

“faith” with a more robust understanding of its full meaning. At the very least, exegesis of individual texts where πίστις occurs will need to wrestle with the possibility of the allegiance argument.

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Brant M. Himes

For a Better Worldliness: Abraham Kuyper, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Discipleship for the Common Good.

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In a book of intriguing title, which ensued from a doctoral dissertation, Brant M. Himes connects life and thinking of two Christian theologians about discipleship. What does a Dutch Calvinist, founder of a university and a political party, pastor, journalist, and prime minister (Abraham Kuyper) have in common with a German Lutheran pastor, theologian, spy, and a co-conspirator on Hitler's life (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)? Apart from the obvious answer that both were Christians, they shared a rich theological and practical commitment to following Jesus Christ in discipleship that did not stop at their personal or even ecclesial lives but continued to influence the world. Indeed, both were “worldly” Christians, not in terms of their engagement with immorality and sin as Christians most commonly use this term, but in terms of their commitment to the well-being of the world.

Himes has delimited his study to the last ten years of their lives. His book attempts to answer the question what it means to follow Christ (14) by comparing historical and theological motifs from Kuyper and Bonhoeffer's lives. In their writings, he recognizes “a four-movement framework (or hermeneutic) of discipleship,” involving God's revelation as its foundation, sovereignty of Christ as its reality, belief-obedience as its action, and common good of the world as its possibility (13). The first part of the book is devoted to Kuyper. In the first chapter, the author locates this framework of discipleship, primarily in his work *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology: Its Principles* (23), which Kuyper wrote to train “everyday citizens for the kingdom of God” (24). According to Kuyper, theology is soteriological in its means but not in its end. In other words, God did not send his Son only to save those who will believe in Him but also to show love towards the world. Christ's incarnation confirms the goodness of God's first creation and of his promise of re-creation. Holy Spirit forms the church as an organism and empowers “belief and obedience” (32). Discipleship is an everyday task of the church in a world that is “ever changing and adapting,” which means that “possibilities of discipleship were contextually unique and culturally challenging” (34).

In order to equip the church for such a formidable task, Kuyper advocates that pastors should be well trained and saturated with God's Spirit. They should preach the whole of Scriptures "to the entirety of human existence" (40). Their main task is to create "a culture of discipleship" (44), so that the church might show Christ's love to the world (44). This is not possible without caring for the poor (45), providing for both their social and spiritual needs (52). This also brings forth the indispensable relationship between faith and obedience (53). Touching on Kuyper's *Stone Lectures*, author shows that Calvinism as "a life-system" creates "life- and world-view" and is thus capable "to fit itself to the needs of every stage of human development in every department of life" (56).

The second chapter focuses on Kuyper's political action. Himes chose three key events that show in what ways his discipleship influenced his politics. As a prime-minister, Kuyper still acted in line with his pronouncedly Christian worldview. During the South African crisis, Kuyper is trying to impose his own view of foreign politics and colonialization as he offers his *ethical politics* instead of British imperialism, that is, "cultural responsibility over and above economic gain" (69). Many people were not fond of his counter measures during the railway strikes, regarding them as oppressive (78). Nevertheless, despite political turmoil, in the magazine *De Heraut* he wrote articles about "knowledge of God, love, and forgiveness" (79), where he found peace and encouragement for his political engagement. His Christian worldview influenced the second half of his mandate, when he endeavored a reform of education (83). His understanding of common grace and sphere sovereignty led him to advocate pluralism in culture and society (89), as well as the need for the church to be an organism that illuminates "all aspects of society and culture with the gracious reality of Jesus Christ, creator and savior of all" (92).

In the second part of the book, and the third chapter, Himes turns to Dietrich Bonhoeffer and finds the same ethos of discipleship that engages with the world, as well as those four movements (101). Bonhoeffer's was a theology of revelation that manifests "in the gracious call of Jesus Christ" (102). He rejects man-centered *cheap grace*, instead believing that costly grace is, at the same time, a merciful invitation to follow Christ. According to Bonhoeffer, "Christ's breaking into the world—through his life, death, and resurrection – defined a new *reality*" (103). Christ has become man for others, and the church should also define its engagement as "being-for the other" (ibid). Christ calls us to simple obedience, which is impossible without faith, but our lack of faith cannot be an excuse for disobedience (108). Faith comes in juxtaposition with obedience, which leads to "the potentiality of true discipleship" (109). Discipleship is an invitation to become like Christ, and Christ's form is "the *form of the death* of the crucified one" (110). As a leader of the German Confessional Movement and of an undergro-

und seminary in Finkenwalde, he put a great emphasis on mutual accountability, confession, joint preparation of sermons, life together and Scripture meditation (116). Seminarians were separated from the world in order to become fit to serve the community (115) and to be the lights to the world (122).

