

Hope

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Ingolf U. Dalferth and Marlene A. Block

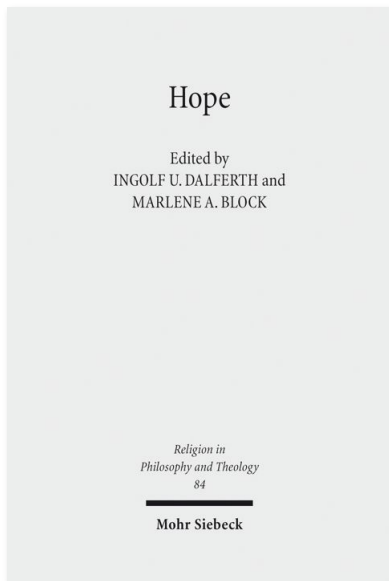
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Hope is a fundamental but controversial human phenomenon. For some it is Pandora's most mischievous evil, for others it is a divine gift and one of the highest human virtues. It is difficult to pin down but its traces seem to be present everywhere in human life and practice. Christianity as a comprehensive practice of hope cannot be imagined without it: Christians are not believers in dogmas but practitioners of hope. In other religious traditions the topic of hope is virtually absent or even critically rejected and opposed. Some see hope as the most humane expression of a deep-seated human refusal to put up with evil and suffering in this world, while others object to it as a form of delusion and an escapist reluctance to face up to the realities of the world as it is. Half a century ago hope was at the center of attention in philosophy and theology. However, in recent years the discussion has shifted to positive psychology and psychotherapy, utopian studies and cultural anthropology, politics and economics. This has opened up interesting new vistas. It is time to revisit the subject of hope, and to put hope back on the philosophical and theological agenda.

Ingolf U. Dalferth Born 1948; 1977 Promotion; 1982 Habilitation; Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology, Symbolism and Philosophy of Religion at the University of Zurich; Danforth Professor Emeritus of Philosophy of Religion at Claremont Graduate University in California; Fellow at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study in South Africa.

Marlene A. Block Bachelor of Arts (Anthropology), University of Toledo; Master of Arts (Anthropology), University of Chicago; Master of Arts (Religion), Claremont Graduate University; Research Assistant and PhD candidate in Philosophy of Religion and Theology, Claremont Graduate University.



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