

# Review of Jürgen Moltmann's 'God in Creation'

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, I must say I am surprised to be given the privilege of addressing the topic of a German theologian. The last time that I attempted to do this, I was somewhat sympathetic to the writings of my great-great-great-grandfather, Friedrich Schleiermacher.

And I thought probably that any further excursions into German theologians might lead to, well, we heard last Sunday about chasing people out of the church.

So I give you these thoughts with care and with a humility, because the topic dealt with in a professional theological way is unfamiliar territory to a geographer.

So you may say it's preposterous for me to attempt it, but it is of great significance, I believe. And it's worth scratching our heads in the way that Dr. Packer has suggested.

So, without further introduction, let me say a word of prayer for us all. We pray, our Father, that you would guide our thoughts this morning.

[ 1 : 30 ] We thank you for your great goodness and generosity and super-generosity with respect to the creation, not only in creating us, but in creating this whole universe.

And allowing us to speculate, in the light of your word, on what that generosity has meant and continues to mean.

We thank you indeed for our Lord Jesus Christ, for his life, death, and resurrection, and the intimation of the new creation, which will take place in its fullness in due course.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. So you'll see that there's going to be a little bit of work for us to do today, as indicated by the whiteboard.

And the heading is starting points. So I think we should just briefly recap. You will not remember the Berners' Exchange that occurred just before Christmas, but it was an attempt on my part to account for the existence of two Testaments, to suggest that the particular and distinctive thing about the Old Testament was the emphasis on creation and the particular ways in which the Noahic Covenant in Genesis chapter 9 the Sabbath Feast as developed in Leviticus 35 and the way in which the psalmist reveled in the beauties and intricacies of God's creation.

[ 3 : 42 ] My starting point there was that we need a rationale for the existence of two Testaments. Now that was a an informal sleighmaker thought what we're doing today is looking at something that's more formal and if I say something wrong today it will be because Jürgen Moltmann said it not I.

Here is the book Jürgen Moltmann You see it's not too not too heavy but actually it's deceptively heavy contents are quite tricky.

Jürgen Moltmann's starting point is that we have an ecological crisis. Some of you may disagree I happen to agree with that starting point and the distinctive feature of his argument with respect to the reason for this ecological crisis is twofold.

He says that of course science and scientism have forced us into a mold of looking at smaller and smaller things at one end of the scale or larger and larger things at another end of the scale with a particular frame of mind and a particular motivation to demonstrate the intricacies of random processes in creation.

So he says science has led us up the garden path but at the same time he says orthodox theologians are equally responsible for this ecological crisis.

[ 5 : 38 ] He says this because of course so many of the powerful nations of the world and so many of the powerful theologians associated with the growth and development of western empires have themselves instilled a certain view of the creation which we are not able to handle the whole way in which we have encouraged development encouraged overuse of resources and so on bears part of the blame.

So his two starting points are that both science and orthodox theology have moved us into an ecological crisis. Now as I say whether or not you agree with that is beside the point.

This is Maltman's starting point. Now the little bit of work that I'd like us to do is simply to ask for some suggestions on what your starting points would be if you were asked to write something about God in creation.

Full marks for everybody. In the beginning. In the beginning. Thank you. I forgot to plant a question this morning but that's a very good one.

Beginnings. Stewardship of the earth.

[ 7 : 25 ] Stewardship. Good. Yes.

And in the beginning God was before anything was God was. Right. I'm going to say that's the included In the beginning.

In the beginning. Thank you. Yes, Lord. Is the creator and sustainer. I'm not a scientist but I've heard that sustaining the universe is just as much of a miracle as creating it.

Good. Thank you. Yes. That actually turns out to be one of the key points in Malkman's argument.

Good. That's all. He was pleased with what he did. very Mr. Hi, this is very promising.

[ 8 : 39 ] Thank you. It's not a lockbook. So we should be tracking parallel on the chronological event.

It's a record that shows who God is instead of exactly and precisely how everything happened. So it's not protological.

So it's not a lockbook. Not a lockbook, yes. That sounds more intelligent, I guess. Well, I'm not sure this focus is going to be necessary.

It's always necessary. Refocus on it. Matter matters. We have resurrection of the body and there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

It's helpful to have work towards the same spelling.

[ 9 : 45 ] If we accept what the kind of view of astronomers is, at the start, it was a singularity. So what that singularity was.