The fourth chapter tracks last years of Bonhoeffer's life. In June of 1939, he goes to the USA in order to avoid being recruited into the army (130). Nevertheless, he decided to go back to Germany in order to share in the misfortunes of his people during the war years, which will lead him into unknown possibilities of discipleship. After returning to Germany, he continues to teach seminarians but soon he became a foreign intelligence officer of Nazi Germany working as a double agent (135). His involvement in the plot against Hitler eventually lead to his arrest and imprisonment at the Tegel prison, where he further developed his theology of discipleship. Himes regards his writings compiled in his *Letters and Papers from Prison* as some of his most creative works (136). During his stay in prison, three authors leave an indelible mark on Bonhoeffer's thinking: Wilhelm Dilthey, José Ortega y Gasset, and Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker (136). Dilthey was a German philosopher and historiographer. Bonhoeffer adopted his concept of "the world come of age," according to which worldliness is next in sequence of steps in human progress. In light of this, Bonhoeffer disagrees with those who wish to remove God from the public sphere and limit him only to personal sphere of life (143). On the contrary, we need to confront people with God at the level of their worldliness. Indeed, this is true Christianity, where God on the cross shows himself as "weak and powerless in the world and in precisely this way, and only so, is at our side and helps us" (145). José Ortega y Gasset was a Spaniard who thought of life as a "concrete reality," "a drama," and thought that "a human 'lives' rather than 'is'" (147). He "recognized the pragmatic reality of life" (149). Therefore, Bonhoeffer believed that Christians are called to a "full reality of existence," because all "of life was affirmed, embraced, and redeemed in Jesus Christ" (150). Weizsäcker was Bonhoeffer's contemporary and a fellow countryman. In his work *The World View of Physics*, he showed how through history our conception of the world has changed, from looking at it as a finite cosmos (153), through a finite world created by an infinite God, until an infinite world in which there is less and less space for God. In the modern world, God becomes "God of the gaps" (154). Instead of expecting that God will speak to us through the unknown (those *gaps*), Weizsäcker and Bonhoeffer concluded that God speaks to us through what we do know (156). While reading these three authors, Bonhoeffer in effect realized that the marginalization of Christianity actually revealed "the unending possibilities of discipleship" (158), since our humanity is closely related to Christ who became human. Therefore, the only way to return to "one's true nature" is repentance (159) and the church must lead the way (160). Since Christ decided to be in and

for the world, Christians should follow his lead while serving, professing, repenting, and witnessing about the reality of Christ (161).

In the third part of his book, Himes synthesizes Kuyper and Bonhoeffer's theology of discipleship for the common good (165). Moreover, he believes that he was able to extract a definition of discipleship that is holistic and "not bound by particular historical or theological traditions." According to Himes, "*Discipleship is the response to the call to follow-after Jesus Christ in all aspects of human life and endeavor, from the inner personal disciplines to the deliberate shaping of culture – in the very midst of the world*" (166; italics in the original). This definition follows those four movements, and it is founded upon the idea that "Jesus' entrance into the world was his turning to the world" and that discipleship "is the call to do nothing less" (169). In each of these movements, there were differences in emphasis between Kuyper and Bonhoeffer. Nevertheless, they both came to conclusion that "Christians were called upon to participate in the very public realm of social engagement and political critique" (175) and "staked their claims for direct engagement with the world on the cosmic centrality of Jesus Christ" (180). Kuyper came to these conclusions by realizing that Calvinism was an all-encompassing Christian worldview, "where God was sovereign over all, and Jesus Christ's claim of lordship over all was realized" (190). For Bonhoeffer, it was his concept of Christonomy, which ruled over different mandates of life (akin to Kuyper's spheres of sovereignty), and in the realm of Christ gave these mandates freedom to live "with-one-another, for-one-another, and against-one-another" (194).

Himes closes the chapter by noting that these four movements of discipleship help us to "assess a way forward for Christian engagement with the world" (196), aware that no tradition can have a monopoly on defining or practicing common good (197). He applies this idea of common good to discipleship in western evangelical culture, because it often splits personal discipleship from the call to public engagement. Kuyper and Bonhoeffer show that these two are indeed connected, since "discipleship reaches a culmination when it builds through the four movements of revelation, reality, action, and possibility" (197).

In the *Conclusion*, the author gives a short overview of the book, followed by a call to apply its findings to the challenges of our time. He writes that discipleship "must culminate in possibility for the common good, because God is still revealing the mysteries of creation, redemption, and the eschaton" (201). Moreover, from now on it will not "be acceptable to conceive of the call to discipleship outside of an engagement with all of life" (203) because "discipleship is our entire theology in action" (204).

For a Better Worldliness is a rich book, which packs more historical and theological reflection than seems to be possible in its little over 200 pages. This book

is primarily written to students, pastors, and theologians with the expectation that they will apply its findings to their particular contexts. It is a work of historical theology and as such it lacks extended biblical reflection that would enable it to give a thorough apologetic for the views it advances. Nevertheless, I would heartily recommend this book to all those who are involved in teaching, pastoring, and discipling. Other Christians might find this work a bit challenging and daunting and might find more helpful to access treatments of these themes in more accessible works by authors like Timothy Keller, Richard J. Mouw, Trevin Wax, Michael E. Wittmer, and others.

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