



Offering Hospitality: Questioning Christian Approaches to War

Caron E. Gentry

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In *Offering Hospitality: Questioning Christian Approaches to War*, Caron E. Gentry reflects on the predominant strands of American political theology—Christian realism, pacifism, and the just war tradition—and argues that Christian political theologies on war remain, for the most part, inward-looking and resistant to criticism from opposing viewpoints.

In light of the new problems that require choices about the use of force—genocide, terrorism, and failed states, to name just a few—a rethinking of the conventional arguments about just war and pacifism is timely and important. Gentry's insightful perspective marries contemporary feminist and critical thought to prevailing theories, such as Christian realism represented in the work of Reinhold Niebuhr and the pacifist tradition of Stanley Hauerwas. She draws out the connection between hospitality in postmodern literature and hospitality as derived from the Christian conception of *agape*, and relates the literature on hospitality to the Christian ethics of war. She contends that the practice of hospitality, incorporated into the *jus ad bellum* criterion of last resort, would lead to a "better peace."

Gentry's critique of Christian realism, pacifism, and the just war tradition through an engagement with feminism is unique, and her treatment of failed states as a concrete security issue is practical. By asking multiple audiences—theologians, feminists, postmodern scholars, and International Relations experts—to grant legitimacy and credibility to each other's perspectives, she contributes to a reinvigorated dialogue.

"This is a bold and brave book that tackles weighty matters pertaining to violence and community with a deft touch. Caron Gentry's perspective, which marries contemporary feminist and critical thought to Christian realist, just war, and pacifist concerns, is fresh and insightful. She succeeds wonderfully in carving out a space that relates the literature on hospitality to the contemporary ethics of war. This book will be of major interest to scholars working in theology, international relations, political theory, and religious ethics."

—Cian O'Driscoll, University of Glasgow

"Caron Gentry offers a daring constructive moral proposal here calling for a reconstruction of the just war ethic's criterion of last resort as a platform for embodying a deep form of Christian hospitality in international affairs. Along the way she analyzes the work of Reinhold Niebuhr, Stanley Hauerwas, and Jean Bethke Elshtain. A must read for students of political theology, international relations, and feminist theory."

—Shaun Casey, Wesley Theological Seminary

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