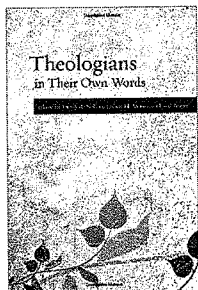


tions regarding how Israel's Scriptures (Old Testament) became the church's Scripture and how the New Testament itself is understood as authoritative. Canon, creed, and episcopacy are seen as interconnected and aimed at preserving the unity of the church with Christ. The final three chapters of the book are examples of Jenson's creedal/dogmatic exegesis using Genesis 1:1–5, Luke 1:26–38, and Mark 14:35–36 as test cases.



***Theologians in Their Own Words.*** Edited by Derek R. Nelson, Joshua M. Moritz, and Ted Peters. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013. Paperback. 288 pages.

✂ Twenty-three theologians, all from North America or Europe, most of them still living, tell their stories in the genre of theological autobiography. With the exception of Ernst Käsemann, who died in 1998, all of these theologians lived and worked into the twenty-first century. With a collection of this type, one may ask, “Why these and not others?” Those selected for inclusion are mostly theologians from mainline denominations. Some are well known in the world of contemporary theology, namely, Ernst Käsemann, Robert Jenson, Gerhard Forde, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Martin Marty, and Alister McGrath, while others, such as Marilyn McCord Adams, Nancy Murphy, and H. Paul Santmire, are less-well-known outside their particular circles. As each theologian puts his or her story in “their own words,” readers are given glimpses into the personal history that shapes one’s theological work. For example, we learn of the formative influence of confessional, “Old Synod” (Norwegian-American) Lutheranism, firmly committed to the Formula of Concord’s teaching on election, on the thought of Gerhard Forde. Reading his essay, one recalls the legendary and long-standing war between George Aus and Herman Preus at Luther Seminary in the middle of the last century.

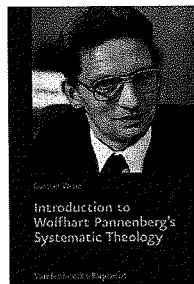
Entries by Martin Marty and Ronald Thiemann are reflective of their formation in (and ultimately departure from) the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Hans Schwarz, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Ernst Käsemann, and George Forrell relate experiences in or just after World War II in their theological pilgrimage. George Forrell, who could be called the dean of American Luther scholars, writes in a way that is particularly moving as he soberly reflects on his life’s work from the vantage point of old age:

Having been brought to America more than half a century ago to preach the gospel in German, I am now apprehensive that the gospel may not be preached at all. If the church abandons its responsibility to theology to devote itself entirely to entertainment, pop-psychology, and social work, the task of helping people with the big questions will be

assumed by others. If that happens, somebody will eventually write a book with the title: *The Treason of the Church*. It was at that point in a very similar condition almost five hundred years ago that Luther entered the picture. At the end of my pilgrimage I am convinced that his relevance to our situation is enormous. (61)

Some chapters evoke memories from my own history. For example, Ted Peters tells a whimsical story of a class at the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary (now Trinity Lutheran Seminary) in Columbus with the ever-eccentric but lovable Harold (“Zippy”) Zietlow. The chapter by Hans Schwarz, who was also one of my teachers in Columbus, brought those days to mind, as well as our ongoing work together in the International Loehe Society.

All in all, this is a readable and informative collection of essays that will reward the reader with insights into theology not only as an academic discipline but as a calling that is shaped within the particularities of one’s own life experience.



***Introduction to Wolfhart Pannenberg's Systematic Theology.*** By Gunther Wenz. Translated by Philip Stewart. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013. Paperback. 267 pages.

✂ Wolfhart Pannenberg is without doubt the most well-known Protestant systematic theologian of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. His approach to the theological task has been celebrated not only by other Protestants but by Roman Catholics and more conservative evangelicals. Over against Bultmann, his insistence on the historical nature of the resurrection has been applauded, as has his refusal to compromise on the issue of homosexuality. His engagement with historical studies, the natural sciences, and contemporary philosophy demonstrates the depth and scope of his thinking. Reliant on Hegel, Pannenberg sees theology as having a critical and apologetic role to play—ecumenically as well as for the sake of the church’s mission in the world. The density and complexity of Pannenberg’s nuanced approach is not easily grasped. Hence, Wenz’s book is a welcome roadmap to the thinking of his teacher and later colleague. Wenz does not take up the task of assessing or critiquing Pannenberg but rather of making the development, contours, and structure of his mentor’s systematic theology accessible to a wider audience. This book is not a substitute for reading Pannenberg but is an eminently helpful tool for those who might otherwise be daunted by the challenge. Some theologians are best understood with a seasoned tour guide to lead others through an edifice that can be cavernous and detailed. Wenz is such a tour guide.

JTP+