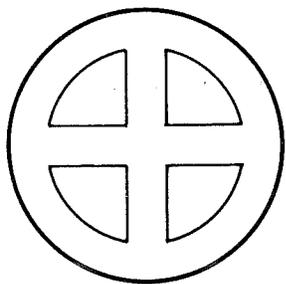


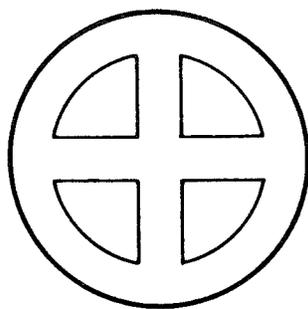
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KUHF Radio Interview with Jürgen Moltmann



Lutheran Brotherhood Colloquium on the Church in Future Society

The Woodlands Inn, Houston Texas • January 29 - February 2, 1979



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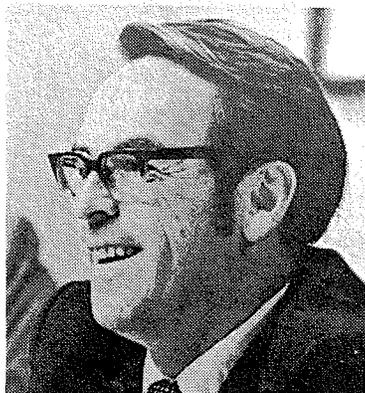
The Lutheran Brotherhood Colloquium on the Church in Future Society was a conference of 250 Lutheran leaders and ten nationally-known futurists. It was the first such event ever held by Lutheran Brotherhood, a fraternal benefit society serving Lutherans nationally, and was the result of consultations with several U.S. Lutheran church bodies. Among the concerns which were expressed by the church bodies in these consultations was the need for more disciplined emphasis on anticipated future changes as they influence congregational life.

The purpose of the Colloquium was to increase awareness of anticipated future change so that appropriate planning can be effected to strengthen the Lutheran church, especially at the congregational level.

All U.S. Lutheran church bodies were invited to take part in the planning, and nine participated by sending representatives, including six national presidents. Ten Lutheran church bodies were represented among the participants in the Colloquium.

The Colloquium was organized around five themes:

	Theme	Presentors
Monday	The Reality of Change	Alvin Toffler
Tuesday	Problems of the Future	John Platt Theodore Gordon Jürgen Moltmann
Wednesday	Human Values & Potential	Willis Harman Jean Houston
Thursday	Defining the Task	Warren Bennis Hazel Henderson Robert Jungk
Friday	The Role of Leadership	Harlan Cleveland



Jürgen Moltmann

Theologian and Professor of Systematic Theology, University of Tübingen, Germany.

Dr. Moltmann, author and lecturer, is noted as one of the leading systematic theologians of the world. In 1944 he was inducted into the German army; a year later he became a prisoner of war and served three years of forced labor in a concentration camp. It was during this period that he began his study of theology and continued it after his return to Göttingen in 1948. After vicariate duty in Berlin and in Westfalen, he began as minister in the community of Bremer-Wasserhorst. He later taught at the Ecclesiastical high school in Wuppertal and in 1963 became Professor of Systematic Theology and Social Ethics at the University of Bonn.

In 1967 he assumed his present position; during the academic year 1967-68 he was a visiting professor at Duke University in North Carolina and the University of California at Santa Barbara. During his visit to Duke University, he co-authored a book entitled *The Future of Hope* which was the result of a Duke consultation on "The Task of Theology Today;" he is considered the founder of the "theology of hope" school of thought. In his book, *The Passion for Life: A Messianic Lifestyle*, he writes: "It is my expectation that theology will increasingly enter into the practice and experience of the people and that the congregation will more and more come to express its pains and joys in theology. ... (Therefore) let us make the congregation strong. The large supra-congregational organizations of the churches often relieve the congregations of independence and responsibility. But in the last analysis, in the times of contempt and persecution, the Church stands or falls with the gathered congregation and with no one else."

