

## Nonviolent Action: What Christian Ethics Demands but Most Christians Have Never Really Tried

**Ronald J. Sider**

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*Sider presents a compelling vision of a war-free world through an analysis of Christian ethics.*

*Nonviolent Action: What Christian Ethics Demands but Most Christians Have Never Really Tried*, by Ronald J. Sider, is another bold challenge for Christ followers from the author of *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*.

Most Christians say they don't like war, that at best it should be a last resort. Sider dares Christians to boldly live out the ideal that nonviolence trumps violence: to "test the full range of possibilities of nonviolent resistance to injustice and oppression." In the process, he uncovers doubts many have about nonviolence—it works only in some instances, it can't fight the most egregious evils—but more than that, he proves that nonviolence is possible and effective, always. The book examines the history of nonviolent movements, from well-known leaders like Gandhi to lesser-known movements: a praying single mother turned the tide of war in Liberia.

Sider boldly states that nonviolence can work and work very well. But his vision is not some idealistic dream. Study, training, and organization are needed to fully execute this vision, he says. And it is not the easy or safe route—that's why faith is critical; as with Christ, modern-day nonviolence may be met with violence and death. This sober reality showcases the gravity of people's often-glib aversion to violence. But this approach is urgently needed: "The twentieth century was the bloodiest in human history." Sider also highlights the opportunities of the present time—like the role of social media during the Arab Spring—but focuses primarily on the most timeless of assets, like prayer, persistence, and community.

While his approach is academic and well researched, it's also intensely readable. He summarizes events and ideas well without oversimplifying. While the task at hand is daunting, his voice is friendly and optimistic.

Sider speaks equally to pacifists and just-war Christians (people who believe it's okay to fight for a good cause when other options have run out). Both groups will find that Sider pokes holes in their previous logic and belief, but rather than being left discouraged or disillusioned, they'll feel encouraged and empowered.

MELISSA WUSKE (Summer 2015)

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