfred Owen¹² (1893–1918), Isaac Rosenberg¹³ (1890–1918), and Siegfried Sassoon¹⁴ (1886–1967).¹⁵ Yet like them, he was influenced by the religious traditions (Christianity and Judaism) encountered at home, school, and beyond. In their unique and different ways, each of these poets depicts the complex relationship between the desire for peace and the merciless nature of modern conflict, as well as between living religions and searching for peace.

This is not of course confined to poets writing out of the First World War. Consider, for example, *Christmas Bells*,¹⁶ written on Christmas Day 1863 by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882), shortly after his son was brought home seriously wounded. Writing during the deadliest conflict in American history, the Civil War (1861–1865), Longfellow describes how 'hate is strong', and the cannons of war drown out the carols of 'peace on earth, goodwill to all men [sic]' (Luke 2.14). As in Sorley's *To Germany*, there is nevertheless also hope for sustainable peace embedded in his poem even as it evokes the sounds of the harrowing brutality of the Civil War. This simple poem illustrates the complex relationship between religion and peace.

The thematic focus of the poems *To Germany* and *Christmas Bells* points to one of the aims of this entire book: the simple desire to untangle the ambivalent relationship between religion and peace, while also exploring how different religious traditions and practices can be a foundation or even a motivating force for peace amidst the storms of violence. Many of the essays in this book discuss the ambivalence in the relationship between religion and peace. They demonstrate how contemporary interpreters, commentators, and peacebuilders do well to recognise the complex and often fraught dynamic between religion and peace.

Far more common are accounts that investigate the connections between religion and violence. What Longfellow described as the ‘wranglings and dissensions’ inspired by religious belief, the ‘prayers for vengeance’, and the fault lines between communities, supposedly caused by or at least accentuated by religious faith, are regularly discussed. Terms such as ‘religious wars’ and ‘religious violence’ are commonly used uncritically with the assumption that religion inevitably causes or contributes to disharmony, conflict, and bloodshed between peoples. It is, therefore, refreshing to see how scholars and commentators are increasingly recognising that religious traditions and practices can and do contribute to a more peaceful way of building the world.

This growing recognition correlates to the recent rise of Peace Studies, which has developed into a multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary field of research and teaching. Questions related to peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding as well as conflict prevention, conflict transformation, and reconciliation are commonly raised not only in Peace Studies but also in a range of other disciplines such as International Relations, History and Politics, as well as Theology and Religious Studies. Though similarities and dissimilarities exist among and within different evolving religious traditions, all world religions include visions and values of peace, alongside principles for and practices of building peace.

As observed earlier, the relationship between religion and violence has attracted far greater scholarly attention than the connections between religion and peace. For example, *The Blackwell Companion to Religion and Violence* (2011), edited by Andrew R. Murphy, provides an overview and guide to the expanding field of study analysing the relationship of religion and violence, drawing on expertise from many contexts and disciplines.

This *Companion to Religion and Peace* provides an interdisciplinary book addressing key concepts, history, theories, models, resources, and practices in the complex and ambivalent relationship between religion and peace. Contributions are drawn from a range of perspectives and locations, reflecting diverse methods and approaches currently proliferating in research and practice. There is by no means a single unified voice; different authors take significantly different approaches. This collection is grounded in experience and context, drawing on established, developing, and new research.

This book can be read as a standalone collection or as a partner to the *Companion to Religion and Violence*, as it is partly modelled on aspects of that earlier volume, while recognising that *Religion and Peace* is a distinct topic, with its own evolving literature, theories, and practices. This volume provides an introduction to debates about conceptualising the core terms ‘religion’ and ‘peace’ and their relationships, including contested meanings and changing paradigms. Taken together, nearly 50 essays explore how religious ideals and visions of peace have been embedded and embodied, expressed and challenged in traditions, movements, strategies, and practices. The actions of nonviolent resistance, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding will be considered in diverse contexts, from interpersonal to international and from mysticism to social and political activism. Themes cut across historical and contemporary examples, drawing upon expertise in various disciplines.

