

Glaubensreflexion; Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 2007). Durch die Übersetzungen und Einführungen werden die diskutierten Texte gut erschlossen. Der gründlich erarbeitete Band ist für eine theologisch orientierte Exegese der biblischen Adamsstellen inspirierend (durchaus auch für die homiletische Bearbeitung der Genesis), enthält mehrere Perspektiven für eine gesamtbiblische Theologie und für verschiedene Themen der systematischen Theologie. Die Reflektionen der Autorinnen ("Zum Weiterdenken") sind weiterführend. Erarbeitet wurde der schöne Band in der Benediktinerinnen-Abtei Mariendonk am Niederrhein, zu der die Autorinnen gehören, und die sich um die Erschließung und Bewahrung des Vätererbes verdient gemacht hat (vgl. www.mariendonk.de).

In diesem Zusammenhang ist ferner auf die neue Serie *Novum Testamentum Patristicum* hinzuweisen, die die patristische Exegese zu einzelnen ntl. Büchern zusammenfassen und auswerten will (hrsg. A. Merkt, T. Niklas). Als erster Band erschien M. Meiser, *Galater*, NTP 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007); vgl. <http://www.uni-regensburg.de/Fakultaeten/Theologie/alte-kg/html/ntp.html>). Ferner ist auf die englische Serie *The Church's Bible*, die sich mit gleicher Absicht der ganzen Bibel widmet (hrsg. R. L. Wilken). Bisher erschienen R. A. Norris, *The Song of Songs: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators* (Grand Rapids, Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003), J. L. Kovacs, *1 Corinthians* (gleicher Untertitel und Verlag, 2005) und R. L. Wilken, *Isaiah* (2007; vgl. meine Rez. in *Religion & Theology*, im Druck); zur Serie vgl. www.eerdmans.com.



Marty, M E 2007 – *Lutheran questions, Lutheran answers: Exploring Christian faith*

Publishers: Augsburg Books. 159 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Dr J A Meylahn (University of Pretoria)

The author, Martin Marty, was professor of religious history for thirty years at the University of Chicago. He wrote the book from the North American context and it thus responds to the questions and challenges of that specific religious context. Many of the questions also find resonance in our own South African context, which shows numerous similarities, but also certain differences to the North American context.

In good protestant tradition, the book is written as a dialogue between questions and answers, like Luther's Small Catechism, which consists of questions and answers. "In faith as in the rest of life, a person grows in knowledge by asking questions" (p 9).

The book is written in an easy style which makes it highly accessible to the lay reader and as such, it is an excellent introduction to the basics of Lutheran faith for believers today.

Professor Marty has formulated 88 questions that seek to capture the religious questions and challenges that believers struggle with in their everyday life. These questions are subsequently divided into thirteen chapters, which follow the main themes of faith (God, Bible, Jesus Christ, church, society, etc). The questions arise from the daily life experiences of believers, for example: Does God answer prayer? Does God heal today? Professor Marty does not answer these questions with references to major theological insights and arguments, but with references to biblical texts and life experiences and thereby communicating the basics of the Lutheran faith. The book is not written as a theological treatise in defence of the Lutheran faith, but as an accompaniment for congregational members seeking clear answers to their questions. At times, one might find his answers too simplistic, thereby losing some of the depth of Lutheran theology, but when it is borne in mind that the book clearly is written for

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laity and not for theologians and its intention is to provide concise answers, then one appreciates the simplicity of the answers.

The book can be a valuable asset to the congregational library or resource center as it can be used for group discussions, adult courses on Lutheran faith as well as confirmation classes.



Raheb, M 2004 – *Bethlehem besieged: Stories of hope in times of trouble*

Publisher: Fortress Press, 2004. 157 Pages. Price: US\$15.00

Reviewer: Prof Dr Dorothy Jean Weaver (Eastern Mennonite Seminary – Harrisonburg, USA)

This is a book aptly titled and poignantly written. Bethlehem was in 2004 and is today a city under siege. A large sign at the entrance to Bethlehem proclaims “Peace Be With You” in English, Hebrew, and Arabic, from the “Israel Ministry of Tourism”. But the sign is a visual absurdity, painted as it is right next to a tall and menacing guard tower in the 8-meter-high concrete wall surrounding Bethlehem and imprisoning its residents. Bethlehem is indeed “besieged”; and the residents of Bethlehem clearly live in “times of trouble”.

But Pastor Mitri Raheb of Christmas Lutheran Church is a man of profound Christian hope and deep vision for the future. So while he depicts the “times of trouble” in Bethlehem in vivid detail, he does not stop there. Instead, Raheb’s ultimate goal is to point beyond the ubiquitous and ugly “trouble” of present-day Bethlehem toward emerging signs of “hope”. And it is this word of courageous hope, spoken into a world of bitter despair, which is the ultimate and remarkable gift of Raheb’s book.

In the “Preface” Raheb writes (p vii): “I am not sure if it is my destiny to write books during difficult times. But writing in such a context becomes an act of nonviolent resistance: resisting being silenced, resisting being a spectator, and resisting giving up.” Raheb’s “nonviolent resistance” takes the form of vivid storytelling, as he recounts dramatic events from the Second Intifada and everyday challenges associated with the ongoing Israeli occupation.

In part one (“Under siege”) Raheb draws his readers into the terrifying days of April 2002, as Israeli tanks rolled into Bethlehem and positioned themselves near the Lutheran compound. Raheb recounts the sheer terror of deafening and deadly gun battles waged at close range (chapter 1, “A monk at the compound”). He depicts the kindness of a Franciscan priest in the besieged Church of the Nativity toward a Hamas soldier taking refuge there (chapter 3, “Father Amjad and Muhammad under siege”) and the courage of Lutheran parishioners who defy an Israeli curfew to attend Sunday worship (chapter 5, “Obeying commands or commandments”). And Raheb includes a sermon, preached at Christmas Lutheran shortly after the lifting of the Bethlehem siege, which passionately denounces warfare (chapter 4, “Though war rise up against me”).

But surely most riveting is the extraordinary account of Raheb’s close encounter with Israeli soldiers who invaded the Lutheran compound and held him hostage in his office as they carried out massive destruction on the premises (chapter 2, “Challenging yet transforming the enemy”). Here the depth of Raheb’s eirenic spirit and the courage of his conviction become visible in his persistent and fearless attempts (p 23) to “engage them in a dialogue” that would “penetrate to their humanity” and “challenge them to see my humanity.”

Part two (“Life under occupation”) opens with an account of Raheb’s life in Bethlehem (chapter six, “The land that swallows its children”), a life impacted at every turn by the Israeli