

THE MOSLEM WORLD: THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

OLGA CHIKRIZOVA. PECULIARITIES OF INTERRELIGIOUS
DIALOGUE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
REGION

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intention; stereotypes; religious phobia;
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Abstract. The article tries to identify the key features of
interreligious dialogue (in particular, Christian-Muslim dialogue) in
the Middle East and North Africa. Stereotypes influencing this
dialogue, as well as factors determining the course and trends in the
interaction of Christians and Muslims in the region are examined.

Throughout history, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has been at the epicenter of the struggle between the West and the East, experiencing the influence of both. Social and political life in the MENA region is the convergence and mutual influence of civilizations, a vivid example of the East-West dichotomy, which manifest in various aspects of the functioning of Middle Eastern societies, including religion and interreligious dialogue. The study of the MENA in the context of interreligious dialogue is especially noteworthy since the Middle East is the place of origin of all three Abrahamic religions, in particular Islam and Christianity, the interaction of which is the focus of this article.

According to the definition given by S. Melnik, interreligious dialogue is “building connections between followers of different religions, including ensuring that these relationships are directed to a peaceful and constructive course” [1, p. 8]. Based on the criterion of ‘intention’, the scholar identifies the following types of interreligious dialogue:

- *polemical dialogue* is “an interaction based on the desire to spread one’s faith or defend it, to demonstrate its advantages; this type of dialogue takes the form of a dispute”;

- *cognitive dialogue* is “brought about by motivation for knowledge, the desire to understand another religion”;

- *peacemaking dialogue* is “aimed at developing harmonious relations between followers of different religions”;

- *partnership dialogue* is “based on the believers’ vision of multiple problems and suffering in the world, along with the desire to engage in joint activities to solve them” [2, p. 17–18].

Interreligious dialogue in the MENA region is possible, taking into account the following factors.

Firstly, there is a rich history of Christian-Muslim relations in the region, which “developed in four main spheres: economic, military-political, cultural and religious” [3, p. 12]. In addition, we should not forget that European Christians often acted as patrons of Middle Eastern Christians¹, who were surrounded by