

Reversing Community Relationship From the I-It to I-Thou as a Tool for Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Ethiopia

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Abstract : The study focuses on the nature of community relationships in Ethiopia, specifically the I-Thou and I-It relationships, and how they contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It highlights the importance of genuine dialogue and mutual understanding in creating a unified and peaceful society. It analyzes the nature of community relationships in Ethiopia and evaluate how these relationships either contribute to conflict resolution or exacerbate conflicts. It aims to understand the role of genuine dialogue (I-Thou relationship) versus monologue (I-It relationship) in building lasting peace in the country. The study adopts a qualitative approach, specifically hermeneutics, to explore and understand the nature of community relationships in Ethiopia. It involves analyzing the characteristics of both I-Thou and I-It relationships and examining how the political elites shape these relationships within the community. The findings of the study indicate that the predominant type of relationship in Ethiopian society is the I-It relationship, referred to as "com-animation". This relationship is characterized by mutual mistrust, prejudice, hostility, and misunderstanding. As a result, conflicts, mass killings, displacement, and human rights violations have occurred. The study emphasizes the importance of shifting from com-animation to communication (I-Thou relationship) in order to address conflicts and establish lasting peace.

Keywords : dialogue, I-thou relationship, peace building, I-It relationship

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