

his book, *Reading for Preaching*. He advises preachers to read “poetry... biography... journalism... essays,” and even “children’s literature” (p. 136), as this will make them wise pastors.

The Pastor as Public Theologian is very accurate in its analysis of the modern pastorate and, in the opinion of this pastor, very helpful in drafting a way of recovery. It is, of course, only a draft, a proposal, and even the authors seem to be aware of this fact. This means that the books can be, at times, very condensed and cluttered. However, a reader is directed to many other books, both modern and historical, that speak in more length about various themes this book only briefly touches on.

All Christians are called to be theologians in the sense of thinking deeply about “what is in Christ” and how it influences our life and witness, but this book is primarily aimed at and recommended to pastors, elders, seminary students and academic theologians for obvious reasons. Nevertheless, church members (especially ones involved in reviewing pastor candidates in congregational churches, but others as well) need to read this book in order to understand what they should (and should not) expect of their present and future pastors. And last but not the least, this book is highly recommended to pastors’ wives, who need to be encouraged to see their husbands’ reading and study time not as a leisure (no matter how much they enjoy it), but as a necessity.

Miroslav Balint-Feudvarski

Keith Clements

Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Ecumenical Quest

World Council of Churches Publications, Geneva, 2015, pp. 326.

In February 2015, the World Council of Churches Publications published the book *Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Ecumenical Quest* written by Keith Clements. Keith Clements is a British historian, theologian and ecumenist. He worked more than nine years as a general secretary of the Conference of European Churches, and he has previously written on the topic of ecumenism and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In 2010 he wrote *The SPCK Introduction to Bonhoeffer*; in 2011, *A Patriotism for Today: Love of Country in Dialogue with the Witness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*; in 2011, in co-authorship with Barry Harvey, *What Freedom?: The Persistent Challenge of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*; and in 2013 he wrote two books, one on ecumenism, *Ecumenical dynamics: Living in Several Places at Once*, and one in co-authorship with Paul Spanringon Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Arnold Köster: Two Distinct Voices in the Midst of Germany’s Third Reich Turmoil*.

By using the method of induction and writing in a simple style, in his latest book dedicated to Bonhoeffer Clements brings us many details about Bonhoeffer, explaining how and why the ecumenical question was at the center of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's thought. As one of the most important theologians of the 20th century, Bonhoeffer has left an ineradicable mark. His theological education began in 1923 at the University of Tübingen at the age of seventeen. He studied theology at colleges around the world, spreading and developing ecumenical unity among different Christian churches. Bonhoeffer served as a pastor, teacher, seminary director, protagonist for the Confessional Church. He was against Hitler, and the Nazis executed him as a traitor in April 1945. Although he lived less than 40 years, Clement presents to us the life and work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer as indispensable in the creation of the ecumenical movement, describing some challenges in ecumenical work which Bonhoeffer had, and which also exist today.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Ecumenical Quest contains an introduction and eleven chapters. In the first chapter, *Young Bonhoeffer: A Case Study in Ecumenical Formation*, Clements observes the young Dietrich Bonhoeffer as ecumenical researcher. In 1924 Bonhoeffer spent two months in Rome. Clements concludes that Bonhoeffer was not prepared for the impact of Roman Catholicism "on full display on its home ground." This trip was very fruitful for his doctoral work entitled *Sanctorum Communio- The Communion of Saints*. In October 1930 he did a one-year study at *Union Theological Seminar* in New York. There he had the opportunity to preach in Methodist and Baptist churches. He came back from America in September 1931, enriched with new experience: unity of the different.

The second chapter describes the meeting of the *World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches* in Cambridge, and how Dietrich started to be a part of them. Because of his presence and activity in the meeting, Bonhoeffer was perceived and named honorary secretary of the *Youth in the World Alliance of Young people in Central Europe*. As secretary he promoted and encouraged ecumenical work in Germany, Hungary, Austria, Central and Northern Europe. From his earliest ecumenical days, Bonhoeffer wanted to answer the question: Why so many churches? - We really should be one church. He worked together with Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze on the drafting of a new catechism for the Lutheran Church. He concluded that cooperation between churches is necessary, but he had a question: "Is this possible or not"?

