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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

This volume covers the period from June 1931, when twenty-five-year-old Dietrich Bonhoeffer returned from his year of study at Union Theological Seminary in New York, to the turbulent weeks of the waning Weimar Republic in October 1932. The shift from student life to the beginning of a professional career is a significant transition in any life, but as Eberhard Bethge later wrote, for Bonhoeffer it marked a major caesura:

Bonhoeffer's return to Germany in 1931 represented a break in his development that was certainly sharper than the momentous and ecclesiastical upheaval that followed two years later. The second major phase of his career began now, not in 1933.

The period of learning and roaming had come to an end. He now began to teach on a faculty whose theology he did not share, and to preach in a church whose self-confidence he regarded as unfounded. More aware than before, he now became part of a society that was moving toward political, social, and economic chaos.^[1]

This new phase of Bonhoeffer's life coincided with the growing political and social turmoil that was beginning to permeate every sphere of German life,

[1.] *DB-ER*, 173.

including the churches. By 1932 German unemployment had risen to 30 percent. The governing coalition parties in the Weimar Republic were openly feuding, and the extreme parties—the Communists and the National Socialist German Workers' Party—were gaining new public support. The German parliamentary crisis in the early summer of 1932 culminated in a runoff election for the Reichstag in which the Nazi party received 37.3 percent of the popular vote. Although nationally prominent Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg won that election, it had made Adolf Hitler a rising star in Germany, particularly after his “Führer over Germany” campaign, in which he chartered an airplane and campaigned in towns around the country. During the final months of 1932, Hitler's refusal to join a coalition government and the fragmentation within the other political parties paved the way for his appointment as chancellor, by Hindenburg, on January 30, 1933.

These political events had already led to troubling developments in some sectors of the German Evangelical Church. The “German Christian” movement (*Deutsche Christen*), which subsequently promoted the nazification of the German Evangelical Church and sparked the Church Struggle, was founded in May 1932; its early leaders were part of the Berlin church and ecumenical circles in which Bonhoeffer began to move during this period.^[2]

During the sixteen months covered by this volume, Bonhoeffer was pursuing a dual career track. By now he had completed his theological examinations and ordination requirements. He was ordained by Ernst Vits in November 1931. His first assignment was as an assistant pastor at the Zion Church in Berlin, where he began to teach confirmation classes and to preach.^[3] Yet he was still considering an academic career, and in November he began teaching as a lecturer (*Privatdozent*) at the University of Berlin (Friedrich Wilhelm University).^[4]

A third realm of work engaged his interest and would profoundly influence his life after 1933: the international ecumenical movement. In September 1931, Bonhoeffer attended the World Alliance Conference in Cambridge, England, and was appointed one of three youth secretaries; in November he was appointed secretary to the German Provisional Bureau for Ecumenical Work.^[5]

[2.] In this volume see especially the “Primary Report on the Conference of the Provisional Bureau” (2/13) for a detailed account of one such meeting.

[3.] See 1/2.

[4.] See documents 2/3–2/10.

[5.] See 1/19.

The ecumenical movement in Europe was also undergoing great changes in 1931 and 1932. In its early days in the 1920s, it had been infused with an "idealistic internationalism,"^[6] but this idealism was disappearing under the weight of the world economic crisis and the rise of nationalism and fascism in Europe. As Dutch ecumenical leader Willem Visser 't Hooft wrote in September 1932, "The forces at work in the world did not work towards peace but towards war."^[7]

Bonhoeffer encountered these forces directly in 1932. The rise of the German Christian movement reflected a growing ethnic nationalism in German theological circles, promoted by leading scholars such as Paul Althaus, Emanuel Hirsch, and Wilhelm Stapel.^[8] This volume documents this development and depicts Bonhoeffer's role in the theological debates that emerged.^[9] In fact, this volume includes some of the most explicit and prescient statements Bonhoeffer ever made about political issues.^[10] As he wrote Erwin Sutz in May 1932: "The situation here really looks desperate. One lives from one day to the next; simply no one can see further ahead. It may be that the day after tomorrow everything turns to chaos, and not because something great and new appears on the horizon, but simply because something rotten breaks down completely."^[11]

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a dialectical thinker, and particularly in the debates with Protestant nationalists who were already in the process of creating an "Aryan" theology he began to articulate the theological counter-argument, notably in the debates about the so-called orders of creation theology.^[12] But some of his other lectures also include commentaries on the political developments in Germany,^[13] and his warnings about *völkisch* ideology even appear in the catechism that he wrote with Franz Hildebrandt:

[6.] Visser 't Hooft, *Memoirs*, 33.

[7.] *Ibid.*

[8.] Stapel's 1932 book *Der christliche Staatsmann: Eine Theologie des Nationalismus* (The Christian statesman: A theology of nationalism) was a key example; Bonhoeffer described it as "a dangerous book" to his students in 1933 (cf. *DBWE* 12:206–9). On Althaus and Hirsch, see Ericksen, *Theologians under Hitler*.

[9.] See esp. 2/16. Other documents that include commentary on the German political situation or criticism of the emerging German Christian theology include 2/7 (esp. p. 262–63), 2/8, and 2/9. Even three of the sermons in this volume (3/2, 3/11, and 3/13) include direct criticism of the theological implications of the new racist ideology and nationalism.

[10.] See esp. his letters to Erwin Sutz (1/59) and to Paul Lehmann (1/68a).

[11.] 1/59.

[12.] See 2/13.

[13.] See especially "The Right to Self-Assertion" (2/5).

A defiant ethnic pride [ein völkisches Trotzen] in flesh and blood is a sin against the Holy Spirit. Zeal that only blindly asserts itself is brought under control by the state. God has established the state for the service of God, so that we might serve God as Christians.

How then should the Christian behave politically?

As much as the Christian would like to remain distant from political struggle, nonetheless even here the commandment of love urges the Christian to stand up for his neighbor. His faith and love must know whether the dictates of the state may lead him against his conscience. In every such decision, he experiences the irreconcilable conflict between the peace of Christ and the hate of the world.^[14]

Here we already find the language and thinking that later emerge in Bonhoeffer's critiques of both the Nazi state and his church, for example, in his 1933 essay "The Church and the Jewish Question," his 1934 peace address at Fanø, and of course during the resistance period, in sections of *Ethics* and the *Letters and Papers from Prison*.^[15]

Theologically, then, this volume portrays a young man already coming into his own. It also documents one of the most significant theological events in Bonhoeffer's life: his encounter with Karl Barth in July 1931. Bonhoeffer realized the significance of this encounter immediately and wrote Paul Lehmann that same day.^[16] Days later, he wrote his friend Erwin Sutz:

Now everything is very much or completely different when it comes to Karl Barth himself. You can breathe freely. You are no longer afraid you will die for lack of oxygen in the rarefied atmosphere. I have, I believe, seldom regretted not having done something in my theological past as much as I now regret that I did not go to hear Barth sooner. . . . There is an openness, a willingness to listen to a critical comment directed to the topic at hand, and with this such concentration and with a vehement insistence on the topic at hand, for the sake of which he can speak proudly or humbly, dogmatically or with utter uncertainty, in a way that is certainly not intended primarily to advance his own theology. It is becoming easier and easier for me to understand why it is unbelievably difficult to grasp Barth through the literature. I am impressed by his discussion even more than by

[14.] 2/7.

