

ACCH Quarterly Vol. 18, No. 3, September 2012

Letter from the Editors: September 2012



Martin Luther's statue stands boldly alongside the Marienkirche in central Berlin.

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to present you with this new issue of the *ACCH Quarterly*. In this issue, we cover much ground – thematically, temporally and geographically.

With respect to Germany, John Conway reviews both a collection of essays about the Christianity of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and what it may offer in terms of both politics and theology and an edited collection on völkisch religious movements in Germany during the Nazi era. Lauren Falkner, a welcome new addition to the editorial team, reviews Sascha Hinkel's examination of the church politics of the influential and controversial Adolf Cardinal Bertram during the Kaisereich and the Weimar Republic. My contribution is a review of Hansjörg Buss's fine study of the Lübeck Protestant church's approach to Jews and Judaism from 1918 to 1950.

Covering a wider reach, both geographically and thematically, we have contributions about relations between the Church of England and the Russian Orthodox Church during the Second World War (John Conway), important developments in European and global Christianity during the twentieth century (Heath Spencer), and the resurgence of religion as it relates to global politics (Steve Schroeder).

Also included are several conference and seminar reports, including a Bonhoeffer conference in Sweden (Keith Clements), a seminar on the complicity of churches in the Holocaust (Lauren Falkner), and a conference on the memorialization of the Church Struggle in contemporary Berlin (Diana Jane Beech).

We hope that these and other contributions to the journal will continue to promote a deeper understanding of contemporary church history.

On behalf of all the *ACCH Quarterly* editors,

Christopher Probst, Saint Louis University

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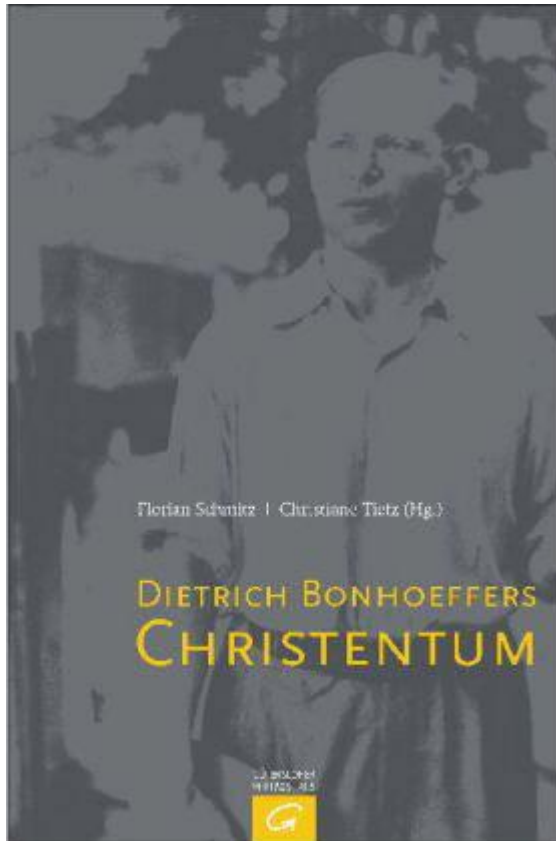
Tags: [Christopher J. Probst](#)

Announcement: Important Changes to the *ACCH Quarterly*

Dear Friends,

Over the past two years, we have made significant changes to the *ACCH Quarterly*, which grew out of the deep roots of John Conway's "Association of Contemporary Church Historians" monthly e-mail newsletter. For fifteen years, John wrote reviews and passed along timely news concerning contemporary German and European church history. At the end of 2009, a group of John's friends and colleagues in the field joined him to form an editorial board and began issuing his newsletter as a quarterly journal called the *ACCH Quarterly*. Our transition to a new web-based format, using the Open Journal System, was made possible thanks to the technical support of staff at Ambrose University College, Calgary.

More recently, however, it has become clear to us that more changes are necessary. Increasingly, academic researchers are recognizing the potential of the technology and format of social networking as an outlet for their scholarly work. Students, academics, and the broader public now regularly turn to search engines and online networks to access new research in history, theology, and many other fields of study. Neither our current journal name nor our existing online platform make effective use of the search engines that now give order to the Internet. Additionally, we have found that our journal website and "subscription" (i.e. sign-up) process are not as user-



friendly as we would like them to be. Most problematically, we are currently unable to host all of our past issues in one place online.

For these reasons, we are excited to announce that, beginning this fall, we will be moving to a new WordPress platform for our journal and publishing future issues of our quarterly under a clearer, more concise name—*Contemporary Church History*—one that captures the original intent of John Conway’s newsletter.

By the end of September, you will receive an e-mail from us, formally announcing the new name and directing you to the journal’s new website. There you will find a livelier, more interactive site, with all the archives (going back to the beginning of John’s newsletter) available in a fully searchable form. We think this will give our work new life, not only for you our regular readers, but also for others interested in contemporary German and European church history, but who

haven’t found us yet on the Internet.

On behalf of all the *ACCH Quarterly* editors,

Kyle Jantzen, Ambrose University College

Tags: [Contemporary Church History](#)

Review of Florian Schmitz and Christiane Tietz, eds., *Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christentum. Festschrift für Christian Gremmels* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlag, 2011), 432 Pp. ISBN 978-3-579-07142-8.

By John S. Conway, University of British Columbia

Dietrich Bonhoeffer must surely be the most discussed and written about theologian in recent German history. His life and thought have brought him a large international following. His praises have been sung continuously in the nearly seventy years since he was murdered. One of the latest contributions is this bilingual collection of essays,

written as a tribute to the retiring head of the German section of the International Bonhoeffer Society, Christian Gremmels. He was also one of the main editors of the German edition of the now completed seventeen volumes of Bonhoeffer's works.

Despite the huge amount of both theological and historical discussions of Bonhoeffer's influence and legacy, there are still some vital questions unanswered. For example, we are still not clear about the exact evolution of his theology from the kind of pious communitarianism as commended in "Discipleship" to the enigmatic "religionless Christianity" of his last prison letters. So too we need to know more about the progress of his political ideas from his early pacifism to his joining the conspiracy to overthrow Hitler by force, and if necessary assassination.

The first half of this book comprises theological essays in both English and German, which shed more light on the above questions. Keith Clements begins with an examination of Bonhoeffer's sermons preached during his stay on England from 1933 to 1935. He is followed by Bishop Wolfgang Huber's valuable discussion of "religionless Christianity". He suggests that it is inadequate to accept one of the more common interpretations of Bonhoeffer's intentions. In Huber's view, he did not mean merely the stripping away of the centuries of accretions in both dogma and ritual in order to obtain a purified form of Christianity without "religious" trappings. Rather what Bonhoeffer advocated was the more radical view that, since the world had now come of age, it no longer needed religion of any kind as a means of either interpretation or support. How to declare the love of Christ for such an autonomous humanity is the question Bonhoeffer poses. Huber claims that Bonhoeffer was incorrect in suggesting that "religion" had come to its end point. There is still much evidence of its continuation and validity, even when some forms of Christian witness misuse it for their mistaken sectarian points of view.

On the political side, the Australian scholar, John Moses, pertinently asks the question: "Bonhoeffer was a Revolutionary, but was he a Democrat?" Many commentators have supposed that, since Bonhoeffer so resolutely opposed tyranny, he must have been a democrat at heart. But Moses suggests that, in fact, he shared many of the reservations of his educated bourgeois class against popular sovereignty, which could so easily lead to the kind of demagoguery that Hitler had exploited. But in the opinion of those survivors associated with Bonhoeffer in drawing up plans for a post-war Europe, Bonhoeffer would have had little difficulty in endorsing the kind of political evolution in West Germany after 1949.

More problematic is Bonhoeffer's role in the attempt to gain support for the resistance conspiracy through his contacts with the churches' ecumenical movement, most notably through his well-known meeting with Bishop George Bell of Chichester, England in Sweden in 1942. On that occasion he asked Bell—as a member of the House of Lords—to obtain from the British Government some sort of statement supporting the conspiracy in return for a rapid end to the hostilities on the western front. When this project came to nothing, it led some of the resisters to believe that their subsequent failure could be attributed—at least in part—to the Allies' cold-shouldering of their valiant attempt to overthrow Hitler.

What has never been made clear—and Moses leaves the matter unresolved—is why Bonhoeffer and his friends should have so fully miscalculated the likely response from London, or why he thought Bell had sufficient political influence to succeed in such a task. From today’s vantage point, what stands out is Bonhoeffer’s political naivety. Perhaps it was a matter of the conspirators having so few trustworthy contacts abroad. But the episode surely confirms our impression that any acute political awareness was sadly lacking in the ranks of the Confessing Church.

The latter part of the book contains short personal contributions by a number of Bonhoeffer’s disciples testifying to his continuing inspiration and influence, and ends with an epilogue written by Ruth Alice von Bismarck, the sister of Maria von Wedemeyer, who is now in her nineties. It makes for a heartwarming conclusion.

Tags: [Christiane Tietz](#), [Dietrich Bonhoeffer](#), [Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christentum](#), [Florian Schmitz](#), [John S. Conway](#)

Review of Uwe Puschner and Clemens Vollnhals, eds., *Die völkisch-religiöse Bewegung im Nationalsozialismus. Ein Beziehungs- und Konfliktgeschichte*. Studien des Hannah Arendt Instituts für Totalitarismusforschung, 47 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 592 Pp. ISBN 978-3-525-36956-8.

