

that some acts of mercy are also matters of justice. She mentions Roman Catholic social teaching as a positive integration of patristic principles with social ethics in our present context and ends, interestingly, with a critique and assessment of various so-called prosperity gospel movements that dominate the teachings of many Pentecostal and charismatic denominations worldwide. This chapter proved surprisingly careful and nuanced, but some terms, unfortunately, were employed without much explanation—“shalom” and “already and not-yet” in particular. While these phrases are common in certain Protestant circles (e.g., Reformed), not every reader would necessarily be able to track her meaning without greater explanation.

While noting a few concerns throughout, my assessment of Rhee’s study as invaluable does not change. Any who are interested in the subject of wealth and poverty in early Christianity would do well to begin with *Loving the Poor, Saving the Rich*.

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Church and Ethical Responsibility in the Midst of World Economy: Greed, Dominion, and Justice

Paul S. Chung

Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2013 (294 pages)

Paul Chung seeks to provide a critical interpretation of the history and trajectory of capitalism, particularly with respect to the relationship between Christianity and capitalism, in order to call for an ecumenical opposition to all forms of injustice and a movement toward a noncapitalistic world economic system. Chung, an associate professor at Luther Seminary, writes using an interdisciplinary approach, including elements of sociology, economics, and theology into his polemic. His purpose is not to develop mere theology or economics but to offer a comprehensive worldview.

The book begins by outlining Chung’s view of the Church’s responsibility in the world: to bring about justice for the oppressed. He then continues with a fairly thorough but rapid movement through several eras of world economic development. Chung starts with an overview of colonialism, in which he finds the roots of capitalism. He transitions from colonialism to a detailed analysis of Max Weber’s representation of the Protestant ethical influence on capitalism; in this discussion he closely follows Weber’s interpretation of the interrelationship between capitalism and Protestant moral theology, seeming to agree almost entirely with Weber. Chung’s critique of capitalism continues by outlining the perceived negative effects of industrial capitalism and the free market, especially as seen through the Industrial Revolution. Chung closely associates Christian missions with European colonialism and evaluates both movements through largely Marxist and postmodern lenses: that is, the advance of the Christian religion is inherently oppressive and the advance of the gospel imperialistic (93–95).

The text moves to a critique of Adam Smith's idea of a free market and an appraisal of Marx's contributions to economic thought. Chung's analysis of Marx is largely an endorsement, though he does recognize some limitations, mostly temporal, in Marx's work. He also endorses Hegel's dialectic approach to historical understanding alongside the economics of Marx. Using a Marxist economic paradigm, Chung goes on to critique capitalism and define its limitations, arguing, "A socialist society is heading and approaching the reality of freedom—an association of free human beings" (133). Chung associates money directly with evil, stating, "[M]oney is the beast causing humankind to lose its freedom" (137). Chung then explains the system of capitalism using an assumed zero-sum paradigm. Concluding the historical analysis, Chung argues that capitalism necessarily leads to a monopolistic economy and imperialism, which multiplies injustices in the world.

Shifting to an analysis of the modern economy, Chung offers a critique of capitalism in a global economic system, arguing that globalization is economic colonialism designed to maintain a *status quo* among nations with differing degrees of prosperity. In his discussion of economic globalization, Chung finally begins to interact with several modern proponents of free-market economics, with the hope of demonstrating an innate oppressiveness in the free-market system, though his interaction with opposing views is limited.

Turning next toward a constructive economic approach, Chung finally proposes alternatives to capitalism, which he argues are more consistent with the task of the church to liberate the oppressed. The economics that Chung proposes are largely borrowed from his mentor Ulrich Duchrow, a vocal opponent of capitalism and proponent of economic social justice. Before moving to a conclusion and a call to action for the church, Chung describes religious themes that he advocates appropriating in order to advance concepts of social justice. In the concluding epilogue, Chung reviews and makes more explicit the connections he finds between various forms of capitalistic injustices and historical Christianity. Then he concludes by briefly outlining some of his vision for the church to minimize injustice by fighting against capitalism.

There are several significant weaknesses in this text. First, the analysis is methodologically unbalanced. Chung largely fails to deal with original sources that are proponents of the views and systems he is critiquing. For example, Chung's critique of the Protestant ethical connections with capitalism relies almost exclusively on Weber's critique, despite the fact that Weber's interpretations of both capitalism and Protestant ethics have been contested and questioned by countless critics in the century since Weber published. Second, when Chung does deal with dissenting scholars, he tends to read their ideas uncharitably. For example, Chung equates Milton and Rose Friedmans' economic theories with Hitler's persecution of the Jews (216) and suggests that Milton Friedman's economics necessarily exclude any ethical considerations (213). A fair reading of the Friedmans may result in disagreement, but it should not engender accusations of genocide. Third, Chung relies on several unstated assumptions for his criticism. For instance, Chung assumes that global economics is a zero-sum system; that any manifestation associated with the Christian religion in history can be taken to be essentially Christian; and that, anthropologically speaking, humans are inherently good and thus injustice in the world is due primarily to

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systematic flaws rather than human sin. Fourth, Chung largely misinterprets or ignores the personal transformation that results from regeneration through faith in the gospel, arguing that the main purpose of justification is to cause the redeemed to work for social justice (232).

Chung's work is impressive in its breadth and scope. He demonstrates familiarity with economic theories from a broad sweep of history, which makes this an informative text. Chung effectively illustrates some ways in which the church has improperly endorsed some economic events in history, including allowing, if not encouraging, some of the abuses that accompanied colonialism. This volume also does bring to light some of the real economic disparities that exist in the world, issuing a needed call to take interest in economic injustices and take action to eliminate them. Chung provides a starting point for a dialogue, clearly presenting one side of the debate, which is the main contribution of this text.

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