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Luther, Bonhoeffer, and Public Ethics: Re-Forming the Church of the Future ed. by Michael P DeJonge and Clifford J. Green
(review)

David W. Loy

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understanding the Lutheran church in Ethiopia. It has application in both academic and devotional settings, thanks to the mixture of theological praxis in Gudina Tumsa's writings and personal faith in Tsehay Tolessa's narrative.

I have traveled to Ethiopia twice, each time to bring home a son. One who was instrumental in allowing that adoption process to take place also lost a parent to the Derg regime. I look forward to teaching my children about their birthplace and the faithful witness of Gudina and Tsehay.

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
BELLAIRE, TEXAS

Clayton Faulkner

Luther, Bonhoeffer, and Public Ethics: Re-Forming the Church of the Future. Edited by Michael P. DeJonge and Clifford J. Green. Lanham: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2018. 229 pp.

This book collects the 2017 Bonhoeffer Lectures in Public Ethics held at Union Theological Seminary. Broadly speaking, the essays fall into three groups. The first three essays provide background about the political and theological context of the Third Reich as well as Roman Catholic reactions to Luther over the centuries. Four essays draw on Luther and Bonhoeffer to envision a public theology that addresses economic ethics. The remaining pieces apply Bonhoeffer to contemporary political issues, including racial justice and climate change. The authors and editors include notable Bonhoeffer scholars and church leaders.

The second group of essays provides a helpful taste of the volume's diversity. In "Radicalizing Reformation amid Today's Crises, in the Spirit of Bonhoeffer," Karen Bloomquist asks, "On theological grounds, Martin Luther and Dietrich Bonhoeffer challenged the whole system and the reigning logic of their times, so why are we reluctant to do so today?" (92). Drawing on the Radicalizing Reformation movement, she argues that the church must challenge the neoliberal worldview that made the election of Donald Trump possible. The church's resistance is most effective when the scriptures are read in light *of* and applied *to* experiences of oppression.

Luther and Bonhoeffer can help the church radicalize its vision to include such social action. Wolfgang Huber responds in “Worldly Worship: Reformation and Economic Ethics” that the prescription of the Radicalizing Reformation movement cannot meet the challenges posed by a finance-dominated economy, because it provides no moral standards for economic actors. Huber then shows how Bonhoeffer develops the doctrine of vocation into an “understanding of responsibility” (101) that could inform an economic ethic for our own day.

In “Reformation: Freeing the Church for Public Witness,” Heinrich Bedford-Strohm identifies four aspects of Luther’s theology that constituted “a call to a new spiritual authenticity of the church: repentance, justification, freedom, and faith and love” (109). These aspects undergirded Luther’s public critique of the financial systems of his time. They can likewise inform public theology as it addresses political and economic questions today. According to Bedford-Strohm, Bonhoeffer shows how the contemporary church can appropriate Luther’s theology for this purpose.

Lutheran readers may find the final essay in the group, Michael DeJonge’s “Between Compromise and Radicalism: Luther’s Legacy in Bonhoeffer’s Political Thought,” particularly interesting. Contrary to much contemporary scholarship on the topic, DeJonge shows that Bonhoeffer draws on characteristically Lutheran doctrines to strike a balance between an apolitical model of church and a model that prescribes new political arrangements.

Two things stand out about the volume. First, many of the essays are more programmatic than scholarly, offering guidance about how Christians ought to live and how the church ought to act. Second, many of them appropriate Bonhoeffer to inspire organized social activism or resistance to neoliberalism. Yet one wonders whether the essays take Bonhoeffer’s thought in directions he himself would not. Bloomquist writes, “. . . *ecclesia* means going beyond the usual Christian boundaries, where Bonhoeffer tended to stop in his day” (90). It is worth asking why Bonhoeffer tended to stop there. A lack of vision or courage is not the most likely cause. A more likely explanation is that he had principled reasons to stop there—a possibility with which most essays do not come to terms.

For the most part, the essays in this volume do not plow new ground. For that reason, scholars in the essays' respective areas may not find the book particularly fruitful. On the other hand, scholars, graduate students, and even advanced undergraduates wanting a glimpse of the terrain will find that the essays are accessible enough to provide a helpful orientation into current scholarship on Bonhoeffer and Christian political thought.

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY IRVINE
IRVINE, CALIFORNIA

David W. Loy

Christ and Revelatory Community in Bonhoeffer's Reception of Hegel. By David S. Robinson. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018. 260 pp.

This book provides another entry in the growing scholarship on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's relationship to the Lutheran tradition. In this revision of his doctoral thesis finished at the University of Edinburgh under David Fergusson, Robinson contends that Bonhoeffer's engagement with Hegel was more complex than some suggest. Robinson shows that Bonhoeffer knew Hegel's thought well and used aspects of Hegel in a constructive fashion. More specifically, Robinson argues that Bonhoeffer is not Hegelian (230) but Bonhoeffer does freely incorporate certain elements of Hegel's thought into his own work even as the person of Jesus Christ and the external Word (sacramental and preached) form the center of Bonhoeffer's theology.

The most promising chapters cover primarily *Sanctorum Communio*, *Creation and Fall*, and the 1933 Christology lectures. Robinson shows that Hegel was never far from Bonhoeffer's theological approach in these texts. Most importantly, Bonhoeffer modified Hegel's definition of the church from "God existing as church community" to "Christ existing as church community." For Robinson, Bonhoeffer travels with Hegel in refusing to set divine and human agency in opposition in the church, but Bonhoeffer's modification from God to Christ also signals his emphasis on the external Word that disrupts the inward curvature of the self in the state of sin and puts "the Word before *Geist*," to use Bonhoeffer's phrase (61). In this