By John S. Conway, University of British Columbia

This collection of essays, skilfully edited by two experienced historians of Germany’s early twentieth century, plunges us at once into the turgid controversies as to whether National Socialism was a “political religion” or a “surrogate or substitute faith”, and invites us to examine the role played by a whole bunch of so-called ethno-religious associations, in order to investigate the extent to which they may have contributed to or detracted from the Nazis’ successful exercise of power from 1933 onwards.

This massive volume is divided into three sections: the völkisch-pagan movements, völkisch Christianity, and the relationship between National Socialism and these völkisch factions. All are thoroughly dissected by the contributors, not one of whom, however, would appear to have



any sympathy with the people about whom he or she is writing. Many of the contributors recapitulate what they have already written at greater length, or summarize the numerous studies of earlier years. The objective of the editors would therefore seem to be not to break new ground with fresh insights but to remind us of the marginal influence of such völkisch-religious adherents and the situations of conflict into which they were drawn.

The contributors certainly do well in reminding us of the enormous variety and the frenetic activity of these groups. More particularly, they successfully evoke the kind of climate in which any number of cranks, crackpots, charlatans or opportunists appeared to flourish in the 1920s and 1930s. As Klaus Vondung points out, these groups saw themselves as the heralds of the future. They sought to elevate the cause of Germany, its race and its blood to be a focus of loyalty for the whole nation. The Nazi Party very successfully mobilized such sentiments through its efficient rallies and parades. One common thread was the idea of national rebirth or redemption, which most of these groups fostered, and which easily enough led to support of Nazism and its charismatic leader. But as several contributors rightly point out, the pervasive characteristics of these movements were all negative—anti-liberalism, anti-Semitism, anti-democratic hatreds, fanatical nationalist beliefs in the worship of Germany or the Germanic God or ethno-centrism of the worst order. Typical of those in this category was Professor Ernst Bergmann, who already in 1923 was sending urgent messages to Hitler not to water down his anti-Semitic crusade. “What is needed is the complete extermination of Jewry in Germany by fire and sword. If you, my honoured Führer, make even the slightest concession on this matter, you will have lost my allegiance.”

Manfred Gailus leads off the section on völkisch Christianity. Its principal adherents were the so-called “German Christians” whose excessive distortions of the Gospel were so ably outlined for us by Doris Bergen nearly twenty years ago. Gailus’ analysis reinforces the view that these men’s motivation was opportunistic and superficial. Many of them preached nothing more than thinly-disguised apologias for their political ambitions, clothed in the garments of Christian righteousness, or faithfulness to the German spirit. Their arsenal of nationalist heresies was all too obviously drawn from Nazi sources. Their disdain for theology or abstract theorizing was matched with fervent expressions of loyalty to the Führer with Nazi flags swirling in or above their churches. But, as Gailus notes, they never achieved the support from the Nazi hierarchy they so enthusiastically longed for, and their internal squabbles soon led to their irrelevance and eventual disappearance.

Susannah Heschel does a suitable demolition job on the notorious Institute established in Eisenach to research and remove the Jewish influence from German church life, about which she has written before, and which she places in the context of racism and Christianity. So too, Lucia Scherzberg is suitably critical of those deluded Catholics, including some prominent priests and professors, who, like their Protestant counterparts, sought to amalgamate their Catholic faith with their pro-Nazi loyalty to the Third Reich, including its virulent anti-Semitism. Their totally nebulous ideas about uniting all Germans in a German national church soon enough ran into destructive criticisms and accusations of fostering a syncretistic cult. But, in fact, these Catholic spokesmen were never disciplined—even after 1945.

Martin Leutzsch provides an interesting pathological diagnosis of the career of the Aryan Jesus between 1918 and 1945. Hitler himself in 1922 called Jesus “our great Aryan leader.” Other Nazis, such as Rosenberg and Goebbels, were quick to take up this idea. Jesus as a Nordic hero was already being voiced in the nineteenth century, but the cult gained impetus through the rapid spread of anti-Semitism in and after the first world war. Its proponents had however to contend with their counterparts in other völkisch movements who wanted to eradicate the idea of Christianity altogether and substitute a purely Germanic deity. But they had the support of no less a figure than Hanns Kerrl, from 1935 Minister of Church Affairs, in whose opinion: “ it is intolerable that German children should be taught that Jesus was a Jew. . . This is an attempt to make the Party ridiculous. True Christianity is represented in the Party and the German people are being called to this true Christianity by the Party and especially by the Führer.” In the end, the issue was too contentious, so orders were given that further discussions were to be suppressed.

Similar prohibitions on almost all these variant sects and cults were implemented in stages by the Gestapo, on Heydrich’s orders. They were suspected of threatening the Nazi Party’s totalitarian controls. A good example can be seen in the case of the Anthroposophists, whose ambivalent position in the Nazi period is here excellently described by Peter Staudenmaier. He shows that many of this sect engaged themselves eagerly in the Nazi ranks, and were then bitterly disappointed to find that the SD dismissed their support by labelling them as “purely individualistic, and their teachings incompatible with the National Socialist ideas about Race”. Similarly, in the case of Freemasonry, as Marcus Meyer explains, the Nazi hostility to a group suspected of secrecy and conspiratorial rituals was long-standing, despite the evidence that many Masons were prominent supporters of the Nazi Party. In fact, as these essays show very well, the thoroughness with which these groups were watched by the Gestapo and the ruthlessness with which they were eventually stamped out was a measure of the Nazis’ determination not to tolerate the existence of any organization which might lay claims to loyalties other than their own.

The third section of this volume covers the attitudes towards Christianity and the churches held by the Nazi leadership.. As is well known, there were numerous and conflicting views held by the Nazi hierarchy which were never resolved. Ernst Piper gives a useful summary of Alfred Rosenberg’s anti-Christian polemics, and the plans he elaborated to institute a Germanic religion of the future. Heinrich Himmler, on the other hand, had his eyes firmly on the glories of the Germanic heathen past. Wolfgang Dierker ably summarizes the findings of his recent book on the policies of the SS and its Security Service, which was responsible for most of the predatory persecution of the churches. He again makes clear that the plans of such leaders as Bormann, Heydrich, Himmler and Goebbels called for the elimination of the Christian religion which would have no place in a future Nazi state. This would have been the end-product of a fateful combination of ideological fanaticism and the exercise of an all-encompassing totalitarian power.

With the Nazi defeat such nefarious schemes came to nothing. So too did the activities of the numerous völkisch-religious cults whose wayward perversity is amply documented in this volume. We can therefore be grateful to

the contributors for what can be seen as a post-mortem evaluation of this regrettable chapter of recent German history.

Tags: [Clemens Vollnhals](#), [Die völkisch-religiöse Bewegung im Nationalsozialismus](#), [John S. Conway](#), [Uwe Puschner](#)

Review of Hansjörg Buss, *“Entjudete” Kirche: Die Lübecker Landeskirche zwischen christlichem Antijudaismus und völkischem Antisemitismus (1918-1950)*. (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2011), 559 Pp. ISBN: 978-3-506-77014-1.



By Christopher J. Probst, Saint Louis University

Hansjörg Buss’s comprehensive, fascinating study of the machinations of the Protestant church in Lübeck during the Weimar, Nazi, and immediate post-war eras is a highly original work that takes seriously predominant social, cultural, and intellectual currents over a tumultuous three-decade period of German history. With a focus on the views of Lübeck’s Protestants toward Jews and Judaism, the author manages to weave together “sacred” and “secular” threads of history in seamless and effective fashion. In the process, numerous important issues are addressed, including: the question of continuities and ruptures, the interaction between local and national issues and points of view, and the nature of

anti-Jewish hostilities and how their various manifestations should be understood.

While the political ruptures of the period under study are obvious—Germany’s defeat in the First World War, the dissolution of the Kaiserreich, the collapse of the Weimar Republic, the ascent to power of Hitler and the Nazis, the collapse of the Third Reich at the end of the Second World War, the Allied occupation of Germany in the wake of the war—Buss rightly and deftly emphasizes the *nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten* that were consistently present during these troubled times. The divinely-sanctioned “inextricable connection” of church, *Volk*, and nation espoused by many Lübeck pastors during the Kaiserreich (50), a complex of ideas embraced by scores of their theological descendants during the succeeding decades, is just one example of this phenomenon. The prevalence of

anti-Judaism and antisemitism among German Protestants, beginning especially with the rise to prominence of the Berlin court preacher Adolf Stoecker, is another.

One of the most significant contributions of the book is its regional focus, which, to Buss's credit, is set firmly within the broader national context. After a prologue in which he examines the church, civil (especially bourgeois) society and nationalism during modern German history prior to 1918, he devotes significant space to each of the three most relevant timeframes (Weimar, the Third Reich, and the early post-war period). For each era, we are made intimately familiar with important areas of Lübeck society, including demographics, economics, and politics. Those seeking only a narrowly focused examination of Protestant views of Jews and Judaism from 1918-1950 will be disappointed. But, those who are patient enough to follow Buss on this thoroughly contextualized journey will be rewarded handsomely.

