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Kool's "God Moves in a Mysterious Way: The Hungarian Protestant Foreign Mission (1756-1951) - Book Review

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BOOK REVIEW


With its sweeping scope, its inclusive breadth, this is a remarkable book, resembling the encyclopedia it is intended to be. While its focus is on the rather neglected Foreign Mission Movement in Hungarian Protestantism, Reformed, Evangelical, and Lutheran, this is set within the broader matrix of the development of Protestantism in Hungary as well as the larger cultural and historical context.

A special feature of the book, whose author is fluent in Dutch and Hungarian, is its examination of the relationship between the Dutch and Hungarian Reformed Churches. Although a highly specialized theme, the author treats it in a way that holds the reader's interest. Additionally, she offers penetrating glimpses into the distinctive features and histories of these churches in the disparate contexts that so powerfully shaped their relationship.

Although the length and specialized character of the book will seem ominous to potential readers, it is a very useful resource with helpful information and insights on each era of the historical period covered even for the scholar familiar with the material.

It goes without saying that, for all its sensitivity to context, a book of this magnitude lacks nuance and subtlety. But that is an unfair criticism of a work that tries to be encyclopedic. In her understandable enthusiasm and thorough treatment of her subject matter, the author does tend to be uncritical.

Although I do not like to be as general as I have been in this review, I find it difficult to do otherwise in a work that has such a sweeping scope. I recommend that potential readers, after reading the introduction, read the particular historical periods and personages that are of interest to them.

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