

## Foreword

IN RECENT YEARS THERE HAS BEEN A MOVEMENT ON THE PART OF SOME biblical scholars and some systematic theologians to bring their disciplines back together after a long period of alienation. This is not a matter of dissolving one into the other, but of finding ways in which serious dialogue can bear fruit. Poul Guttesen's work is an exemplary contribution to this. By engaging Jürgen Moltmann's theology and the biblical book of Revelation in a mutually illuminating dialogue Guttesen is, of course, hosting such an encounter within the creative theological context of his own engagement with both. He enters with sympathy and perception into both of these visions of the kingdom of God, with their very different theological idioms, and explores both the consonances and the tensions he finds between them.

As supervisor of Guttesen's doctoral studies, I followed his work with great interest, because I am myself an enthusiastic student of both Moltmann's theology and the book of Revelation. I have written two books on each, and doubtless each has influenced my reading of the other, but I have never attempted systematically to bring them together. So I have been delighted to see this done so well.

Guttesen importantly recognizes the *situatedness* of Revelation, of Moltmann's theology, and of his own work. As the seven messages to the churches in Revelation show, we cannot live out an orientation to the coming kingdom of God (in Guttesen's phrase, "leaning into the future") without prophetic discernment of the historical moment at which the church finds itself here and now. As Guttesen argues, the focus on *resistance* (in Revelation) or on *engagement* (in Moltmann) is a relative difference that reflects the continuity of the two within the mission of the church on its way to the kingdom.

Where differences between Moltmann and Revelation become apparent, they concern especially the nature of the sovereignty of God that the biblical symbol of God's kingdom entails and the relationship between the church and the kingdom. These are vital issues that the

church has all too often got dangerously wrong in the past, as both Moltmann and Guttesen recognize. We need all the help we can find to get them right in the present, and Guttesen's engagement with both Revelation and Moltmann at these points of divergence points some ways forward.

In commending this book, it is a pleasure also to be able to welcome a theological voice from the Faroe Islands to the international theological discussion.

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