[15.] Cf. *DBWE* 12, 2/6 and 2/13; *DBWE* 13, 2/3; *DBWE* 8, 3/145 (esp. p. 389) and the prologue "After Ten Years" (*DBWE* 8:37–52).

[16.] 1/2a.

his writing and lectures. He is really fully present. I have never seen anything like it nor thought it possible.^[17]

It was the beginning of a long and rich conversation with Barth that would continue in the crucial months after January 1933 and end only with Bonhoeffer's execution in April 1945. In fact, much of the present volume should be read in the context of the larger church, political, and theological conversations that precede and follow the period documented here. While the period from June 1931 to October 1932 was a transitional one for Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the contents of this volume are very much a part of the larger story told by the preceding volume (*DBWE 10, Barcelona, Berlin, New York: 1928–1931*) and the subsequent one (*DBWE 12, Berlin: 1932–1933*). As Christoph Strohm, coeditor of *DBW 11*, wrote in the afterword to the volume, “the texts from the years 1931–32 assembled in the present volume document fundamental theological decisions that occupy a significant place in Bonhoeffer's work and life path. The disputes, decisions, and positions taken at the beginning of the 1930s were not merely preliminary skirmishes of the coming struggle; instead, they set a course that would have considerable consequences that to a large degree remained decisive even beyond the more acute stages of the Church Struggle.”

Organization and Content of *DBWE 11*

As in the other *DBWE* volumes, the contents of this volume have been organized into three parts: Bonhoeffer's correspondence, his lectures and notes, and his sermons. Within each section the material is organized chronologically. New archival material discovered since the publication of the German *DBW 11* volume (notably the correspondence with Paul Lehmann: 2a; 8a; 16a; 37a; 59a; 68a; 93a) has also been included. Two additional new documents—a book inscription (9a) discovered in 2009 in Burke Library by Clifford Green and Bonhoeffer's notes from his assistantship at the University of Berlin (27a)—are also included. With the exception of the book inscription, all these documents were first published in *DBW 17* (the book inscription was first published in the Bonhoeffer *Jahrbuch*). Appendix 2 is a list of documents from Bonhoeffer's literary estate that have not been included in this volume.

Despite the extensive material in the Bonhoeffer literary estate, there are certain areas of Bonhoeffer's work during this period for which little or

[17.] Letter of July 24 to Erwin Sutz (1/6).

no documentation exists. As editor Eberhard Amelung noted in his introduction to the German volume, there are virtually no documents from his confirmation classes and student retreats, and many of his lecture manuscripts have been lost or exist only in fragmentary form.^[18] The documentation for his major university lecture courses here (2/3 and 2/9) has been reconstructed from student notes, and in some places where there were gaps in the notes Professor Amelung added and sometimes revised the text for clarification. These additions are always bracketed within the text.

Part 1: Bonhoeffer's Correspondence

The correspondence related to Bonhoeffer in this period can be divided generally into four categories: notes and letters to his family; documents related to ecclesial standing and professional responsibilities; the ecumenical efforts; and his personal letters, primarily with his closest friends. This correspondence expands our information about Bonhoeffer's activities and work, but their deeper importance may be in the less formal information that it renders about the nature of his activities as well as his own insights on the various tasks in which he was engaged. As such, they are invaluable as a reflection of several significant developments in his views of theology, church, and the political situation in Germany, providing valuable correlations with his writings in parts 2 and 3.

Family: Since Bonhoeffer was once again living at the home of his parents in Berlin and in close proximity to siblings as well, the relatively few family letters are mostly descriptions of his excursions and travels. Yet even these few give us a continuing portrait of close and caring relationships and offer glimpses into this more private dimension of Bonhoeffer's life. He writes of his visit with his brother Karl-Friedrich and his wife, Grete, in Frankfurt to celebrate the birth of their newborn son and then a return to Bonn (his continuing visit with Karl Barth) by Rhine steamship, which he describes as "cheerful."^[19] There are notes related to the occasion of the ninetieth birthday of his beloved grandmother, Julie (Tafel) Bonhoeffer, with its brief discussion of his gift to her of a work by Thomas à Kempis, probably the *Imitatio Christi*.^[20] His letter of birthday greetings to his father in March 1932, from the family retreat in Friedrichsbrunn in the Harz Mountains, reminds us of how much he loved hiking in those woods and meadows.^[21]

[18.] See the editor's introduction to the German volume, *DBW* 11:6 and 8–9.

[19.] 1/1 and 1/3.

[20.] 1/78.

[21.] 1/48.

He was there with members of his confirmation class, and he conveys the importance of such an experience for them with implied gratitude to his father for supporting the excursion. We see such gratitude as well in a brief remark of satisfaction for the stable quietness of being at home with them in the midst of his turbulent schedule.^[22] These are modest documents, but they reflect a balancing dimension to Bonhoeffer's strenuous work and are a reminder of the enriching family background that framed his life.

Professional Correspondence: Bonhoeffer returned to Berlin in the late summer of 1931 primed for the pastoral ministry and teaching at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin. The ministry assignment had been arranged while he was still in America. In June, just before Bonhoeffer's departure from New York, he was given the assignment to serve as an "assistant pastor in the city" (*Stadtvikar*), a vicariate position within the synod that meant special duties supervised by the general superintendent, Emil Karow.^[23] This new pastoral work was to begin on August 1, the date his leave of absence concluded. In April, while still at Union Seminary, Bonhoeffer requested that his leave of absence, due to expire on July 31, be extended to October 1, to provide additional time for writing about the American experience and to prepare for both his new pastoral work and the expected university courses.^[24] Max Diestel, his immediate superintendent and mentor, had initiated Bonhoeffer's new pastoral assignment and notified him at the end of May that this extension request had been denied, even though he had strongly supported it.^[25] Nonetheless, it seems that Diestel succeeded informally, since he informed Bonhoeffer that Karow, his new superior, was willing to grant Bonhoeffer the necessary time as "vacation," both to participate in a major ecumenical conference in September in Cambridge and to work further on reflections about the American experience.^[26] It is also apparent that in this same period Diestel assigned him a new ecumenical role; it was to be a fateful initiative.

The central pastoral focus of Bonhoeffer's assignment was a chaplaincy to students at the Technical College in Charlottenburg. While such a position had long existed at the university, Karow's suggestion that Bonhoeffer might work in a parallel way with the pastor there proved ineffective.^[27] This was a new effort at the Technical College, a very different environment

[22.] Ibid.

[23.] Assignment as Assistant Pastor in the City, Berlin, June 12, 1931 (1/0).

[24.] *DBWE* 10:296–97.