Religion has been, and is increasingly, a persistent and significant socio-political and cultural factor, operational in all domains and at all levels of human interaction. Like peace, religion encompasses the interpersonal and international as well as the symbolic, discursive, and economic. The role of religion in challenging violence and building peace has been analysed and interrogated in many different ways. In the chapters that follow, practices, processes, motivations, resources, leaders, histories, and social capital are considered.

Likewise, the significance of religious actors in civil society or as interveners in conflict situations is considered, offering conducive contexts for liminal space and transformative shifts in understanding and empathy with 'the Other.'

Theologies, beliefs, texts, traditions, institutions, and leaders have also been subject to critique from a range of standpoints as obstacles to just and sustainable peace even where religions position themselves as positive agents of peace. Chapters from this book include examples of current work and insights from different disciplines. Gendered constructions and operations of power are profound but often unacknowledged realities of violence and peacebuilding, so the book as a whole addresses the importance of understanding gender and race as categories of analysis in peace studies while exploring the relation between religion and peace. Some of the chapters consider peacebuilding in the face of structural, cultural, and symbolic violence, operational and normalised in the everyday lives of women, children, and subordinated/marginalised peoples and often legitimised by what can be experienced as oppressive patriarchal religious traditions. Others explore how religion can serve as a healing, liberating force for building peace. The following chapters contain a wide range of what Longfellow describes as 'words of wisdom.' These practical and theoretical words of wisdom contain more than simple warnings and encouragements; they reveal how different religions, while having the potential for inciting violence, can also promote lasting peace.

Outline

Section I introduces the volume with four essays and one interview, which set the stage for what follows. On the one hand, the essays map different religions (each exemplifying various approaches to peace, see Chapter 2). On the other hand, the chapters highlight different approaches to peace (each exemplified by various religions, see Chapter 3). The section concludes with a critical reflection on the discipline of 'religion, violence, and peacebuilding' (Chapter 4) and then an extended interview with the leading peacebuilder and scholar John Paul Lederach (Chapter 5).

The following introductory chapter (Chapter 2) brings together short essays on the central, structural elements of five largely distinct religious traditions as they bear on the issue of peace. They do not all deal in the same way with creeds, scriptures, beliefs, and practices because not all religions put the same value on these and other elements. Instead they address this question: How is peace understood by someone immersed in or an expert of a particular religious tradition?

In Chapter 3, **Ian Markham** examines the relationships that exist globally between religion and peace. Though the diversity between and within religions must not be flattened, three broad approaches are discernible. First, some religious traditions have an intrinsic connection to peace, opposing violence, and promoting peacemaking. Examples include the Christian Quakers, Islamic Nur community, and Asian traditions which centralise *ahimsā* (nonviolence). Second, there are religious strands with a pragmatic relationship to peace; that is, peace is the ultimate goal, but sometimes force is required to get there. This view has been prominent in the Christian just war tradition and in some Islamic and Hindu texts (e.g. the writings of al-Shaybani and the Mahābhārata respectively). Finally, some religious groups are opposed to peace if it means tolerating views deemed abominable. Markham offers six case studies of such groups, which share features like binary narratives, apocalyptic expectations, and deeply held metaphysical beliefs.

In the penultimate chapter of this opening section, **Atalia Omer** advocates a turn to ‘intersectional peacebuilding.’ She offers a schematic account of the academic field, arguing that the subfields of ‘Religion and Violence’, and ‘Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding’ have thus far failed to critically integrate questions of peace and justice. The overarching complex of ‘Religion, Violence, and Peacebuilding’ (RVP) has tended to focus on acute and direct forms of violence while overlooking indirect forms. Structural, symbolic, cultural, epistemic, and discursive violence must be grappled with in theory and practice. What’s more, the edges of RVP are growing, allowing room for epistemologies from the margins. RVP must be decolonized and deorientalized and must expand via integrative and intersectional analysis which takes account of multiple bondages. Such analysis should be sensitive to the manifold interrelations of religion and violence and work towards the constructive aims of peacebuilding.

