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 gifts. In addition to its retention of the mass—with the exception of its optional parts, such as the canon of the mass and oratory prayers—many orders prescribed the elevation, the use of housing cloths (linens placed on altars, draped over chalices, and used in communicating to catch any crumbs or spills of the sacramental element), 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 the Blessed Virgin Mary as demonstrated in the church order of Mark Brandenburg as 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, once continuous meditation on the anointing of the sick. What the reader does not find in this text is that Margrave Joachim 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 aspects of the topic, 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 unfamiliar with the practices of the Vineyard churches and Willow Creek, or the writings of Aidan Kavanagh and Alexander Schmemann, than with their own Lutheran heritage, Zeeden's text provides an opportunity for Lutherans to begin the task of recapturing themselves with their own history. Only then, as Sasse stated, is a genuine Lutheran liturgical renewal possible.

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Reviews


Jürgen Moltmann, now in retirement, finished out a long and innovative career at Tübingen as one of the most celebrated Reformed theologians of our time. His influence has had wide impact in ecumenical circles, including that of the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation. His numerous books, especially his programmatic Theology of Hope (1964) and his revision of the theology of Grace, The Crucified God (1973), have shaped generations of Christian thought 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. He does in the third chapter, "Separatist Eschatology," where he engages the so-called American theologian, Stanley Hauerwas, whose 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 (p. 15).

Clearly Ethics of Hope, written in the fifth 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 Transformatory. The second and shortest section, consisting of only two chapters, is titled "An Ethics of Life" and includes a discussion of "the culture of life" and "medicals." Moltmann takes a moderately conservative stance on end-of-life issues while voicing a nuanced and tentative position on contraceptions and abortion. Marriage is treated in egalitarian 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" (229).

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

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Moltmann and the New Testament


From Dan Brown's Da Vinci Code to the latest Coptic fragment purported to demonstrate that Jesus had a wife, there has been a surge of sensationalistic claims about Christian history surrounding the life of Jesus and the origin of the church. Much of it has depended upon fragmentary Gnostic sources and the noncanonical texts of the second, third, and fourth centuries. Our culture, so eager to discount the canonical Scripture as literary fabrication, quickly embraces and trumpets oddball theories that supposedly refute traditional Christian teaching.

In a real 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 four canonical Gospels, that is, on the New Testament. This 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 the historicality of the Gospels, the source material that has been used 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 the data we know of other ancient personalities. 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 one person, 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, who speaks of the role of the apologist, who as a rabbi's student 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 ancient history, from 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 myths such as the ancient Christians were somehow simplistic, unscientific people who believed that miracles happened every day. He also notes philosophical objections to the miracles, yet most 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 builds on 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 already 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. Considering the most famous 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