[25.] *DBWE* 12:303, ed. note 2.

[26.] 1/2.

[27.] Ibid.

from the university, and Bonhoeffer rarely refers to it in his letters. Bonhoeffer tried a number of innovative strategies, but over the next year he came to regard it as an unsatisfying and unproductive experience.^[28] Nonetheless, this chaplaincy qualified for the obligatory service of newly ordained ministers in the provincial church and was in effect renewed a year later, in August 1932.^[29]

Bonhoeffer's ordination authorization is documented here;^[30] the ordination took place on Sunday, November 15, 1931, at St. Matthew's Church in Berlin.^[31] It is curious that there is no other extant correspondence about this event, either in connection with the family's response or Bonhoeffer's understanding of its meaning for him.^[32] The surviving records are exclusively bureaucratic.

At the same time, Bonhoeffer began teaching lecture courses and seminars as an adjunct lecturer at the university, on a recommendation from Reinhold Seeberg and subsequent appointment by Professor Wilhelm Lütgert in 1929, and in concert with the publication of his doctoral dissertation (*Sanctorum Communio*) and the acceptance of his postdoctoral thesis (*Act and Being*).^[33] Upon his return, he once again assumed his duties as a teaching assistant to the chair of the systematic theology department (Wilhelm Lütgert, who had succeeded Seeberg), a position that he had held before his year in America. This assistantship included a variety of mundane duties assigned by the chair of the department, such as managing the department library and preparing bibliographies.^[34] Lütgert requested that this be a paid position for Bonhoeffer in May 1930 (he had previously served as an unpaid "volunteer"), but there was no official confirmation until November 1931, when the previous assistant, Arnold Stolzenburg, became a full professor. Bonhoeffer's status was then made retroactive from August 1931.^[35] Bonhoeffer's teaching became a much more intense focus, rivaled only by his pastoral duties. The letters, especially those to Erwin

[28.] 1/34; 1/91 and 92. See also *DB-ER*, 222–26. Bonhoeffer continued his student chaplaincy work in late 1932 and early 1933; see *DBWE* 12.

[29.] 1/78a.

[30.] 1/17.

[31.] 1/17, p. 64.

[32.] See *DB-ER*, 221–22.

[33.] Published in this series as *DBWE* 1 and 2. The publication of *Act and Being* much concerned Bonhoeffer in this period, even though he indicated reservations about it. See 1/3; 1/9; 1/39.

[34.] See 1/27 (Bonhoeffer's letter to Erwin Sutz) and 1/27a ("Notes from the Time as Assistant, 1931–1932").

[35.] *DBWE* 10:215, ed. note 2.

Sutz and Paul Lehmann, demonstrate the extraordinary seriousness and demanding nature of the university's expectations.^[36]

Ecumenical Engagement: The largest group in this collection of letters, more than a third,^[37] relates to Bonhoeffer's ecumenical work, particularly his work within the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship among the Churches and a number of youth conferences that were sponsored by the World Alliance. Bonhoeffer had moved quickly to significant participation and leadership within the German ecumenical scene after his return from America in July 1931. Starting with the Cambridge conference in September, he became thoroughly immersed in ecumenical matters at the national level, including the deep conflicts over ecumenical involvement within German Protestantism.^[38] This new venture for Bonhoeffer had been initiated by Diestel, an ecumenical leader in Germany and a major figure within the German section of the World Alliance.^[39] He had Bonhoeffer in mind for a youth leadership role a year or so earlier and used his influence to champion him with his ecumenical colleagues.^[40] In his view, Bonhoeffer was an ideal person for such a role because of his theological prowess, academic accomplishments, and his international experience, especially his fluency in English and the recent experience in America. Through Diestel's efforts, Bonhoeffer attended the Cambridge conference and returned as one of three international youth secretaries for the work of the World Alliance in Europe. In this position, Bonhoeffer became a member of the Provisional Bureau for Ecumenical Youth Work, a coordinating body in Germany for the various Protestant groups committed to ecumenical work. Much of the correspondence in this section reflects his work in the Provisional Bureau and his collaboration with its leadership, principally August Schreiber and Wilhelm Stählin and the Church Federation Office.^[41] Diestel also brought Bonhoeffer into the central governance

[36.] See, for example, 1/11, 1/16a, 1/27.

[37.] A key reason for this substantial number of documents is that many were retained as part of the bureaucratic records of the various ecumenical organizations.

[38.] See 2/1.

[39.] See Bethge's description of the most important figures on the German ecumenical scene in *DB-ER*, 190–93.

[40.] See Diestel's letter of May 29, 1931, to Bonhoeffer, when he was still at Union Seminary, concerning arrangements already made for his participation in the international conference of the World Alliance in Cambridge in September 1931 (*DBWE* 10, 1/177). It is interesting that he did this apparently without any consultation with Bonhoeffer and signed that letter "your Ephorus," referring in Latin to a figure with overseer authority. See also Diestel's earlier letters of strong recommendation for Bonhoeffer (*DBWE* 10, 1/102, 1/126, as well as *DBWE* 10, 1/114, ed. note 11).

[41.] 1/10, 1/13, 1/16, 1/19, 1/44, 1/45, 1/46, 1/84, and 1/85.

of the German Section of the World Alliance, its management committee, as a "specialist in youth work."^[42]

As the World Alliance youth secretary for central Europe and Scandinavia, Bonhoeffer was principally involved in planning international conferences and shaping the organization's educational and theological program, working primarily through the Provisional Bureau. His duties were both pedestrian and grand. The letters frequently suggest the managerial nature of his office, the enlistment of delegates, the publication of reports and papers, and the continual struggle for financial support. He also had to deal with significant political resistance to ecumenical participation within the church, due to the widespread political resistance in Germany to any kind of international involvement, especially with churches in England, France, and the United States, signatory nations of the despised Treaty of Versailles. These countries, and by association their churches, were seen as exploitative and inimical to German interests. The ultranationalist movements in Germany pressured the churches to isolate themselves from such engagement. This nationalist opposition would become for Bonhoeffer a matter of increasing attention, in both his ecumenical work and his teaching.

The planning and implementation of a series of youth conferences dominated Bonhoeffer's ecumenical work from the fall of 1931 through 1932.^[43] His work was both organizational and theological. The letters reflect ordinary concerns about budgets, programs, and conference leadership and later publication of papers in the influential ecumenical journal *Die Eiche*. Yet there were certainly weightier dimensions, clearly relished by Bonhoeffer. In the four major conferences in 1932—the Theological Conference in Berlin (April 29–30), the Westerburg Conference (July 12–14), the meeting at Ciernohorské Kúpele (July 20–30), and the Gland Conference (August 25–31)—Bonhoeffer either was central in setting the program agenda or played a critical role in the conference's theological leadership, often both.^[44] Although the planning letters indicate only indirectly the theological significance of this work, his formal reports to the Central Office and the World Alliance, which appear in part 2 of this volume,^[45] indicate the central issues as well as his assessment of distinctive

[42.] 1/38.

