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Jillian Dunn

John Carroll University, jdunn13@jcu.edu

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Hope Theology in Relationship with the Legacy of St. Ignatius of Loyola

**In the World, Out of the World, and Beyond the
World**

By Jillian Dunn

John Carroll University

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Approval Page

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The discipline of a theology of hope started not as an opposing view to current theological thought, but as a conservation encompassing all theological disciplines through the lens of hope. A theology of hope embraces Christianity's forward moving and looking faith rooted in the life of Christ, his resurrection, and the promise of the Kingdom of God. Similarly St. Ignatius of Loyola, after his conversion, illustrates the Catholic faith through the lens of hope. Documented in the *Spiritual Exercises*, the *Constitution of the Society*, and how Ignatius and other Jesuits have lived their lives, a theology of hope is foundational to the legacy of St. Ignatius of Loyola. St. Ignatius developed hope as not just transcendent but practiced within his spirituality in Christ, how he acted justly in the world, and was transfixed on the betterment of this world for all people. By analyzing the study and practice of a theology of hope alongside the Ignatian movements, it becomes apparent these are theologies of prayer, practice, and potential.

A theology surrounded by hope is the central theme within the Christian life and everything related to it. Looking at the theology of hope as both a systematic theological reflection and practice, one must delve into more specific situations and see how they illuminate the theology and visa-versa. This methodology captures a liberation theological approach where theology and real life are in relationship, dialoging with and illuminating each other. Also, by conducting a history of research and demonstrating how this theology developed out of the experience of believers will demonstrate the active role hope plays in believers lives. Demonstrating how specifically the Jesuits respond to hope and the theology of it, is not only apparent in the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Constitution* but also found in the lives of the Jesuits and in their call to seek justice.

Development of A Theology of Hope

Books and articles treating a theology of hope often begin by echoing the claim made by German, systematic theologian Jürgen Moltmann, considered to be the father of a theology of hope, that “theology can set out from hope and begin to consider its theme in an eschatological light”¹ quoted in his book *Theology of Hope*.² During the 1960s, the modern, secular world and conventional institutions, especially religion and theology, entered into dialogue in a profound and collaborative way. These conversations, in the forms of Vatican II, civil rights movement, etc., gave way to an increased emphasis on partnering with “the other” and discovering the common ground of humanity. In turn, this united the end of the world with hope and a “coming God” whose shadow is cast on history from the “absolute future,” and therefore also transforming the present.³ While Pope Benedict XVI titled his 2007 Encyclical *Spe salvi*, “saved by hope,” projecting the essence of Christian salvation to have faith in hope.⁴

These statements recall a time where the theme of hope was contagious as generations were recovering from two wars, economic turmoil, and handling civil unrest. The dictators, wealthy, and big players on the world stage became subject to the choruses of socialism, while the religious, the democratic, grabbed hold of the spirit of *aggiornamento*. These were the bishops at Vatican II, and those involved in the civil

¹ Moltmann, Jürgen. *Theology of hope; on the ground and the implications of a Christian eschatology*. 1st U.S. ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1967. 11.

² Hahnenberg, Edward. "The Mystical Body of Christ and Communion Ecclesiology: Historical Parallels." *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (2005): 3-30.

³ Grenz, Stanley J., and Roger E. Olson. *20th Century theology: God & the world in a transitional age*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1992. 172 & 175.

⁴ Callaghan, Paul. *Christ our hope: an introduction to eschatology*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2011. Vii.

rights movement of Martin Luther King, Jr.⁵ During the earlier half of the twentieth century, Ernst Bloch published *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (The Principle of Hope) in three volumes -1954, 1955, and 1959- describing utopianism creating dialogue between Christians and Marxists. Bloch, the Marxist philosopher, “argued with persuasive scholarly insight that what is essentially and characteristically human is neither enchantment with the past (Freud and behaviorism) nor preoccupation with the present (existentialism, mysticism, and Platonism), but anticipation of the future.”⁶ Moltmann was inspired by Bloch’s secular thoughts as compatible with Christianity. These included: future as medium of faith, hope as immediate and hovering, required understanding of the sources (Old and New Testament), but differed where the God of hope orients all believers to the future and does force or pull believers like a vacuum.