Dr. Moltmann is a member of the Synod EKC (Evangelical Church of Germany), the board of directors of the Ecumenical High School at Bossey and the Paulus Society. He is a frequent contributor to numerous theological journals and also publisher of *Evangelical Theology*, *Evangelical Commentary*, *Proclamation and Inquiry*, *New Forum* and *Public Forum*. Dr. Moltmann has completed two works on the study of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and has published numerous articles and books, many of which have been translated into English. Some of his more recent books include: *Theology of Play*; *The Gospel of Liberation*; *Man: Christian Anthropology in the Conflicts of the Present*; *The Crucified God*; *Religion and Political Science* (several authors); *The Experiment Hope*; *The Theology of Hope*; *Hope and Planning*; *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*; *Origins of the Theology of Hope* by M. Douglas Meeks (an analysis of Moltmann's theological background) with a forward by Moltmann.

KUHF Radio (Houston) Interview with Dr. Jürgen Moltmann

Theologian and Professor of Systematic Theology, University of Tübingen, West Germany.

Interviewed at the Lutheran Brotherhood Colloquium on the Church in Future Society, January 29 - February 2, 1979.

INTERVIEWER: Dr. Moltmann, thank you very much for kindly consenting to be interviewed prior to your presentation today. What is the essential message that you are going to present in your talk at the Lutheran Brotherhood Colloquium on the Church in Future Society this afternoon? Can you sum it up in a few words?

MOLTMANN: That's very difficult. It took me 15 pages to spell this message out but I will try to do my best because Americans would like to have it snappy. I believe that the church is the church of Christ and is full of the power of hope. The answer to the question of the form of the church in future society must come out of the church itself, not just in reaction to the developments of the future society but in reaction to the hope to which the church is called. So, I expect the coming of Christ and I live in anticipation of this coming and open myself up for the future which I do not know yet. But I'm ready to compare every future development in society with this expectation of the coming of Christ.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think is the most overlooked or least understood aspect of the future? Now that's a very broad question, can you focus in on that in general terms or as specifically as possible?

MOLTMANN: Yes, I would like to do that. It is in the abstract use of the term "the future". Overlooked in this abstraction is whose future? My future or your future, the American future or the future of the Third World? The future of the rich and advanced or the future of the poor, the handicapped and the sick people? So one has, I believe, to start talking about the future in existential terms.

INTERVIEWER: So you would be more interested in focusing in on smaller processes, micro-processes, rather than discussing the future from the most comprehensive of perspectives? Is this what you're saying -- that it's necessary to focus in on the varying futures of different kinds of groups rather than generalize about the future for everybody?

MOLTMANN: First of all you have to start where you are and where the people or the class in which you live are. Then you have to ask whether the future perspectives you develop, from your standpoint in society and in politics, may be a future also for other people. Let me repeat this phrase from the Bangalore Conference on Faith and Order which happened in August this year. There was this phrase, "The hope of the one is the despair of the other." So is this the future -- if my hope and the hope of my advanced industrialized society will be the final despair of Third World peoples? This cannot be.

INTERVIEWER: What cannot be? The despair of the future or the focus in on only one future?

MOLTMANN: The focusing on only my future.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned earlier that one, however, must begin with one's existential perspective. Do you think that the futures literature in general does not deal sufficiently with the existential perspective that individuals or even groups are inclined to?

MOLTMANN: Listening to the lectures I've heard so far in this Colloquium and in reading the books of futurists, I have the impression that they generalize the future of their own nation to the future of the world, overlooking those peoples who have to pay the costs of the progress they want to make. For example, to say that the United States of America and the European nations are the advanced industrial societies and all the other nations are underdeveloped is an illusion, because if you use your fantasy for a moment and imagine all the other nations on the same level of production and consumption as the United States of America and the nations of the Common Market in Europe, the planet would be exploded already. This is impossible. So to talk just about the future of 1/4 of the world population and forget about the rest is dangerous -- at least dangerous.

INTERVIEWER: What, in your estimation, will be the biggest surprise that you expect to occur in society during the next 5, then 15, then even as far out as 50 years? Do you have any projections on those issues?

MOLTMANN: If I would now spell out a certain and definite expectation it would no longer be a surprise!

INTERVIEWER: The very definition of surprise is its uncertainty, its novelty.

