

Boekbesprekings / Book Reviews

Part II: Lutheran contextual theology

- Responsibility for God's world – Luther's political ethics
- Prophecy or confession – a Lutheran response to social injustice
- Acceptance in action – a Lutheran approach to the HIV pandemic
- Conclusion – a theology for our times?

As can be expected from a well-known Lutheran scholar, Nürnberger is well versed in international Luther-research. However, some might criticize him for ignoring certain recent German publications on Luther. What is more important though, is that he brings African theologians into discussion with Lutheran theology. In other words: He gives exposure to African voices in the Lutheran academic world.

The sub-title is important. It is "a perspective from the South". This is a development that should be appreciated by all Christians. Because the centre of gravity of Christianity has shifted from the north to the south, theologians from the south must show more intellectual and academic leadership. This publication by Nürnberger could be appreciated as one of the important contributions in this regard.

Every South African student in Dogmatics, Ethics and Church History should buy this book. Every responsible minister, whether Lutheran or Reformed, should read this book. To foreigners we say: We present you with something proudly South African!



Moltmann, J 2006 – *Jürgen Moltmann Eine Lebensgeschichte, herausgegeben von W Raum*. Publisher: Gütersloher Verlagshaus. 384 Pages. Price: Unknown

2008 – *A broad place: An autobiography, translated by M Kohl*
Publisher: Fortress Press. 406 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Prof I W C van Wyk (The Africa Institute for Missiology)

It is not often that one receives a book for reviewing that one cannot put down once you have started reading it. The story of the world-famous Jürgen Moltmann's life is one of those books. It is one of the most interesting books I have ever read. Anyonewho is interested in Moltmann as a theologian and as a human being should read this book. Likewise, those with an interest in German history, the German academic world, famous German theologians and the ecumenical world should also read it. This autobiography is not only fascinating, but is inspiring too. It serves as motivation for all lesser theologians to aspire to academic excellence.

Moltmann provides the reader with an amazing account with detailed information on his life and work. It is astonishing that someone could keep so much detail stored in files and on computers for so many years. He recalls the names of his childhood neighbours, the children in his catechesis classes and of the people he met all over the world, including those he met during his visit to South Africa. He deals with what happened to him and his family during the War and with their move from Wuppertal to Bonn in detail. He also provides detail about his colleagues, the subjects they lectured and during which semesters they lectured.

The 57 photographs in the book in itself depict a life-story. The pictures tell the story of Moltmann, the world-famous theologian, the church leader, the family man and the friend of thousands around the globe. The pictures put faces to the works of people like Hans Küng, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Ernst Wolff, Eberhard Jüngel, Dorothee Sölle and Moltmann's wife Elizabeth Moltmann-Wendel. From the photos it is apparent that Moltmann was always very

tidy, a well-dressed person who enjoyed the respect of statesmen and church leaders all over the world.

The book is divided into the following divisions: His youth; the first phase of his academic career; the theology of hope; political theology; the Cross and the Trinity as focus areas of his theology; his latter contributions in systematic theology and the new beginning at the end. Each division consists of a few chapters.

People with a variety of interests will find this autobiography of use and very interesting. The two hundred students, who wrote dissertations on his theology, will rue the fact that they did not have access to all these biographical information. Every person who is interested in German theology and the ecumenical world should read this book at least twice. It contains many facts, anecdotes and perspectives that one can share with friends and students. Let me mention a few: Otto Weber played a major role in Moltmann's life as study-leader, theologian and family friend. He regards his *Grundlagen der Dogmatik* as one of the most important books in his library. In moments of uncertainty, he would consult Otto Weber, and not Karl Barth. He personally agitated to get Eberhard Jüngel appointed at Tübingen, whilst other very famous theologians opposed the appointment. Despite many theological and political differences between them, Wolfhart Pannenberg remained a very close friend. Moltmann firmly believed that universities should be left to the academics and maintained that the innovation-mania and ideas about structural improvements of universities by officials from education departments normally do not lead to much. He resisted the "Americanization" of the old German universities and wanted to keep them as places of knowledge, research and publications. At Tübingen his academic duties during the week amounted to lecturing for four hours, two hours of seminars, and two hours of meetings with his twenty doctoral students and of course also included university and faculty meetings.. He is one of the few high-profile theologians who has a working relationship with the medical fraternity.

This book should not only be read by lecturers, but by everyone who has an interest in theology and church life. I can hardly think of a more appropriate way of motivating them to live intellectually and to share in the great tradition of German university theology.



Neyrey, J H 2004 – *Render to God: New Testament understanding of the divine*

Publisher: Fortress. Xviii + 313 Pages. Price: \$19.00

Reviewer: Prof Ernest van Eck (University of Pretoria)

Render to God is about "the neglected factor" in New Testament study, God (see Dahl, N, *The neglected factor in New Testament Studies*, 1975). With Jesus' saying in Mark 12:17 ("render to God the things that are God's") as cue, Neyrey studies the God-talk in Mark, Matthew, Acts of the Apostles, Romans, 1 Corinthians and Galatians (chapters 1-6). In the two final chapters (7-8) the focus is on John and Hebrews, the two books of the New Testament in which Jesus is also called God. In this study Neyrey makes use of certain elements of Judean and Graeco-Roman God-talk (e.g., the rabbinic commonplace of four questions [Mark], the contrast between the covenants of promise [Abraham and David] and the covenant of Moses [Galatians], the "kingdom of God" [Matthew], the two powers of God, creative and executive [Romans and John], and the correlation of the names Jesus and Lord [John]), as well as three social science models (patronage and clientism, purity and holiness and honor and shame, appended at the end of the book for the uninitiated reader).