

*Dilemmas* (Westminster John Knox, 2009), Christie's *Moral Choice* nicely bucks that trend.

The least surprising part of the book is that Christie is not content to offer a method devoid of moral content. As the former executive director of the Catholic Theological Society of America, she draws from numerous sources, including papal statements, to argue for an "objective morality," a "definitive criterion against which to measure human decisions." This criterion, already embedded in Catholic moral thought, is the "the human person, the pinnacle of creation and the place where God became human" (p. 106).

Christie's work takes a creative turn when she warns against narrow uses of the norm. When we make a decision with the good of the human person in mind, she states, we "must consider the far-reaching consequences not only to one person but also to others, to the earth, and ultimately to the future" (p. 129). With this relational ethic in tow, Christie then offers surprising comments on gay marriage, abortion, and end-of-life issues.

The book's focus on humanity may disappoint readers looking for a radical Christian ethic of creation—for example, those who embrace animal rights independent of their relation to humanity. But Christie pushes the boundaries of traditional ethics hard. In doing so, she also offers numerous illustrations for teachers, counselors, and pastors hoping to move Christian ethics from the realm of abstraction to the reality of our everyday lives, where good people want to do all they can to help their grandmothers live and die well.

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## Ethics of Hope

by Jürgen Moltmann, translated by Margaret Kohl

Fortress, Minneapolis, 2012. 271 pp. \$29.00. ISBN 978-0-8006-9858-4.

THE TITLE OF JÜRGEN Moltmann's *Ethics of Hope* is reminiscent of his famous book *Theology of Hope* (Fortress, 1993), written at the beginning of his career. The resonance is not accidental, as Moltmann's ethics is developed on the basis of his theology. This primacy of theology, however, does not mean the primacy of theory over practice. Moltmann emphasizes the "dialectical relationship of reciprocal influence and correction" between theory and praxis (p. xiii). The most important mark of Moltmann's ethics is that it refuses to be determined by the dominant worldview. Christian ethics, in his approach, is shaped by the logic of the Jewish and Christian traditions, which he has engaged throughout his career, rather than by abstract ethical principles or by predetermined notions of rationality or experience.

Many of the theological themes on which the *Ethics of Hope* rests are familiar to Moltmann's readers, and it is instructive to observe how he develops the ethical implications. The messianic dimension, which Moltmann developed in his later work on Christology, for instance, reminds us of the challenge that the future poses to the present. If the present is shaped by the eschatological future, without this future ceasing to be the future, ethics acquires a transformative character. In other words, the goal of the *Ethics of Hope* is the transformation of both world and church in light of God's future breaking into the present.

Moltmann's ethics range widely, including what he calls an ethics of life, earth ethics, and an ethics of peace. In his discussion of the ethics of life, Moltmann notes that life is threatened by terrorism, the growing gap between the rich and the poor, and ecological destruction. Referring

to this last topic, he states that “we are not acting on what we know” (p. 49). One wonders, of course, to whom he is referring. Who is supposed to be acting here? More importantly, why are we not acting? Is this due to lack of ethical instruction or lack of faith? And how will all of this change? Moltmann notes in the beginning that he does not address economics in depth in this book. When he touches upon the subject, he often talks about matters like greed and consumerism. But are these symptoms rather than causes? Studying economics as theologians might help us understand some of the deeper reasons we are not acting on what we know and what the alternatives might be.

How will things change? Idealistic approaches cannot help us now, as Moltmann realizes, and so he stresses the realism of Christian hope and the reality of Christ. These are good places to start, but what about the realism of Christian hope that is embodied in liberation movements? Moltmann mentions some of the movements of the past, in particular the civil rights movement. What about today’s movements and the hope that is embodied in them? More than a few people are already acting on what they know, in opposition to the dominant logic. Could theological reflection on this activity bring us closer to the reality of Christ in our time and to a more powerful ethical stance?

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### **The Hermeneutical Self and an Ethical Difference: Intercivilizational Engagement**

by *Paul S. Chung*

James Clarke and Co., Cambridge, 2012.  
287 pp. \$50.00. ISBN 978-0-2271-7381-7.

IN THIS WELL-WRITTEN BOOK, Paul Chung undertakes an ambitious and admirable task. He

engages two worlds, both the Confucian Way and European philosophy, and proposes an ethical-hermeneutical theory from a “global-critical” perspective. This volume emerges from Chung’s convictions that a global-critical perspective evolving out of these dialoging cultures is both necessary and possible in this multicultural age. A critique of colonialism and commitment to the subaltern characterize Chung’s model of ethical humanism.

In seeking to propose a global-critical hermeneutical theory, Chung traverses constantly and deftly between the continents and ages. In the first section, he examines the relation between hermeneutical theory and human experience in the European philosophical traditions. Through a comparative study of Thomas Aquinas and Mengzi, he highlights the integration of hermeneutics with ethics. Chung’s brief survey of comparative studies, undertaken earlier by Max Weber, Lee Yearly, and Matteo Ricci, reveals the possibilities, problems, and promises of the comparative analytical method. The second half of the book introduces a synchronic hermeneutic that is prophetic, practical, and ethical-political. Chung identifies Matteo Ricci as a pathfinder for such intercivilizational engagement. He also highlights the possible contribution of non-Western culture to Western modernity. Chung argues that ethical solidarity with the vulnerable, outcast, and subaltern should serve as an inspiration for the proposed hermeneutic.

Chung’s ability to engage two or more civilizations through a global-critical perspective is laudable. His articulation of its implications for the theological enterprise is helpful. The proposed hermeneutic recognizes the gifts that Christian communities from around the world bring to the church as well as the opportunities that living amidst other faith communities offers. This book reveals Chung’s expertise on