[43.] 1/16.

[44.] Bonhoeffer attended the Epsom Conference in April 1932 but this was a French-English conference in which he had no direct role. He did not participate in planning the Czech conference at Ciernohorské Kúpele, but his address there was a highly significant one (2/14 and 2/15).

[45.] 2/1, 2/2, 2/11, 2/12, 2/13, 2/18, 2/19.

perspectives and difficulties that were encountered.^[46] In these reports, Bonhoeffer elaborated on his abbreviated comments in the letters about the prevailing poverty of theological foundations for ecumenical work; the tendency of the churches to make grandiose yet ultimately anemic resolutions about the kingdom of God and peace in place of hard, realistic, ethical proposals that would address the real problems of the time; and the serious threat of ultranationalism that comes dressed as confessional and biblical theology. Although the letters mostly show the planning and programmatic development of the conferences, his reports and addresses convey the fuller themes and critique in this ecumenical work and demonstrate important developments in Bonhoeffer's theology in this period.

Letters to Friends: The year in America had been for Bonhoeffer an extremely full and provocative year. In spite of a generally negative view of American theological education and church life,^[47] there is considerable evidence, even if Bonhoeffer was unaware at the time, that this was indeed a vitally shaping experience.^[48] During this critical time, several new friendships at Union developed, each of which became deeply influential for Bonhoeffer.

There were four particularly influential friendships from his year at Union: Jean Lasserre, a French participant with Bonhoeffer in Union's Visiting Fellows Program; Frank Fisher, one of the first African American students at Union; Paul Lehmann, an American; and Erwin Sutz from Switzerland. Only the latter two are correspondents in this volume. While Jean Lasserre is generally credited with playing a very significant role in the development of Bonhoeffer's interest in pacifism, there is little evidence of correspondence in the period covered by the present volume or, of course, during the war years.^[49] During a visit to Switzerland primarily to see Sutz, he visited the Lasserre family with great pleasure for two days at their vacation home near

[46.] See esp. 2/11, 2/18, 2/19.

[47.] See his report on that year to the German Church Federation Office, *DBWE* 10:305–22.

[48.] There is an increasing perspective in Bonhoeffer studies that this experience is to be seen within a larger theological and spiritual "turn" in the years 1930–32, in which Bonhoeffer's academic and abstract theology became integrated with pastoral sensitivity and social activism toward a view of Christian life as discipleship, justice, and service. This understanding was initially signaled by Bethge (*DB-ER*, 173, 202–6). See also the editor's introduction to *DBWE* 10:35–43; and Pfeifer, "Learning Faith and Ethical Commitment."

[49.] Lasserre and Bonhoeffer did connect again through the ecumenical movement in 1934, however, notably at the Fanø meeting in August and at a special gathering in Bruay, France, the following month, where Bonhoeffer also visited Lasserre's parish (cf. *DBWE* 13, 1/145 and 2/3a, as well as *DB-ER*, 389).

Chamonix.^[50] With Frank Fisher, there is no documented contact at all. Even though Fisher was pivotally important for Bonhoeffer's introduction to Harlem's Abyssinian Church and for insights into the discrimination and stress afflicting African American communities, correspondence between Fisher and Bonhoeffer lapsed. Bonhoeffer was clearly displeased with this lapse, implying that he had tried to communicate with Fisher, although we have no documentation of this. In a letter to Lehmann, he mentioned this regret in a casual way but also with a rare snide tone.^[51]

The correspondence with Sutz and Lehmann, on the other hand, reflects a continuing and substantial relationship. Paul Lehmann became Bonhoeffer's most important American contact and friend. Lehmann was a doctoral student at Union during Bonhoeffer's time there, with similar interests in both Barth and Emil Brunner. Their correspondence continued in these first years after Bonhoeffer's return to Germany and then resumed following Bonhoeffer's decision to return to Union Seminary in the summer of 1939.^[52]

Together with Sutz, Lehmann was one of Bonhoeffer's strongest compatriots in things Barthian during the year at Union Seminary, and Bonhoeffer was eager to share with him his continuing enthusiasm, as, for example, in his letter to Lehmann on the day of his first visit with Barth in Bonn.^[53] His later letters continued this high valuation of Barth's work and also descriptions of the woeful conditions in Germany.^[54] He advised Lehmann and his wife as they prepared to come to Europe in order to study with Brunner in Zürich.^[55] Later, Bonhoeffer convinced Lehmann to help him by writing a draft of the history of the social gospel movement in America, which he acknowledged as "a brazen request."^[56] It is a mark of their friendship that Bonhoeffer could admit that he was overwhelmed by his commitments and felt free to turn to Lehmann in such an open and trusting way:

Now, I am very much at a loss because the simple fact is that I actually do not know enough about the material and am coming to you, hoping confidently that you will help me. . . . It can't be that much trouble

[50.] 1/76.

[51.] 1/37a.

[52.] See *DBWE* 15.

[53.] 1/2a.

[54.] 1/68a.

[55.] Bonhoeffer made a vigorous attempt to convince Lehmann to drop the plan to study with Brunner and to turn more fully to Barth. See 1/59a and 1/68a.

[56.] 1/93a.

for you, of course, and you would be doing me a really great favor. After that, you can ask of me what you will—up to half a kingdom—and I will do it for you; only please help me quickly in this difficulty. I actually have so ridiculously much to do with the university and the ministry and innumerable lectures that I just could not work my way into it from the beginning. So please be so kind and help me!^[57]

The paper, "The Social Gospel," based on Lehmann's draft, was circulated within the German branch of the World Alliance in December 1932.^[58]

It is the correspondence with Erwin Sutz, however, that clearly includes Bonhoeffer's most intense theological interests and his pastoral concerns. These letters are also the most frankly personal. As in the case of Lehmann, Bonhoeffer's friendship with Sutz began at Union Seminary in 1930, grounded in a common commitment to Barth's theological work and a strong mutual bond. Barth was the primary mentor for them both. It was Sutz who wrote on Bonhoeffer's behalf for the visit with Barth in Bonn in July 1931, and Sutz was thus the obvious person to hear his fullest reactions.

There are three important dimensions to the correspondence with Sutz: (1) the dialogue between them about Barth, with its opportunity to test ideas with a trusted friend who shared a common theological enthusiasm, especially in areas where Bonhoeffer was developing critical disagreements with Barth; (2) reflections on Bonhoeffer's growing commitment to the ministry, with its deepening sense of compassion for the wretched social conditions that gave him such serious foreboding (evident also in his sermons from this period); and (3) several rare self-reflective admissions.

Bonhoeffer's initial letters to Sutz are full of gratitude and enthusiasm.^[59] He was eager to discuss not only his very positive impressions of Barth but also the genesis of some disagreements, particularly about ethics. This discussion was refined as the correspondence continued into the next year. In April 1932, a lecture by Barth in Berlin occasioned a letter to Sutz with personal impressions about the theological atmosphere in Berlin but was mainly a return to the discussion of ethics in Barth and Brunner, a topic that was, as he put it, "becoming more and more acutely and unbearably critical."^[60] The centrality of this preoccupation with ethics emerged even more clearly in his letter to Sutz in August, where he reflected on his experience

[57.] Ibid.

