

Nonviolent Action: What Christian Ethics Demands but Most Christians Have Never Really Tried. By Ronald J. Sider. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2015. Pp. xvi + 191. \$19.99.

Sider is a long-time social activist and professor of theology who was founder of Evangelicals for Social Action. He has written numerous books that combine theological ethics and social advocacy. In this easy-to-read volume he collects a wide array of examples where nonviolent action has brought about, or at least contributed to, meaningful change. S. argues for the efficacy of nonviolent action against those who may admire the ideal of nonviolence but who are too quick to conclude that military force is necessary in a given situation.

The twelve brief chapters, none longer than twenty pages, provide clear and straightforward accounts of case studies where nonviolence made an important difference. Obvious examples are included: Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Lutheran churches in East Germany. But there are also accounts of lesser-known incidents where nonviolent strategies and tactics brought about important alterations in the political and economic order.

S. has provided a well-documented argument making his case that the reluctance of too many Christians to use military force has not been nearly reluctant enough. He maintains it is possible to envision an effective deployment of nonviolent action in more varied situations than many of us have heretofore considered. At the same time, some of the incidents that S. cites demonstrate that nonviolence made a difference but do not prove it was the decisive difference or that such action avoided any use of force or the threat of force in resolving all the conflicts narrated in the volume.

Nonetheless, his appeal for more attention to nonviolent strategy and his call for the Christian churches to be more supportive of research and programs regarding nonviolence, as well as promoting the actual use of nonviolent action to address injustices appear sound and convincing. The book is at least a partial rebuttal to those who would dismiss nonviolence as impractical idealism.

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The Vision of Catholic Social Thought: The Virtue of Solidarity and the Praxis of Human Rights. By Meghan J. Clark. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014. Pp. xiii + 166. \$39.

Pope Francis's address to the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit was the most recent, but certainly not the first, engagement between Catholic social teaching and the United Nations. Clark provides an analysis of the relationship between human rights and solidarity that highlights potential contributions of Catholic social thought to the development work of the United Nations. In 1948, the UN did not provide a philosophical or theological basis for human rights; C. turns to Catholic social thought to do so. After providing an overview of Catholic social teaching on human rights and solidarity from John XXIII to Benedict XVI, C. argues that the philosophy

of Charles Taylor and a theological anthropology of *imago Dei* informed by the trinitarian theologies of Catherine LaCugna and Elizabeth Johnson provide an important anthropological basis for understanding human rights, solidarity, and their relationship. Since the first UN Decade of Development, Catholic social teaching has engaged social analysis about development, and following this lead, C. engages the work of Amartya Sen, stating his “theory is foundational for global poverty efforts at the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), especially the emergence of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) initiative” (74).

A revised dissertation, the first three chapters provide extensive quotes from Catholic social teaching, Taylor, Johnson, and Sen. In Chapter 4, the author’s voice is more prominent as she writes about solidarity as a virtue, noting that an earlier version of this writing appeared in *Political Theology* (111). To illustrate her point that the virtue of solidarity is fostered through actions that promote human rights, the fifth chapter includes accounts of her students’ experience building a house in Costa Rica and of her observation of health professionals in Sudan working to realize the Millennium Development Goal of reducing child mortality. The 70th UN General Assembly looked back at the Millennium Development Goals of the past 15 years and looked forward 15 years as it approved the Sustainable Development Goals. This book provides a context for better understanding the contributions of Catholic social thought that support this development work of the United Nations.

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Feet Rooted, Hearts Radiant, Minds Raised: Living Sacraments in India. By Francis Gonsalves, SJ. Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 2015. Pp. 316. \$20.

Gonsalves performs his comprehensive treatment of sacrament and then the seven Catholic sacraments in particular as an exercise in “Indian contextual theology” (15). His method, attributed to Michael Amaladoss and Felix Winfred, is “mainly inspired” by Latin American liberation theology, committed not to mere “study” but to a praxis that “must result in ameliorative action in favour of the earth’s poor” (17). As for historical sources, G. qualifies the usefulness of those he selects as “contextual . . . limited by the spatiotemporal exigencies of particular centuries” (90).

The poverty G. identifies is certainly societal in nature—the financial misery and injustice leveled upon lower castes and rural populations, plus the current ongoing violence and repression against free exercise of particular religions, is such that “Indian Christians are passing through very trying times” (173). Nonetheless, from the start and throughout, he analyzes and seeks to correct the poverty of Indian Catholicism’s theology and practices of the sacraments. The former remains mired in a simplistic cause-and-effect scholasticism, while the dwindling numbers attending Mass or going to confession passively witness and receive from the sacred actions of their priests. One can only rue this state of affairs a full fifty years after Vatican II.