Bloch’s *The Principle of Hope* spurred dialogue with secular world and religion embodied by Moltmann’s Christian perspective captured in his book *Theology of Hope*. Moltmann illustrates Christianity as not only rooted in hope through the Old and New Testaments, but also as the ground of faith where believers exist, and the shooting sprout growing, constantly into the expectations of those future things promised by God.⁷ Moltmann, who was a prisoner-of-war during World War II, asserts hope’s reality as concrete and necessary for Christianity to exist. He says,

Hope alone is to be called ‘realistic,’ because it alone takes seriously the possibilities with which all reality is fraught. It does not take things as they happen to stand or to lie, but as progressing, moving things with possibilities of change.

⁵ "Jürgen Moltmann." Encyclopedia of World Biography. 2004. Retrieved October 10, 2012 from Encyclopedia.com: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3404704516.html>

⁶ Bloch, Ernst. *The principle of hope*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986.

⁷ Moltmann 20.

Hope is a medium theology and Christian existence paddles through to the horizon that is God. Eschatology and things Jesus promises in the Gospels are current possibilities. Moltmann creates this new image of a Christian as a person who is not looking down on the ground searching for Jesus's footprints, but as looking up toward a horizon soaking in and living out tomorrow's inevitable change.

Moltmann's contemporaries encountered secular thought and drew similar conclusions and questions about how wearing the lenses of hope would affect our outlook toward the future. Christianity for Lutheran Wolfhart Pannenberg, and for Roman Catholic theologians Karl Rahner and Johannes B. Metz proclaimed a "religion which keeps open the question about the absolute future which wills to give itself in its own reality by self communication...as eschatologically irreversible in Jesus Christ, and this future is called God."⁸ Like Moltmann, Pannenberg focused on the eschatology as a transcendent theme across all theology and life. Hope is a uniting force between now and the future, God and humanity, and believers with the world. Pannenberg tackles the radical transcendence and radical immanence of God as a part of a theology of hope. He says, "The history of modern revolutions illustrates the fatal flaw in living so exclusively for the future that all cherishing and celebrating of the present are precluded."⁹

Pannenberg warns against being future orientated rather than God orientated since there is nothing humanity can do to make the kingdom come sooner. Pannenberg's hope

⁸ Lane, Dermot A. *Keeping hope alive: stirrings in Christian theology*. New York: Paulist Press, 1996. 4.

⁹ Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Theology and the kingdom of God*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969. 126.

is in the preparation for God's kingdom that can be anticipated now and placed within the historical backdrop of humanity. Pannenberg's theology of hope differed from Moltmann's saying that hope is not just a means to a better future but fundamentally a means to a better relationship with God.

Even before Moltmann and Pannenberg, the Germanic influence on a theology of hope was formulated by Karl Rahner, and later put into praxis by his student Johann Baptist Metz. Karl Rahner asserted one of the three key principles he believed as a creedal statement and credential of the Christ faith is eschatology. Rahner claims an attitude of hope for the future is a condition in order to receive the grace of God.¹⁰ Rahner's mentoring challenged Metz who wrestled with the notion of how to do theology after the Holocaust. Metz co-opted with the Holocaust by point to hope for a new tomorrow as the answer and slogan for horrific events. He said, "Only if we recover in these onerous apocalyptic images of danger some sense of the situation of Christ hope, will the other images of hope... not collapse... Only if we remain faithful to the images of crisis will the images of promise remain faithful to us."¹¹ Loss and tragedy can beget hope but hope cannot beget anything but more hope. Hope needs to constantly progress in humanity's consciousness to have meaning, relevance, and precedence. The Holocaust would not be a symbol of hope today, Metz would assert, but rather September 11, 2001. Metz places hope within suffering as a concrete illustration of a current event pointing to an uncertain future that requires faith as a guide.

¹⁰ Rahner, Karl. *Foundations of Christian faith: an introduction to the idea of Christianity*. New York: Seabury Press, 1978. 298.

¹¹ Metz, Johannes Baptist, and James Matthew Ashley. *A passion for God: the mystical-political dimension of Christianity*. New York: Paulist Press, 1998. 49.

Since the 1960's there have been micro revitalizations of a theology of hope and eschatology, but usually only when the earth is predicted to end. One of the most recent publications of the nature of faith and theology is in Pope Benedict XVI's *Spe salvi*. The Pope first defines hope in terms of the Bible as equivalent to faith. Benedict believes hope must be a concrete action and lifestyle. He says, "It is important for the practice of Christian hope." Asking God to enter into believer's lives and situations create hope. Benedict further reminds his audience, "A world without God is a world without hope (Eph 2:12). Hope remains a central and flexible part of the faith meant to be in dialogue with others.