MOLTSMANN: Well, I'm uncertain about a couple of things. I expect in the next 50 years more struggle and wars because of natural resources -- oil for example. I expect a crises in the world economy, which we have already, and my hope is that we will get a new economic order in the world which will bring more justice to the poor nations in the world.

INTERVIEWER: Do you see that as a modification of the current marketplace orientation toward distribution of goods and services throughout the world? Do you see a move in the direction of more centralization, more control over the world economy as a result of the crises that will be precipitated within that economy?

MOLTSMANN: One reason for the crises is that economy is international already in the multinational corporations, etc. Politics are still on the national level, so there is a discrepancy. Political use of political power is provincialized, over against the international powers of economy. This must be solved in one way or another. I believe we will get a lot of struggling and fighting until finally we get perhaps not a super power but an international covenant and somebody who can have some power that this covenant will be kept.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the super powers, especially China, Russia and the United States or other powers that might be emerging elsewhere in the world might, in fact, be responsible for putting together this new world economic order? Would you anticipate the future in those terms?

MOLTSMANN: They will have to do it only under the pressure of the Third World nations, because the Third World nations are the most populated nations. Their power is not in political, military and economic terms but in terms of population, and under the pressure of this population explosion, the so-called "super powers" will give in to an international covenant on world economy.

INTERVIEWER: Let's shift to a different kind of question which focuses on the nature of social institutions. What social institutions do you anticipate will experience the greatest amount of change in the next 20 years? You've already mentioned economics and politics, but do you see education or the family or religion itself?

MOLTSMANN: They're different in different countries of course. In this country perhaps Social Security systems because the original or the natural society security system

is the family (the large family and the nuclear family). If the family system is breaking down, then you need a larger social security system in order to give people the power to survive.

INTERVIEWER: So a governmental agency will move in and take over some of those functions that families originally provided for, especially the security of the aged, or those children who may be victimized by broken homes or whatever? Would you want to reflect at all on changes that might occur in the educational institutions? What do you see looming on the horizon?

MOLTMANN: It's different in Europe than in the United States, I believe. Let me give a European answer. In Europe our educational system is directed toward the past. We learn what our tradition is, and we have more than 2,000 or 3,000 years of tradition, which is a treasure and a burden at the same time. So, we use all our energy to learn Hebrew and Greek and Latin and read the books from Augustine on to the present and deal with the past, with the past, with the past. We do not deal so much with the present, not even in school, not to speak of the university, and we do not deal at all with the future. We leave this to those people which some of our conservative leaders call enthusiasts or Schwärmer or "crazy people". We must break away from our large tradition in order to have free room to understand our contemporaries in America, Asia and Africa, and then to have free room to understand our future. It is more difficult in an old country than in a rather new country and the United States is just 200 years old.

INTERVIEWER: To follow up on that, one of the most significant changes that has occurred in American higher education in the last 30 or 40 years is what some people refer to as the "democratization" especially of higher education. Do you foresee similar trends going on in Europe or in other parts of the world? Of course the literacy rates are advancing which would suggest some spreading of the democratizing impulse, but do you think it would be a significant movement in education in the future?

MOLTMANN: I believe that it is essentially necessary to democratize our educational system and I'm fighting for it, but I'm losing one battle after another in the schools in the town I live, in Tübingen, and in the University of Tübingen because we have a hierarchy of those who know and then we have an anarchy of those who don't want to learn or to follow. In German schools and universities there's an ongoing struggle between the authority on the one side and anarchy on the other side. This can be solved only if we find more trust in each other and find democratic forms. But it is also questionable to break away from a long tradition.

INTERVIEWER: Earlier in your remarks you referred to the notion of hope and defined yourself as a hopeful person and then a little bit later you talked about the potential emergence of some conflict. I'm not sure whether that makes you an optimist, or a pessimist, or a short-run pessimist and a long-run optimist. How do you define yourself in those terms and what do you see as the origin of either optimism or pessimism, or some alternative to those two?

MOLTMANN: I believe that hope, especially Christian hope which is resurrection hope, is an alternative to both optimism and pessimism. Since this is a Lutheran Brotherhood conference, let me bring into it a saying of Martin Luther. He said, "If the world would come to an end tomorrow, I would nevertheless plant an apple tree today." This is the courage of hope which is neither optimistic or pessimistic, and we need more of this courage in order to become a little more independent from the trends.

