

is that they loved one another. What if apostolicity manifested itself not in certain theological ideas and organizational structures but in mutually caring relationships?

Joseph Martos  
*Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis*

*Keeping Faith with Human Rights.* Linda Hogan. Moral Traditions. Washington: Georgetown University, 2015. Pp. vii + 240. Price: \$29.95.

In this volume, theological ethicist Linda Hogan insists that many who criticize a human rights approach to moral issues misunderstand how human rights discourse exists as a dialogue among members of situated traditions that are themselves marked by contestation and difference. This book embodies a pluralistic, arts-inspired method. H. calls for a method that draws upon sources from law, anthropology, sociology, political science, and even poetry with as much grace and facility as it does Christian ethics. Masterful and never tedious in its use of multidisciplinary material, the book briskly and convincingly shows that a renewed human rights discourse is not only possible, but necessary in our globalized and conflicted world.

H. begins with two chapters briskly summarizing critiques of human rights language from politics, political science, and theology. She resolves political concerns that allege that human rights discourse has originated in Western dominance and theological worries, and therefore has become corruptingly secular. More legitimate concerns for H. are communitarian, feminist, and postcolonial critiques of a human rights view of the person as independent monad and of culturally disembodied universal values.

H. argues that a renewed human rights discourse need not be rooted in an abstract, idealized anthropology. She engages feminist complications of the body's meaning and demands for respect for the other. Sociologist Maria Mies showed that classical understandings of subjectivity presume an economic autonomy denied to many throughout the world. For H., these new insights on human nature do not derail the project of human rights, but refocus it on "the situated rather than the abstract individual" (93).

H. moves on to difficulties with discourse practice, finding a stalemate between universalist and relativist views. She urges for a universality grounded in multiple justifications. Human rights discourse itself is "a form of situated knowledge" (108) which despite its early universalist claims was "adopted and appropriated by other situated communities who then developed it in ways unanticipated by the originators" (111). To be truly global, human rights discourse should engage in deep learning of religious traditions and should reach across methods and disciplines. Concerns about the potential outcome of interreligious dialogue are premature until this deep, mutual learning takes place.

H.'s robust hope for dialogue relies on her understanding that borders around cultures and traditions are more permeable than we imagine. Cultures are internally diverse; communities are not rigidly exclusionary but characterized by hybrid belonging of members; and tradition changes even as it shapes and marks adherents. Postcolonial theorists remind us that culture is discursive and hybrid. "Multiple

belonging” characterizes religious, ethnic, and national communities today (145–147). Traditions, too, evolve, as H. shows with examples from allegedly timeless Roman Catholic moral theology. Nor is culture deterministic for individual behavior and beliefs, as H. deploys political scientist Anne Phillips to show. Philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah reminds us that change in religious traditions often comes from within. When culture(s) and human rights discourse(s) are correctly understood as internally dynamic and evolving, “culture can be repositioned as a site of emancipatory politics rather than a bulwark against social change” (162).

H. says that even, perhaps especially, when communities believe their foundational values are at stake, they should cultivate practices of civility and respect and virtues of love and justice in their discourse. Here I wish she had elaborated further, since those values are not immune from contested cultural interpretation. H.’s example of the treatment of LGBT persons within the Catholic Church rather illustrates than resolves this issue.

H. closes by evoking the potential of the arts in a robust discourse of human rights. Having illustrated points with Seamus Heaney’s poetry throughout, she here delves into his theoretical work. The arts can contribute to “the expansion of moral concern” which is critical to any understanding of human rights as universal (179). Art can contribute in two key ways: establishing a baseline threshold for universal human dignity and confronting viewers with the true horror of violence. Torture is used as a test case, convincingly with respect to the role of art, but those who disagree with H. on torture might wish for a longer hearing than they get.

For H., human rights discourse has three purposes. It makes normative claims about what human dignity requires; it represents dialogue among members of different traditions; and effects political change through persuasion. It does not ultimately rest on static notions of persons, communities, or reason, but can be a dynamic dialogue open to multiple ways of knowing and speaking. While not immune to epistemologies which value some humans over others, it has been, and can still be, a crucial tool in addressing the horror and violence such epistemologies too often inspire.

I hope this book finds readers from fields as diverse as those it cites. Scholars of law, philosophy, politics, and theology will find much to admire in H.’s effort to keep faith with human rights.

Kate Ward

*Marquette University, Milwaukee*

*Idol and Grace: On Traditioning and Subversive Hope.* By Orlando Espín. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014. Pp. ix + 201. \$34.

“How have Christians traditioned their hope?” (xv). Orlando Espín addresses this question in what deceptively reads like an introductory volume on theological method. E. would like the reader to continually ask the questions: what it is that we “tradition,” with what authority, in which sociocultural context, and for what purpose. By making a verb out of the term “tradition,” E. unbinds it from the perception that it remains a static deposit of universal truths guarded by an ecclesial elite class. Instead,