

Dealing with the Future: A Theological Engagement with Lars von Trier's *Melancholia*

- Dr. Robert Vosloo (Faculty of Theology, University of Stellenbosch)

Given the theme of the conference, this paper engages the avant-garde and controversial Danish director Lars von Trier's 2011 film, *Melancholia*. In *Melancholia* there are several pivotal scenes where the characters look at the sky, the reason being the threat that a rogue planet – named *Melancholia* – may collide with the earth. The focus of the paper is on the various ways the main characters cope with the possibility of the end of life on earth (as exemplified in the way they look at the sky). The paper also argues that the film invites comparison to what can be described as prophetic eschatology, and as such is not merely about the end *of* history, but about the end *in* history. When viewed on this level, the possible ethical and political meaning and significance of the film comes clearer into focus.