[58.] *DBWE* 12:236–43.

[59.] 1/4 and 1/6.

[60.] 1/59.

at the ecumenical conference at Ciernohorské Kúpele (Czechoslovakia).^[61] He had given a lecture on the theological foundations for ecumenical work that, even though it was well received, he himself found unsatisfying:

There are still very many question marks that have to be brought up there. Basically, it all depends on the problem of ethics, that is, actually on the question of whether it is possible for the concrete commandment to be proclaimed through the church. . . . It is simply not enough and therefore false to say that the principle of concretion could only be the Holy Spirit himself. . . . The concrete form of the proclamation of grace is, after all, the sacrament. But what is the sacrament of the ethical, of the commandment? We must talk about that when we see each other.^[62]

It is highly likely that this matter was a central focus when they were together at Sutz's home in Switzerland the following October.

Some of the most striking reflections in this correspondence with Sutz relate to Bonhoeffer's experience with the Zion Church confirmation class in the north of Berlin (Prenzlauer Berg). In his February 1932, letter to Sutz, he gave the single most extensive description of his confirmands, their marginal social setting, and his strategies for dealing with numerous difficulties.^[63] In a 1931 Christmas Day letter, he had previously written about his relief that he had such pastoral work, amid a generally boring teaching enterprise.^[64] As he had done in earlier letters, Bonhoeffer reiterated the desperate social situation in Germany. Although this deep social concern is present in his more formal writings, particularly in the ethical challenges expressed in his ecumenical papers, his assessment of the deprivations of unemployment and hunger is striking and immediate in these letters to Sutz.^[65] In his letter just one day before the concluding examination of the confirmation class (February 29), he wrote with enthusiasm and a sense

[61.] 1/72. Bonhoeffer's summary reflection here is quite striking: "I have just come back from a very mediocre conference in Czechoslovakia that once again made me have doubts about the value of all this ecumenical work." See also 1/66.

[62.] Ibid.

[63.] 1/39.

[64.] 1/27. Bonhoeffer did not find his lecture course in the winter semester of 1931–32 (see 2/3) satisfying, but the seminars were evaluated highly, because of "an elite of interested and in part amazingly clever and intelligent people." He also mentioned the awkwardness and tension in his reception at the university. At the end of that semester, in his February letter (1/39), he termed the lecture course "boring."

[65.] 1/11 and 1/27.

of achievement about the experience, including that of living in the same neighborhood as his confirmands. Yet in his comments about their situation and the challenges of teaching in that situation, one senses not only his strong commitment to such work but also his cautious assessment of the viability of this work. He shared his uncertainty about the effectiveness of the church in a social setting of deprivation, tension, and tenuous morality: "Maybe it really is the end of our kind of Christianity. . . . We have learned to preach again, at least a very little bit, but pastoral care?"^[66]

It is often noted that Bonhoeffer was a most reserved person and did not often or easily share his inner life and self-assessments. One of the aspects of his friendship with Sutz was a trust sufficient for him to feel that he could share such thoughts—even though he still maintained a formal correctness and distance in his use of the formal *Sie* rather than the informal *du*. These are rare moments, which make such expressions particularly valuable. He registered his growing sense of frustration with ecumenical work in his letter of May 1932, written just after the Epsom conference in England, which he termed "a very superfluous conference."^[67] To this, he added a sense of frustration about his teaching, about his continuing struggle with the issues of concretion and certainty in ethics, the desperation and seeming hopelessness in German society, and the absence of truly creative theological discussion; there is a sense of discouragement and foreboding in the letter. Even more striking is his revealing admission of almost overwhelming expectations upon his return to Germany in 1931, when he faced so many new commitments:

Now I am sitting here preparing for my lecture course, and for the work as pastor for the students and would sometimes be happy if I could be in the country somewhere for a while, to get away from everything everyone wants from and expects of me. It's not that I'm afraid of disappointing—at least I hope not primarily—but that sometimes I simply cannot see how I will be able to do all these things right. The cheap consolation that one just does what one can, and that there are others who would do it even worse, isn't always enough. It is certainly not right for me to come into such things so soon—and also on the basis of what qualifications? Now and then I would like to laugh grimly about all of that.^[68]

[66.] 1/39.

[67.] 1/59.

[68.] 1/11.

The importance of this relationship became especially evident to him in his visit with Sutz and his family in Switzerland in September 1932. A month later, he wrote Sutz expressing his deep gratitude for that visit and their friendship. He was struck by their similarities and common commitments despite different backgrounds and made it very clear that, although they were in a sense in different worlds, the continuation of this friendship was important to him: "I hope that now we do not lose track of each other, after we have had this time together. (Sometimes I think with a shudder that we are perhaps alike because we are both leading existences somehow at the edge of our church—both in very different locations.) I am eager to know about the paths in your life; they are much less predictable than mine. And that is what is bad about my situation, yet nice as far as yours is concerned. But please help see to it that we keep an eye on each other."^[69]

The themes found in these letters commonly reflect Bonhoeffer's central interests in this period, foreshadowing the more thorough treatments of them in his theological writings in part 2. In addition to the major areas cited above, this collection also contains some interesting hints at profound themes and controversies on the horizon. Two can be readily discerned: Bonhoeffer's leadership in the effort to gather support within the theological community for the defense of Günther Dehn, the socialist-pacifist professor who had come under attack from ultranationalists and the National Socialists;^[70] and his role in the Working Group of Theologians and Economists, in which he clashed with Pastor Friedrich Peter over the issues of "orders of creation" and the *völkisch* theology of the fervent nationalists.^[71] These documents presage Bonhoeffer's fateful conflict with the Nazis, which was only months away. As a whole, the letters and documents in the first section of the volume clarify his work and activities in this period, offering a broader view of Bonhoeffer's life and work during a time of strenuous demands and challenges.

[69.] 1/89.

[70.] 1/40. See also the sermon on Matt. 24:6–14 (3/5) in this volume and the comments in the German editor's afterword on the Dehn case, as well as *DBWE* 12:107 and 262, and *DB-ER*, 177 and 235–36.

[71.] Peter, a member of the Nazi Party and later the German Christian bishop of Magdeburg, espoused a theology of a special divinely ordered destiny for the German people. Letters 1/18, 1/28, 1/36, 1/49 concern this group. For the theses of Bonhoeffer's lecture to the group in January 1932, see "The Discernible Nature of the Order of Creation" (2/8).

Part 2: Reports, Theological Studies, and Texts from the University Period

The themes that emerge from the letters are further developed in the theological and ecumenical writings in part 2. When Bonhoeffer returned to Berlin, he immediately resumed his work at the Friedrich Wilhelm University. Prior to his time in America, he had served as an academic assistant to the theological faculty, specifically to the chair of the faculty. His mentor, Reinhold Seeberg, had recommended him to Wilhelm Lütgert, Seeberg's successor, and Bonhoeffer began that work in 1930. Even during his time in New York in 1930–31, he had anticipated further university service, both in administrative duties and in teaching.

