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Book Review

Frampton F. Fox, ed., *Violence and Peace: Creating a Culture of Peace in the Contemporary Context of Violence*, Pune: CMS & Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2010, pages xiii + 392, ISBN: 81-7-86-535-2.

The book on *Violence and Peace: Creating a Culture of Peace in the Contemporary Context of Violence* discusses a recent, relevant, and recurrent issue of creating peace in the encircling horror of violence. The outburst of religious violence in Kandhamal and the terrorist attacks in Mumbai 26/11 give the immediate reason to reflect on the promise and praxis of peace. Reading and reflection of the text in the context of burning and butchering occurrences of violence give the reader the much awaited interpretation of faith in Christ. The book as a whole and the papers in particular present the biblical perspective of reconciliation as the way in creating a culture of peace.

The book is a collection of papers presented at the Annual Consultation of the Centre for Mission Studies, UBS, Pune, and is edited by Frampton F. Fox. The work consists of fifteen papers divided into four sections: theological, biblical, contextual, and missional.

In the theological section there are three papers. In his paper “Forgiveness in the Absence of Justice and Reconciliation,” Kethoser Kevichusa argues the necessity of creating a culture of peace by forgiving even if there is no justice and reconciliation. Santhosh J. Sahayadoss, in his paper entitled, “Martin Luther’s Theology of the Cross and Its Significance for Creating a Culture of Peace,” illustrates the importance in creating a culture of peace by following the path of suffering on the cross. In his paper on “Lessons from Orissa: Peacemaking in the Face of Anti-Christian Violence,” Richard Howell draws our attention to work for peace through the means of repentance and nonviolence.

There are four papers in the biblical section. Havilah Dharmaraj in her paper on “War and Just War” examines the significance of the global application of just war theory. Through the article on “Scapegoating and Lynching in LukeActs: A Mimetic Analysis,” Babu Immanuel analyses the atrocities at Kandhamal and suggests to confront and defuse mob mentality. The paper on “Religious Violence in the Gospel of John: A Response to the Hindutva Culture in Modern India” by Cor Bennema is an investigation into the different spiritual insights. V. J. John, in his paper, “Engaging in ‘dharma’ of Peace Amidst of Violence: Some Insights from the

Sermon on the Mount,” unearths some of the invaluable insights towards creating peace amidst an atmosphere of violence.

In the section on contextual analysis there are four papers. Jagat Santra, in his paper “Religious Violence in Media: Truth is the First Casualty,” analyses the power of media in communicating anti-Christian propaganda. He argues that truth should be communicated through media in order to create a culture of peace. Delores Friesen and Mary Shamshoian, through their paper “Peacemaking in the Family: A Systemic View of Domestic Violence,” invite to have a look at the family setup and urge to begin peace at home. J. N. Manokaran makes a reading of the “Urban Youth Culture and Violence” and suggests the importance in reading the sign of the times in creating a culture of peace in society. Stanley Friesen, in his paper on “African Church Witnesses to Nonviolence,” argues that nonviolence is the only Christian response to violence.

There are four papers under the section on missional. Brainerd Prince, through his paper “The Story of Kandhamal: Conflicting Narratives and Competing Discourses,” invites to the use of theories rooted in the soil and calls for an honest reading of emotionally charged events. In the paper, “Violence in Religious Segments of India and Christian Response: A Biblical and Missiological Understanding,” R. Jayakumar draws our attention to various suggestions to promote a culture of peace. The paper of Joy Thomas on “Mission and Violence” discusses the need for active participation in the struggles against injustice. Paul Joshua, in his paper, “Reconciliation: A Model for Christian Mission,” suggests reconciliation as a model for mission in the contemporary context of violence.

In this book the teaching of Jesus, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God” (*Matthew 5:9*), stands out as the hallmark of Christian living in the context of violence. “Reconciliation is not only a fundamental theological category but also a fecund missiological paradigm,” argues Paul Joshua. The command of Jesus to “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous” (*Matthew 5:44-45*) seems to be the guiding spirit of the volume. This book offers a sincere theological, biblical, contextual, and missional reflection in the context of violence, which is a reiteration of the significance of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. The cross of Christ emerges as a sign of peace in the context of violence.

The authors and the editor deserve our thanks and appreciation for their earnest effort to have a contextual reflection on peace at the outbreak of religious violence in Orissa and the terrorist attacks in Mumbai. The book is a passionate appeal for creating a culture of peace founded on nonviolence, which is a right step in the right direction. In a land of *ahimsa paramo dharmah*, it is unfortunate to witness to the increasing violence at every sphere of life, beginning with family. Loving

forgiveness and nonviolence find their marvelous expression in compassion, which is the nature of God, “Be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate” (*Luke 6:36*). *Violence and Peace: Creating a Culture of Peace in the Contemporary Context of Violence* is a book worth reading and reflecting in order to reach out to the tens of thousands of people still under the yoke of violence and the horror of terror.

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