



***Interpreting Bonhoeffer: Historical Perspectives, Emerging Issues.*** Edited by Clifford J. Green and Guy C. Carter. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013. Paper, 259 pages.

✎ The massive project of rendering Bonhoeffer into English has been brought to completion with the release of the final volume in the Fortress Press project *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*. With the seventieth

anniversary of Bonhoeffer's death in 2015 and with an undiminished interest in his life and legacy across the theological and ecclesiastical spectrum, it is not surprising that interpretative anthologies such as this one would emerge. The papers in this volume represent, for the most part, what might be termed a "postliberal" reception of Bonhoeffer. Originally presented at a conference, "Bonhoeffer for the Coming Generations," held at Union Theological Seminary in November 2011, these papers seek to retrieve aspects of Bonhoeffer's theology for contemporary projects.

The essays are arranged under two headings. Part I is devoted to "Interpretation from Historical Perspectives" while Part II addresses "Emerging Issues of Interpretation." Under Part I, readers will find essayists examining the reception of Bonhoeffer in three Germanys (Wolfgang Huber), South Africa (John W. de Gruchy), Britain (Keith Clements), the United States (Larry Rasmussen), Brazil (Carlos Ribiero Caldas, Filho), and

Japan (Kazuaki Yamasaki). In many ways, these chapters are the most informative and the most interesting. For example, Yamasaki tells of how Japanese Christians sided with the Emperor during the Second World War in a way that paralleled the so-called German Christians and of how Bonhoeffer was discovered in Japan only after 1950. Clements chronicles shifts in Bonhoeffer's reception in England, from the early days of J. H. Oldham and Bishop George Bell to Gregor Smith after the war to John A. T. Robinson's *Honest to God*. Other essays in Part I address the challenges faced in translating Bonhoeffer into English, commenting especially on the Fortress project. Other essays in Part I take up Bonhoeffer's context. Worthy of note here is the essay by Union professor Gary Dorrien, "The American Protestant Theology Bonhoeffer Encountered," which offers generous glimpses into Liberal American Christianity in the first three decades of the twentieth century. No wonder that Bonhoeffer complained that sociology had replaced theology at Union when he came to study there in 1930.

Part II takes up issues of interpretation. Two of the writers, Brigitte Kahl and Clifford Green, suggest that Bonhoeffer was a forerunner of the New Perspective on Paul. Christiane Tietz seeks to find a way to accommodate religious pluralism in Bonhoeffer's Christology. Interpreters of Bonhoeffer often see a gap between his *Cost of Discipleship* (early Bonhoeffer) and his *Ethics* (late Bonhoeffer); Florian Schmitz attempts to show the coherence between these two works. Michael DeJonge situates Bonhoeffer near Barth in intellectual history. Reggie Williams examines Bonhoeffer's experience in Harlem with "the Black Christ" while Samuel Wells speculates on how Bonhoeffer continues to challenge the church as a theologian, activist, and educator.

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