The ways in which Lübeck Protestants dealt with Jews and Judaism is at the heart of the book. Fearing a deeper descent into secularization and immorality—not to mention their perceived drift into irrelevance—during the Weimar era, most Lübeck Protestants, like many of their co-religionists in other parts of Germany, espoused conservative, anti-democratic, and anti-Jewish views. The outcome of the Church Struggle in Lübeck, according to Buss, was a church government take-over by “radical” German Christians. The radicals who led this regional church ardently supported the Nazi State, the National Church Movement of German Christians (NDC), and the virulently antisemitic Institute for Research into and Elimination of Jewish Influence in German Church Life (commonly called the “Eisenach Institute”).

Yet, all of this masked the fact that the Confessing Church in Lübeck, together with other Protestants who, despite their initial enthusiasm for the Hitler regime, largely rejected National Socialist incursions on Protestant autonomy (but did not openly protest anti-Jewish measures promulgated by the regime), actually represented a majority of Lübeck Protestants. As a result, from April 1937 to the end of the war, there were in Lübeck essentially two independent churches, joined only administratively (485).

On the one hand, Buss argues that a striking feature of the history of the Lübeck Church during the Nazi period was a radical antisemitism, which led under Bishop Erwin Balzer to adopt the goal of creating a “Jew-free” church to correspond to the “Jew-free” state that the Nazi Party was striving for (490). Buss suggests that this radical antisemitism was most prevalent among the leaders of the Lübeck church government.

On the other hand, however, he asserts that antisemitism and the state persecution of Jews was a non-issue in parish life. For the most part, Lübeck Protestants explicitly recognized and welcomed the state regulatory authority to limit the influence of Jews in politics, society, and culture. “There also were no reactions to the increasing restrictions on the Jewish community, to the open exclusion of Jewish Lübeckers, to the November 1938 pogrom, and finally to the beginning of the deportations.” There is simply little evidence, Buss argues, to suggest that these exclusionary policies aroused special concern among knowledgeable Protestants, even in the Confessing Church (493).

This lack of expressed concern was based at least in part on the “totalitarian” nature of the Nazi government and the “theological-ideological orientation” of the Balzer church government, both of which would have inhibited significant Protestant protest. Yet, he stresses that a lack of consciousness for the plight of Jews and Protestant “anti-Jewish resentments” (as well as some other church-political dynamics) played the greatest role. These conclusions are nuanced, but there may be some reluctance here to attribute antisemitic attitudes to Protestants who were not aligned with the German Christians and/or the Nazis. At the national level, certainly anti-Judaism and xenophobia seem to have been more prevalent in the Confessing Church and the Protestant “middle.” Yet, antisemitic ideas can be found in those camps as well. It is a bit surprising that such attitudes were seemingly less prevalent in Lübeck.

In the post-war era, cautious rapprochement between Protestants and Jews predominated in Lübeck, as elsewhere in Germany. Despite all that had transpired, Lübeck Protestants were not ready to welcome their Jewish neighbors with open arms. The differentiated description of events at the local level over three decades presented here helps to nuance our prior understanding of Lübeck Protestantism as a purely German Christian stronghold.

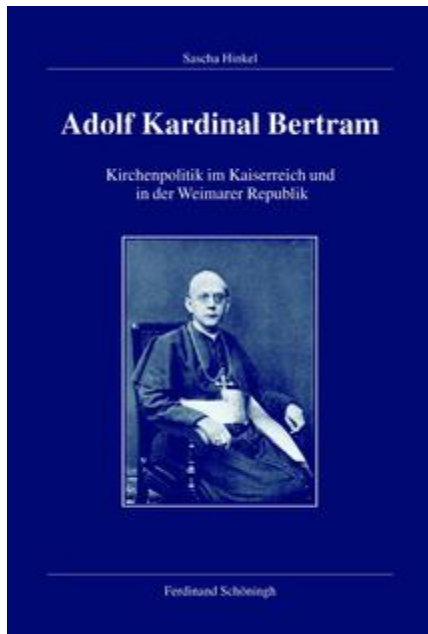
Buss’s inclusion of the experience of Lübeck Jews is commendable. Rather than a one-sided conversation featuring the dim views of Jews and Judaism purveyed by most German Protestants, Buss deals with the lived experience of Lübeck’s tiny Jewish minority during all three eras. He also consciously sets the actions and attitudes of Lübeck Protestants in their context; that is, he is careful to demonstrate the marked contrast between their often narrowly constructed abstract theological arguments about Jews and Judaism with the horrific terrestrial events being perpetrated against Jews in Europe at the same time.

This excellent study significantly broadens our previous knowledge about the Lübeck Protestant church. Buss’s judgments are measured and his analysis acute. He is also cognizant of the sensitivities involved in the issues being discussed. *“Entjudete” Kirche* is important reading for anyone interested in twentieth-century German Protestantism, and would be similarly useful for those interested in the history of Christian antisemitism.

Tags: [Christopher J. Probst](#), [Hansjörg Buss](#), [“Entjudete” Kirche](#)

Review of Sascha Hinkel, *Adolf Kardinal Bertram. Kirchenpolitik im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik*. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Zeitgeschichte, Reihe B: Forschungen 117 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2010), ISBN: 978-3-506-76871-1.

By Lauren N. Faulkner, University of Notre Dame



In his first published book based on doctoral work in Mainz, Sascha Hinkel does not set an easy task for himself. His subject is Adolf Cardinal Bertram, chairman of the Fulda Conference of Bishops from 1920 to 1945 and, as such, the most powerful Catholic bishop in Germany. Although Bertram is “among the most controversial German bishops of the 20th century” (336), he lacks a definitive, updated biography.¹¹ Bertram’s accommodation of the Nazi regime is notorious: “his opponents criticize him as vigorously as his proponents defend him.” (336) Rather than recounting Bertram’s well-known Nazi-era activities, Hinkel observes “a younger Bertram . . . who was not prejudiced by later events.” (12) The Kaiserreich and Weimar Republic are the twin epicenters of the book as Hinkel seeks to explain Bertram’s post-1933 behavior in his pre-1933 experiences. Thus, Bertram’s activities during the Third Reich are limited largely to a ten-page section at the end of the final chapter. The result is a portrait of a man who was not yet the acquiescent cardinal who kowtowed

to Adolf Hitler. And though Hinkel’s biographical approach limits him to the reach of one man, there is no denying Bertram’s considerable influence in the most turbulent years of the twentieth century. His actions impacted Catholic Germans, Vatican policy, the ethnic Poles who resided in Prussian Upper Silesia before the post-WWI territorial redistributions.

In scrutinizing his experiences as bishop in Hildesheim (1906-1914) and Breslau (1914-1945) and his 1920 accession to the cardinalate and simultaneous appointment to the chair of the Fulda Conference of Bishops, rather than Bertram’s more well-known Nazi period activities, Hinkel reminds us that it is worth looking closely at an individual’s formative years in order to explain later behavior. Bertram came of age during the papacy of Leo XIII, whose *Harmoniemedell*, or model of harmony, served as the basis for Bertram’s own approach to church-state relations. This paradigm preached compromise because God’s authority informed all earthly governments, and that the state was God’s designated instrument for preserving social order and peace.

With this, Hinkel explains Bertram’s remarkable adaptation to regime change in Germany. From monarchy to parliamentary democracy to dictatorial regime, Bertram accommodated the successive shifts while holding strong reservations. Bertram was a classic *Vernunftrepublikaner*, hostile to democracy like many other Church leaders of the time but recognizing the inevitability of its coming, and he rejected much of Nazi ideology despite his endorsement of Hitler as the legitimate head of state.

Arguably the most valuable part of the book is the section detailing Bertram’s involvement in the resolution of the “Upper Silesia question.” Its story comprises more than a fifth of the book, and it is one of Bertram’s defining pre-1933 moments, showcasing his capabilities as bishop, political player, and administrator. The re-emergence of Catholic Poland necessitated the re-drawing of national and ecclesiastical borders between 1919 and 1925, which

impacted the Catholic Church in Germany significantly and sparked political battles between Germans, Poles, and Vatican administrators for control of the new territories. James E. Bjork has done valuable work in this area already; Hinkel's portrayal of Bertram adds to this, though Hinkel does not reference Bjork in his bibliography.^[2]

It is difficult to get a grasp of the ethnic and national identities of the contested province of Upper Silesia: the inhabitants of the region, which had been part of Prussia since the eighteenth century, included German and Polish speakers. How many of these considered themselves Silesians (German-speaking, or Polish-speaking)? Alternately, how many classified themselves as German nationals or, after 1919, Polish nationals? Hinkel does not dwell long on these slippery distinctions. Instead, he reconstructs the events that led to the 1921 plebiscite that split Upper Silesia in two, with the eastern (mostly Polish) portion going to the Polish Silesian Voivodeship and the western (mostly German) portion remaining part of Germany.

It is in this section that Hinkel's Bertram comes most vividly to life, as he attempted to prove himself a major player in the power contest surrounding the plebiscite. Of particular note is the relationship between Bertram and Achille Ratti, nuncio to Warsaw and later Pope Pius XI. They formed their mutual and enduring coolness toward each other here: Bertram saw Ratti's presence as disruptive and a challenge to his own authority, and Ratti regarded Bertram as on edge, malcontent, and self-interested. Bertram's attitude vis-à-vis the Poles was forceful, and it made him unpopular: he encouraged them to vote in elections, but he advised steadfastly that Upper Silesia remain part of Germany, and in late 1920 he forbade clergy, irrespective of nationality, to use their pulpits for political lecturing. (This did not go over well with either the German or the Polish priests.)