In the fifth and final chapter of this opening section, **John Paul Lederach** is interviewed by Jolyon Mitchell. This wide-ranging conversation covers considerable ground. Lederach reveals the religious and artistic roots of his peacebuilding practice as well as his many insights into how religion can help to enrich peacebuilding. This interview, drawing upon Lederach’s extensive practical work, highlights the vital connections between religion and building peace. Lederach makes a strong case for the importance of including religious leaders and religious communities as well as the arts in developing sustainable peace around the world.

II. Religion and Peace in Local Contexts

Part II turns to essays spanning the globe, from Northern Ireland to Indonesia, and consider diverse religious traditions. Many contributors draw on fieldwork or personal experience to provide on-the-ground examples with significant social, political, and theological implications.

The first three contributions consider Israel, Palestine, and the Arab world. **Victoria Biggs** focuses on young people in the Israel/Palestine conflict. She begins by examining common, religiously inflected ‘iconographies of childhood’: the child as a symbol of hope, childhood as a site of moral innocence, and children as the responsibility of their parents. These iconographies are weaponised for violence as they are used as inflammatory counterpoints for depictions of children as terrorists. Biggs then turns to the children’s own perspectives. Refracting her discussion through the Jewish ethical thought of Levinas and Islamic conceptions of sacred struggle, she narrates encounters with Palestinian and Israeli young people which suggest profound ambivalence in their understanding of the Other. Finally, she offers her own religious and ethical reflections to reimagine childhood in Israel/Palestine in a more nuanced way. She draws particularly on the thought of the Catholic ‘Little Sisters of Jesus’ to understand what ‘littleness’ might mean as a response to violence and injustice.

In Chapter 7, **Trond Bakkevig** offers an autobiographical account of his role in facilitating dialogues between Jewish, Muslim, and Christian leaders from Israel and Palestine. After years of experience working in ecumenical and international affairs, Bakkevig was asked in 1995 to participate in interreligious conversations in the Holy Land. He charts the frustrations and successes of that process, highlighting instrumental individuals and pivotal moments. Dialogues began around the holiness of Jerusalem, religious dimensions of peace, and holy sites. After a promising meeting in Alexandria in 2002, progress was hampered by

violence and lack of local ownership. The establishment of the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land in 2005 was a new beginning. In spite of inflammatory remarks of some individuals, the Council managed to move forward. The chapter ends with some reflections on the role of religious dialogue as part of a peace process.

Next, in Chapter 8, **Maryam Ahmad and James DeShaw Rae** discuss the intersection between Islamic and feminist political thought, particularly within the context of the Arab Spring. They sketch a rough distinction between 'secularist' and 'reformist' branches of Islamic feminism, which find tools for liberation outside and inside the faith respectively. Recent years have witnessed a reinterpretation of the role of women in Islamic thought, along with increased female political representation worldwide, including women's role in peacebuilding. After explaining this background, Ahmad and Rae focus on the Arab Spring, which was shaped by the participation of millions of women, secular and religious alike. Women marched alongside men, and sometimes took leadership roles. Sadly, in the bouts of government suppression that followed, women often suffered gendered violence and attempts to destroy female legitimacy. The situation of women post-Arab Spring remains uncertain and precarious.

The volume then travels eastward for two essays on Southeast Asia. In Chapter 9, **Sumanto Al Qurtuby** focusses on Indonesia since the fall of Suharto's New Order dictatorial government in 1998. This period has witnessed an increase in civil liberties, but also in tensions and violence across ethnic and religious lines. Al Qurtuby showcases some of the grassroots peacebuilding initiatives that have confronted these challenges. For example, when interreligious violence erupted in Ambon city in 2011, a group of Christian and Muslim activists (the Peace Provocateurs) prevented its spread to other regions. In Central Java, we find examples of local peacebuilders in Wonosobo; productive intrareligious and interreligious relations in Jepara; collaborative Christian-Muslim projects in Solo; and an inter-faith 'House of Peace' in Semarang. Al Qurtuby also highlights the role of female grassroots peacebuilders, whose stories are documented poorly. They were instrumental, for example, during and after the communal conflict in Ambon, Poso, and elsewhere in the country.

