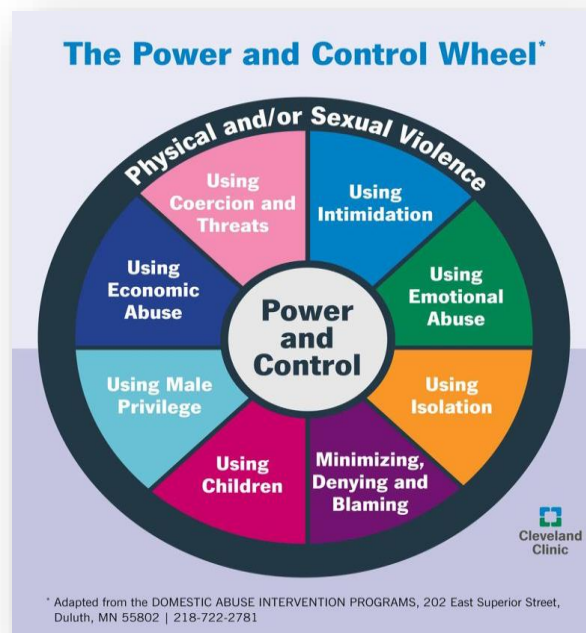


12.3 A Theology of Non-Violence

This theological reflection on non-violence invites the Church to reconsider its historical engagement with conflict and its role as a beacon of peace in a troubled world. While Christian history reveals instances where violence was justified under the guise of "holy war" or self-preservation, the life and teachings of Jesus present a radically different model—one rooted in love, reconciliation, and peace. Jesus himself embodied non-violence, teaching his followers to turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:39), love their enemies (Luke 6:27), and seek peace as peacemakers (Matthew 5:9).



His ultimate act of self-sacrifice on the cross was not one of retaliation but of redemptive suffering, demonstrating that true power lies not in force but in sacrificial love. By embracing a theology of non-violence, the Church fulfills its calling to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). This commitment requires not only a rejection of physical violence but also an active pursuit of justice, reconciliation, and the dignity of every human being. In doing so, the Church reflects the heart of Christ, offering healing and hope to a world deeply in need of peace. Our society is diverse, and the body of Christ reflects this wonderful diversity.

Throughout history, while the Christian Church and its denominations have faced challenges, they have also been places of hope, healing, and unity. The Church, despite its occasional struggles with power, has always been called to be a light in the world, guiding people toward love and compassion. Unfortunately, denominationalism has at times been associated with a resistance toward those who are perceived as different.

But Jesus' message in the Sermon on the Mount calls us to a higher standard, a standard rooted in non-violence and love. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave us the ultimate example of how to live, showing us how to embrace love over conflict.

He taught:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ 39 But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. 40 And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. 41 If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. 43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”(Matthew 5:38-48)

Jesus calls us to embrace the path of love, to break the cycle of violence, and to be agents of peace in our communities. When we extend love, especially to those who may be vulnerable or different from us, we embody His teachings. Jesus made it clear that the highest form of love is shown when we embrace and care for those who need it the most. The Old Testament also emphasizes the importance of protecting and

caring for the vulnerable. James captured this sentiment perfectly: "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." (James 1:27) And Isaiah spoke similarly: "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow." (Isaiah 1:17) Deuteronomy echoes this principle too: "He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing." (Deuteronomy 10:18)

The foundation of these calls for justice and love comes from God's covenant with Israel. He empowered Israel to be a light to the world, reflecting His nature. God's covenant with Israel was always meant to be a source of blessing for the nations. In Genesis, God promised Abraham: "And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you." (Genesis 17:7) In Deuteronomy, God reminds His people:

"For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers..." (Deuteronomy 7:6-11) Violence arises when we step away from our relationship with God and mismanage the authority He has given us. When we misuse this power, it leads to injustice and oppression. But Christ, in His journey to the cross, showed us that true strength lies in love and self-sacrifice. Even when He was wronged, He chose to remain silent and bear the unjust punishment inflicted upon Him. Hebrews 4:15 affirms this: "For we do not have a High Priest Who is unable to understand and sympathize and have a shared feeling with our weaknesses and infirmities and liability to the assaults of

temptation, but One Who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning.” Jesus, the Good Shepherd, laid down His life for us, not out of compulsion but by His own authority and love. He said: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. For this reason, the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.” (John 10:11, 17-18)

Through His sacrifice, Christ opened the door to redemption for all of us, extending God’s grace through the New Covenant. As members of the body of Christ, we are called to live in unity, embracing both Jew and Gentile, and committed to reconciliation and peace. Paul reminds us in Ephesians: “Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh... you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility...” (Ephesians 2:11-20) Through Christ, we are united as one family, no longer strangers but fellow citizens in the household of God. This is the ministry of reconciliation that He calls us to—living in peace and unity with one another.

**To be Christian is to be, Inclusive, Non-Violent and To Be Non-Hostile,
Diverse but United.**

**That is to make Peace, Live in Love, and Symbiosis and continue to
grow.**