

Lisa Sowle Cahill. *Global Justice, Christology, and Christian Ethics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

In *Global Justice, Christology, and Christian Ethics*, Catholic feminist moral theologian Lisa Sowle Cahill constructs a biblical and theological argument for social justice-making. The book is Cahill's second contribution to the New Studies in Christian Ethics Series, following *Sex, Gender, and Christian Ethics* (1996) and is written for a diverse audience of scholars and students from a variety of theo-ethical perspectives.

Beginning with the relationship between theology and ethics, Cahill argues that in the experience of salvation the life of the believer is reoriented toward God, which has implications for the believer's action in relation to self and others. This action is necessarily personal, ecclesial, and political (1). With this established, Cahill aims "[t]o give biblical and theological reasons for Christian commitments to justice, to show why just action is necessarily a criterion of authentic Christian theology, and to give grounds for Christian hope that change in violent structures is really possible" (1).

The author accomplishes these aims by engaging biblical texts in conjunction with feminist and liberation theologies within a revised natural law tradition rooted in Aquinas. In particular, she claims that a theology of justice is promoted within the biblical creation accounts and theologies of evil; the politics of the Kingdom of God; Word and Spirit Christologies; and a liberative theology of the cross. All reveal a particular politics of salvation that calls Christians to participate in the work of justice making. Cahill concludes with a vision of peacebuilding as "a strategy to reduce conflict and its causes and as a Christian expression of the politics of salvation" (290).

*Global Justice, Christology, and Christian Ethics* translates across theo-ethical differences. This is due largely to Cahill's willingness to name her context and a demonstrated openness to dialogue. She situates herself as a "white, feminist, Catholic, theologian, living in the United States" (28) and is honest about her decision to privilege certain discourses over others. At the same time she views her social location as a place from which to engage perspectives different from her own. Her transparency in this respect frames potential tensions and disagreements as opportunities for conversation. Anabaptist-Mennonites may find her appeal to universal norms, moral

realism, and a close relationship between church and politics challenging, but not detrimental, to engaging her work.

The book also makes three key contributions to peace theology and ethics. First, Cahill locates peace and justice-making within an active Christian response to the politics of salvation revealed throughout the biblical witness. Not only is peacemaking a response to the Gospel but also, she argues, a necessary response to the much larger narrative of God's presence in history. In this way she develops an even stronger argument for a peacemaking than one that relies solely on Jesus' nonviolent example. Second, Cahill highlights the danger of a community of faith forming "around selective memories and hope for a future that decisively validates one group over another" (27). As a result she promotes mutuality as well as solidarity with all groups suffering violence as criteria for peacebuilding (302). She, like Mennonite feminist theologians,<sup>1</sup> raises awareness of all forms of violence, including violence internal to the community of faith (e.g., violence against women), as a priority for Christian peacemaking.

Third, Cahill asserts that a commitment to peace and justice emerges from a liberatory view of the cross as Christ's decision to suffer with, rather than for, creation (228). Drawing on womanist theologians Jacquelyn Grant and Katie Geneva Cannon, for example, she names the power of the cross as active resistance to evil (235-36). Her work in this regard, which includes a reorientation of atonement as reconciliation (227), informs a peace ethic that is itself nonviolent. For these three reasons in particular, this volume is an important contribution to addressing violence in the 21st century from a Christian perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Lydia Neufeld Harder, *Obedience, Suspicion, and the Gospel of Mark: A Mennonite-Feminist Exploration of Biblical Authority* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 1998); Malinda E. Berry, "'This Mark of a Standing Human Figure Poised to Embrace': A Constructive Theology of Social Responsibility, Nonviolence and Nonconformity," (Ph.D. diss., Union Theological Seminary, New York, 2013); and Carol Jean Penner, "Mennonite Silences and Feminist Voices: Peace Theology and Violence Against Women," (Ph.D. diss., St. Michael's College, Toronto, 1999).