

Pilgrims on the Silk Road: A Muslim-Christian Encounter in Khiva

Walter R. Ratliff



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They were seeking religious freedom and the Second Coming of Christ in Central Asia. They found themselves in the care of a Muslim king. During the 1880s, Mennonites from Russia made a treacherous journey to the Silk Road kingdom of Khiva. Both Uzbek and Mennonite history seemed to set the stage for ongoing religious and ethnic discord. Yet their story became an example of friendship and cooperation between Muslims and Christians. Pilgrims on the Silk Road challenges conventional wisdom about the trek to Central Asia and the settlement of Ak Metchet. It shows how the story, long associated with failed End Times prophecies, is being recast in light of new evidence. Pilgrims highlights the role of Ak Metchet as a refuge for those fleeing Soviet oppression, and the continuing influence of the episode more than twelve decades later.



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