

This engaging collection leaves its readers with much to ponder. Highly recommended!

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RESISTING VIOLENCE AND VICTIMISATION: CHRISTIAN FAITH AND SOLIDARITY IN EAST TIMOR. By Joel Hodge. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012. Pp. xi + 232. \$99.95.

Those already well versed in the history of the small half-island state of East Timor and those who would struggle to locate it on a map will find in this book offers a thought-provoking analysis of the East Timorese experience of violence and resistance in the context of Christian faith. Using the Timorese case, Hodge provides an insightful theological reflection on how Christian beliefs and practices helped people of East Timor endure suffering and confront violence. His analysis brings to the fore the potency of the transcendent Christian imagination—how it can create spaces of nonviolence and solidarity, replacing the spaces of violence created by the constricted imagination of those in power to sustain their order.

Informed by René Girard's works, H. examines the East Timorese experience with the eyes of a critical faith through the lenses of stories of suffering and resistance. The stories H. selects are of martyrs and survivors, men and women, priests, religious, and lay. He mines these accounts of courage in the face of death, and unearths veins of fidelity, forgiveness, and solidarity grounded in Christian belief and practice, and centering especially on the Eucharist and the cross.

An introduction to Girard's ideas on mimetic desire, scapegoating, sacred violence, and sacrifice provides the theoretical framework that shapes H.'s interpretation of his own experiences. A central aspect of this framework is the idea that the loving self-giving of Christ has provided an alternative to the violent sacrifice of scapegoats found in societies through the ages.

A concise overview of the history, religion, and culture of East Timor provides a good introduction for those unfamiliar with this former Portuguese colony that struggled under Indonesian rule for 24 years before attaining independence. Few would dispute the significance of the Catholic Church in those decades of struggle. However, H. takes us well beyond the familiar territory of how the Catholic Church grew rapidly and provided spaces for supporting resistance, helped create a unified national identity, especially through its liturgical use of the local language, Tetum, and was a trusted source of charitable assistance. H.'s focus is much more on how Christian faith in a loving, self-giving God and how solidarity found in the church empowered personal and collective resistance to oppression.

Specifics of Christian faith are central to this account. For example, with the story of Joao, who, bearing only a crucifix, seeks to protect those in his care from soldiers bearing arms, H. highlights identification with the suffering Christ. The religious sisters spared in the 1999 Suai massacre similarly identify with Christ as they pray together before the tabernacle in their chapel while priests and community members are cut down outside. Fortified, the sisters face the violent mob in solidarity with the victims. In H.'s interpretation, their relationship with Christ, demonstrated in prayer before the Body of Christ in the tabernacle, enables the solidarity with the victims as the Body of Christ outside.

Particularly illuminating is the story of the tortured Cristiano. Here H. analyses the state's use of "sacred violence" to legitimize itself, creating enemies and torturing them to buttress its totalitarian claims. In this analysis, non-violent resistance and solidarity with the victim, based on the innocent Christ's self-giving, provide an alternative world of meaning and basis for identity to the personal and communal identities that the state creates through the use of violence. This discussion opens into a wider examination of the role of Christian faith and the Catholic Church in the creation of the Timorese national identity and, in particular, the importance of martyrs to that identity.

As H. makes clear, he is not looking closely at the political, economic, and cultural factors that contributed to the growth of the Catholic Church, Timorese resistance, and ultimate success in the struggle for independence. Rather he is attending to what he correctly identifies as a neglected area, namely, lived experiences of faith and violence. Nevertheless, more engagement with the political, economic, and cultural factors at play in the specific experiences examined would have helped better situate H.'s interpretations.

One of H.'s aims is to respect the East Timorese experience "as it is" and "to deepen the ability and scope of Girard's mimetic theory to dialogue with empirical data" (49). In actual fact, however, the framework dominates the interpretation of the experiences rather than vice versa. Experiences seem to have little influence on revising the framework.

Even so, the theological reflection undertaken by H.—most significantly from the standpoint of the victim—has great value and will, one hopes, inspire more work of this kind.

Dili, East Timor

FRANCIS ELVEY

THE THEOLOGY OF JONATHAN EDWARDS. By Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott. New York: Oxford University, 2013. Pp. xi + 757. \$52.49.

This comprehensive exposition and discussion of the theology of Jonathan Edwards is a major contribution to the field. It also stands as evidence of