Paul as the First Demonstrator of Christian Hope

The praxis of spirituality is accomplished within a theology of hope and the Spiritual Exercises by contemplating on the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Through the example of Paul the apostle, who converted to Christianity, demonstrates not only finding hope in Christ, but also hope for a better world acting in accordance with Christ's teachings. In Romans, Paul writes:

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5:1-5; NABRE)

Paul illustrates here that hope's foundation is in Christ no matter what tribulations may occur. Though Paul was imprisoned and rejected by the Jews, through Christ he always found hope to carry on to the next city.

Paul saw his ministry as not one focused on gathering souls for the heavenly kingdom, but working in the here and now as God called Christ to do. In Philippians, Paul

says believers do not attend to salvation later, but salvation is a reality of the now. He says, "So then, my beloved, obedient as you have always been, not only when I am present but all the more now when I am absent, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For God is the one who, for his good purpose, works in you both to desire and to work" (Phil 2:12-13; NABRE). God transcends human beings, catalyzing them to desire a better reality and work ethic to obtain that hope. Hope is not a wish to leave this world, but, as God redispenses humanity, to work out salvation now during one's life.

When Paul talks about "being in the world, but not of the world," (John 17:11-16; NABRE) he is using the world as the current socio-economic, political structures of his time. He is not talking about a different planet or afterlife. The eschatology of the New Testament talks about the New Jerusalem coming down (Revelation 21:21; NABRE) and Christ's return (Phil 1:26; NABRE). These images demonstrate a descending reality, not an ascending reality. Catholicism not an escapist theology, but one that embraces the now as Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, former Superior General of the Jesuits, says "the gritty reality"¹² of this world.

After reading the *Life of Christ* and *Lives of the Saints*, St. Ignatius developed the *Spiritual Exercises* as an imaginative walk through Christ's life. The retreatant would not only think of the hope of Christ's word and deed, passion, and resurrection but also experience it. The balancing of desolation and consolation demonstrates the necessity and challenge to locate that hope in Christ's narrative. St. Ignatius calls hope a product of consolation saying, "Finally, I call consolation every increase of hope...which calls and attracts heavenly things and to the salvation of one's soul, quieting it and giving it peace

¹² "Quotes from the Justice Conference: Rev. Paul Locatelli, S.J.." Connections. Association of Jesuit Universities & Colleges, n.d. Web. 5 Dec. 2011.

in its Creator and Lord.”¹³ Hope not only allows us to call upon Christianity’s historical roots, but climb the branches of thought and experience through the clouds of the unknown. Through the resurrection, hope is an everyday reality for a Christian that not even death can conquer.

The problem with the notion that hope is only for the next world, and not this one, that we hope for our souls to reach salvation, but not our whole being in this life. The perspective of bifurcation of person is only valid if one believes the only hope in this world is the hope of salvation in the next. For in 1 Peter the letter reveals, “But even if you should suffer because of righteousness, blessed are you. Do not be afraid or terrified with fear of them, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope” (1 Peter 3:14-15; NABRE). Catholics hope is not found in heaven, but in the promise and fulfillment of Christ’s incarnation, life, death, and resurrection.

A Theology of Hope Lived Out Through Jesus’s Ministry and the *Spiritual Exercises*

The following essay explores the field of a theology of hope between these twentieth century models and observes their unique correlation to the work and life of St. Ignatius of Loyola. I am interested in reflecting on these past developments in a theology of hope and devotions of St. Ignatius, and in looking toward how that is reflected in modern Catholic thought and practice, if at all. Over the past century, the use of hope as the medium through which theology is viewed has been explored but never in serious depth, especially on a practical scale. But history suggests that, like any

¹³ Mullan, Elder. *The spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*,. New York: P.J. Kennedy & Sons, printers, 1914. 168.

perspective, today's eschatology of hope has existed, can be traced to the life and practices of St. Ignatius and his followers, and will continue to exert influence; giving way to new ways of discussing the faith.¹⁴

The Christian faith is as much of a spiritual pursuit as a practical one. A theology of hope asserts that the mission of Jesus becomes intelligible only by the promise of his life, death, and resurrection.¹⁵ Christians look to the Gospel narratives, ponder the messages He reveals, and contemplate how these truths affect their forward moving lives.

In the Spiritual Exercises, the retreatant goes through a four-week process discovering one's sinfulness and God's love, Jesus's ministerial messages, the friendship of the passion, and the joy of the resurrection. The *Exercises* establish hope in Christ that is fulfilled daily in the Christian's life as inheritors and committed to Jesus' call. "Values commonly found in Ignatian spirituality are core values of the Gospel, such as authenticity, integrity, courage, love, forgiveness, hope, healing, service and justice."¹⁶ Both find hope in Christ. Without the Christ narrative there would be no constant orientation and movement into the future. Both A theology of hope and the Spiritual Exercises apply Christ's life to believer's mission, which in affect makes them a hopeful people.

