

Paul S. Chung. *Church and Ethical Responsibility in the Midst of World Economy: Greed, Dominion, and Justice*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013. 320 pages. \$35.

For too long the Western church has heard complaints about global capitalism as a swat-able nuisance, annoying but entirely natural to the order of things. Paul Chung calls for a paradigm shift. By recounting key moments in the history of capitalism with perspectives from developing nations, he helps the church face its complicity, complacency and power to change. His study is a rigorous one that demands fairly technical economics language at times and includes detailed discussions of John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, and other architects of the current order.

With haunting clarity, Chung points to the ways capitalism wears the guise of Christianity. His insistence on this dynamic should stir the interests of those who study mission and evangelism as well as theological ethics. Capitalism emerges from the book as a religion and chief among its virtues is personal accumulation.

The book reads like a history of the church's relationship with capitalism beginning with the colonization of La Hispaniola. By reaching back to this moment, Chung makes it clear that the church has a long history of treating people as commodities and resisting correction. In this case it is Bartolomé Las Casas who urges the church to maintain allegiance to the "God of the victim" (26), but revenue proves to be more compelling than human life or Christian mission. Martin Luther and John Calvin are equally concerned about the church's attitude and Chung outlines their worries in Chapter Two. He starts with appreciative nods to both reformers for taking a stand against injustice. Luther's sermons on "Sir Greed" and usury (42) provide a model for critiquing corrupt economic practices. Calvin is cheered for coupling his preaching with action in the public square. But Chung is quick to note that these legacies of resistance are subsequently distorted; Mammon trumps the word of the reformers.

So along with the examples of figures like Luther and Calvin, Chung thinks the church needs a robust understanding of economics. He devotes large portions of his next seven chapters to economic theory, beginning with an examination of the relationship between economics and civil society. This discussion features Locke, Hobbes, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Some important contradictions in Locke's thought emerge, like his tendency to link poverty with moral failure, his participation in the slave trade, and his "glorification of property rights" (60). Troubling aspects of Hobbes' thought are also given close attention, like his conception of human labor as a commodity in *Leviathan* and his lack of concern about the impact of colonialism on the colonized.

While attending to Chung's thorough discussion of the "Fathers" of Western economics, I was struck by the scarcity of women's perspectives. I was eager to read a discussion of sexism as one of the sad legacies of early capitalism—one that capitalism shares with the church. Yet it is clear that Chung has an inclusive vision of human flourishing and disgust for the church's insensitivity. He demonstrates this insight in his chapter on industrialization and self-regulation where he chronicles the prison-like conditions mill workers faced as well as the church's pattern of using missions as a façade for economic domination. The corruption of Christian mission is especially disturbing and drives part of his argument about the religious nature of capitalism—an argument that takes off in Chapter Six when he presents accumulation as a form of asceticism.

Chung challenges neoliberal approaches to global economy and laments the ways investors abuse foreign markets and pummel resources. His critique of global empire is

formidable. Yet, one can come away from it without a sense of the continuous struggle against capitalist brutality. I was eager to read about the communities of resistance that manage to clog the capitalist machine because they might also inspire faithful Christian practices.

Chung concludes that economic justice is not just an ethical issue but a confessional issue, and Chapter Ten is his effort to help the church revise its theology. The strength here is not just in his masterful theological argument but in his awareness of the church's penchant for ignoring hard messages. Some helpful nudges follow in the Excursus and Epilogue where he essentially compares the "capitalist faith" to Buddhist, Taoist, and authentic Christian alternatives. Perhaps the supreme achievement of the book is its vision of the church's agency in the face of overwhelming crisis.

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