THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST AS THE MODEL OF PEACE IN THE WORLD

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This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree of Master of Theology (Systematic Theology) from St. Paul's University

August, 2015

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the priesthood of Jesus Christ as the model of peace in the world. It utilizes the 2007/2008 post election violence in Kenya as a case study. The problem of violence especially of a recurring kind in between individuals, communities and states that profess Christianity is an anathema. To prevent incidences similar to the 2007/2008 PEV in Kenya, it is vital that the root cause of the violence is identified and relevant action taken to forestall recurrence of violence. This study is an attempt in that direction. Using the priesthood of Jesus Christ's as the model of peace this study argues that Christians' participation in conflict and violence is caused by their misunderstanding of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. The virtue of self-sacrifice expressed through love, friendship and forgiveness as demonstrated by the priesthood of Jesus Christ is the only lasting solution to conflict and violence and the sure foundation of eternal peace. Love, friendship and forgiveness between individuals, communities and states need to be the goal, even if they are a high and difficult target to achieve, because without them, societies are at risk of developing cycles of *stasis* – envy, jealousy, toxic anger, factions, hostility, conflict, violence and hatred. This thesis shows the deleterious effects of *stasis* which is self destructing hence worse than war. It also demonstrates that love, friendship and forgiveness are a powerful antidote when *stasis* arises in an individual's heart, community, state and the rest of the world. It is argued here that if individuals have not yet had the opportunity to practice love, friendship and forgiveness then *stasis* usually remains or can escalate. Thus, one strategy for breaking cycles of *stasis* is using the priesthood of Jesus Christ as the model of peace, as expressed in love-friendship-forgiveness triad. This model can bring lasting peace when it is properly understood and sincerely practiced. Therefore, forgiveness acts as a conduit for exercising agape. Then agape contributes to friendship that breaks the cycle of *stasis.* Eventually, eternal peace can be achieved. Therefore, the Church should exercise love, friendship and forgiveness like Jesus Christ to create peace in the world. However, the study notes that the love-friendship-forgiveness triad, as exemplified by the priesthood of Jesus Christ, needs to be a target in individuals' hearts, communities and states, even if it is a high and difficult target to achieve. Therefore, a single incidence of Church failure like the 2007/2008 post election violence in Kenya or several such incidents all over the world should not discourage the Church from preaching and practicing love-friendship-forgiveness. These virtues are the hallmark of the priesthood of Jesus Christ and should be also for the Christian priesthood. Therefore, Christians should take seriously the Christian priesthood that is a call to self-sacrifice for God every day as St. Paul puts it in Romans 12: 1 - 2.

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