

The Theology of Hope

"Theology of Hope" refers principally to two theologians, Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-) and Jürgen Moltmann (1926-). "Hope" designates their emphasis on the future as the place of divine action. Pannenberg and Moltmann are best understood as responding to two impulses in 20th century theology: Karl's Barth's focus on divine revelation and the recovery of eschatology. They accepted Barth's focus but criticized him for presenting revelation as the Word that existentially encounters us. In response, borrowing an idea from G.W.F. Hegel, they held that history in its totality is the revelation of God. Eschatology thus became for them a critical theme, for the totality of history, which is God's revelation, is in our future. Yet this eschatological future is not simply in the future; in the resurrection of Jesus Christ it has entered into the midst of our history. Hope is thus grounded in a revelatory future that has, in a preliminary way, already taken place. In later developments, Pannenberg and Moltmann placed increasing emphasis on the doctrine of the Trinity, emphasizing the social analogy in contrast to Barth's Augustinian approach. They also articulated powerful ways of understanding the doctrine of creation. Additionally, Moltmann expressly connected the principle of hope to liberation theology and to Martin Luther's theology of the cross.

Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*. Translated by R.A. Wilson and John Bowden. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.

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Pannenberg, Wolfhart, ed. *Revelation as History*. Translated by David Granskou. New York: Macmillan, 1968.

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