The next two essays consider the Indian Subcontinent. In Chapter 10, **Mark Owen** discusses religious contributions to the ongoing peace process in Nepal, drawing on fieldwork data collected between 2011 and 2015. He stresses the importance of contextually sensitive approaches and the dangers of generic and simplified models. Owen discusses several examples of religious peacebuilding in Nepal, including initiatives stemming from individual religious communities (Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim), and interreligious efforts. He then analyses existing and potential barriers to religious peacebuilding: the difficulty of creating networks between centralised and local peace efforts; the need for religious leaders to be trained in peacebuilding; the perception that religions are being intentionally excluded from the peace process; and the challenge of interreligious violence. He suggests ways to overcome these barriers and puts forward positive proposals for peace, such as drawing on indigenous religious peacebuilding resources.

In Chapter 11, **Farah Mihlar** explores how Sri Lanka's 10 percent Muslim population engages in peacebuilding through identity and religious reforms. Mihlar looks at two processes of Islamic reform that Muslims have undergone during and after the armed conflict and explains how they were fundamentally shaped in response to the ethnic/religious other. During the armed conflict, the reforms were a form of non-violent separatism,

concerned with identifying with a 'true Islam' and eliminating influences of the ethnic/religious other. After the conflict, as Muslims were increasingly being seen by majoritarian Buddhist nationalists as a threat, the former have responded to persecution and violence through another process of religious and identity reform. This occasion has involved opening up and adapting to the religious other and actively engaging in peacebuilding. The chapter questions the nature and sustainability of this 'oppressed peace', which is one-dimensional and void of justice and accountability.

The following two chapters focus on Africa. In Chapter 12, **Darren Kew and Chris M.A. Kwaja** examine religion and peacebuilding in Nigeria. In this region, religion is complex and diverse and has a decisive influence over public life. Kew and Kwaja begin by surveying the religious landscape. Nigerian Islam is pluriform, shaped by local ethno-national traditions and waves of historical reform. Of particular importance were the new radical movements of the 1970s and '80s. Christianity was established in Nigeria in the nineteenth century and in recent decades has been shaped by the expansion of Pentecostalism. This religious diversity has caused tensions, and the country has suffered eruptions of intrafaith and interfaith conflicts, particularly at the hands of extremist groups who give religious sanction to violence. Countering this, though, are the many individuals and organisations working across religious divides towards peace.

In Chapter 13, **John W. de Gruchy** examines the theological and political dimensions of 'reconciliation' in South Africa. He traces how this concept has been contested and critically retrieved in political praxis aimed at social transformation. He begins with various reconciliation efforts from the struggle for apartheid in the 1960s–1980s, including the seminal Kairos Document (1985) and influence of Nelson Mandela. He then moves to the period in which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) spearheaded the process of reconciliation in the transition to democracy. He considers the integration of the theological and the political envisaged by the TRC's leaders and the criticisms and concerns that this raised. He ends with reflections for the present day on the continuing significance of reconciliation in its theological, interpersonal, social, and political dimensions.

The final three essays in this section are wide-ranging. In Chapter 14, **Sandra M. Rios-Oyola** draws on fieldwork in the Diocese of Quibdó in Colombia and considers how religious initiatives to transform negative emotions can contribute to peacebuilding. Emotional regulation is essential if communities are to survive and flourish amid and post-conflict. In particular, the conflict in Colombia has engendered widespread feelings of fear and distrust amongst victims. Through its narratives and rituals, the local Catholic Church has offered mental and bodily means to manage these emotions. Particularly important have been its initiatives of social memorialisation for victims though some victims are unwilling or unready to discuss their past. As well as countering negative emotions, religion offers means to foster positive emotions. This does not simply mean forgiveness, but community happiness and *ilusión* (wishful hoping). Such positive emotions form a basis for productive peacebuilding.

In Chapter 15, **George R. Wilkes** also draws on fieldwork and examines the process of post-conflict reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Wilkes explains the perceived problems around this enterprise. 'Reconciliation' may be deemed a concept ill-fitted to the historical context, it may not fully redress wrongs, and it may not create conditions for cultural transformation. Nonetheless, reconciliation has popular support. Wilkes describes reconciliation activities from the 1995 Dayton Accord onward and the obstacles they faced. Such