That's beginning again. Thank you. Okay. Do you mind if you do... ...if you feel like I'm talking the sources? Both go points. Yeah. But we'll talk about it again. but we'll move the left later. Thank you.

Put this way, theology and science are different, they're different frameworks and assumptions but in the end they are compatible and they merge.

That's a very brief comment about what I said for an hour last May. All truth is fair. All truth is fair.

Compatibility of science and theology. Oops, it's getting worse down here. Well let me just terminate the hard work that's been done and say that that's a very helpful list of starting points.

[ 11 : 01 ] The way in which Mokban develops his position focuses very much on the contrast between emphasizing beginnings and emphasizing continuity and the whole of creation from the beginning through the present and into the future.

the whole question of the messianic view of creation is very strongly emphasized by him. He takes issue at various points with the emphasis on beginnings.

He feels that we have over-emphasized beginnings and that we need to emphasize and look at what does it mean to have creation going on all around us and also the way to nature of the new creation the eschatological creation.

Well, that's giving you a foretaste of some of the ideas. I've lost my glasses. I always lose my glasses.

So, these are some of the starting points and the theme of God in creation is I'll read it out for you.

[ 12 : 52 ] Yeah. This is going to be more important when we come to look at the scripture passages that are being used.

So, in his first discussion the first chapter on God in creation Moltmann talks about modern thinking reducing things to the lowest common denominator.

Nuclear physics and biology have demonstrated that this approach does not do justice to reality. Objects can be known and understood better if they are seen in their relationships and interactions with their environments.

We no longer at least those who have interrogated the modern approach we no longer know in order to dominate but perceive in order to participate.

This is a very key statement that so much of modern science with all the good things that are accompanied with it has as its basic motivation the need to dominate and of course picks up the whole question of dominion in a particularly negative way and that the more ecologically helpful way to look at learning is that we learn to perceive in order to participate.

[ 14 : 38 ] This is a comparison which he returns to over and over again in his discussion. A Christian doctrine of creation is a view of the world in the light of Jesus the Messiah.

It is directed towards the liberation of persons to peace with nature and the redemption of the community of persons and nature from the forces of death.

And he says that the Sabbath should be the hallmark of every biblical doctrine of creation. Nature, he says, is unremittingly fruitful and does not know what Sabbath means.

It is the Sabbath which blesses, sanctifies, and reveals the world as God's creation. Now, we probably don't take the Sabbath seriously enough.

The Jewish people, noting that it was the longest of the Ten Commandments, spent a lot of time working out what the Sabbath meant.

[ 16 : 06 ] but Mautmann sees this as integral to the whole question of God in creation.

The fact that on the seventh day, God rested and saw that it was good all that he had made constitutes the key principle people in people, in Mautmann's view, because the Sabbath, in this respect, is different than the natural order, with respect to its causing us to have to rest, and to celebrate, and to indeed celebrate the feast of the Sabbath, which, of course, is something we did talk about a little last time, as reflected in Leviticus 35, with respect to not only the celebration of the Sabbath on a weekly basis, but the celebration of the Sabbath in terms of years, and in terms of the celebration of the Sabbath in terms of the year of Jubilee, seven times seven plus one the 50th year was the year of

Jubilee, and the idea here is that creation is incorporated into the Sabbath, it's not just the Sabbath for us, or just for God, it's for God, for us, and his whole creation, and this is a, as he points out, this is a very compatible perspective to that of the ecological perspective, and which is something that the ecological crisis demonstrates as being not achieved as a result of modern scientific thinking, nor indeed as a result of traditional orthodox theological discussion.

Now, I hear the objections, but I'm not going to allow them just for the moment. Second chapter says, in the ecological crisis, as mentioned, he takes the starting point as the analogy of the ecological crisis in which we find ourselves, and to which orthodox theology has contributed.

The ecological crisis is a crisis of the whole life system of the modern industrial world. It is a crisis which we human beings have brought on ourselves and on our natural environment.

[ 18 : 35 ] Modern science originated in the context of certain human ideals, values, and convictions. Christians. Christian theology is no less affected by the ecological crisis than the sciences and technologies.

Modern industrial countries developed in those parts of the world which were under Christian influence. Science sets its sights on the acquisition of power and scientific knowledge is dominating knowledge.