Hinkel has used documents from eleven archives in Germany, the Vatican, Poland and Austria, including documents recently released from the Vatican's secret archives. He admits to having limited access to files in Wrocław (formerly Breslau) as well as in the Vatican, which has yet to release to the public much of its documentation pertaining to the Second World War. Despite these limitations, the book holds together well. Readers may be interested in the biograms at the end, comprised of a list of people in ecclesiastical and political circles whose paths crossed with Bertram, including their birth- and death-dates and their positions.^[3]

Some minor editorial adjustments could have made Hinkel's study more accessible, including a map of Upper Silesia showing shifting national and diocesan boundaries. The retention of quotations in their original language in the main body of the text will be problematic for scholars with no knowledge of Latin, French, or Italian.

There are some deeper questions for which Hinkel's argument cannot account. The "model of harmony" does not explain well Bertram's role in two concordat negotiations. He was a minor player in the processes that led to both the 1929 Prussian concordat and the 1933 *Reichskonkordat*, but both concerned him directly. No persuasive explanation is tendered for Bertram's minimal involvement in either, beyond the observations that Bertram's relationship with Eugenio Pacelli was distant (at the time, Pacelli was secretary of state and the overseer of both concordats), the Breslau cardinal was skeptical of a federal concordat, advocating instead for state-level concordats

(he famously said, “a frame without a picture is merely ornamentation without content” – 209 fn. 412), and that he was overworked. This does not marry persuasively with Hinkel’s portrayals of Bertram as autonomous and authoritarian.

One may also quibble with the presentation of Bertram’s antisemitism, which Hinkel qualifies as “a latent existing religious anti-Judaism.” (280) The subject of Bertram’s attitude toward Jews is hardly a central tenant of the biography. Its presence towards the end of the book, and mostly confined to a footnote, reads as an aside. Yet how useful is the distinction between religious-based anti-Judaism and racist antisemitism? While certainly one cannot argue that Bertram belongs among the blatant, unapologetic antisemites of the Third Reich, he was also hardly neutral regarding the Jews. What Bertram really thought about Jews is a question Hinkel does not resolve, but one is reminded that they were not an irrelevant minority in Breslau – statistics indicate they made up as much as 4% of the population, and paid as much as 20% of the city’s taxes.¹⁴¹ Two of his most damaging statements (which, Hinkel acknowledges, approximate Nazi language) describe a Jew-controlled international press, in March 1933, and refer in early 1938 to the conversion of Saint Paul as a rejection of “the errors of degenerate Jewishness [*Judentum*]” (280 fn 198). Susannah Heschel reminds us that words must be understood in the context of their time. In the 1930s, the German word *Judentum* could be used to refer both to the religion, Judaism, as well as the people who adhered it, “shifting meaning away from a theological-based polemic to a polemic against people.”¹⁴² This important point applies to Bertram, and makes his comments about Jews more ominous than Hinkel presents them.

Finally, there is Bertram’s unwavering enthusiasm for Adolf Hitler after March 1933. Although he remained staunchly critical of its race-based world view and promotion of positive Christianity, Bertram did approve the regime’s restoration of social order, its fight against communism, and Hitler’s professed respect for the Christian churches. But this is hardly enough to explain the effusive praise that he (and the other bishops) offered after the signing of the 1933 concordat, or the personal birthday greetings he sent to Hitler every year. Why did Bertram lose no opportunity to show his loyalty to Hitler, sometimes estranging even his own colleagues in the process?

The way that Hinkel has organized his argument may be the problem here. The book focuses on the 1906-1933 period, which at the beginning of this review I describe as one of its strengths. But this periodization makes it difficult to account fully for Bertram’s behavior under the Nazi regime and his support for Hitler. Because Hinkel stops his biography in 1933, the reader is left with many questions about Bertram’s legacy in its entirety. Can the model of harmony account for Bertram’s post-1933 behavior? Upon reflection, the answer is: not persuasively. The kind of dictatorship that Hitler erected was then unprecedented, and it may be unfair to expect Bertram to recognize it for what it was, let alone repudiate it publicly. This is tantamount to asking him to break with his training and decades of Church tradition. On the other hand, his unwillingness to be critical of Hitler is rooted in more than a stubborn perception of the Nazi Party as a God-given, legitimate authority. Moreover, the model of harmony fails to suggest what course of action to take when the state ceases to compromise for the sake of social order, or attacks the institution of the Church, as Hitler’s regime did after 1933, leaving one to wonder if the “model of harmony” argument determined Hinkel’s periodization.

Despite the limitations of his central argument and the questions that remain, Hinkel's book provides critical information about an important figure in the Catholic hierarchy in twentieth-century Germany. It is valuable to scholars studying episcopal politics and church-state relations in Germany from the Belle Epoch to the end of the Weimar Republic. It provides a new angle along which to study the impact of national and ecclesiastical border drawing on Germans, Poles, and the Vatican. Finally, it belongs to a growing body of literature that demonstrates the necessity of rethinking conventional periodizations in modern European history. The twelve-year Third Reich will always be bracketed because of the horrific devastation it spawned. But Hinkel proves that what came before 1933 is just as much worth studying on its own terms, and not simply as context for what came next.

[1] Hinkel gives a thorough overview of the literature dealing with Bertram on pages 14-27. These include works by Joachim Köhler, Bernhard Stasiewski, Werner Marschall, Antonia Leugers, August Hermann Leugers-Scherzberg, and others. Hinkel's explanation as to why it has taken so long for scholars to engage with a study of Bertram is persuasive: the timing of his death at the end of the Second World War; the transfer of Breslau to Poland in August 1945, when it became Wrocław; the early postwar "memory literature", which upheld Bertram as "the epitome of a lost, transfigured homeland [*Heimat*]" (12); and the domination of the 1933-1945 period in historiography that depicted Bertram as the compliant leader of the Catholic bishops without delving into his personality.

[2] Bjork's book, based on his dissertation work, is *Neither German Nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008).

[3] My thanks to my colleague John Deak for helping me refine my understanding of the biogram, and for his helpful comments on an early draft of this review.

[4] Statistics taken from <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Silesia>, accessed 12 July 2012.

[5] Susannah Heschel, "Historiography of Antisemitism versus Anti-Judaism: A Response to Robert Morgan" in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 33 (2011), 261. The article lays out an eloquent argument favoring a move away from a rigid distinction of the terms *anti-Judaism* and *antisemitism*.

Tags: [Adolf Kardinal Bertram](#), [Lauren N. Faulkner](#), [Sascha Hinkel](#)

Review of Hanna-Maija Ketola, *Relations between the Church of England and the Russian Orthodox Church*

during the Second World War, 1941-1945 (Helsinki: University of Helsinki Faculty of Theology PhD thesis, 2012), 231 Pp.

By John S. Conway, University of British Columbia

It was a striking paradox that the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 led to a major change in the fortunes of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Communist dictator, Stalin, after twenty years of hostility and persecution of the church, suddenly recognized his need for popular support from church members. So he changed his policy and allowed the Russian Orthodox Church unprecedented new possibilities. Amongst the changes was the permission to enter into relations with churches abroad. One of the first with whom contact was made was the Church of England. Dr. Ketola's valuable account of how these relations developed is drawn largely from British sources, since the Russian documents are not (yet) available. She describes the opportunities and complexities which this unprecedented encounter gave rise to, and outlines the intricate balancing act which faced the British church leaders. Political pressures to support Britain's new-found ally competed with deep-set suspicion of Soviet Communism and all its ways. There had been virtually no contact since the Bolshevik Revolution, though considerable sympathy had been extended to the clergy and laity who had fled abroad. The Communists' murder of the Czar and his family had appalled everyone from the royal family down to the common man. Could this crime, and the subsequent oppression of the churches now be overlooked for reasons of political expediency? The only prominent Anglican supporter of the Soviet regime was Hewlett Johnson, the Dean of Canterbury, but he was a known maverick and enjoyed no support.

In the following month, the dilemma for the Church of England's leaders only intensified. On the one hand, they were criticized for giving moral support to a regime which still maintained anti-religious propaganda in its official ideology; on the other they were criticized for not expressing more sympathy with the Russian people in their struggle. The main difficulty lay in the fact that no one in England had accurate knowledge about church life in Russia. Wishful thinking that the Soviet anti-church policy could change was not enough. And the British Government was concerned lest admiration for the Russian people's resistance could turn into admiration for Communism.

In 1942 the situation became more problematic when the Metropolitan Nicolai of Kiev approached the British Embassy suggesting an official exchange of visits between the churches, and bringing a gift of a newly-published and handsome book "The Truth about Religion in Russia." This was followed by an offer to translate the book into English, and a request for a foreword by the new Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple. The book stressed the Orthodox members' devotion to their country and gave details of the devastation wrought by the German invaders. Shortly thereafter, 700 copies were delivered to Lambeth Palace. This resulted in a flurry of exchanges between the British Foreign Office, the Ministry of Information and various Church of England officials. But Temple declined to write anything since he could not pass over the earlier persecution of the church, nor the

conduct of the Soviet occupiers in the Baltic countries. "I should either offend the Soviet authorities by what I put in, or the Continental Churches by what I left out." It all pointed to the regrettable absence of first-hand information about the true state of the Russian Orthodox Church.

