

One comment on the book jacket offers a clear summary: “This book is an invaluable point of entry to a worldview and logic that survives still as the scaffolding of official Roman Catholic pronouncements on sexual and biomedical ethics.”

In addition to the various entries by way of topic or subject matter (bioethics, for example), there is a helpful introduction to a number of theologians who have played significant roles in the development of Catholic moral theology, including Leonardo Boff, Josef Fuchs, Bernard Häring, Charles Curran, and Stanley Hauerwas.

Designed to serve as a reference book for libraries, students, teachers of theology, priests, pastoral ministers, and adults seeking enrichment in ongoing education, B.’s book is the most comprehensive post-Vatican II work of its kind in English.

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Good Business: Catholic Social Teaching at Work in the Marketplace. By Thomas O’Brien, Elizabeth W. Collier, and Patrick Flanagan. Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2014. Pp. 288. \$34.95

Many people, including business leaders, represent business as an ethics-free zone, even though they may simultaneously praise the market as the necessary condition of a “free society.”

In this admirable book, egregious business abuses are fully acknowledged. The anti-capitalist Occupy Movement is discussed courteously rather than dismissively (141–46). But the authors’ argument and perspective are positive. Rejecting the charge that “business ethics is an oxymoron” (9) they stress how, by “moral imagination,” and in the light of Catholic social teaching (CST), business can transform the world positively.

The book functions as a lucid and practical introduction. The authors explain generic ethical frameworks (consequentialist or virtue-based), basic understandings of biblical justice, CST’s conception of the common good, and principles of subsidiarity and solidarity. But the authors go beyond the limits of an introduction. In a chapter implausibly entitled “In Search of a Capitalist Option for the Poor,” four distinct business models that put social inclusion before profit levels are described in detail (127–35).

A book of this modest size cannot be comprehensive. That said, certain major current controversies, left unexamined, could have helpfully sharpened the challenge to business morality. I take three examples: finance corporations are condemned for their insulation of stratospheric “executive compensation” from ruinous corporate losses, losses which are then dumped on ordinary workers, pension funds, and on the general public (80–82). But the book lacks a systematic ethical reflection of the finance sector as such, though this sector arguably tests the notion of “good business” to destruction by dissociating vast profits from social function. Nor do the authors discuss taxation:

in particular the avoidance of virtually all taxation by transnational corporations through the use of shell companies, “transfer payments,” and similar ploys, thus stripping legitimate revenue from governments and peoples while crushing local businesses that do pay tax. Third, a brief allusion to “distorted” profit maximization (79) may sell short a foundational question. What is the distinction between reasonable profit and the socially and environmentally destructive imperative of maximum profit and/or growth? The question remains acute: To what extent can global business be “good business?”

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Friendship across Religions: Theological Perspectives on Interreligious Friendship. Edited by Alon Goshen-Gottstein. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015. Pp. lii + 181. \$85.

This book grew out of a 2012 gathering of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders at Oxford (UK). The nine chapters and conclusion reflect the contributors’ theoretical and theological understandings of friendship as supported by the resources found in their respective traditions. These include impressive voices that draw on Judaism (Alon Goshen-Gottstein and Meir Sendor), Christianity (Mirsolav Volf, Ryan McAnnally-Linz, and Johann M. Vento), Islam (Timothy J. Gianotti), Hinduism (Anantanand Rambachan), Sikhism (Eleanor Nesbit and Balwant Singh Dhillon), and Buddhism (Maria Reis Habito and Ruben L. F. Habito). Major themes that emerge across the essays include theoretical models of friendship, the differences between religious understandings of friendship (especially the sharp differences that emerge between the so-called Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic traditions), the challenges of interreligious friendship, the benefit and promise of interreligious friendship, and practical considerations for cultivating friendships across religions. Rising to the top among the concerns and lessons proffered by these essays are (1) “the single greatest concern in relation to interreligious friendship is the need to protect religious authenticity and identity. Only when one’s identity is secure can there be sufficient trust to cultivate interreligious friendship” (xxxvii); and (2) “by far the most common good that [the] authors ascribe to interreligious friendship can be captured in terms of the key word: *understanding*” (xliv), for instance, a more evenhanded understanding of other faiths and an enriched understanding of our own faith. Better understanding of self and other, on its own, is enough reason to value highly the importance of interreligious friendship and to include this text in any contemporary canon on interreligious studies. The volume concludes with a useful eightfold shared manifesto on interreligious friendship which can also be publically accessed at elijah-interfaith.org/addressing-the-world/friendship-across-religions.

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