In addition to assisting Lütgert with bibliographical work and departmental library supervision,^[72] Bonhoeffer had permission to teach. This allowed him to offer lecture and seminar courses on his own interests; these lectures shed light on the development of his theology.^[73]

Bonhoeffer's entry into teaching came at a time of substantial expansion of interest in theology, and it is estimated that more than a thousand students were enrolled in the university's theology department.^[74] Bonhoeffer had no difficulty attracting students; word seems to have spread that, in addition to offering intellectual rigor, he represented a refreshing and challenging new voice in the political and theological context of the times.^[75] In his critique of traditional theology and the new nationalism, he pressed the kind of foundational questions that students felt necessary. Bethge has described the circle of students coalescing around Bonhoeffer in this period as connected by ideals of theology, spirituality, and social activism that needed yet to be integrated.^[76] Bonhoeffer's probing, listening, and patient encouragement made him all the more attractive as a teacher. He also communicated an impatience with traditional theological education—an attitude that he realized set him apart.^[77] Both his commitment

[72.] For an example of this work, see 1/27a.

[73.] Although this teaching arrangement did not carry an established salary, Bonhoeffer was paid a stipend for his departmental assistance. The contract for departmental assistantship was not completed until January 1932 but was applied retroactively. See 1/24. This income was later used for the cabin that he built in Biesenthal. See 1/30 and *DB-ER*, 207.

[74.] See *DB-ER*, 207; 1/27.

[75.] See, for example, the reflections of Zimmerman, *I Knew Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 59–67.

[76.] *DB-ER*, 207–8.

[77.] See 1/27. This is also reflected in his understanding of the integral connection between theology and pastoral care. See his letter of February 28, 1932, to Sutz (1/39).

to Barth's thought and his developing differences with Barth supported this independence.

Part 2 also includes the course work of the 1932–33 winter semester and the 1932 summer semester. In both semesters, Bonhoeffer offered a lecture course and a seminar. In the winter semester, he held a lecture course titled "The History of Twentieth-Century Systematic Theology" (2/3) and a seminar titled "The Idea of Philosophy and Protestant Theology in the Twentieth Century." (There are no extant notes from the latter; however, "Thesis Fragment about M. Heidegger and E. Grisebach" [2/4] was probably used for that seminar.) In the summer semester, his lecture course was "The Nature of the Church" (2/9) and the seminar was "Is There a Christian Ethic?" (2/10).

There is no evidence that any of the manuscripts for Bonhoeffer's courses in these years survived.^[78] Some student notes are available for the lecture courses, and these have become the basis for reconstructing those texts in this volume. No student notes from the seminars, however, seem to exist. The only seminar material is the fragments of Bonhoeffer's notes on Heidegger and Grisebach (2/4) and excerpts, actually a brief outline, from the summer seminar on Christian ethics (2/10). The lack of material from the seminars may reflect the contrast between formal lecturing that encourages note-taking and the informal and less directed nature of the university seminar.

Obviously, the dependence of the German editors on student notes has the inevitable consequence of imprecision about Bonhoeffer's actual presentation and thinking. Nonetheless, the notes provide a clear outline of topics, dominant themes, and interpretive orientation. In this volume, the German editors reconstructed the course manuscripts by determining a primary set of notes from a small pool of extant student notes, with variant contributions from other note sets offered in footnotes when the meaning is differentiated or an alternative record of an expression changes the point being made. The particular note sets that have been used are cited in the opening footnote to each document.

Thus, although we have very little textual material from the seminars, we have extensive notes on the lectures.^[79] His first lecture course, on the

[78.] An exception is the text for his course the following year, "Creation and Sin," from the winter semester of 1932–33, due to its later publication. See *Creation and Fall* (DBWE 3).

[79.] Bonhoeffer, however, valued his seminar work much more than the lectures that he gave. It is clear that he preferred seminar teaching and that this was his major focus. See his letter of February 28, 1932, to Sutz (1/39).

history of recent systematic theology, reflects Bonhoeffer's own theological development and cultural background as a backdrop for his foundational reorientation, his major "turn" (*Wende*), on the basis of the theology of Karl Barth. The lectures began with a general intellectual history before focusing quickly on a review of the dominant perspectives in his own theological training. Bonhoeffer surveyed the concept of religion in the nineteenth century, in the development of liberal theology, and with respect to major philosophical systems in this period, before turning to an extensive treatment of various understandings of the "essence" of Christianity. The work of Schleiermacher, the neo-Kantians, Friedrich Nietzsche, Rudolf Otto, Adolf von Harnack, Karl Holl, Wilhelm Herrmann, Franz Overbeck, and Reinhold Seeberg were engaged, as one would expect.^[80] What is quite striking, however, is the prominence and influence of Ernst Troeltsch and Friedrich Naumann in an assessment of the enhanced importance of a synthesis of theology and ethics.^[81] All were preparation for Bonhoeffer's emphasis on the turning point in the theology of Karl Barth, for in Barth the theological enterprise had shifted dramatically, "spelling God" in a new way. It was both a radical critique of religion and a reorientation of the starting point for Christianity:

Barth opposes religion in the name of God. . . . [Religion is] always [in] danger of thinking it has God, knows about God, even humbly and modestly. Religion then becomes one area among others. . . . With this as starting point, the central issue becomes that of religion and culture. . . . Instead of beginning with religion, theology should begin by speaking from the word of God. . . . We should begin with God's own beginning set for us. Nobody knows that in advance, we must each receive it as told to us; God's word [is] the absolute *petitio principii*. *Deus dixit*—to accept this is the beginning of all genuine theological thinking, to allow space for the freedom of the living God.^[82]

Bonhoeffer then moved to the Barthian accents on the centrality of Scripture, the location of theology within the church as the servant of the church, and the critical importance of preaching. He expounded on the

[80.] The absence of an extensive discussion of Heidegger and Bultmann is perhaps explained by Bonhoeffer's concurrent seminar focus on the relation of philosophy and Protestant theology.

[81.] Troeltsch and Naumann are also central in the summer-semester seminar on ethics.

[82.] 2/3, pp. 230–31.

dialectical nature of this orientation grounded in God's freedom and its consequences for more-traditional theological concerns, such as justification and sanctification. At the end of the lecture course, he returned to a related interest that was becoming more central: the "problem of ethics and obedience." One can clearly see through these notes the dramatic sense of divergence that Bonhoeffer represented, in both the turn to Barth and his own growing sense of differentiation from Barth.

In the summer semester, Bonhoeffer moved to his primary interests in ecclesiology and ethics, with lectures on the nature of the church and his seminar on the distinctive nature of a Christian ethic, both of which are completely consistent with his refined theological focus.