So at the end of 1942 the Church of England leaders came to the conclusion that the invitation to send a church delegation to the Soviet Union was an opportunity not to be missed. It would be politically interesting but very delicate. However much the church connection was stressed, the political overtones were inescapable. On the other hand, there had been no contact for twenty-five years. It was time to begin again. The British churchmen wanted to be the first to visit, and in return agreed to make a joint declaration against fascism. But how far was the Russian Orthodox Church eager to promote Christian brotherhood, or just to escape from the solitary confinement of so many years?

The Anglicans then chose their second highest cleric, the Archbishop of York, Cyril Garbett, to lead a small delegation. His instructions were very narrowly drawn. He should avoid any open political pronouncements. No substantial discussion of dogmatic or liturgical questions was envisaged. It was simply to be a goodwill visit without commitments. But, in order to avoid any criticism from their own members, the visit should be kept secret until the Archbishop arrived in Moscow. War-time security prompted the same caution. So in fact it was not until mid-September 1943 that Garbett and two younger clerics flew out via Gibraltar, Cairo, Tehran and Stalingrad. They arrived a few days after Stalin had unilaterally made a significant concession to the Orthodox Church by allowing the revival of the Patriarchate and the election of a new Holy Synod. This seemed a good augury for the future of the Church in Russia, and Garbett's visit as the first foreign dignitary was most welcome. In return the British churchman gained first-hand impressions of the Russian church leaders, even though the language barrier prevented any heart-to-heart exchanges. But they gathered as much information as they could, and reciprocated with news about the Church of England. They attended several lengthy church services and were impressed by the piety of the worshippers. More significant issues were however skirted. Ecumenical friendship prevailed. And the delegation met briefly with the Soviet Foreign Minister, Molotov, which indicated the support given by the Soviet Government to the visit.

On his return, Garbett stressed that he had found that worship in the churches was fully allowed, and that the Russian people were now giving wholehearted support to the war effort. His impressions had been positive, and he looked forward to a return visit by the Russians to Britain. This would help to break the isolation of the Russian Church, and would enhance the prospects of future peace. But Garbett was realistic enough to acknowledge that the positive achievements of his visit were rather limited. The religious situation in Russia had improved but the state was still "non-religious" and very many churches were still closed or secularized.

In early 1944 the idea of a return visit was taken up. But the death of Patriarch Sergii in March, the Normandy invasion in June and the sudden death of Archbishop Temple in October caused a postponement. Not until June 1945 did the Russian delegation eventually arrive in Britain. By that time the European war had ended. After the defeat of

Germany and the overthrow of Nazism, the need for Anglo-Soviet co-operation was no longer a top priority. At the same time, the climate of relations between the Soviet Union and its allies had grown noticeably cooler. In church circles, increasing concern, even alarm, was felt about the Soviet re-imposition of control over the Baltic countries and Poland, and to a lesser extent over Finland. The Russians had shown no willingness to join in the task of European reconstruction to which the Church of England was heavily committed. The warmth of sympathy expressed by the hosts could not obscure the fact that no substantial dogmatic or political issues were touched on. So the return visit proved to be even less of a success than Garbett's two years before.

Dr Ketola's careful appraisal of the extensive documentation on this matter shows how assiduously the British officials, both governmental and ecclesiastical, took up the complex issues involved. She does not however attempt to give an overall assessment of the events she so capably describes. In fact, the verdict must be a negative one. The outbursts of sympathy for the Russian people were short-lived; the optimistic hopes that the Russian Church would gain more scope for its activities and that the Soviet state would allow more freedom for religion, were soon enough disappointed. It was to be many more years before relations between the Church of England and the Russian Orthodox Church could improve. But we can be grateful that Dr Ketola has shed such a clear light on this short and transient period of apparent reconciliation and inter-church harmony.

Tags: [Church of England](#), [Hanna-Maija Ketola](#), [John S. Conway](#), [Russian Orthodox Church](#)

Review of Katharina Kunter and Jens Holger Schjørring, eds., *Europäisches und Globales Christentum/European and Global Christianity: Herausforderungen und Transformationen im 20. Jahrhundert/Challenges and*

Europäisches
und Globales Christentum /
European and Global Christianity

Herausforderungen und
Transformationen im 20. Jahrhundert /
Challenges and Transformations
in the 20th Century

Herausgegeben von / Edited by
Katharina Kunter / Jens Holger Schjørring

*Transformations in the
20th Century* (Göttingen:
Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011),
381 Pp. ISBN-13: 978-3-525-
55706-8.

By Heath A. Spencer, Seattle
University

What were the most important developments in twentieth-century Christianity? If the focus is on Europe, we might emphasize secularization, declining church attendance,

Christian complicity in an era of war and genocide, or the challenges faced by churches under various dictatorships. If we are more global in scope, our attention might be drawn to the peculiarity of the United States in comparison to Europe, the dramatic expansion of Christianity in the global south, the global prominence of Pentecostal-charismatic varieties of Christianity, and relations between European and non-European Christianities during a transition from colonial empires to newly independent states. All of these themes are addressed in *European and Global Christianity*, a collection of papers presented in Denmark in 2008 at the conference “Taking Stock of Church History in the Twentieth Century from an International Perspective.” While the book does not propose a new master narrative for the history of world Christianity, individual contributors offer an indication of themes and questions that would have to be included in such a project.

In the first section, “Transformations and Historical Turning Points in the Twentieth Century,” Hartmut Lehmann and Hugh McLeod highlight broad trends in Europe and the wider world. Both see a weakening of confessional boundaries, greater religious pluralism and a dramatic decline in church attendance to be among the most important developments in European Christianity over the course of the twentieth century. McLeod identifies the 1960s as the tipping point for this ‘decline of Christendom’ but notes that the United States diverged from the European pattern in the latter part of the century. Lehmann is more attentive to trends beyond Europe and North America, drawing attention to the surge of Pentecostal-charismatic forms of Christianity and the complexity of Christian-Muslim relations. Within Europe, he also sees positive developments such as greater international understanding and a thorough discrediting of Christian anti-Judaism.

Aud V. Tønnessen and Uffe Østergård are less interested in megatrends and international comparisons than in the reactionary or progressive tendencies in Scandinavian Christianity. Tønnessen notes the persistence of an ideology of ‘gender complementarity’, not only in early twentieth-century debates about birth control and sexual morality, but also in more recent controversies over the ordination of women and the blessing of same-sex unions. Østergård’s “Lutheranism, nationalism and the universal welfare state” challenges the conventional view that trade unions and social democratic parties deserve all the credit for the modern welfare state. Instead, he concludes that “the Danish welfare state is a result of secularized Lutheranism in national garment rather than international socialism” (93).

The second section of the book offers two articles on the world wars and their repercussions for the churches. Martin Greschat shows both change and diversity in the responses of Christians to the violence of the twentieth century. During the First World War, most churches enthusiastically endorsed the slaughter. However, in the interwar period, leaders in the ecumenical movement were promoting peace and reconciliation and challenging the absolute claims of nations and states. During the Second World War, many Christians supported their governments out of a sense of fatalism and obedience to authority, but religiously-motivated resistance was also a possibility. Unlike Greschat, Nicholas Hope tells a more uniform story of Christian capitulation to the claims of ‘the State.’ Unfortunately, he does little more than raise interesting talking points (for example, the role of the churches in what James Sheehan has called the rise of the ‘civilian state’) and then drop them without further development.

The third section of the book addresses the Protestant and Catholic churches in postwar Europe. In his comparison of East German and other Eastern European churches, Miklós Tomka demonstrates that labels like ‘conformity’ and ‘resistance’ fail to do justice to the complexity of situations faced by churches and churchgoers in east bloc countries, where it was not always easy to distinguish between hypocrisy and pragmatic survival strategies. If we imagine ‘church’ to mean the clerical hierarchy and ‘resistance’ to mean openly confronting dictatorship, then these churches were seriously compromised. On the other hand, if we focus on the congregational level and pay attention to more subtle forms of opposition, then churches appear to be among the most important sites of opposition to dictatorship in the twentieth century, particularly after 1945. Tomka’s sociological analysis is complemented by Dag Thorkildsen’s historical theology in “Unconditional Christian Loyalty towards the Rulers?” Although Luther and his early modern successors left little room for challenging the social or political status quo, Norwegian theologians of the twentieth century interpreted Romans 13 (“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities...”) in such a way as to justify popular sovereignty on the one hand and resistance to German occupiers and Norwegian collaborators on the other. In the study of scriptural religions, the history of interpretation is at least as important as the texts themselves, and “Norwegian history shows that Lutheranism does not necessarily have to lead to an unconditional Christian loyalty towards the rulers” (268).