But belief in creation only arrives at the understanding of creation when it recollects the alternative forms of meditative knowledge. Today, this is an interesting quote.

Today he says, science and theology have become companions in tribulation under the pressure of the ecological crisis and the search for a new direction to ensure survival.

That I think is probably the essence of his conviction. Science and theology have become companions in tribulation under the pressure of the ecological crisis and the search for a new direction to ensure survival.

[ 19 : 48 ] Let me think about that and I'm sure there'll be discussion. Now the third chapter, he starts to fill out his particular emphasis, asks what does the concept of God contribute to our knowledge of nature?

it. And he emphasizes three things. Covenant, creation, and the kingdom of God. The covenant, moving from the Noahic covenant, covenant onwards.

Creation in terms of the way in which God has created all things. And the kingdom of God in terms of the expectations that creation will be fulfilled, partially fulfilled in the lifetime of Jesus, progressively fulfilled in the eschological context of the end of time.

He says, Israel learned to understand the world as God's creation in the light of the saving events of the exodus, the covenant, and the settlement in the promised land.

We do not get knowledge of the divine creation from merely observing it. If it's understood as God's creation, the universe is caught up into the history of God's rule.

[ 21 : 21 ] And it's only under the presupposition of faith in Jesus the Christ that the world is revealed in the messianic light, as a creation that is both in bondage and open for the future.

Nature is not the revelation of God, nor is it God's image, but it does show traces of God everywhere if we are able to perceive in it a reflection and a mirror of God's beauty.

Again, that's a critical point. Nature is not the revelation of God, nor is it God's image, but it shows traces of God everywhere if we are able to perceive in it a reflection and a mirror of God's beauty.

Now let me move to the first of the overheads. Here's Psalm 104, which, for those who can't see, the living things, Psalm 104, verse 25, and verses 27 to 30, living things both small and great, these all look to you to give them their food in due season.

When you give it to them, they, gather up, when you open your hand, they are filled with good things, when you hide your face, they are dismayed, when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust, and when you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.

- [ 23 : 08 ] This view of the Trinitarian nature of creation, and the way in which the Holy Spirit is constantly activating creativity and creation around us, is an important part of his thinking. He's saying here that all created things die unless they are breathed on by the Holy Spirit. And that's the link here with the ecological emphasis. The second of these references that he builds on is Proverbs chapter 8 verses 22 to 27 and 30 to 31.

There's nothing significant about the break here because it's just in order to fit it onto the screen, the essential points. The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old.

Ages ago I was set up at the first before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth and delighted in the children of men. When there were no springs abounding with water, before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills I was brought forth, before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world, when he established the heavens, I was there.

- [ 24 : 44 ] When he drew a circle on the face of the deep, then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world.

The idea again of the way in which the spirit is actively creating, as well as having been part of the original creation itself.

And that's the sort of background to that section of this discussion. Moving on, Romans chapter 8 is crucial to the understanding of creation in the messianic light.

and that's the passage which we are all familiar with from Romans chapter 8. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in the hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

- [ 26 : 13 ] For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. It's a critical perspective on the way in which the creation is going to achieve fulfillment, but only partially so in the present.

And this whole important emphasis in relation to the worship of nature in itself, obviously this is not a Christian point of view, the worship of nature, it's looking for the traces of God's image and his beauty rather than seeing the whole of nature as if it were perfect in the form that he originally made it.

So, at first sight, and I must say this underlay a lot of my last talk, at first sight, the New Testament does not seem to add anything new, to the understanding of the world as creation.

When I was discussing the importance of the Old Testament and its emphasis on reveling in the beauty of God's creation, and the apparent limited reference to that in the New Testament, it's true what he says.

At first sight, the New Testament does not seem to add anything new to the understanding of the world as creation. Jesus and the Apostles presupposed the Old Testament and contemporary Jewish belief in creation was a matter of course.

- [ 28 : 08 ] The gospel of the kingdom of God, which they proclaimed, made no difference to this. And Paul, too, has seldom anything to say on the subject. But this impression is deceptive.

It only arises if we understand by creation a story about origins, and therefore we look at the wrong passages. No.

I love these definitive statements, looking at the wrong passages, I guess. He knows which the right passages are. But he does bring in this Romans discussion.

what he says is that the New Testament emphasizes the testimony to be found in the experience of the Holy Spirit, who is the energy of the new creation.

