

The first chapter considers the mass, its ceremonies and ritual, the prayer offices, the extra-Catholic sacraments, the liturgical year, and various practices such as pilgrimages, processions, and the ringing of bells. In addition to the retention of the mass—with the exception of its offensive parts, such as the canon of the mass and offertory prayers—many orders prescribed the elevation, the use of houseling cloths (linens crumbed or spills of the sacramental elements), the use of Latin, full communion vestments, and liturgical actions such as genuflecting and bowing. A comprehensive liturgical calendar was often retained with numerous feasts of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the apostles, Evangelists, and other saints. The primary feasts of the church year (the Nativity, the Resurrection, and Pentecost; and occasionally the Feast of St. Michael) each had a three-day celebration, with the other days having either a whole or half day. A small sampling of orders even retained such nonbiblical and controversial days as the Assumption of Mary (Minden, 1530; Brandenburg, 1540) and Corpus Christi (Fraustadt, 1564), but with a sermon on the sacrament of the altar rather than the offensive procession.

Chapter two provides an overview of the economic and legal circumstances of the period. Inadequate pay forced many Lutheran pastors, like their medieval predecessors, to supplement their incomes by teaching, milling, farming, offering bulls or boars at stud, brewing beer and brandy, and even charging fees for certain parish rites. Zeeden helpfully summarizes the retention of, and distinction between, the lesser and greater bans, the former being exercised by parish clergy with respect to the sacrament, and the latter being enacted by consistories or secular authorities, barring the excommunicated from any parish activity and severely restricting all interaction with the person.

The third chapter examines various abuses of both the clergy and laity. A recurring problem for the pastoral office was inadequate training, with some incumbents having minimal to no theological education. There were also issues with “riotous living,” often consisting of aggressive conduct, dancing, hunting, and drunkenness. The laity were also guilty of disorderly behavior, often being accused of drunkenness, violence, gambling, ignorance of doctrine, poor attendance at the divine service, and even urination in parishes and cemeteries. To this was added the persistence of superstitious acts—such as the use of baptismal water for casting spells and for watering livestock and crops—and witchcraft.

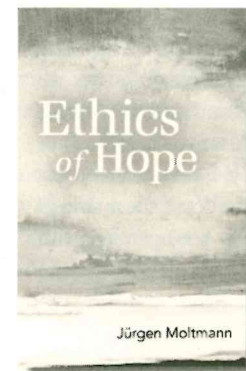
One should be wary, however, of making sweeping conclusions about practices and ceremonies in the Lutheran churches of the sixteenth century based upon Zeeden’s findings. First, as Zeeden notes, the church orders are legal documents that present a limited view of parish life. These texts do not demonstrate how these regulations were put into effect at a parish level, if at all. They give a limited perspective of the life and activities of Lutheran parishes. Second, Zeeden’s work is a survey of the church orders, highlighting both patterns and anomalies; it is neither exhaustive nor comprehensive. Finally, and most importantly, it needs to be remembered that all of the

church orders are products of their respective territorial environments. Isolating them from their cultural, political, and theological contexts results in dubious findings. For example, Zeeden often cites the 1540 church order of Mark Brandenburg as demonstrating a high level of continuity with certain medieval Roman Catholic practices that often were abolished in other territories, such as the reservation of the sacrament for communion of the sick, ostentation of the sacrament, and the anointing of the sick. What the reader does not find in this text is that Margrave Joachim II of Brandenburg was slow and hesitant in his embrace of the Reformation, and he sought to create an order that mediated between Roman Catholic and Lutheran usage. It would be an erroneous conclusion to surmise that these findings from Brandenburg faithfully represent Lutheran practice.

Walker’s contributions to this volume are also worthy of note. In addition to the work of translation, his introduction, footnotes, and updated citations provide the reader with various tools of navigation, extending beyond the present text, for further study.

Hermann Sasse once lamented that the great liturgical figures of nineteenth-century Lutheranism, such as Theodore Kliefoth, Wilhelm Löhe, and August Vilmar, had been forgotten. In Sasse’s reckoning, no authentic Lutheran liturgical renewal could occur apart from the study of these men who were so well versed in the doctrine and practice of the Lutheran fathers of the sixteenth century. Current ignorance extends beyond the nineteenth century all the way to the sixteenth. In the present day, when many Lutherans, including pastors, are more familiar with the practices of the Vineyard churches and Willow Creek, or the writings of Aidan Kavanagh and Alexander Schmemmann, than with their own Lutheran heritage, Zeeden’s text provides an opportunity for Lutherans to begin the task of reacquainting themselves with their own history. Only then, as Sasse stated, is a genuine Lutheran liturgical renewal possible.

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★ *Ethics of Hope*. By Jürgen Moltmann. Translated by Margret Kohl. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012. Paper. 271 pages. ★

✦ Jürgen Moltmann, now in retirement, finished out a long and prestigious career at Tübingen as one

of the most celebrated Reformed theologians of our times. His influence has had wide impact in ecumenical circles, including the World Council of Churches and global Pentecostalism. His numerous books, especially his programmatic *Theology of Hope* (1964) and his revision of the *theologia crucis*, *The Crucified God* (1973), have left an imprint on mainline Protestant theology in Europe and America and have increasingly found their

way into some branches of Evangelicalism in North America and Asia. For these reasons, the appearance of *Ethics of Hope* is significant.