Hope for Now

¹⁴ Hahnenberg, Edward. "The mystical body of Christ and communion ecclesiology: historical parallels." *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (2005): 3-30. 4. Structure of paragraph.

¹⁵ Moltmann 203.

¹⁶ Marquette University. "Ignatian Spirituality for Ignatian Spirituality | Marquette University." Marquette University | Be The Difference. <http://www.marquette.edu/faber/IgnatianSpirituality.shtml> (accessed December 13, 2012).

In relation to the Gospel and the God's transcendent presence within human beings, hope in and for the world is Christianity's privilege and duty set forth by God. A theology of hope grounds believers in the now, and pushes them into the future. It grounds you in the now, but draws you to a better future, the redemption of now, to a different way of being in the world. Eschatology not based on the afterlife, but the trans-historical event of the resurrection.

A theology of hope can only ground people in this world, and primarily and directly fulfill the promises for this world striving for a better reality. Moltmann grounds the hope for the future and the hope for now as a parallel desire. He says, "a reality which is there, now and always, and is given true expression... the future is the continuation or regular recurrence of the present."¹⁷ One does not have a child without looking into the future and looking for hope. Without the prospect of a hopeful future no parent would wish to bring a child into an abandoned world.

In the *Constitutions*, Ignatius called for his order to be mobile in order to cater to the needs of the world effectively and efficiently. Jesuits are challenged to seek and create justice in the world, which inevitably requires hoping for justice and practical steps away from poverty. In the article "The Other, Older Ignatius," John A. Coleman distinguishes the social justice's importance in the Society of Jesus because the call to help others occurs in the preamble to the *Constitution*. Coleman says, "The *Constitutions* insist that the salvation of our souls must be linked to our desire also to help others, 'to help souls', in Ignatius' phrase. Love of God and love of neighbor are inexorably

¹⁷ Moltmann, Jurgen. "Theology of Hope." Online Journal of Public Theology. <http://www.pubtheo.com/theologians/moltmann/theology-of-hope-0b.htm> (accessed December 13, 2012).

linked.”¹⁸ Each does not ignore the world and just look toward the next, but takes invested interest in the affairs of humanity. Both highlight that hope affects someone’s holistic wellbeing too. To create justice is a long process. It is not a work of mercy that is giving someone a fish, but rather influencing and appealing to educational structures to ensure him/her and all those hunger will learn how to fish.

Hope in Practice

Forward-thinking and moving people, moving the boundaries, conversations, and gritty realities of poverty into the public sphere, create justice. A theology of hope needs to be practiced within academia in order to reveal the grander context of believers lives, that humanity does not live on a linear timeline. My immersion trip experience to Ecuador and involvement in Labre has provided concrete moments of hope in otherwise doubt filled situations. Ecuadorians build houses now with piping for water, while there is no running water for miles around. The homeless apply for jobs and assistance, while they might not have an address or phone number. Both examples demonstrate how they act concretely in the now, but orientate themselves to a brighter future.

Through followers like Pedro Arrupe, S.J., Ignatius’s message of standing with the poor, who have nowhere to go but up and are especially promised the kingdom of God in the Beatitudes. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., once described doing mass in Latin America in a city where if it rained it destroyed everything the people had, and it rained often. These thousands of people were pushed to the margins of town, to the cliffs, where rain would collect and destroy. The people did not enter the small chapel with anguish and defeat

¹⁸ Coleman, John. "The Other, Older Ignatius." *America the National Catholic Review*, July 31, 2011. <http://new.americamagazine.org/node/127800> (accessed December 13, 2012).

everyday but with hope. He said, “Those people who seem to have nothing, were ready to share their joy and happiness.”¹⁹ Arrupe finds himself with the marginalized and outcasts who call humanity to be better, charitable people and call our society to create better, just systems. Hope does not point beyond this world to another one, especially if one is talking about the afterlife or a heavenly place. It points beyond the structures of this world and says this is not the best of all possible worlds and can be structured differently. Justice can happen and can be implemented, and that is part of the job of being a Christian.

How did they find themselves with the marginalized? The Jesuits placed themselves there. They made a conscious choice. How does that tie in with the hope thing? You take your stance and decide what your existential location is. Is it in solidarity with this group? The kingdom starts to take form in real life in hope, and people are acting on their hope.