It's not the historical ordering of the events creation, that is important, which was the comment that was made, one of the starting points that was suggested here.

[ 29 : 21 ] It's not the discussion of the protological creation, apparently is the theological word for it. Someone can correct me if I'm wrong.

It is the eschatological creation, as might be expected of testimonies belonging to the messianic era. God's eschatological creation is put into language through the words raise, make alive, and call to life.

In Romans chapter 4, Paul calls Abraham the father of faith because he believed the God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence, things that do not exist.

The faith in the promise, which alone justifies it, is put on the same level as creation out of nothing, and the raising of the dead, for the God of the promise is the creator of all things, and the one by whom the dead are raised.

Paul gathers together into one perspective the justification of the sinner, the raising of the dead, and the creating out of nothing. the beginning of the world and its consummation are both inherent in the present experience of justification.

[ 30 : 43 ] These concepts are really quite tricky to encompass, but the scope of it is huge. The scope of it is bringing the whole of the history of the creation together under one compass.

Paul gathers together into one perspective the justification of the sinner, the raising of the dead, and the creation out of nothing.

The beginning of the world and its consummation are both inherent in the present experience of justification. For Paul, the raising of the crucified Jesus is the beginning of the end-time process of the raising of the dead, and with that, the new creation of the world.

Out of the out of Jesus' resurrection, he justifies the future of this hope, and you can see that in not only in Romans, but in 1 Corinthians and in 2 Corinthians also.

So he is saying that, that's to say, Moltmann is saying that faith in the resurrection is the Christian form of belief in creation.

[ 32 : 00 ] The Holy Spirit is the power of the resurrection, and that is why Paul presents the community of the risen Jesus as the place where the Spirit is manifested, in Ephesians chapter 1.

This is also brought out in the Romans passage that we have here, in the connection that's made between the believer's experience of unredeemed bodily nature, and his recognition of the whole enslaved creation, and the listening to the sighs of the Spirit.

Paul, in a sense, describes three concentric circles of community. Firstly, the children of God, who have already been seized by the first energies of the Spirit, who long for liberty.

They are saved, but as of yet, only in hope. so their faith is simultaneously assurance and pain. Secondly, they long for the redemption of the body.

They are already freed from the body of sin, but because of that, they suffer all the more under the body of death, from which they have not yet been released, as we know.

[ 33 : 14 ] And thirdly, in physical terms, believers are bound together in a common destiny with the whole world and all earthly creatures. The unredeemed character of the body, which believers sense in themselves, corresponds to the tragedy of non-human creation, which is subject to futility, as in this passage from Romans.

Creation, in the beginning, started with nature and ended with the human being. The eschatological creation reverses that order. It starts with the liberation of the human being and ends with the redemption of nature.

Nature has fallen victim to transience and death. It has not fallen through its own sin like human beings. In perceiving the world as creation, the human being discerns and enters into a community of creation.

The cosmos sings before its creator the eternal song of creation. creation. This is the vision that Moltmann develops.

Essentially focusing on the continuing activity of the Holy Spirit, that creation is a trinitarian process. God is present. Jesus is present. The Word, the Holy Spirit, is active.

[ 34 : 35 ] And as we contemplate the creation around us, he says we need to link that appreciation of the nature of the creation with the origins and with the eventual purpose of that creation.

And that is the perspective that he sees most vividly as missing. He says we have focused, when we talk about creation, we focus as Orthodox Christians very much on the beginnings and very much less on the continuation of creation and indeed on the evolution of creation and the eventual fulfillment of that creation in eschatological terms.

Now I use the word evolution advisedly. I know it raises all sorts of problems in people's minds, but the word evolution, before Darwin took it over, simply meant change over time.

And that's the wonderful thing about the energies of the Holy Spirit, which is the kind of evolution into which I think the creation fits ecologically, from an ecological perspective, very well.

There is a lot of material which I don't wish to go into here, but most importantly I want to talk about the Sabbath, which is regarded as the feast of creation.

[ 36 : 12 ] And the goal and completion of every Jewish and every Christian doctrine of creation must be the doctrine of the Sabbath.

Which is quite a very deterministic kind of instruction to us. I'm not sure how many of us have thought about the doctrine of creation based in the doctrine of the Sabbath.

But he says it is the Sabbath which demonstrates the world's identity as creation. It sanctifies it and blesses it. It was for the sake of the feast day of the eternal God that the heaven and the earth were created.

