

BOOK DISCUSSION

Book: Not on Our Watch: The Mission to End Genocide in Darfur and Beyond

Authors: Don Cheadle and John Prendergast

Paperback: 252 pages. May 2007

Publisher: Hyperion

Country setting: Darfur, Sudan

Genre: Non-fiction

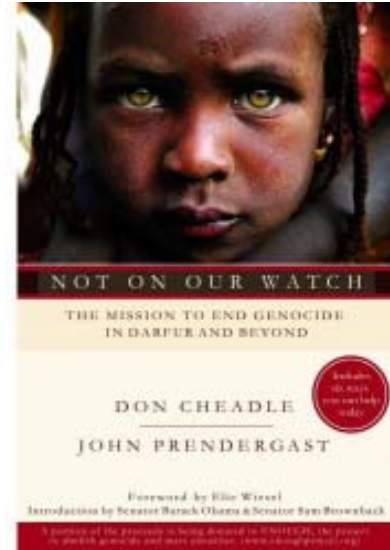
Catholic Social Teaching Principles and themes to explore through this book:

- The social sin and horror of genocide
- The resiliency of the human spirit
- Hope as an important element of solidarity
- The power of one person to make a difference
- The role of human rights and the role of the international community
- The call to advocacy

Synopsis:

Not On Our Watch is an accessible and readable book that offers not only a clear picture of the problems in Darfur (a region in Sudan on the continent of Africa), but also offers signs of hope and practical suggestions for getting involved in the growing effort to stop the genocide in this region. The bulk of the book was written by John Prendergast, an African expert who worked in the Clinton administration; the text demonstrates many of the themes of Catholic social teaching in action. Prendergast's personal reflections, including a bit of his own faith journey, demonstrate the importance of solidarity based on a clear understanding of a complex situation; he models for the reader an informed and passionate advocate for human rights and human dignity. While Don Cheadle's credentials are less professional, his role in the film *Hotel Rwanda* gave him an immersion course in genocide, and his reflections, interspersed with Prendergast's, add another interesting personal voice and witness to this unfolding story.

In addition to the authors' own reflections on their trips to Darfur, the narrative offers a basic overview on the Darfur political crises to provide an informative context to help the lay reader understand the complexities of the



Note: Author, John Prendergast spent 7 years in the early 1990s working on Africa justice issues at the Center of Concern, the host agency for the Education for Justice Project.

situation. Other first-person accounts are included in the book, giving the reader an intimate glimpse of how the tragedy impacts families in the region. *Not On Our Watch* also provides an understanding of the major efforts of the many people and organizations who keep working to bring about justice and peace to the Darfur region. These efforts obviously spark optimism in the authors, who see many significant signs of hope and offer us hope as well as a challenge to get involved. Most useful are the practical suggestions that give us all a way to support ongoing efforts and to participate in the crucial work of compassion, advocacy and action to save our sisters and brothers in Darfur.



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Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What did the personal stories of the authors and the other people involved in Darfur add to your experience of reading this book?
2. What was significant to you in the informative narrative about the political and economic aspects of the Darfur crisis?
3. What signs of hope did you note in the book?
4. How can people so close to tragedy be so hopeful? What does our faith teach us about the nature of hope?
5. What suggestions for action and advocacy were suggested in the book? What can your church, school, faith group, local community or other group do to become another sign of hope for justice and peace in Darfur?



Education for Justice Resources:

www.educationforjustice.org

Prayer for Darfur: <http://www.educationforjustice.org/bin/view.fpl/1200/article/2222.html>

Fact Sheet: Women in Darfur: <http://www.educationforjustice.org/bin/view.fpl/1200/article/10779.html>

Poverty, War, and Environment in Darfur: <http://www.educationforjustice.org/bin/view.fpl/1200/article/2676.html>

Case Study: Victims of War in Sudan: <http://www.educationforjustice.org/bin/view.fpl/1200/article/2424.html>

Additional Web Resources:

To Help the People of Sudan:

Catholic Relief Services in Sudan: Remembering, responding and rebuilding. For prayers, backgrounders and other resources refer to their website:
<http://sudan.crs.org/>

To Engage in Advocacy for Darfur:

Save Darfur: Take action to help the people of Darfur and learn more about the facts, background, history and people.
<http://www.savedarfur.org>

To Learn More About Darfur:

The International Crisis Group (The author's organization)
<http://www.crisisgroup.org>

Human Rights Watch - Refer to their resources and information on the crisis in Darfur
<http://www.hrw.org/>

Sudan: The Passion of the Present:
<http://passionofthepresent.org/>