Harry Oelke and Karl-Joseph Hummel offer narrower studies of the German Protestant and Catholic churches. Oelke highlights the ongoing relevance of national studies, noting that Germany’s recent past has given a particular twist to postwar debates among German Protestants over political engagement, collective guilt, and nationalism. Hummel surveys the research on the Catholic Church in Germany, much of which has focused on the Nazi era. Immediate postwar narratives of Catholic resistance and victimhood gave way in the 1960s to critical appraisals arguing that an illiberal and anti-modern Catholic hierarchy helped facilitate the Nazi ‘seizure of power.’ More recent scholarship strikes a balance, recognizing Catholic *Resistenz* to national socialist ideology and its totalitarian claims as well as broad areas of complicity. Hummel also explores cases where political, moral, and theological agendas have shaped and at times distorted postwar memories and representations of German Catholicism.

The articles in the final section of the book return to some of the global trends mentioned by Lehmann in the opening article. Klaus Koschorke stresses the need for a coherent narrative of World Christianity and points to promising areas for comparative study such as church independence movements in Asia and Africa, colonial-ethical discourses, and the year 1989 as a global caesura (rather than merely European). Kevin Ward and Ezra Gebremedhim follow up by highlighting the unique dynamics of African Christianities rather than presenting them as African adaptations of a ‘European’ religion. Ward argues that in Africa, religious pluralism has long been the norm, and “religion has been the midwife of modernity rather than its opponent” (303). As a result, African Christians do not feel compelled to fight the same kinds of culture wars as have Europeans and North Americans. Ezra Gebremedhim assesses progress toward independence and equality in the relationship between the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus and the Church of Sweden. The nature of that equal partnership is revealed in the current dialogue between the two churches over the Church of Sweden’s decision to bless same-sex partnerships. The section ends with Viggo Mortensen’s reflections on the state of Christianity as a global religion in a pluralistic

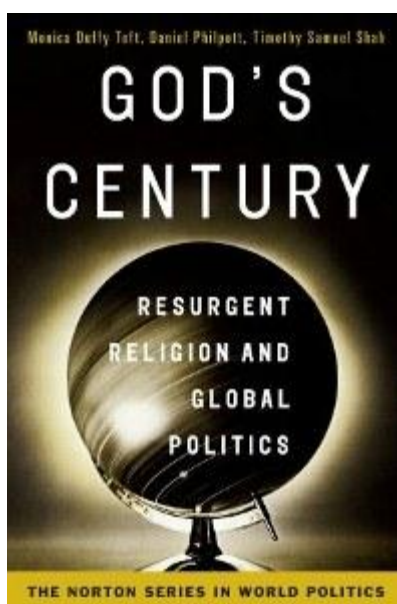
world. Mortensen identifies fundamentalism, relativism, and syncretism as threats to the integrity of Christianity, arguing that Christians must hold on to their convictions while engaging in dialogue with others in a spirit of *konvivenz*. Unfortunately, Mortensen's call for *konvivenz* is compromised by his references to 'Eurabia' and 'dhimmitude' as well as the dubious claim that 'Islam' has no history of multicultural sympathy with the 'other.' One is left wondering what he means when he poses questions like, "What will win out: Protestantisation of religion or the islamisation of Christianity?" (368).

Overall, this book delivers what the title promises, a useful constellation of articles on European and global Christianity, covering key moments, themes, and trends over the course of the twentieth century. Chapters are in English or German, and the authors represent a variety of countries (Germany, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Hungary) and disciplines (church history, theology, and sociology of religion). The middle sections privilege European church history, but the others offer a range of global perspectives that suggest new ways to imagine and contextualize European developments. The individual articles are uneven in terms of quality, significance, and originality, but the collection as a whole gives evidence of the richness and diversity of twentieth-century Christianities, within and outside of Europe.

Tags: [Europäisches und Globales Christentum](#), [European and Global Christianity](#), [Global Christianity](#), [Heath A. Spencer](#), [Jens Holger Schjørring](#), [Katharina Kunter](#)

Review of Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011), 276 Pp.

By Steven Schroeder, University of the Fraser Valley



Proponents of the secularization thesis have long-asserted that religion has been sequestered to the private realm, but the authors of *God's Century* claim this view is outdated. Drawing on a plethora of events spanning the last few decades, the authors argue that "major religious actors throughout the world enjoy greater capacity for political influence today than at any time in modern history – and perhaps ever" (49). The authors set out to explain the resurgence of religiously-fuelled political action on the world stage by examining what is behind the phenomenon: the religious actors; their beliefs; and, the ramifications of actions.

Political scientists Monica Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Shah provide the necessary historical backdrop for their study, which also problematizes succinctly the oversimplified narratives that portray religion exclusively as friend, or foe, of democracy and peace. Moving on to foreground the global impact of religion in today's world, the authors' two central arguments are that religion has played an increasingly significant role on the world stage during the last forty years, and that this increase is due to shifts in political theology and the mutual independence of political and religious actors (9-10). They argue that the onset of religion's resurgence in global politics began in the 1960s. Aided by modern communications, religious actors have made good use of their independence in creating "transnational civil societies," (24) resulting in their increased strength in the political realm (81).

The measured increase in significance of political actors is based nearly exclusively on data gathered by the U.S.-based NGO Freedom House, which examined the ties between religion and democratization during the last four decades. In numerous cases involving Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism, the data reveals a significant relationship between religion and democratization, which the authors measure according to specific criteria (e.g., open opposition to authoritarian regimes, supporting resistance groups, brokering mediation between combatants). Generally, they determined that "the democratization role of religious actors between 1972 and 2009 was massive," (93) due to the liberal, democratic political theology—and independent action—of the religious actors (112).

To be sure, many examples of religion fuelling terrorism and war are also found in the world during this same period. Chapters five and six deal directly with the violence inherent in various political theologies, and how certain conditions render plausible the outbreak of this religiously-inspired violence. Citing numerous cases as evidence, the authors utilize their categorical approach to conclude that religious actors are more likely to use violence to alter the status quo when they are "not privileged by the state [and hold] political theology that runs counter to the interests of the state" (132). States that privilege one religious group over others (i.e., integrated states) often witness violence and even civil war, which is evident in recent conflicts in Sudan, Chechnya, Algeria, Tajikistan, and Iraq. Radical domestic and international terrorist groups (e.g., Al Qaeda) broaden this thinking to the point that a specific state—or the world, generally—is seen as ignoring or threatening their cause. Terrorist actions result when this view is fused with a political theology that endorses violence for the "right" cause.

The authors conclude the book with two chapters that focus on religion's positive potential to promote peace in the world, and on prescriptive measures for us to apply in light of their discoveries. Religious actors can serve and even lead the way in peacebuilding they argue, but again this depends on the actors' political theology and their relationship to state actors, and the belligerents in the conflict. The most effective peacebuilders are religious actors who: act independent from the state and from warring factions; are popular leaders; and, hold a political theology of justice, peace, and reconciliation (206). The authors identify peaceful components in the respective religious traditions and highlight many cases of religious actors brokering peace. Here, Catholic organizations (and mainly the lay organization, Sant'Egidio) get the most attention. Additional cases involving NGOs rooted in other traditions like the Muslim-based Afghan Institute of Learning, discussed in chapter seven, would have broadened the scope and strengthened the points of this section. Nevertheless, when the essential components are present together,

religious actors—at times “with fervor equal to the religiously violent” (176)—are shown to advance peace through work in mediation, transitional justice, and reconciliation.

The prescriptive conclusion first reiterates the central role of religion in contemporary politics, and then suggests ten ways to address this role. “God’s partisans are back, they are setting the political agenda, and they are not going away,” (207) say the authors, and the best way to deal with this reality is to acknowledge and embrace it, and allow for religious freedom and autonomy. Conversely, the state will encounter significant problems—even violence—if it privileges one religion and excludes others, if it represses religious actors, or, if it doesn’t take religious actors seriously. Essentially, the authors recommend that educators and government leaders inform themselves of the role of religion in local and global politics so that political actors will learn to “treat their religious citizens in a way that promotes their best civic, democratic, productive and peaceful energies” (222).

The authors have done well in highlighting numerous cases from all parts of the globe. Additional details for some cases would have rendered clarity to numerous assertions and strengthened their conclusions. The study’s categorical approach serves to illuminate general tendencies and trends, but it is insufficient for a deeper understanding of the respective cases highlighted in the book. For example, Soviet and East German church leaders are portrayed as having been completely subservient to their respective governments, but no time frame or details of the church-state relationships are provided to explain these assertions. The limitations of the study’s main approach also became evident. Partly due to the Freedom House’s categorization of Israel as a “free” nation, the authors concluded that “Judaism has lacked the demographic opportunity...to mount serious pro-democratic activism in politically volatile and dynamic parts of the world” (104). To be sure, also identified in the book is the need to address seriously the “motivations” including “sociopolitical factors” of Palestinian suicide bombers (145). The clarity of other cases presented (e.g., Iran, Mozambique, and Guatemala) was excellent, and the authors did well to maintain their necessary, though ambitious, global approach throughout the book.

God’s Century is a compelling overview of a complex phenomenon that will be of great interest to a wide readership. The book’s focal points resonate in contemporary headlines that reveal religion as a powerful force in the world, a force that shows no sign of retreat. (For example, religious actors have had some role in the events of the Arab Spring, which the book pre-dates.) The numerous ways that religion can be employed for good or ill are handled in a balanced manner and reveal what is at stake in the relationship between religious and political actors. The authors conclude that religious actors serve democratic peacebuilding best when they enjoy independence from political authorities, and hold a political theology centered on impartial, peaceful activism. Fostering these qualities in ongoing, constructive engagement between political and religious actors seems to be the best way forward for those who want to see democracy and peace furthered in the 21st century.