By standing in the world, the realization and promise of the Kingdom of God starts to take form in the eyes of hope. Hope ultimately points beyond this current reality. Christian eschatology is firmly based on, and without it tomorrow would never be contemplated. The challenge to be called to correct the injustices in the world is difficult by far. God calls humanity to a high standard. It is easy to look at the world and say it is hopeless, and God's not interested in it. God is only interested in saving humanity out of this world. This train of thought reflects Gnosticism, one of the church's first heresies. While Gnosticism was rejected repeatedly, it still rules within the church. Even if people read the creed and say, “the resurrection of the body,” it is not what they

¹⁹ Arrupe, Pedro, and Kevin F. Burke. *Pedro Arrupe: essential writings*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2004. 59.

mean. They mean afterlife of the soul. These people transmute the word resurrection to have nothing to do with the body. It is not scriptural, and does not fit with the message of Jesus and the early church.

The principle of “magis” inspires thought of what is greater beyond oneself, world, or practicality. It stretches humanity to be more for Christ, and give our spiritual and physical selves all to God. Each acknowledges this world is not the end. Where spirituality and acts of justice only matter if they are to fulfill Jesus’s promises of our fulfillment. The principle and foundation in the *Spiritual Exercises* says, “...so that, on our part, we want not health rather than sickness, riches rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, long rather than short life, and so in all the rest; desiring and choosing only what is most conducive for us to the end for which we are created.”²⁰ Hope calls the believer to trust in God, and that the promises fulfilled in Christ will and are for the best. This also calls believers to trust in the fact he/she might not always know the best way or more than God. So, even through tragedy and struggle, there must be trust in God’s eternal hope for a better tomorrow.

Hope Beyond Sight

By looking beyond the world, the realization and promise of the Kingdom of God starts to take form in the eyes of hope. How do you sit with people who are dying and find hope? How do you understand solidarity with those folks? How do you find hope in sudden tragedy? When people are terminally ill, you have time to prepare. There is a specific walk to that than sudden death. It is decentering when something happens

²⁰ Mullen 31.

suddenly. It is a ministry of presence. It is the shared, communal hope of Christ's followers. The reaffirmation of the resurrection lived in the presence of community.

The resurrection of Christ is not debated about for Christians because Christ not only rose from the dead but appeared several times to his apostles. Jesus shows the apostles hope by physically appearing to them, and not revealing himself as a booming voice from heaven. Thomas places his finger in Jesus's hands and side (John 20:19-31), Jesus eats fish on the shoreline with the apostles (Luke 24:41-43), and he breaks the bread after his walk to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) proving Jesus has risen and is giving cause for celebration and hope. Hope beyond the here and now comes through the example of Jesus. By his resurrection, Christ shows the things that limit us are only temporary if one has faith in God. Believers demonstrate this from their actions and reflecting on how that affects the world and salvation. God's hope is not just for the super faithful or "unblemished" Catholic, but for all because that is who he died for (John 3:17).

Hope's Home

Working with the homeless population one gets accused to the unexpected. You feed and befriend someone one week and you never see him/her again...you feed and befriend someone 3 years and then you never see him/her again. Last summer, I got a call from my peers in Cleveland, still going out every Friday night to feed and befriend the homeless during summer break. The call informed me one of my closet homeless friends was diagnosed with a brain tumor. I cried all day till I could compose myself, call him, and let him know I would be taking him out to dinner the following night.

When I picked him up, he did not want to talk about the diagnoses, but he informed me he would not receive treatment. His mother and two brothers have already died from various forms of cancer, and he saw his fate sealed with the formation of this illness. At the end of the evening, I turned to him and said, "Bob you are going to be at my wedding. You need to get better." Two weeks later he started treatment, made a full recovery, and has maintained his health. I am not saying I gave him hope because he gave me hope. By saying yes to treatment, Bob decided the odds were not against him because he had hope he would be with the community that loves him for years to come. Hope is found in this world even when the wished outcomes seem otherworldly.

Conclusion

Documented in the Spiritual Exercises, the Constitution of the Society, and how Ignatius and other Jesuits live their lives, a theology of hope is foundational to the legacy of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Both a theology of hope and Ignatian spirituality find their centrality in Christ, continual renewal in this world, and then being moved to do justice. By analyzing the study and practice of a theology of hope and the Ignatian movements of acting in the world, out of the world, and beyond the world it becomes apparent these are hope theologies. Today's eschatology of hope has existed, can be traced to the life and practices of St. Ignatius and his followers, and will continue to exert influence; giving way to new places and cause for hope.

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