In his lectures on the church, there is evidence of continuity with his dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio* (DBWE 1), with its foundational assumptions of the church as the presence of Christ and its reality as a social community. In the early part of the course, he analyzed the problems of a "need" for the church and its place in the world. In seeking a preferred place, the church had lost its real place as the "place of God himself," as the place of the present Christ in the world.^[83] But since this belied any particular place, the church had found itself to be peripheral in relation to the critical center of its world, and it is to this center, where the word is believed and obeyed, that God wills the true place of the church. In this first part of the course, Bonhoeffer also explored the most effective theological schema for an understanding of the church, in dogmatic theology and within theological systems, including contrasting Catholic and Protestant views, especially where the church is simultaneously presupposition and object of theology. Again, Barth's influence is pervasive, yet Bonhoeffer vigorously objected to an individualizing element in Barth (and in Tillich) that needs to be offset by the communal nature of the church (Luther's conception of the church-community).

The second part of this lecture course was preoccupied with the christological nature of the church. Bonhoeffer centered this understanding in the presupposition of the church as the form (*Gestalt*) of God's revelation, as the revelation of the wholeness of God, as opposed to the individually willed religious community. His explication first revolved around an extensive discussion of Adam and Christ, heavily reflective of material from *Sanctorum Communio*,^[84] in the struggle between "humanity-in-Adam" as reflecting the alienated individual (all humanity falls in Adam [*Allein-Adam*]) and the new humanity of the church. The resurrection and

[83.] 2/9, p. 278.

[84.] DBWE 1:107–18.

salvific nature of Christ speaks to the church as community: "The new, whole humanity is set in Christ. Christ as new humanity, as church: the church is with Christ on the cross and resurrected with him."^[85] The whole of humanity is here encompassed and so too the church as a community. Here, too, is Bonhoeffer's reintroduction of the concept of "vicarious representative action" (*Stellvertretung*), well known from *Sanctorum Communio*, as a central christological concept that grounds his theological anthropology in both the distinctive atoning work of Christ and the unifying nature of such action with the other. Hence, he strongly emphasized the communal sense that is integral to the nature of Christ. This incisive christological concept of "vicarious representative action" paved the way for a central affirmation in these lectures: "The church of today is the presence of Christ on earth,"^[86] from which the church's foundation reflects three essential characteristics: "(1) Christ is himself the church-community; (2) Christ is [the] Lord of the church-community; (3) Christ is [the] brother in the church-community."^[87]

In the lectures that followed, Bonhoeffer elaborated on several consequences and distinctions that follow from this ecclesiology, including its actualization through the Holy Spirit; the distinction between this concept of the church and religious community; the relation of Scripture, preaching, and confession within a notion of church-community; and the role of theology. He understood the relation of members within the church-community as a community of love that entails an interrelated "being-with-each-other" and "being-for-each-other."^[88] Finally, he explored the "worldliness" of the church-community and its boundaries, with a concern to distinguish the church from the kingdom of God and especially from the state. In this last lecture, there is a clear reflection of the most difficult situation of the church in the midst of the Weimar crisis and the impending threat from the fascist right:

Obedience to [the] state exists only when [the] state does not threaten the word. [The] battle about the boundary must then be fought out! The decision will be difficult in the development of our future state.

[85.] 2/9, p. 295.

[86.] 2/9, p. 304.

[87.] 2/9, p. 305.

[88.] 2/9, p. 319. Cf. Bonhoeffer's discussion of the structure and nature of the church in *Sanctorum Communio*: "(1) Church-community and church member being structurally 'with-each-other' [*Miteinander*] as appointed by God and (2) the members' active 'being-for-each-other' [*Füreinander*] and the principle of vicarious representative action [*Stellvertretung*]" (*DBWE* 1:178).

[The] office of the state is neither Christian nor godless; the office must be carried out in a responsible and objective way. [The] existence as church depends upon whether its criticism can come from listening to the gospel alone. Criticism of the state [is] demanded where [it] threatens [the] word. The church can come [through] difficulties only when it sees to it that it stands or falls with the word of *Christus praesens* as its Lord alone.^[89]

It was a prescient remark, expressing a conviction that would become central in the Church Struggle after 1933.

In these lectures, perhaps in the whole of Bonhoeffer's academic work in this period, there is not only continuity with his earlier writings but also clear reflections of his concurrent pastoral and ecumenical efforts. His entire theology in this period speaks to his concern for a church that is effectively engaged in the social and international issues that so permeated the time. The ethics seminar, to the degree that its content can be deciphered, indicates this strong correlation between Bonhoeffer's theological critique, reflected in the concurrent lectures on the nature of the church and the practical issues related to his work within the ecumenical movement and other discussions of this period, for example, those within the Working Group of Theologians and Economists.^[90] Thus the document that has survived from the summer-semester ethics seminar should be understood within the context of such controversies as well as the urgencies of the international efforts toward peace and disarmament—as well as in the context of Bonhoeffer's frustration over the poverty of the church's relevance within such broad social crises.

The document related to the summer 1932 ethics seminar (2/10) has severe limitations but nonetheless a certain value. Only one set of student notes from this seminar is extant, and it is far from comprehensive. The German editors have rendered only a portion of those notes; their fragmentary nature means that it is not possible to represent it as a reconstruction of Bonhoeffer's comments and interpretations. Its value lies in the listing of basic ideas, definitions of key problems, and an indication of the seminar's plan.^[91]

The first part of the seminar seems to have been a review of the most important ethical literature and took up the first half of the semester. Bon-

[89.] 2/9, p. 332.

[90.] See 1/28 and 1/33.

[91.] See 2/10, ed. note 1. The German editors have indicated that the actual course of the seminar differed from the noted plan. See 2/10, ed. note 23.

hoeffer's attention focused on the ethical imperative in God's will, in an examination of its principal sources and the distinctions that should be made between law and commandment. This first part concluded in a discussion of the relation of ethics and the gospel, eventually isolating three streams in Karl Barth, Paul Althaus, and Friedrich Gogarten, but on the whole it seems to have included a wide range of prominent theological voices.^[92]

The second part of the seminar dealt with "the New Ethics on the basis of the gospel," focusing on three possible relationships of law and gospel. Not surprisingly, it was the interpretation centered in Barth that seems to have garnered the most attention, a view that starts not with an independent category of law but rather with revelation. This moved the discussion toward the imperative will of God in the context of preaching, in the proclamation of forgiveness and judgment, and the "promise of the Gospel . . . in a concrete situation."^[93] The concrete nature of the gospel was, it seems, a highly developed end theme in the seminar. There is also an appended fragment (2/10.2) from a different set of notes, a single page apparently from the concluding session of the seminar, dealing with the matter of ethical certainty. Six avenues were explored, including the orders of creation and the Sermon on the Mount as law—all were discounted. In this apparently final discussion, Bonhoeffer critiqued the orders of creation with his counter-theme of the "orders of preservation directed toward Christ."^[94] The inherently christological nature of ethics reemerges, as the final sentence in the student notation states: "The present Christ is the place from which our action is always determined anew."^[95]

Part 3: The Sermons

By the time Bonhoeffer was ordained, he had some experience of preaching regularly in the Barcelona parish.^[96] It was characteristic of Bonhoeffer, however, that he agonized over the writing and preaching of a good sermon and gave much thought to the challenge of making God's word

[92.] The seminar apparently had a rigorous reading list. It is apparent that Troeltsch and Naumann were once again prominent in this discussion; perhaps Bonhoeffer was building on conclusions evident in his winter-semester course on systematic theology. Karl Barth was central. The notes indicate that Otto Piper, Reinhold Seeberg, Albrecht Ritschl, and Luther were discussed in addition to Althaus and Gogarten.