Tags: [Daniel Philpott](#), [God’s Century](#), [Monica Duffy Toft](#), [Steven Schroeder](#), [Timothy Samuel Shah](#)

Seminar Report: Annual Seminar for Seminary and Religious Faculty, Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., June 18-22, 2012

By Lauren N. Faulkner, University of Notre Dame

Recently sixteen scholars met in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington for a five-day seminar led by two expert historians of modern Germany, Victoria Barnett and Robert Ericksen. Every year, the museum hosts a seminar for seminary and religious faculty via its Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies. It is aimed primarily at academics and teachers whose interests are focused on religion, but participants' backgrounds are diverse. This year, the topic was the role of the churches during the Third Reich, and it attracted an impressive array of scholars. In addition to instructors of religion, which include the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish faiths, there were also several historians of modern Germany in attendance, as well as biblical studies experts, a professor of ethics, and a professor of philosophy and religion who also teaches environmental science. This diversity of interests contributed to a lively and enriching discussion.

The seminar was held entirely in the museum, which showcased its multiple uses: in addition to being an active museum and memorial, it is also a research center and a teaching resource, with an impressive library and an enormous archive. Seminar participants took advantage of the location and were given time to tour the museum and familiarize themselves to library and archival holdings. They were also introduced to Paul Shapiro, the director of the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, Suzanne Brown-Fleming, director of the Visiting Scholars Program, and fellows working at the museum's archives.

There were five distinct units through which the seminar participants explored the topic of church complicity in Nazi Germany: Church Reactions to National Socialism; Anti-Judaism/Antisemitism: Continuities and Distinctions; Rescue, Resistance, and Opposition; Debates About Denazification and Postwar Justice; and Church Statements that Address the Holocaust. Ericksen's chapters about the churches in his new *Complicity in the Holocaust* (2010) were required reading; Barnett's text, *Bystanders* (2000), was recommended, as was Peter Fritzsche's *Germans Into Nazis* (1998). In addition to several articles, the group also read primary documents from the period, including the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Barmen Declaration, Pope Pius XII's 1942 Christmas Message, the postwar Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt, and "We Remember," from 1998, among others. Reading was completed before the commencement of the seminar, so that each day the bulk of seminar time was devoted to intensive discussion.

If the focus of the seminar was the Christian churches during the Third Reich, the theme was complicity, and one of the primary goals of Barnett and Ericksen was to invite participants to complicate their understanding of the term, and how it might be applied to the Protestant and Catholic churches in Germany. "Complicity", a shared

responsibility for an ultimate outcome, inculpates those who were not perpetrators of murder, but who nonetheless contributed to the construction of an environment in which the Nazi genocide became possible. Evidence gathered over the last seven decades has clarified some elements of the complicity puzzle: the postwar efforts by both churches to misrepresent what had been reality under Nazism, combined with deliberate dishonesty during the denazification process, are now widely recognized and condemned; there is abundant evidence of broad, enthusiastic support for Hitler in both churches, among clergy as well as laity; and there is a painful lack of evidence for consistent, open opposition from the churches to Hitler's regime. Scholars identify various factors undergirding church behavior: the nationalism of German church leaders, their tendency to view democracy with hostility during the Weimar era, their reluctance to embrace modernist trends (particularly among the Catholics), and the attraction of certain of Hitler's values, not the least of which was a relentless opposition to communism.

The organization of the seminar, the deliberate and thoughtful direction of the two instructors, and the interdisciplinary nature of the discussion that took place resulted in an exciting and original investigation of a topic that has been exhaustively scrutinized. Barnett and Ericksen came determined to immerse the participants in the historical and theological dynamics of church complicity. The unit readings and the seminar discussion, therefore, exposed participants to both the history of the topic and the theological "ecosystem" of the men (and a few women) whose actions and behavior were the focus of the seminar.

Over the course of the five days, the backgrounds of individual participants created an informed, vibrant discussion that often complicated the conventional understanding of the subject. The concept of complicity was one, as were the concepts of forgiveness, mercy, and resistance. Jewish-Christian dialogue and post-Holocaust Christian political theology surfaced frequently, and the group benefited immeasurably from the willingness of certain participants, Christian and Jewish, to debate these issues with intellectual curiosity and respect. The discussion of Christian antisemitism, especially in the New Testament, was riveting.

It may be easy for specialists of the Third Reich and the Holocaust to assume that knowledge of church complicity with Nazism is widespread and uncontroversial. But this seminar demonstrated the inaccuracy of such an assumption. Every participant came away with a firmer grasp on the nuances and complexities of the situation, and a resolution to ask the difficult ethical questions about responsibility and guilt, both in their own work and with their students. Barnett and Ericksen were the perfect discussion guides throughout the seminar, offering their considerable expertise as well as personal anecdotes and experiences. The Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies should be commended for organizing and funding the seminar, which was a resounding success in the eyes of the participants.

Tags: [churches in the Third Reich](#), [Complicity in the Holocaust](#), [Lauren N. Faulkner](#), [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#), [USHMM](#)

Conference Abstract: “Confessions of a Protestant Past: The Memorialisation of the Kirchenkampf in Contemporary Berlin”

By Diana Jane Beech, University of Cambridge

Anyone visiting Berlin for the first time will be struck by the wealth of heritage sites dedicated to remembering the tyranny of Germany’s Nazi past. From the haunting spectres of the sinister strength of the Third Reich (as epitomised by the Olympiastadion or the former home of the Reichsluftfahrtministerium) to the plethora of memorials commemorating the various victims of Nazi atrocities around the Reichstag, Berlin is a city with a showcase on both the perpetrators and the casualties of its dark history. But what of those institutions in the Third Reich like the Protestant Church, which comprised both pro- and anti-Nazi movements and, as such, do not fit neatly into Berlin’s dualistic memorial landscape?

At first glance, one would be forgiven for focusing on the bombed-out shell of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church located in the centre of Berlin’s main shopping district, which presents the Protestant Church as an innocent bystander and a tragic casualty of Allied bombings—a convenient illusion perhaps for an institution whose resistance to Nazism was less than glorious, save for the heroism of Protestant martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer or outspoken leader of the Confessing Church resistance group, Martin Niemöller? A closer examination of Berlin’s Protestant landscape off the ‘tourist track’ nonetheless reveals the Martin Luther Memorial Church in Mariendorf, which is a lesser-known place of worship kept under lock and key due to its Nazi-inspired interior, demonstrating only too well the complicity of the Protestant Church in furthering the Nazis’ hold over the German nation. Even the St. Annen Church in Dahlem, famous for its associations with the Confessing Church, cannot escape the shadow of guilt of its fellow Protestant institutions when counterbalancing its visible, outdoor memorial against racial fanaticism, war and dictatorship with a concealed, indoor display of Doris Pollatschek’s critique of the churches’ ambivalent conduct in the Third Reich: the ‘Triptych for Auschwitz’.

And it is not just Berlin’s churches that have been affected by the parallel need to acknowledge the resistance efforts of some of their members yet, all the while, emphasising their overall ineffectiveness in preventing Nazi crimes and, in some cases, even facilitating them. Physical memorials, too, erected to honour the Confessing Church, have paled in significance against their more prominent counterparts and have been left to decay just like the reputation of the churchmen they were designed to uphold. The plaque erected opposite the ‘Topography of Terror’ at Wilhelmstrasse 36 to commemorate the meeting place of the Protestant resistance movement demonstrates this perfectly. Inconspicuously placed on a graffitied and now boarded-up YMCA building and hardly noticed by the throngs of visitors at the ruins of the SS headquarters nearby, it reflects a paradoxical obligation to remember but also to relativise this contentious aspect of Third Reich history.

By focusing on the Berlin cityscape as a whole, then, my paper seeks to show how the debate over the significance of the Protestant *Kirchenkampf* (Church Struggle) in the Third Reich has come to be reflected both in patterns of heritagisation and memorialisation. As well as examining the preservation of sites of historical interest, my paper will explore how aspects of *Kirchenkampf* history have permeated Berlin's urban landscape, through street names, building dedications and commemorative plaques. It will explore the nature and location of the sites used, and question how in the long term these sites can not only come to shape public perceptions of the history of the *Kirchenkampf*, but also transmit powerful ideological messages about the value of virtue and morality in modern society.

Tags: [Berlin](#), [Church Struggle](#), [Diana Jane Beech](#), [Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church](#), [Kirchenkampf](#), [Memorialization](#)

Conference Report: XI International Bonhoeffer Congress, Sigtuna, Sweden, June 27-July 1, 2012

By Keith Clements

We are grateful to Dr. Keith Clements for the following conference report. Dr. Clements was general secretary of the Conference of European Churches from 1997-2005 and editor of Bonhoeffer Works Volume 13: London, 1933-1935.

