Geffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson. *The Cost of Moral Leadership: The Spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

I was at Saint John's Abbey as the U.S. prepared to invade Iraq on pre-emptive pretense. One morning a monk shared an e-mail he had just received from a monk in Belgium, asking, "What is happening to your country? It is frightening how much your president sounds like Hitler did in the 1930s. What is even more frightening is how much the American people sound like the German people of the 1930s." This monk saw in America what Dietrich Bonhoeffer saw in Nazi Germany and the German church.

Soon after hearing the monk's question, I was in Baghdad with Christian Peacemaker Teams as bombs bought with our tax dollars exploded around us. Words from Bonhoeffer rang harshly true, "How can one close one's eyes to the fact that the demons have taken over the world? It is the powers of darkness who have made here an awful conspiracy."

Few people have confronted Western Christians with a more radical call to follow Jesus than Bonhoeffer. He was his era's most radical pastor-priest-prophet, a rare moral Christian leader who spoke and lived his faith in the face of death.

I came to *The Cost of Moral Leadership: The Spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* wondering what more can be written about him. I found an answer in this poignant volume, a powerful book that "reflects the major dynamics of Bonhoeffer's spiritual life: following Jesus Christ and embracing the cross in his efforts to liberate his nation and oppressed peoples from the yoke of Nazism" (xvi).

For all Bonhoeffer's brilliance as a theologian, ethicist, and pastor, his greatest gift was his personal faith and pastoral commitment to Christ. At an early age he told a friend that his one desire was "to have faith." At the end of life, in a letter from prison to Eberhard Bethge, he confessed, "For a long time…I thought I could acquire faith by trying to live a holy life….I discovered later, and am still discovering right up to this moment, that it is only by living completely in this world that one learns to have faith" (1).

Bonhoeffer's faith was immersed in prayer as "the purifying bath into which the individual and the community must enter every day" (234).

Prayer connected him to the "other," including the enemy. In the end in a Nazi prison, prayer sustained him.

Truth and freedom must go together, Bonhoeffer insisted. To be Christian is to stake one's life on the living God as truth. The powerful shield themselves from truth by refining their lies and polishing their appearances. "They take their lies for truth" and cleverly manipulate the masses, trading on fear and hatred (206). To be free is not to be free from God but from ourselves and our untruth (207).

How do we reconcile Bonhoeffer's Christian pacifist commitment to the way of the cross with his participation in the plot to assassinate Hitler? I did not find an explicit answer in this book. But I did find an insight into how he embodied and even embraced the tension of the cross and the plot to kill Hitler. Especially revealing was a section on "Bonhoeffer's Pacifism and the Political Conspiracy" (112-15). Bonhoeffer embraced a deep sense of personal responsibility for victims of Nazi atrocities and an equally deep "trust in the incarnate presence and forgiving power of Jesus Christ" (112). He lamented the pervasive willingness of German Christians to condone Nazi violence and let Hitler be their conscience. He agonized over taking up violent measures even in this desperate "last resort." He refused to justify "deeds of free responsibility that could include violence" on grounds of convenience or pragmatism (113). "In no way did Bonhoeffer concede that the violent deeds planned by the conspirators escaped the guilt for what they had to do in attempting to free the world from the sinister, lethal grip of Adolph Hitler" (115).

On April 9, 1945, Bonhoeffer's life was tragically ended on a Nazi gallows. He was 39 years old. Reinhold Niebuhr paid tribute to him as "A Martyr….[who] belongs to the modern acts of the apostles" and who dared to "overcome the dichotomy between faith and political life" (2).

With eyes of faith, Bonhoeffer saw the victims of the Nazi regime and complicit Christians. As a follower of Christ, he felt compelled to get in the way of both. He relentlessly pursued that Lenten journey to the cross, spending his last two years in prison. His final words are those of one who gave his life to find it: "This is the end; but for me, also the beginning of life" (137).

Bonhoeffer knew Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and the cross to be *The Cost of Moral Leadership* and central to his spirituality. Our question is: Who is Bonhoeffer today?

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Geoffery Dipple. '*Just as in the Time of the Apostles': Uses of History in the Radical Reformation*. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2005.

In this volume Geoffery Dipple examines, critiques, and ultimately revises the conventional understandings promoted and inherited by past generations of Reformation historians. Anabaptists and others belonging to the 'radical' wing of the Reformation were presumed until now to have shared a foundational, if not naïve, conviction or project of restoring the Church to its primitive state, which is called "restitutionism." Although various stages of revisionist scholarship challenged who was part of the original, genuine core of the Anabaptist movement, and who was to be excluded from that core, scholars generally accepted the claim that the Radicals were New Testament primitivists (25).

Rather than viewing the Radicals as blatant restitutionists, Dipple's research qualifies such general understandings. The Radicals can be viewed more adequately as having developed historical visions, not as the basis for their reform agenda but as a later stage in the argumentation and defence of the visions for the Church they had already set forth on other grounds. Although the Apostolic Age was exalted as glorious by most, no one saw it as a complete model for reform (57).

The study begins by outlining and critiquing the dominant view of the Radicals' primitivism, whereby Frank Littell (1964) had made a distinction between the Radicals' use of history and that of the other major reformers. Dipple contends that a closer examination of Erasmus shows that his call to return to primitive sources was not as extreme as Littell and others depicted, nor did it establish a basis for Radicals to build extreme views of restitutionism. For Erasmus, Christ and the Apostles did not establish a Golden Age but merely laid the basis for the Church's development (35).