

## ***Interfaith Friendship: Beyond Religious Orthodoxy?***

In the area of interfaith friendship, is religion a motivating factor or does it occasionally rather trouble such friendships? This paper will explore this question based on preliminary analysis of important aspects in an empirical interview material established as a part of my ongoing PhD-work: ***Life-Changing Friendships***. A study of stories about friendship between Christians and Muslims. One central area of investigation in my analysis is to see how faith and friendship interrelate.

Looking at the interreligious perspective in the stories of friendship among my interviewees, religion seems to inspire most informants in the initialization of their friendship. Nevertheless, when considering the link between their faith and the continuance of their friendship, many of them are more ambiguous since they both seem to be motivated by religion and in some cases troubled by it.

However, I can trace some interesting differences between the Christian and Muslim interviewees. Many of the Muslims seem to define their friendship as something outside the area of religion all together. Christians on the other hand appear to be bothered by the missiological prerogative of converting all men in their nurturing of good friendships with Muslims. My paper will analyze this in detail.

These findings may pinpoint some interesting aspects for further analysis of the relationship between friendship and religious transformation and reflection. For instance, does interfaith friendship change or challenge religious considerations and/or practices, such as understandings related to the question of conversion?

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