

The Contemporary Theological Project

“‘Peace, Peace,’ they Say, When there is No Peace”¹: An Assessment of the KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders’ Group’s Response to the Intra-Party Violence in KwaZulu-Natal

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ABSTRACT

The level of violence in South Africa has reached frightening proportions where, all too often, the instrument of violence is chosen rather than peaceful problem-solving mechanisms as means of resolving conflicts. The continued killing of political leaders in the province of KwaZulu-Natal has exposed a need for a contextual theological approach to establishing peace between the warring parties in the milieu of complex intra-party conflicts. The failure of the church to build lasting peace in the province has exposed the inadequacies of the older models established under apartheid to address the current problem. Accordingly, there is a need to develop new methods that can address the present climate of political violence that prevails in the country, both individualised and intra-party, located at provincial and municipal levels, and fuelled by the quest to access patronage networks and resources. In this article, I propose ways in which the KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders’ Group can intervene to dismantle intra-party violence within the province, especially at the local government level.

Introduction

For some twenty-five years South Africa has been free from the political repression and systemic violence that epitomised the former white oligarchic apartheid regime. Even in the midst of such a developing democracy, the country remains one of the most violent in terms of world standards. Accordingly, the province of KwaZulu-Natal has not lost its unenviable reputation as being the most dangerous,

¹ Jeremiah 6:14 (New International Version).