

Kevin J. O'Brien, *The Violence of Climate Change: Lessons of Resistance from Nonviolent Activists*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC, 2017. 228 pp. \$24.95. ISBN: 9781626164352.

Kevin J. O'Brien's *The Violence of Climate Change* is an inspiring read that provokes imaginative, embodied, and risk-taking engagement with the "wicked problem" (O'Brien's terms) of ecological catastrophe. In an effort to feel and flesh a response to both O'Brien's work and the specter of earth's crucifixion, I crafted the following poem.

With prayers, and honey
we take and eat a cloud
of witnesses, asking the
holy ones to turn
in us, feeding divine discontent
in a time of wickedness,
this age of ecocide.

In they go, one by one,
tripping tastes, and
stretching us wide.
A Woolman and Addams,
a Day, King, and Chavez.
Five brave fools who foil
worldly wisdom with wild idealism,
speaking what few want to hear,
fearlessly uttering truth.
And they live it. They actually do!

With low wages and prayer,
habits of fasting and
clothes that hearten the great soul.
They, "by faith," choose
hospitality, enduring "cold rooms and
lack of privacy,"¹ deserting the pleasures

of "cigarettes, liquor, coffee, [and] candy."²
Modesty embodied, wrapped in

1 Kevin J. O'Brien, *The Violence of Climate Change: Lessons of Resistance from Nonviolent Activists* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017), 123.

2 O'Brien, 126.

the garments of poverty and militant action,
 the saints secure moral authority through
 self-surrender
 self-purification
 self-sacrifice
 with the people,
 and the earth,
 and with Christ.

We cannot be them. And we should not.
 But like them, drawing strength from
 despair and patience for the prospect of change
 for the morrow.

And the mystery is this.
 Never once—not often—do our witnesses let
 loose of the structural for the personal.
 Always together, never bewitched by stupid conversations of
 separation, they know the fullness of being, the
 interconnectedness of life, and the
 responsibility such entails.
 Take shorter showers and
 fight the industrial machine. Do both, for they are
 one.

Our common home is in trouble, unspeakable.
 And Pope Francis, a blessed witness himself,
 states the obvious. “‘Tyranical’ anthropocentrism
 contributes to the problem of climate change.”³
 But “in [this] house where all cry out I see! and
 proceed to do the works of darkness”⁴
 another fool counsels creative response to
 this complex problem. “There is one classic
 action open to the wise; strike yourself
 blind, and explore that kingdom”
 (Daniel Berrigan, d. 2016,
 yet more alive).⁵

3 O’Brien, 104.

4 Daniel Berrigan, *The Dark Night of Resistance* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1971), 67.

5 Berrigan, 67.

The most influential people
are the wildly idealistic. The most
beloved by creation, those who
give back—love and
life and dreams—
more than they take.
Pray, O God, that we may live it.
Pray, O God, that I actually do.

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Dan Nighswander, *New Believers Church Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, Herald, Harrisonburg, VA, 2017. 402 pp. \$29.99. ISBN: 978-1-5138-0244-2.

In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Dan Nighswander sets out to unite his love of academic scholarship and pastoral ministry. Describing the biblical letter as “one of the richest sources of practical advice [in the scriptures],” Nighswander not only seeks to provide the reader with relevant cultural context, language study, and awareness of form, but also practical advice for the use of 1 Corinthians in our ministerial context today (19).

Nighswander’s intent comes through clearly in how he divides the sections of commentary for each part of the letter he examines. Along with the explanatory notes and basic outlines to be expected in any commentary, he includes two larger sections: the “Text in Biblical Context” and the “Text in the Life of the Church.”

As I read through the commentary, I was particularly pulled toward “the Text in the Life of the Church” sections. In these sections, Nighswander identifies themes that can be developed for preaching and teaching (113–14), book recommendations (125, 157), reflections on pastoral care (123–24), and suggestions on using a chapter from 1 Corinthians as a case study for church discernment (189). These ideas are a jumping-off point for the reader to continue looking at 1 Corinthians through a creative lens. I enjoyed Nighswander’s ideas for how 1 Corinthians can be engaged by congregations, as well as his liturgical awareness to point out which parts of 1 Corinthians are a part of the regular lectionary rotation and which are never read when strictly following the lectionary.

Nighswander’s attention to the practical applications and studies available to churches from 1 Corinthians, as well as his attention to lectionary inclusion of parts of the text, have caused me to reflect on how churches curate which scriptures are used in worship and study and which are not. I have only been at Lima