In other words, the first six days were busy. God's active, creative work. And the seventh day was for rest.

But it wasn't for going to sleep or in the way that my early childhood suggested, making sure one did nothing. But it was a feast day in the sense that it was rejoicing in the beauty of what God had created.

[ 37 : 35 ] And he was able to relax over it but also to celebrate. And some of the references that in the book talks about the way in which the Jewish people would celebrate uproariously certain phases of Jewish history.

The key thing is not what we call these days but what is the experience that is promised when we celebrate God's creation as an ongoing experience.

not just thinking of it as something past or something future but it's past, present and future and inspired by the active presence of the Holy Spirit.

The quotes which I found particularly interesting, that creation is God's work but the Sabbath is God's present existence.

Think about that. It's an interesting mind-bending sort of thought. The Sabbath is God's present existence.

[ 39 : 01 ] He follows up with some recommendations as to how we might celebrate the Sabbath more fully in our present time. but I'll come to that in a minute.

His works express God's will but the Sabbath manifests his being. His works express his will but the Sabbath manifests his being.

is to say he was able to simply be and enjoy the result of his work on that seventh day.

It does say that the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. The weekly Sabbath points to the Sabbath year and to the year of Jubilee.

Jesus' public ministry began with the proclamation of the Messianic Sabbath in Nazareth. Remember when he stood up in the temple and declared this day is the scripture fulfilled in your ears.

[ 40 : 18 ] The blind see, the deaf hear, the dead are brought to life. This is a signal of the Messianic creation being fulfilled in Jesus' public ministry and demonstrating the power of the Holy Spirit right there in Nazareth at the start of Jesus' public ministry.

So as a whole, Christianity celebrates the Messianic feasts of Christ's salvation history and Judaism celebrates the feasts of its salvation history.

But before all else, it celebrates the Sabbath of creation. And in the ecological crisis of the modern world, it is necessary and timely for Christianity too to call to mind the Sabbath of creation.

creation. And in relation to that, there is a sort of common denominator between the discussion that I started just before Christmas and that is the quotation from Hebrews as a key to this whole perspective.

Long ago at many times and in many ways God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the world.

[ 42 : 08 ] He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

There is a trinitarian emphasis in this quote, which I think is a key to the understanding of Maltman's approach to creation.

And with that I am now going to substitute my own comments. I hope this has been a fair, but I know it's a really rushed summary of his perspective, but I think I need to try to pull it together in terms of words that are my own and in terms of our experience as a Christian community.

What does this mean in terms of the work of creation and in terms of our appreciation of God in creation?

Well, there are a number of things. I think the general point that he makes that we have emphasized beginnings to the exclusion of change and the eventual consummation of nature in the last days.

[ 43 : 34 ] We think we have underestimated the present and future aspects of creation as a community. Now, these are wild generalizations, but seem to be a bad examination.

To what extent do we actually receive energies from the spirit as we examine creation? To what extent do we see the relationship between the redemption of our world and the redemption of ourselves and the general role that God in creation plays in that process?



My sense is that there are two extremes here. One is the person who takes ecology as the guiding principle to the exclusion of a theological perspective.

There are others who take a theological perspective to the exclusion of ecology. But somewhere in the middle, Mottmann is asking us to see how ecology and theology are closely tied together.

people. Now this was written in 1983. He saw an ecological crisis in 1983 and tried to develop a theology around it.

[ 45 : 11 ] We're now 30 years later and the ecological crisis is that much worse and the amount of thinking that we as regular Christians have been doing about it has been increasing but awfully slowly.

And lots of strange doctrines and lots of strange scientific perspectives have been developed in the meantime. But the essential challenge that I read in Mottmann is how to put together not only the Old Testament and New Testament which was one of the things I was talking about last time but how to put the whole of the perspective of time and creation together and the relationship between our redemption story and the creation story.

So that's one big issue. And we can discuss that as you see fit. The second issue which he emphasizes very strongly and which I think was a strong reminder to me that I was kind of over emphasizing this distinctiveness of the Old Testament in my last discussion with you.

He was saying that really the Old Testament and New Testament are entirely one and that there's equal insight into creation in both New Testament and Old Testament.

And I think that that is an interesting perspective. I don't agree with entirely but it seems to me that's the way in which he does alert one to the unity of that perspective.