INTERVIEWER: So you distinguish hope from pessimism and optimism.

MOLTMANN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: I wonder if you could amplify on that just a bit more before we move on to another question. Is it possible to do that in a very brief time?

MOLTMANN: The Christian hope is grounded in the resurrection of the crucified Christ. This hope is born out of a resurrection and the resurrection came out of a death. This hope, therefore, has death behind it and life, eternal life or new life, in front of it. Therefore, this hope will no longer fear death because as resurrection hope, it lives from the victory over death. Death is the point where optimism, pessimism and all secular hopes end. Therefore, I say that this is a kind of transcending hope -- a power which can keep you alive even in the midst of destruction. This hope is alive even if the world would come to an end tomorrow.

INTERVIEWER: The next question focuses in a bit differently, especially with respect to students who are interested in thinking about the future or committing themselves to a lifetime of study of the future. What five books or what papers or other works about the future would you recommend to students who would be interested in committing themselves to study the future? (Besides The Theology of Hope!)

MOLTMANN: In this context I would first of all recommend the book in which the promissory history is witnessed to,

and that is the Bible. The Bible is the book of promise and therefore also the book of hope. You see, the three mes-
sianic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) come out
of this Old Testament, come out of this book. So, this is
where you can learn about hope and the future which God has
promised. But you are certainly asking for different
things.

INTERVIEWER: Are there other books that are more contem-
porary? Not that the scriptures aren't contemporary in the
sense of their important meaning and interpretation, but
those books which have been written by more contemporary
authors which might complement, supplement, add to the
scriptures?

MOLTMANN: To understand the trends and the expectations of
the world we live in I would recommend Alvin Toffler's book
Future Shock and Robert Jungk's book The Millennium Man and
the reports of the Club of Rome. I believe they're very
important.

INTERVIEWER: You're focusing in on those books which have
come to be accepted as more or less classic within the
emerging field of future studies, to the extent that any
material can be considered classic in such a young disci-
pline. Is that essentially correct?

MOLTMANN: Yes, that's correct.

INTERVIEWER: Again focusing on young futurists, what types
of skills, intellectual or otherwise, do you believe are
essential for students who are pursuing aspirations in this
area?

MOLTMANN: Reason and imagination.

INTERVIEWER: Good! And how would you define imagination?

MOLTMANN: Reason to understand reality and imagination to
understand possibility and to project into the realm of
possibilities.

INTERVIEWER: So it's a freeing up of one's consciousness to
think about alternative ways of perceiving the future, what
might lie ahead, and not be too tied to traditional per-
ceptions of reality, or to build on those perceptions and
advance to new ones?

MOLTMANN: To have daydreams, not with our reproductive
imagination with which we work through our past every night
again and again, but a productive imagination with which we

explore the future possibilities and rule out those which are dangerous and take those which are good. We need much more imagination at this point. Let me therefore recommend another book. This is a book of my philosophical teacher, Ernst Bloch, Das Prinzip Hoffnung, On the Principal Hope, where he summarized these utopias and dreams of humankind which are only illusions for those "realists" who are satisfied with the present. Otherwise, we all live by dreams.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you. Let me draw our conversation to a conclusion with one more question. What are the most significant problems that you see lying ahead, about which formal studies of the future, as opposed to other inquiry disciplines, could be of significant assistance? Are there any unique problems that the field of futures can address that other disciplines cannot address, or can address in a significant way that others cannot address?

MOLTMANN: The other disciplines are more or less specified disciplines and futuristic studies can bring them together and use them as a whole. So a futurist is more or less a generalist bringing different disciplines together. He or she is perhaps similar to a doctor who has a practical science using psychology and physiology and other sciences for one purpose, for the healing of the sick. And so, a futurist must bring different disciplines together into one project in order to overcome diseases of the society.

INTERVIEWER: Let me paraphrase you if I might, the uniqueness of futures is its ability to integrate what specialties and specialists within those specialties deal with on a much more particular, specific basis so that we can get a picture of the whole, as opposed to a sense of the parts.

MOLTMANN: I would expect that of futurists, that we get a picture of the whole we want and not just of the whole that may happen.