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Neufeldt-Fast, Arnold. Review of John W. de Gruchy, ed., *Bonhoeffer for a New Day. Theology on a Time of Transition. Conrad Grebel Review* 16, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 101-103.

*Bonhoeffer for a New Day: Theology in a Time of Transition.* John W. de Gruchy, ed. Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K.: William Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997.

What makes this collection of twenty diverse essays both fresh and urgent is the window it opens on Bonhoeffer's thought from the perspective of contemporary theology, specifically as it has emerged "with sullied hands" in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Contributors include scholars and activists from around the world who gathered in Cape Town for the Seventh International Bonhoeffer Congress in 1996.

The first seven essays are gathered under the title "Christianity in a World Come of Age." Fritz de Lange addresses the churches' continuing embarrassment in speaking about God, and Bonhoeffer's own version of a theology of the Word which *creates room* for a speaking God. Following Bonhoeffer, de Lange argues that our postmodern context requires a combination of passivity (waiting for God) and activity (praying and doing good) in the ecclesiastical community.

James R. Cochrane argues that Bonhoeffer anticipates the importance of seeing reality from the point of view of the marginalized (also argued in Konrad Raiser's paper on Bonhoeffer and ecumenism). Cochrane connects the later Heidegger's account of truth as an event of being to theological truth, i.e., truth as *aletheia*, as the disclosure of reality out of that which eludes notice. Thus what is unnoticed is key, and its most important indicator may be found in

suffering. Following Bonhoeffer in a post-apartheid era, according to Cochrane, means that our God-talk must arise from taking responsibility in the midst of actuality.

Barry Harvey explores the direction in which Bonhoeffer points the church in a world come of age. His analysis of modernity and its conception of history as self-enclosed space, the corresponding loss of the penultimate, as well as the "colonization" of politics, education, and religion is particularly acute. Following Bonhoeffer, Harvey argues that as the church shares in confronting the strength of the modern world with the weakness of the cross, it embodies an alternative configuration of time and space for the sake of the world.

The second section of five essays is entitled "Responsible Freedom." Hans Pfeifer sees Bonhoeffer's ethics not simply in terms of "peace ethics," "ethics of resistance," or "contextual ethics." Rather Bonhoeffer's focus is on the "renewal of the relationships in which the human being exists." The ethical subject must first be brought into a new position, i.e., the new reality revealed in Christ.

A number of essays reflect in more detail on this christological or, better, eschatological account of reality, and thus also on Bonhoeffer's account of acting *in correspondence with reality*. It is in the context of this reality that Bonhoeffer's ethics of responsibility or "deputyship" is rooted.

Elias Bongmba develops a convincing comparison of Emmanuel Lévinas and Bonhoeffer in their common challenge of "totality," or the metaphysics of being, which has dominated the philosophical tradition and has brought about an absence of morality and an exaltation of power and states of war. Totality eliminates Otherness—and both Lévinas and Bonhoeffer argue that the recognition of the infinity of the Other (i.e., relationships rather than totality) is the precondition for ethics and peace. Bongmba outlines priorities in ethics which the human Other (whose very existence carries compelling moral weight) ought to set in the African context.

The third section of seven essays is entitled "Political Witness and OIKOUMENE." Jean Bethke Elshtain seizes Bonhoeffer's theological critique of nationalism and argues that sovereign discourses, whatever their century or their theistic or a-theistic commitments, share a deep preoccupation with the notion of a unified will: "Sadly, our adoration of sovereignty makes us weak, not strong. . . . We have rendered altogether too much, and we have gotten the Caesars we deserve. That is the solemn lesson Dietrich Bonhoeffer leaves us with" (235).

Alejandro Zorzin, Andreas Pangritz, and Geoffrey B. Kelly each draw attention to Bonhoeffer's essay on "The Church and the Jewish Question" in order to explore the significance of theology in the context of political resistance and even military conspiracy. Zorzin connects his South American context to Bonhoeffer's concern to speak of God in a world which has become tolerant of the violence against various minorities by the powers of the day. Pangritz and Kelly speak of Nazi Germany and the American context respectively.

Some of the most fascinating new research in this book is John Moses's account of Bonhoeffer's reception in East Germany, as appropriated both by regime-friendly theologians and by those who perceived the church to be under existential threat. Moses shows the extent to which Bonhoeffer's ideas enabled the church to see in its oppressed situation the opportunity and promise to be the purified church. Moreover, Moses claims an undeniable link between "the witness of the persecuted Bonhoeffer in the Third Reich and the opposition movement which contributed so much to the overthrow of communism in the GDR" (296).

Theological critique of Bonhoeffer in this volume is slim, which is a disservice to him. Pangritz, for example, challenges Bonhoeffer's account of our relation to God as "existence for others," insofar as it represents the tradition of mysticism to a problematic degree (273). Keith Clements notes that from the perspective of Eastern Orthodoxy Bonhoeffer's writing must be seen as overly Christocentric at the expense of a truly trinitarian perspective, and "ineluctably Lutheran" in its theology of the cross (349).

The collection is large and the essays are only very loosely connected. The book provokes fresh thought from a variety of perspectives; its usefulness, however, would have been enhanced by an index of names, subjects, and Bonhoeffer texts cited. More care in editing would have caught a high number of typographical errors. Overall, this volume is both an important addition to Bonhoeffer studies and a provocative exploration of the possibilities of theology at the close of the twentieth century.

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