In the third chapter, *Ecumenism and Peace: Theological Foundations*, Clements talks about ecumenism and peace as theological bases for ecumenical work through several ecumenical organizations and conferences in the period between 1931 and 1933. He points out that for German ecumenical work there are four very important parts: the German Ecumenical Working Committee, the Student Circle for Ecumenical Youth Work, the Regional Protestant Friends'

Circle for Ecumenical Friendship Work, and the Provisional Bureau for Ecumenical Youth Work.

Bonhoeffer brought to us a theological critique of peace, and he concluded that peace rests on an external order of freedom. Peace cannot be gotten in the self, but depends on receiving the Christian Gospel, and ecumenical bodies need to promote cooperation, fellowship and dialogue.

The fourth chapter, *Crisis 1933: Church, Nation, and Oikoumene*, talks about the crisis of 1933 that affected the church, society and ecumenism. Bonhoeffer said that the church which decides to base itself on national or ethnic criteria is no longer the church of Jesus Christ. He was concerned with the internal church struggles in Germany after Hitler came to the power in 1933. He started to fight against the Nazi party, which eagerly spread the militant, nationalistic and anti-Semitic ideas.

The fifth chapter, *Ecumenical Friendship: 1933–1935*, which is rather short, describes Bonhoeffer's ecumenical friendship in the time between 1933 and 1935. The second part of the chapter describes how in October 1933 Bonhoeffer met in England with bishop George Bell, who at that time was the president of the Council of Life and Work, and informed him about problems in Germany with the Reich Church.

The sixth chapter, entitled *The Clock is Late*, covers events from the ecumenical conference held in 1934 on the island of Fanø in Denmark. There were two meetings: the larger Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, and the Young Commission of Life and Work. The major theme of the conference was Church, Community and State. At this conference they debated the idea that the church must stay within nation but "ought not to give its blessing to any war whatsoever." Bonhoeffer argued that it is very important to obey God's commands and bear witness to the truth and justice, which in turn prepare the way for the acceptance of the gospel of Christ. Bonhoeffer's prophetic vision of the testimony of Christian life and faith in ecumenical community was encompassed in his speech, which aimed to remind the church of her responsibility to work for peace:

The hour is late. The world is choked with weapons, and dreadful is the distrust which looks out of every human being's eyes. The trumpets of war may blow tomorrow. For what are we waiting? Do we want to become involved in this guilt as never before? We want to give the world a whole word, not a half word – a courageous word, a Christian word. We want to pray that this word may be given to us today. Who knows if we shall see each other again another year?

Unfortunately, his cry to the church to be proactive in fighting for peace was not heard, and war would soon to be knocking on Europe's door.

In the seventh chapter, *The Question Has Been Posed: Is the Ecumenical Movement Church?* Clements addresses internal battles in Germany. Bonhoeffer and his Confessing Church had different attitudes in ecumenical bodies compared to the Reich Church. For them it was not advisable to accept a relationship in ecumenical bodies with those who in Germany represented heresy. Bonhoeffer accused leaders in the Reich Church of no longer serving Christ but the Antichrist. Clements describes Bonhoeffer's maintaining links with friends in the ecumenical movement, although leaders from the German Evangelical Church were absent from the Oxford Conference held in 1937. Bonhoeffer returned to Germany to lead the Confessing Church and teach at the seminary in Finkenwalde. The same year the Gestapo banned their work, but Bonhoeffer continued to do his work secretly. He still insisted that the German church must resist Nazism. He said: "The German church struggles in the second great stage of the history of the ecumenical movement and will be decisive for its future." Unfortunately, he was disappointed. There was no resistance and rebellion against Hitler and Nazism as he had expected.

