

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS REPORTS AND PROCEEDINGS

23. C.A. Mumma- Martinon (2008). The post _election crisis in Kenya: Necessary steps towards genuine reconciliation. In S.K Ahenda (Ed), the church in Africa Service to Reconciliation, justice and peace: In the light of the Second Special Assembly fro Africa of the synod of Bishops, The proceedings of the 10th Interdisciplinary Theological Session (pp.86-114). The Catholic University of Eastern Africa

ABSTRACT

Kenya's worst political impasse was broken on 28th February 2008 when president Kibaki and Honourable Raila Odinga took the tough decision to sign a deal which enabled the Kenyan people to move forward from the post election stalemate. This was a positive step but the journey is far from over. It is the beginning. The remaining challenge is for the leaders to take responsibility for healing the nation.

The crisis triggered by the 2007 presidential election brought to the surface deep- rooted and long standing divisions within Kenyan society (Daily Nation,29th, February,2008). Many questions have come to the fore: how do people come to terms with a legacy of past atrocities, abuses, and criminal acts? How can the wounds caused by ethnicity, division and conflict be healed?

How can people recover from collective trauma? What is the way forward, what solutions for our beloved country? Reconciliation has been a major proposal towards a solution.

This paper urges that despite all the challenges facing the country, the church still has a very important role to play in reconciling people and bringing stable peace to this country. The paper explores the readiness of Kenyans for genuine reconciliation and how well Kenyans and their leaders understand the meaning of reconciliation. We analyze the role of reconciliation in bringing stable peace in Kenya. This is based on the realization that although conflict settlement and resolution may terminate a conflict, they do not necessarily stabilize peace or prevent the emergence of new conflicts in future, which may even lead to renewed violence.

The paper defines reconciliation, examines the meaning of genuine reconciliation and asks why reconciliation is important in conflict situations. It even explores challenges to reconciliation and steps towards genuine reconciliation. It also highlights the role of the church in fostering reconciliation in the country.