[ 46 : 59 ] The third thing that he does is to talk in a very vivid way about the activity of the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity.

Now I know that's also a sensitive area for many Christians but it seems to me that it is a wonderfully liberating way of seeing the work of the Holy Spirit as the energizing of the continuous act of creation that is going on around us.

In other words we do see creation in the laboratory test tube. We see creation in the telescope looking at the galaxies and we do see creation all around us.

And our secular and modernist preconceptions lead us to interpret this very often as randomness or sheer chance.

At least that is the dominant perspective in the secular scientific world. Somehow or other we need to recapture the essence of the work of the Spirit in creation it seems to me.

[ 48 : 32 ] And you can see the way in which the Spirit occasionally bursts out in revivals you can see the way in which the work of the Spirit bursts out in individual lives and it seems to me in a similar sense the Holy Spirit is evidently active in the extraordinary proliferation of God's generosity in creation.

So that's an ecologically very very compatible approach. I know we don't have to judge ourselves by ecology but the concept of ecology is that of a home or the niche in which we've been placed and the understanding of the interactions that occur in that niche between people environment and God's creation.

So I think that there are big insights here. The balance may not be right but I think that some of our conservative theology is frankly stodgy.

Not to address any individuals. But it's impossible to relate some of the more stodgy theology to anything that's going on around us.

And I know some people have deliberately taken themselves out of the discussion of what's going on around us because of their feeling that they can't accommodate the way in which the secular discussion proceeds.

[ 50 : 35 ] Now I think what this perspective does is give us an opening into that discussion but it needs to have strong reference to the scriptures and it needs to have strong experience of the work of the Holy Spirit.

It needs to have careful and grateful examination of those bits and pieces of creation which are a direct guide to us to what God is doing in this world.

So that's the third issue that's raised and it seems to me perhaps the most practical of them. The fourth is a very sounds like a very low key suggestion which arises out of his emphasis on the Sabbath the feast day of the Sabbath.

He says the fact that it was Friday to Saturday in the Jewish context and the fact that it's Sunday for us Christians is an irrelevant point but we might take some note of the fact that the Jewish Sabbath starts on the Friday evening and continues into the Saturday and that the wisdom of this could very well be projected for us into Saturday evening worship in preparation for the Sunday Sabbath.

It's an interesting thought. it's a very kind of mundane thought but it could well have some very positive impacts upon our collective sense of the importance of the Sabbath.

[ 52 : 24 ] Now you might say well that would disrupt the sense of importance of Sunday that we already have but it wouldn't necessarily demean it it would perhaps make it more precious more thoughtful and allow us to prepare ourselves better.

Sunday I don't know about you but I come to the 7.30 service and I'm just waking up at 7.30 and a wonderful experience of worship at 7.30 is a jolt after the revelry of the Saturday night.

So this advice to us that we should take the Christian Sabbath more seriously and prepare ourselves for it.

I'm not suggesting that any of you were involved in revelries last night but this is an interesting side benefit of Malcolm's discussion.

A final point which does in fact relate to my own work and my own sense of what is happening in the world around us is the ecological crisis is not a bad thing for us to wake up to.

[ 53 : 59 ] It seems to me that there are many problems in the world that we can all agree on but the deepening of the ecological crisis seems to me to be self-evident and in spite of the optimism of some I think that we have an obligation and Mordmann is arguing from this perspective that we need to take a greater and more serious interest in the decline that is going on around us and obviously there are two ways of looking at this one is that the world is going to hell in a handbasket anyway and therefore we don't spend any time on it or we believe that there is clearly an obligation in terms of social justice in terms of the way in which we think about and love our neighbours which requires us to think more carefully and act more carefully in relation to the ecological crisis so those four points seem to me the practical outcome and I've read you a lot of words here which you could hear were not my words they are more wise and brilliant people who have coined those phrases but what I get out of it is these four important points the whole question of the way in which this grasps the nature of the whole of creation through time and space the way in which the relationship between redemption history and creation history is brought together the way in which we look at the importance of God's generosity the work of the spirit and then the practical issues of how we deal with the Sabbath itself in its

Christian form and how we deal with the ecological crisis that is deepening around us so that's my summary and I know I should not only ask forgiveness for any theoretical points here but also I should ask forgiveness of Jürgen Moltmann himself for probably having garbled his message but that's the best I could do for this little presentation and