In the eighth chapter, *Christian, Ecumenical, German: Shifting Priorities, 1938-1939*, Clements talks about the ecumenical scene before the war. At the end of the thirties it was clear that peacemakers would lose the battle. Concerned for his safety, his ecumenical friends from America urged Bonhoeffer to move to New York. So in the summer of 1939 he arrived in the United States. But soon after his arrival Bonhoeffer realized that he was wrong. In a famous letter to Professor Niebuhr he said, "I have made a mistake coming to America. I must live through this difficult period of our national history with Christian people in Germany." He thought that if he would stay in Germany through this difficult time, he would participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war. In March of 1940 the pastorate work of the Confessing Church was closed by the Gestapo. After the outbreak of the war, Bonhoeffer found a job as an agent in a department of the Military Intelligence Office of the Armed Forces High Command. He became a member of a group of conspirators with Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, General Hans Oster and Hans von Dohnanyi who were preparing to kill Hitler.

The ninth chapter is entitled *The ecumenical conspiracy from 1939 to 1943*. At that time the war virtually paralyzed the activities of the ecumenical movement, and it was necessary to find new ways for action. Thanks to his connections, Bonhoeffer was able to travel abroad and visit Switzerland three times, where he met Karl Barth and Visser't Hooft, the general secretary of the World Council of Churches. With them he discussed the resistance movement in Germany, just as he did on his trip to Sigtna, Sweden, in April 1942. There he met his friend, bishop Bell. Bonhoeffer asked him to encourage the British government to give public support to the German resistance movement, but this never came to fruition.

In chapter ten, *Ecumenism from Prison*, Clements describes how Bonhoeffer was arrested in April 1943 and placed in the prison Tegel. Thanks to the letters, essays and poems that he wrote to his friend Warder, there is evidence that he remained as committed to ecumenism as before. In fact, Bonhoeffer's ecumenical activities continued to the end. Clements describes the day before he was killed in April 1945. When two Gestapo soldiers in civilian clothes come for Dietrich, he sent a message for bishop Bell through a British prisoner of war, Captain Payne Best: "...this is the end but for me the beginning of life. With him I believe in the principle of our universal Christian brotherhood which rises above all national interests, and that our victory is certain." He was taken to the concentration camp Flossenbürg and sentenced to death. The next morning, April 9, 1945, was executed by hanging in the prison yard.

In the last chapter, entitled *Still Ahead of us? The Continuing Quest*, Clements describes the memorial service in honor of Bonhoeffer and his ideas, starting with a heartfelt speech of bishop Bell at the commemoration service in the *Holy Trinity Church* in London in July 1945, which was broadcast by BBC in the presence of members of Bonhoeffer's family. Victoria Barnett recognized the process in Bonhoeffer's life as "the creation of an ecumenical saint." This process culminated in the setting of Bonhoeffer's bust in the front of Westminster Abbey in London, along with other Christian idealists of the twentieth century. Bonhoeffer was declared a victim, because of his Christian witness and faith.

The book *Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Ecumenical Quest* is recommended to those who wish to explore ecumenism and are interested in Bonhoeffer's ecumenical quest. Readers of this book will become familiar with new, so far unknown Bonhoeffer facts of life and activity. This book is a reminder of one great theologian and man who "lived what he believed." Thanks to Keith Clements, this summarized biographical work is available to a readership which cherishes Bonhoeffer's contribution to the development of the ecumenical movement.

Danijel Časni

Greg Gilbert

Why Trust the Bible?

Crossway, Wheaton, 2015, pp. 160.

In October 2015 Crossway Publisher house published the book *Why Trust the Bible?* Written by Greg Gilbert, senior pastor at Third Avenue Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, this book is yet another attempt of the author to discuss basic tenets of the Christian faith. Some of Gilbert's previous books in-