

IAMS 2016 Conference

Title: Healing Zimbabwe: Case of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in the Fight against a Culture of Violence.

N.B. topic may fall under 'healing/pneumatology or 'theology of mission'

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Abstract:

This paper argues that in order to effectively fight a culture of violence afflicting the Zimbabwean society, the Church needs to do more than publish documents and engage more with afflicted communities on the ground. The roots of civil conflict and tensions that have led to a culture of violence in Zimbabwe span from the pre-colonial era, through the colonial up until the post-colonial period. The Catholic Bishops' Conference confesses that Zimbabwe is a wounded society due to its failure to deal with its own past. Regardless of several church-initiated efforts, Zimbabwe still remains characterised by a culture of violence. Through a qualitative case study of the Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace (CCJP), a Catholic civic organisation, this paper makes an in-depth inquiry of the impact the church is making in terms of fighting a culture of violence in the country. The assumption that the Church has a mission to reconcile and bring healing to the world was used as a conceptual framework to analyse literature and field data. Based on the findings and in view of lessons learnt, it is argued that while documents and appeals to end violence give hope in the fight against a culture of violence, more initiatives and collaboration by all stakeholders is needed at grassroots level in order healing to take place in the society. Initiatives at grassroots level will only be effective not only if the church speaks with one but also when it translates its voice into action at grassroots level.

Key words: mission, justice and peace, healing, reconciliation, culture of violence, nation building.
