
A Review of *Ubuntu Peacemaking: An Afro-Christian Perspective*

Book Review by Polly Walker

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Ubuntu Peacemaking: An Afro-Christian Perspective by Lumeya, Fidele. 2014. Self-Published.

Translated by Krista Rigalo.

Paperback \$9.95

doi 10.18113/P8ik360149



Lumeya, originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, has extensive peacebuilding experience in Africa. In his short book, he integrates Christian and traditional African values related to peacemaking.

Lumeya describes traditional African values related to conflict as based in the concept of togetherness, and goes on to explain traditional African processes of dealing with conflict including protectorates, ceremonies, and intermarriage. He also shares a specific example from Eastern Congo of relation-based peacebuilding: the peace child. When a warrior was killed in battle, the war was called to a halt. The family of the warrior who struck the fatal blow gave a child (or other family member if a suitable child was not found) to the family of the fallen warrior as a form of restorative justice. This process also was designed to return the warring parties to a relationship of mutuality.

The author maintains that both traditional and contemporary African worldviews prioritize the spoken word over written agreements. In addition to a common locus of the word, Lumeya draws further parallels between Christian and African principles of peacebuilding: the ceremony of drinking blood, gravity of the spoken word, and an emphasis on holistic frameworks of peace.

Lumeya articulates a peacemaking framework derived from Christian concepts of peace in which departures from God's law are considered to have created ecological, biological, and human identity crises. He maintains that Christianity has revitalized traditional African concepts of relatedness that have been lost in contemporary conflicts.

The author provides a syncretic approach to three dimensions of peace: peace within oneself, with others, and among humankind. He relates the Christian church to the traditional African *tree of palaver*, a space for peacemaking where elders held power in part through open dialogues, which were followed by ceremonies of reconciliation.

Lumeya ends with a call for African communities to create spaces of dialogue for their youth to revitalize the values of their ancestors and to enhance peace.

This is not a text that engages explicitly with the work of other indigenous scholars. However, as a primary source document, it provides a unique viewpoint into contemporary peacebuilding based in an Afro-Christian worldview.