

Christianity in a Cosmopolitan Overcoming Xenophobia and Racism in the light of the Bible, Kuzituka Did'ho J-M

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This book is written from an emic perspective; the author is from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and has lived, studied and worked in South Africa for some years. Being black and “foreign” he has experienced both xenophobia and racism. Being a Christian, he has searched for an appropriate church response to these issues, and this small volume is the outcome.

In the first chapter, he analyses the political and economic context of South Africa in historical and contemporary life. Chapter two reflects on national identity and immigration. This is followed by a chapter on the churches and integration, with a particular focus on the situation in the first century Corinthian and Galatian churches. Chapter four studies the biblical foundation of the church’s missionary activity from the gospels. The final chapter develops a theory of social justice. The book then has a conclusion and two appendices on the research process and the need for both the church and state to act to alleviate and resolve the situation.

One of the initial problems highlighted is that blacks and whites do not know how to interact with each other socially, and that violence is a major outcome of the disparity in power levels—with the oppressor being the instigator of trauma. A missing factor in South African-immigrant relations is the lack of the much-touted concept of *ubuntu*, which is constantly honoured in the breach of the value. Latent hostility towards foreign nationals is unacceptable, both from an African and Christian point of view. The assumption that “foreign nationals” come to South Africa as needy migrants or refugees, is also challenged, as most are self-sufficient and come for temporary residence rather than long-term stays.



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What is sad is that we reach conclusions regarding immigrants largely on the basis of misinformation. The media are at the forefront of this process, highlighting the negative side of having a diverse population rather than its benefits or achievements. This only serves to divert attention away from the real issues our nation is facing, as we scapegoat those we perceive to be a threat.

This is a well-balanced and reflective response to xenophobia and racism. It is worthy of further study. It is not comfortable reading, but it does point us to our failures as “the rainbow people of God.”