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Book review: "The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation" by Jürgen Moltmann

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ticular audience. He compares his own analysis of doctrine to that of Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic interpretation, praising Lindbeck but also faulting him, in effect, for not deconstructing the notion of a linguistic community.

A problem with deconstruction is its tendency to self-destruction. Cunningham early rejected any reduction of rhetoric to persuasive verbal gimmickry empty of honest substance. Yet he repeatedly attacks rationality, logic, objectivity, and universality as valid goals in theology, offering in their place no criteria or standards to distinguish among the true, false, or vacuous, the good, bad, or irrelevant, or even the beautiful, ugly, or boring. He ends up, for example, stating approvingly and without qualification that "Biblical exegesis is simply a form of persuasive argument" (224). This is often true, as Cunningham's other examples from exegesis and theology in general illustrate. But he speaks as though there were no valid way at all to identify what the probable historical (objective) truth might be about any texts or traditions. Unwittingly, perhaps, Cunningham has constructed for himself an audience of people who do not like to think very critically about theology and its criteria, who prefer instead to swim through assertions which legitimize them in savoring and promoting whatever they already like, free from critical criteria of evidence and logic shared by a broad public willing to strive for honest objectivity.

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MICHAEL H. BARNES

The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation. By Jürgen Moltmann. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992. xv + 358 pages. \$24.95.

Jürgen Moltmann's recent volume on pneumatology takes as its premise the assumption that the Holy Spirit is deeply implicated in the living of human, indeed of all, life. "The Spirit of God is called *the Holy Spirit* because it makes our life here something living, not because it is alien or estranged from life" (x). The tradition of opposing revelation and experience has marginalized the Spirit, Moltmann argues, a result that, not surprisingly, he further maintains, is to the benefit of the established churches. Moltmann wishes to expand our understanding of the experience of the Spirit, and does so in a work that displays not only theological breadth but genuine engagement with "the everyday charismata of the lived life" (183).

In his discussion of the gifts of the Spirit, Moltmann insists on the diversity of life: "Life is always specific, never general" (180). This diversity is present in God's life as well as in human relationships. Life in the Spirit fosters pluriform "trinitarian community," as opposed to the undifferentiated "unitarian concept of community," a position that Moltmann attributes to Schleiermacher's embrace of the "common Spirit" (223). The value of the Spirit, in Moltmann's thought, is precisely its role as guardian of diversity (thus, presumably, the subtitle of this work).

This diversity of life in the Spirit is detailed, even celebrated, in chapters focusing on liberation, justification, rebirth, sanctification, charismatic and mystical experience. But Moltmann's constructive acumen comes to the fore in his final chapter on the personhood of the Spirit. Here the effects of the dis-

tinctive personhood of the Spirit are presented via four metaphorical patterns. This distinctive personhood is then given a similarly multifaceted context by Moltmann's quaternity of trinitarian patterns: monarchial, historical, eucharistic, and doxological. The first three provide economic grounds for the immanent pattern of doxology.

Moltmann's theological contribution invites comment in at least three specific areas. Most obviously, scholars in ecumenical or pneumatological theology will note his constructive rejection of the *filioque*, a discussion that is more fundamental to the entire book than its explicit outline might imply (306-309). Secondly, Moltmann's treatment of feminist and environmental concerns is welcome for its sophisticated integration of these issues with classical discussions in pneumatology and trinitarian theology. For either concern, Elizabeth Johnson's work (*She Who Is* [Crossroad, 1992]), would provide a strong comparative point. Finally, this work offers multiple avenues for a theological reconsideration of Spirit christology, primarily in its attempt to articulate the unique personhood of the Spirit within a broad trinitarian framework.

The Spirit of Life should be in the college library, although as a whole it is more suited to graduate study. As a resource, sections of it could stand alone for use in undergraduate courses on anthropology or ecclesiology (see, for example, reflections on the experience of the Spirit [17-38], on charismatic experience [180-97], and on the nature of community [248-67]).

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The Body of God: An Ecological Theology. By Sallie McFague. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993. xii + 274 pages. \$12.95.

Readers acquainted with McFague's *Metaphorical Theology* (1982) and *Models of God* (1987) will find many familiar ideas developed in this book which focuses on the ecological crisis. Critical of the neglect of the body in a religious tradition that makes the Incarnation its central doctrine, McFague seeks to remedy this defect by proposing a model that treats creation as the continuing, dynamic, growing embodiment of God.

In the first two chapters she addresses the ecological crisis, noting the responsibility of first world peoples and its effect on the poor of the third world and on nature as a whole. She also notes the contribution of postmodern scientific cosmology, especially that of feminist philosophers of science Sandra Harding and Carolyn Merchant to correcting the dualism of modern mechanistic science that has contributed to the crisis. In the subsequent five chapters McFague makes proposals for a methodology for a theology of nature that incorporates the common creation story; a theological anthropology that is critical of anthropocentrism; a theology of God and the world in which she presents God as immanent and transcendent, organic and agential, emanationist and procreative; a Christology that explores the cosmic dimensions of Christ; and an eschatology that emphasizes a hope for a new creation.