Sigtuna, Sweden, was the venue for the recent XI International Bonhoeffer Congress. The 140 participants came not only from Europe and North America but from as far afield as Brazil, South Africa, South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, drawn by the overall theme *A Spoke in the Wheel: Reconsidering the Political in the Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. Sigtuna, the small, picturesque lakeside town situated between Sweden's capital Stockholm and its most historic cathedral city Uppsala, lays claim to having the country's oldest surviving street, Stora Gatan. For the Congress participants however one house in Stora Gatan was invested with particular historic interest, for it was there that late one night in May 1942 Dietrich Bonhoeffer had his clandestine meeting with his English ecumenical friend Bishop George Bell, giving him the fullest possible details of the conspiracy to overthrow Hitler. These details Bell was to pass to the British foreign office in the hope of securing allied support for a coup and a new, non-Nazi German government. It was perhaps the most significant, daring and fateful point in Bonhoeffer's political involvement. The house in Stora Gatan (today it is the local tourist office) became a point of pilgrimage for many at the Congress, while the recalling of that 1942 meeting provided a firm point of contact with historical and political reality for the Congress discussions themselves.

No less appropriately, the Congress was housed in the Sigtuna Stiftelsen (Foundation), established in 1917 and one of Sweden's most creative and influential church-related institutes facilitating dialogue on social and cultural issues. On the opening evening two of our Swedish hosts—Congress President Bishop Dr Martin Lind and Prof. Dr Sven-

Erik Brodd—cogently but carefully expounded the significance of the Swedish Lutheran scene and its relation to Bonhoeffer’s German context for a proper understanding of the reception of Bonhoeffer in Sweden—a reception which in fact began in 1936 when Bonhoeffer brought his Finkenwalde class of students on a short visit to the country. The Congress was equally well served by the other plenary lecturers whose presentations followed by open discussion occupied the next three mornings: Bishop Prof. Dr Wolfgang Huber (Berlin) on ‘The Theological Profile of Bonhoeffer’s Political Resistance’; Prof. Dr Jean Bethke Elshtain (Chicago) on ‘The Profile of Bonhoeffer’s Political Resistance from the Perspective of Political Science’; Prof. Dr Wolf Krötke (Berlin) on ‘Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Understanding of the State’; Dr Victoria J. Barnett (Washington D.C.) on ‘Church, State and Civil Society’; and Prof. Dr Nico Koopman (Stellenbosch, South Africa) on ‘How Do We Live Responsibly?’ Rarely can Bonhoeffer’s thought and actions have been subjected to such scrutiny and interpretation from so varied angles in three short days. Warnings were issued, for example by Wolfgang Huber, against seeing Bonhoeffer as more than a marginal figure in the political resistance as far as his personal activity was concerned. As the other presenters also argued, his true significance lies rather in his underlying perception of responsibility in relation to state and society, and his daring to inhabit the misty borderland between ecclesial and individual responsibility. Another reiterated concern was Bonhoeffer’s relation to democracy: was he, or would he have become, a democrat such as we assume now to be the norm in westernised society? Again, warnings were heard against too easy answers, either those of dismissing him as a conservative traditionalist and therefore of little contemporary relevance, or of assuming that his anti-totalitarianism equally betokens an ease with what passes for liberal democracy (but may in truth be anything but liberal or democratic) in western society today. The real questions are about how Bonhoeffer *theologically* interpreted *his* situation *then*, and how we might learn from him how we might no less critically and theologically evaluate our situations now. Nico Koopman aptly summarized how, in the still-changing context of post-apartheid South Africa, Bonhoeffer is persistently relevant:

Bonhoeffer’s theology helps South Africans in our quest for responsible living. He offers helpful descriptions of responsible living as a life that responds faithfully to the concrete call of God in Jesus Christ, which also implies responding faithfully to human beings of our generation, as well as those of past and future generations. He equips us with a theological rationale and motivation, as well as with thicker theological descriptions of human dignity and human rights. He provides essential tools for formulating policies that are cautions about wrong compromises, and that advance the fulfilment of human dignity and human rights. He shows the way to a threefold action of firstly prayer, which includes spiritual and moral formation, secondly concrete obedience, and lastly active hoping and waiting upon God.

The issues raised in plenary, with other questions, were examined further in no fewer than 36 shorter afternoon seminars on a fascinating range of subjects which presented participants with beguiling problems of choice: topics ranging from ‘Religion, Race and Resistance’ to ‘The Form of Christ and Christian Formation’; from ‘The Politics of *Life Together*’ to ‘The parish as a body of otherness’; from ‘Theology as Politics versus “Political Theology”’ to ‘Bonhoeffer and Human Rights.’ Andreas Pangritz (Bonn) looked yet again at the oft-quoted phrase ‘to fall within the spokes of the wheel,’ alluded to in the Congress title itself and found in Bonhoeffer’s 1933 essay ‘The Church

and the Jewish Question.’ It seems we Anglophones are still wilfully misreading this phrase! But as well as established academics taking a fresh look at perennial points of interest and debate, these seminars also allowed many younger scholars to share their work-in-progress on quite new themes and perspectives, and drawing upon more recent approaches in social and political science, gender studies and psychology. The plenary papers and much of the seminar material will, it is hoped, be published in due course.

Though intensive, in true Bonhoefferian style the Congress was not ‘all work and no play.’ An octet of voices from the Uppsala University Choir gave an utterly charming evening concert of traditional Swedish songs, to rapturous and prolonged applause (have you ever *seen* young people sing so joyfully with their whole faces?). A group performed the play ‘Dem Rad in die Speichen fallen’, by Galileo Galilei and der Narr. The layout of the Foundation with its informal lounges and outdoor ‘cloister’ made for easy communality during coffee breaks and late evening conviviality around the bar, while in the long Scandinavian summer daylight Sigtuna at large, with its lakeside and woodland walks, lent itself to contemplation whether alone or with others. It is rumoured that theological conversations even took place between early-morning joggers. Then of course mealtimes served not only splendid meals, such as Bonhoeffer himself would have relished, but also the opportunities to talk or argue with friends old and new. To all this was added morning worship in the chapel, calm and meditative, and uplifted by the inspiring organ-playing of Gottfried Brezger (Berlin). Thanks are due to John Matthews, Hans Buurmeester, Michael Lukens and Gottfried Brezger for arranging these services. Towards the end of the Congress, news from the different language and national sections of the International Bonhoeffer Society was shared.

Prof. Dr. Christiane Tietz (Mainz) perceptively and succinctly surveyed the ‘Harvest’ of the Congress under five main headings: awareness of the need for care in retrospective reading of Bonhoeffer in his own historical context as distinct from ours; a new perception of the political character of Bonhoeffer’s whole theology; a realization that a contextually committed theology will always have political implications; new insights into Bonhoeffer’s political actions which were not simply confined to his role in the conspiracy but involved a novel questioning of the state and the nature of its authority; and a fresh encounter with the foundational role of spirituality in Bonhoeffer’s political engagement, which enabled him to remain faithful even in the most extreme circumstances. These insights, Tietz stated, map a future for the new generation of Bonhoeffer scholars but are not merely of historical interest: they are inspirational for our own contemporary responsibilities in society.

The Congress certainly demonstrated that Bonhoeffer studies not only have a past but a future, as evidenced by the strong presence and vital contributions of so many younger participants—not to mention the fact that for reasons of time and space the organizers had had to decline as many proposals for seminar topics as they accepted. At the final chapel worship, one of the leading veterans of the Bonhoeffer Society, John de Gruchy (South Africa), gave a poignant meditation on the theme ‘Nothing is Lost,’ referring to the text Ephesians 1:10 ‘. . . as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in Christ,’ taken up by Irenaeus in his doctrine of recapitulation and in turn by Bonhoeffer in his prison reflection on the line in the hymn ‘*I will restore it all.*’ A group that has existed as long as the Bonhoeffer Society, said de Gruchy, should have no fears that the work of its pioneers will lose its

significance, any more than a loss in our personal lives is irredeemable. In this spirit also, a card with signed greetings was sent by the Congress to Renate Bethge who is no longer able to attend meetings in the way she, and of course Eberhard, did to the immense profit of so many of us.

At the Congress banquet on the final (Saturday) evening several distinguished guests from church and cultural life in Sweden were welcomed, and Bishop Martin Lind as President expressed his deep satisfaction with all that had taken place. John Matthews from the English-Speaking section spoke of the Sigtuna event providing a four-fold experience for us all: inter-national, inter-generational, inter-disciplinary and inter-personal and thus a real taste of *Gemeinsames Leben*. Finally, next morning we made our way to Uppsala for High Mass in the impressive Cathedral, at which Bishop Lind preached on authentic witness to Christ as always involving the overcoming of separation—a hopeful note on which to take leave of one another to go our ‘separate’ ways across the world.

Heartfelt thanks, then, to our hosts in Sigtuna and the Congress organizers especially Bishop Lind, Kirsten Busch Nielsen, Anders Jonåker, John Matthews, Karina Juhl Kande, Jurjen Wiersma, Hans Buurmeester, Martin Hüneker and Stephen Plant. Much appreciated also was the work of the German-English interpreters Elaine Griffiths, Renate Sbeghen and Ursula Ziel.

And what of a future Congress? Sigtuna has set a dauntingly high standard in terms alike of content, organization and venue, but a provisional committee is already investigating possibilities for 2016. This particular wheel will keep turning!

Tags: [Dietrich Bonhoeffer](#), [International Bonhoeffer Congress](#), [Keith Clements](#), [Sigtuna Conference](#)