[93.] 2/10.1, p. 339.

[94.] P. 341.

[95.] P. 341.

[96.] See *DBWE* 10, part 3.

concrete in a way that his congregation would understand: “How should I preach such things to these people? Who still believes that anymore? Invisibility is ruining us. . . . This madness of being constantly thrown back to the invisible God himself—no one can stand that anymore.”^[97]

He answered his own question at the beginning of his sermon on Luke 16:19–31: “One cannot understand and preach the gospel concretely [handgreiflich] enough. A real evangelical sermon must be like holding a pretty red apple in front of a child or a glass of cool water in front of a thirsty person and then asking: do you want it? We should be able to talk about matters of our faith in such a way that the hands reach out for it faster than we can fill them.”^[98] In sermon after sermon contained in *DBWE* 11 and subsequent volumes, Bonhoeffer sought to preach the gospel as concretely as possible. Later in the sermon on Luke 16 he asked: “Where do we get the incredible presumption to spiritualize these things that Christ saw and did very concretely?”^[99]

For Bonhoeffer, concrete reality includes both the reality of God and the reality of the world. To ignore either the reality of God or the reality of the world leads to abstraction. Concrete reality is embodied in Jesus Christ, in his life, death, and resurrection. Certainly the Lutheran theology of the cross shaped his preaching. But for Bonhoeffer evangelical preaching was also shaped fully by the incarnation and the resurrection.

For Bonhoeffer, then, evangelical preaching was a descriptive task. The preacher seeks to describe the truth and the reality of God, and the reality of the world and our relationships to God and the world. Two of the sermons in this volume (3/7 and 3/13) focus on John 8:32: “The truth shall set you free.” As he says in his sermon at the Technical College in summer 1932, “religion is primarily interested in only one thing, namely, to be true.”^[100] In the final sermon of this volume, a baptismal sermon, he expresses this in a different way: “To be awake means to be realistic, to live not in dreams and wishes but in the bright light of reality.”^[101]

The text for sermons 11 and 12 is Colossians 3:1–4. For Bonhoeffer, so much depended on our faith that we “have been raised with Christ” (Col. 3:1). He affirmed that God comes to the people of God in the world of the Bible, the world of Christ. The challenge for the preacher is to articulate how God came to the people of God in biblical times and then to articulate

[97.] Letter of October 18, 1931, to Helmut Rössler (1/14).

[98.] 3/10, p. 443.

[99.] 3/10, p. 446.

[100.] 3/7, p. 434.

[101.] 3/14, p. 474.

how that same God comes to us in our current situation in the world. In every sermon he sought to discern and describe as concretely as possible how God was coming to the community of faith before him. Discerning and describing God's coming to us in as concrete a way as possible is complicated by the reality that "our life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3).

Bonhoeffer was also radically incarnational in his understanding of God's presence in our neighbor. For example, in his sermon on Psalm 63:4, he wrote: "If you want my loving kindness to stay with you, serve your neighbor, for in him God himself meets you."^[102] In his sermon on Genesis 32:25–32, he explained that when dawn came, Jacob saw "the face of his brother not as an enemy, but 'like seeing the face of God.' He [saw] in his brother God himself and his love."^[103]

Sermon 12 contains the famous quotation: "If that really is the way it must be, we should not be surprised if for our church, too, times will come again when the blood of the martyrs will be required. But this blood, if we really still have the courage and honor and faithfulness to shed it, will not be as innocent and untarnished as that of the first witnesses. On our blood would lie great guilt of our own: the guilt of the worthless slave, who is thrown into the outer darkness."^[104] Bonhoeffer's preaching is prophetic not just because of the way it can challenge us but also because of the way he "saw" things before others did and was not afraid to articulate them.

As challenging as Bonhoeffer's preaching could be and as truthful as he could be about humankind's sin, he powerfully affirmed God's mercy and grace—an aspect of his preaching that is abundantly evident throughout the sermons in this volume. That mercy and grace would sustain Bonhoeffer in the years to come as he faced the challenges of life and ministry in Nazi Germany.

Acknowledgments

This volume is dedicated to the memory of Hans Pfeifer, a pastor, teacher, and member of the editorial board of the German edition. In that capacity he served as the appointed liaison between the German and English editorial boards, and from the beginning was a thoughtful and astute consultant for our translations, including the present volume. He was a treasured colleague who will be deeply missed.

[102.] 3/1, p. 405.

[103.] 3/6, p. 432.

[104.] 3/12, p. 458.

We also wish to acknowledge the contributions of a number of colleagues and advisers, beginning with the gifted and patient translators who worked on it: Isabel Best, Nicolas Humphrey, Marion Pauck, and Anne Schmidt-Lange. Particular thanks here should go to Anne Schmidt-Lange for her extensive work on the translation of parts 1 and 3. The German editor of *DBW* 11, Eberhard Amelung, helped with early reviews of the manuscript and offered insightful advice. His unexpected death was a real loss, and we are grateful to his colleagues on the German *DBW* board, particularly Hans Pfeifer and Christiane Tietz, for stepping in to assist with the review of the remaining translations in parts 2 and 3. The complexity of the theological texts in part 2 required particular knowledge of Bonhoeffer's early works, *Sanctorum Communio* and *Act and Being*; Clifford Green was generous here with his time and expertise; and Michael DeJonge, author of the forthcoming *Bonhoeffer's Theological Formation: Berlin, Barth, and Protestant Theology*, served as a consultant for "The History of Twentieth-Century Systematic Theology" (2/3).

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So much of the theological material in this volume is significant, in terms of both Bonhoeffer's own thought and the Church Struggle that would soon divide his church: the turning point marked by his encounter with Barth, the ecumenical material, the lectures that build on *Sanctorum Communio* and *Act and Being*, and the sermons. Yet, as in all the *DBWE* volumes, the present volume traces these theological developments hand in hand with the biographical story of this remarkable individual. In the afterword that concludes this volume, the German editor notes that "if a more profound turn in [Bonhoeffer's] life in the larger sense can be discerned, it took place during these years. . . . When in 1933 the National Socialist seduction and threat coerced many people into passive conformity, Bonhoeffer had already dealt with the enormous tensions within himself such that he was now able . . . to take the difficult path of the minority who rejected the National Socialist regime not just occasionally but fundamentally."

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