

to solve moral dilemmas. He does so by beginning with a brief overview of the discipline of ethics that includes suggestions about ways that Scripture can offer moral guidance. Van Til then organizes the rest of the book around the three main types of ethical theory: character, norms, and consequences. For each, Van Til typically lays out basic philosophical and historical background, offers some critical observations, and then discusses (or at least implies) how Christian faith qualifies each. For example, the section on character describes a moral agent in general as responsible and responsive. Christian faith expands these notions in more capacious ways, as one comes to understand that one is responsible and responsive not just to self and others, but also to the entire creation and God. This qualification of the moral life by Christian faith is a pattern that recurs in the other sections of the book: norms derived from conscience and culture are modified in light of biblical norms, and Christian reflection on consequences must take into account the ultimate promise of new creation.

A strength of this work is that, although permeated by a more traditional Protestant perspective, it draws widely from Christian thinkers both ancient and contemporary, Catholic and Protestant, mainstream and evangelical. In addition, the book is user-friendly: written in an accessible style, it includes brief case studies, discussion questions, sources for further study, and sidebars that highlight key terms. As an introduction, however, Van Til necessarily oversimplifies some topics. For example, although he acknowledges that norms can and often do conflict, he does not adequately explain what to do when interpretations or applications of biblical norms conflict. His account of eschatology is rather unsophisticated. One also wishes for a bit more scholarly apparatus: for example, more complete

citations for quotations would enable interested readers to track down the sources more easily. Nevertheless, this book provides a solid introduction to Christian ethics. It would be appropriate for congregational use in classes for adults and perhaps older high school students. It could also serve as a text in undergraduate classes, especially at church-related colleges that take confessional identity seriously.

PAUL LEWIS  
MERCER UNIVERSITY  
MACON, GEORGIA

### **Moral Choice: A Christian View of Ethics**

by *Dolores L. Christie*

Fortress, Minneapolis, 2013. 260 pp. \$35.00.  
ISBN 978-0-8006-9802-7.

GRANDMA HAS SLIPPED into a coma, and her doctor recommends aggressive treatment. But your sister, Grandma's caretaker, disagrees. She has witnessed Grandma's decline and wants to stop the suffering. "Just let her go in peace," she pleads. You also learn that Grandma recently said she is ready to "meet her Lord" and does not want expensive treatment to keep her alive. "But we have a chance to make her better," the doctor counters. How to decide?

This is the type of case that fuels Dolores Christie's delightful new book on Christian ethics. Perhaps most refreshing is Christie's willingness to offer us practical counsel about making concrete moral decisions. She even identifies and walks us through specific steps for faithful moral decision-making. This may seem unremarkable, but a quick survey of recent Christian ethics reveals a lamentable focus on moral character to the exclusion of moral choice. Like J. Philip Wogaman's *Moral*

*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.

MICHAEL G. LONG  
ELIZABETHTOWN COLLEGE  
ELIZABETHTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

## 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