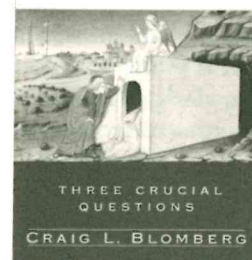
Ethics of Hope shows Moltmann’s critical loyalty to the Reformed tradition that allows him also to embrace aspects of the left wing of the Reformation, the Anabaptists. This he does in the third chapter, “Separatist Eschatology,” where he engages the work of the American theologian Stanley Hauerwas. There is minimal direct encounter with Luther and the Lutheran tradition, mostly limited to Moltmann’s critique of this teaching as “conservative” and providing no motivation for change (9–13).

Clearly *Ethics of Hope*, written in the twilight of his career, is an extension of *Theology of Hope*. Moltmann argues that ethics presuppose eschatology. Written not as a textbook in Christian ethics but as a theological exposition of ethics in light of eschatology, Moltmann in the first section of the book examines several “types” of eschatology: Apocalyptic, Christological, Separatist, and Transformative. The second and shortest section, consisting of only two chapters, takes up “An Ethics of Life” and includes a discussion of “the culture of life” and “medical ethics.” Moltmann takes a moderately conservative stance on end-of-life issues while voicing a nuanced and tentative position on contraceptives and abortion. Marriage is treated in equalitarian terms as a partnership of life. Homosexuality is not mentioned. The third and longest section, “Earth Ethics,” is devoted to ecology from an eschatological perspective. Section four deals with “Ethics of a Just Peace” and the fifth and final section, “Joy in God: Aesthetic Counterparts,” concludes the volume, advocating a “new Christian mysticism that is turned towards the future, and with its hope for God awakens all the senses for the future of God’s world” (239).

Reading Moltmann is a reminder that eschatology can easily be coopted by enthusiasm. Ethics remain squarely in the realm of creation, poetic descriptions of the new creation notwithstanding. Lutheran ethics offers a more robust doctrine of creation and a more realistic assessment of the human condition.

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Making Sense of the
New Testament



Making Sense of the New Testament: Three Crucial Questions. By Craig L. Blomberg. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2004. 189 pages.

✦ From Dan Brown’s *Da Vinci Code* to the latest Coptic fragment purported to demonstrate that Jesus had a wife, there has been an explosion of sensationalistic history surrounding the life of Jesus and the origin of the church. Much of it has depended upon fragmentary Gnostic sources, often dated to the late second, third, and fourth centuries. Our culture, so eager to discount the canonical Scrip-

tures as literary fabrication, quickly embraces and trumpets oddball theories that supposedly refute traditional Christian teaching.

In such an atmosphere, a work like Blomberg’s *Making Sense of the New Testament* is welcome indeed. Blomberg’s work, concise and clearly written, makes the case that Christianity is based on historically reliable documents, based in turn on the testimony of eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus. Blomberg’s work in no way goes into the depth of Richard Bauckham’s *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, nor does it go into detailed arguments as to the authorship of any single document. What he does show is that whether one understands the Gospels to have been written by the apostles themselves (the generally conservative view) or by those who followed, there is no denying that the whole of the New Testament arises within the first century. Blomberg compares the Gospels with what we know of other ancient personages. He notes that much of our knowledge of Alexander the Great, who died in 323 B.C., is only to be found in the writings of Plutarch and Arian, who wrote some four hundred years later. Or consider Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon, generally accepted as history, though the historical accounts of it are based solely on the eyewitness account of Asinius Pollio, whose writings have disappeared.

Blomberg then proceeds to offer an introduction to the Gospels as history. Over against the skepticism of Bart Ehrman, he speaks of the role of the apostles, who as a rabbi’s students would have surely taken notes as well as committed their teacher’s teachings to memory. Blomberg then proceeds to speak about the Gospels and Acts from a historiographical point of view, showing how they fit into the basic world of Jewish and Greco-Roman historical writing.

Having discussed the Gospels as literary works, Blomberg then takes on the question of miracles, and then especially the resurrection. Helpfully, he debunks the myth that the ancients were somehow simplistic, unscientific people who believed that miracles happened every day. He also notes philosophical objections to the miracles, noting that much of modern philosophy is less dogmatic on what in fact is possible and also making the point that if Jesus was in fact God’s Son, then that changes everything.

The second chapter of the book focuses on Paul’s relationship to Christianity and answers the question as to whether Paul was in fact Christianity’s founder. Blomberg shows how much Paul’s teaching is congruent with Jesus’ own teaching, as well as how much he relies upon the basic story of Jesus as found in the Gospels. As Blomberg notes, none of the Epistles are written for the purpose of initial evangelism, as all of Paul’s letters are addressed to communities that knew well the story of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. However one dates the Epistles in relationship to the Gospels, both assume a high Christology, which came from the very teachings and life of Jesus.

In the final chapter, Blomberg speaks to the question, “How is the Christian to Apply the New Testament to Life?” (107). This section may not be as valuable to Lutheran readers, though it offers a serviceable introduction to the Gospels’ main sections. That being said, this well-written little book