

Robert J. Dean. *For the Life of the World: Jesus Christ and the Church in the Theologies of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Stanley Hauerwas*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016.

As the western world rapidly moves into a post-Christendom context, what is the role of the church? Theologian Robert J. Dean attempts to answer this question in this new volume. With Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas as his guides, the author argues that proper ecclesiology begins with Christology. By focusing on the ecclesiologies of Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas, Dean offers accounts of two theologians who strove to understand what it means to be the church guided by the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Dean's study comprises three main parts: "This Man is God!": The Person of Jesus Christ, A Peculiar People: The Church of Jesus Christ, and For the Life of the World: Church and World. Each part is devoted first to the work of Bonhoeffer, then Hauerwas, and concludes by drawing parallels and dissimilarities between the two theologians. Each section is mutually descriptive and critical of the pair's respective views, attempting to be honest to the message and content of each while recognizing potential failings.

In a way, what Dean is doing is as much providing a method to do Christological ecclesiology as it is examining the content of the work of both Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas. The author correctly situates the two in the tradition of Karl Barth, in that their theologies are directed towards "the God who has acted for us and revealed Himself to us in Jesus Christ" (6). Thus, Dean argues that the work of both Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas operates with a Christological impulse that informs the rest of their respective theologies. By beginning *For the Life of the World* with a foray into the Christologies of both men, he contends that the proper starting place of ecclesiology is not with the worshipping body but with the person of Jesus Christ.

Many Christians today, fuelled by a concern for mission, try to create worshipping institutions that focus primarily on the church as it should be for the world. However, as Dean shows in light of the arguments of Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas, the proper way for the church to be for the world is for it to be properly for Jesus Christ. Both theologians argue that only once an understanding (albeit an incomplete one) of Jesus Christ is reached, can one begin to understand who the body of Christ—the church—actually is.

Thus, it is only when the church truly knows who it is in Christ that it can be for the world (225).

While the author's goal is to emphasize the similarities of Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas rather than their differences, he recognizes that their differences "may offer a helpful correction" to each other (130). One "potential impasse" comes up regarding orthopraxis in the context of discipleship (136). Hauerwas, influenced by Alasdair MacIntyre, employs the language of virtue ethics as a way of speaking of the disciple's conformation to Christ. Bonhoeffer, on the other hand, is concerned about virtue language, discussing the "masquerade of evil" which befell the Third Reich. What remains true for both Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas, however, is that conformation to the person of Jesus Christ is the essential task of the disciple.

*For the Life of the World* will benefit multiple readerships. For theologians, critical engagement with the work of Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas will provide a greater understanding of both theologians' greater projects, with a reminder that theology should be rooted in the person and work of Jesus Christ for the benefit of his body, the church. For pastors, Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas provide methods of being church that are rooted in the person of Christ, thus urging those in leadership positions to reflect on their own ecclesiological models in order to ascertain if they truly employ a Christological ecclesiology. Finally, lay readers will be reminded that everything they do in life should be guided by the person and work of Christ.

Dean contends that the works of Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas will help the church to "faithfully bear witness to Christ in the midst of navigating its increasingly diasporic existence amidst the ruins of Christendom," for both men claim that "Jesus makes all the difference" (4, 5). It appears, perhaps, that post-Christendom cannot hear enough of this message of Jesus.

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