

Number 77 ♦ October 2001

## *Welcome, Renate, to the USA!*



During the month of November, Renate Bethge (pictured here) will be traveling in the USA, speaking at churches, colleges and seminaries, prior to attending the AAR/SBL Convention in Denver, November 17-20. Her itinerary includes Washington DC, New York City, Chicago and Rockford, IL, and Minneapolis & Saint Paul, MN.

These days of travel will be for Renate an opportunity not only to share something of her life experience in the Bonhoeffer family - as the daughter of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's sister, Ursula - during the Hitler years, but also an occasion for renewing many friendships that she and her husband, Eberhard, made while traveling in the USA during the past four decades. While Renate continues to reside in Villiprott, Germany, she also enjoys her time spent traveling some distance to visit with her children and grandchildren.

Our prayer is for Renate's safe travel and good health:

*Gott bewacht sie!*

### *Inside this issue . . .*

- ♦ Announcement of Bethge Scholars Program in Berlin
- ♦ Denver AAR/SBL - Nov. 17-20
- ♦ Bonhoeffer's Status at Yad Vashem
- ♦ IBG Declaration Against Terrorism

## ***Eberhard Bethge Resident Scholars Program . . . commences in Berlin***

On May 21 the Administrative Board of the Bonhoeffer House for Memorial and Encounter in Berlin authorized a new program.

In 1939 Dietrich Bonhoeffer expressed hope for genuine, worthwhile exchange between European "Reformation Churches" and American and other denominations that are not today so directly rooted in the Reformation heritage. Now *Bethge Resident Scholars* - based in Berlin at Marienburger Allee 43 - can realize this hope. The primary goal is to provide for non-Germans interested in Bonhoeffer's life and theology the opportunity for direct experience of the reality of everyday life in Germany.

Pending final detailed arrangements, notice is given here to encourage interested students, pastors, faculty, and others to consider applying. Working space and housing for *Bethge Resident Scholars*, as well as a network of appropriate contacts with individuals and institutions in Berlin and the surrounding area, are to be provided by the leadership of the Bonhoeffer House. Other support may also be arranged. A special committee of the Administrative Board will be appointed soon to oversee this new program. The Board has asked that a similar special committee be appointed by the IBS-English Section to aid in screening applicants and assist the program in other ways. Our section is expected to act on this proposal at its meeting at the Denver session with the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature in November.

While other programs such as the Bonhoeffer Lectureship, study grants from various scholarly groups or from CES-DAAD are available for work in Germany, they often are highly competitive and open, in fact, only to mature scholars of some standing. While *Bethge Resident Scholars* may include such persons and may use funds obtained from such sources, the House Administrative Board emphasizes that junior scholars, including advanced students with a variety of special interests in Bonhoeffer, are encouraged to apply for these appointments.

Eberhard Bethge's scholarly career, which became global in its influence, spanned the Atlantic in a special way, since funds to support major editing of Bonhoeffer's papers, as well as work on Bethge's masterful biography, came from American institutions. His teaching and church leadership activities often included extended periods in the United States. Therefore, this new part of the program of the Bonhoeffer House is an appropriate memorial for Bethge. It will keep active his own interests in this special direct dialogue, especially with its encouragement for younger scholars and students to have "hands on" experience of German church and cultural life.

It is expected that *Bethge Resident Scholars* will normally be in Berlin for at least 90 days. While details are still to be arranged, academic teachers, pastors, and others are encouraged to indicate immediately any interest in receiving current information and nominating fellows to: J. P. Kelley, Treasurer (email: [jkelley934@aol.com/](mailto:jkelley934@aol.com/)) 4236 White Street, Lynchburg, VA 24502 [telephone: 804-845-1032) of our section, who will serve as informal coordinator until other arrangements are completed. It is hoped that the first *Bethge Resident Scholar* may be in Berlin before the end of 2001.

Financial need continues for the *Bonhoeffer House for Memorial and Encounter* (43 Marienburger Allee, Berlin). Over the past two years 24 members of our section have contributed over \$ 4,000 through the treasury - as well as additional amounts sent directly to Berlin - for the support of various programs and activities at the Bonhoeffer House. These contributions were in response to a special appeal to replace funds which had earlier been provided by various German institutions but were no longer available after 1999. The need for annual support of about DM 50,000 is not yet covered by any endowment. Both those who have contributed earlier and any new contributors are urged to consider making gifts of any amount now. Please send checks to our Treasurer (J. P. Kelley, 4236 White Street, Lynchburg, VA 24502), payable to the "International Bonhoeffer Society-English Language Section" for the "Bonhoeffer House Project." All contributions will be promptly acknowledged with gratitude, noted as tax deductible, and remitted to the Administrative Board in Berlin for its use.

-James Patrick Kelley-

## 2001 AAR/SBL Meeting in Denver, Nov. 17-20

The following program is scheduled for the November 17-20, 2001, sessions of the International Bonhoeffer Society at the Annual AAR/SBL gathering, this year to be held in Denver, CO:

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### **Session I.** Theme: *Bonhoeffer and the Theological Task*

Saturday, November 17, 4:00-6:30 PM

Presiding: **Lori Brandt Hale, Augsburg College**

- Jeffrey W. Robbins, Syracuse University**  
"The Advance of a Theological Ontology: The Continuing Contribution of Bonhoeffer for Continental Philosophy of Religion"
- Connie Lasher, Boston College, St. Joseph's College of Maine**  
'Fellowship in Destiny': Christological Aesthetics and the 'Dialectics of Otherness'

Responding: **Barry A. Harvey, Baylor University**

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### **Session II.** Theme: *Bonhoeffer, Christ, and Social Witness*

Monday, November 19, 9:00-11:30 AM

Presiding: **Michael B. Lukens, St. Norbert College**

- Glenn Stassen, Fuller Theological Seminary**  
"Bonhoeffer's Use of the *Sermon on the Mount* in the Pluralistic Context of the Conspiracy"
- Renate Wind, Protestant Fachhochschule, Nurnberg**
- Craig L. Nessen, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque**  
"Bonhoeffer's 1933 Christological Lectures: Past Impact and Present Relevance"

Responding: **Wayne W. Floyd, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia**

(continued on next page)

## **Annual Business Meeting – English Language Section IBS**

Following the second session (time yet to be determined) of the Bonhoeffer Group at the 2001 Meeting of the AAR in Denver, the general business meeting of the society will be held to transact the business of the English Language Section – International Bonhoeffer Society. In addition to hearing reports from the society secretary and treasurer, the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works - English Edition project, and the constitution revision committee, there will be discussion on future international congresses, future publications of the society, with updates on the Bonhoeffer Lehrstule and Bonhoeffer House in Berlin. All members of the Bonhoeffer society attending the AAR gathering in Denver are encouraged to attend.

**The 2002 Bonhoeffer Society Annual Dinner** is being planned for Saturday, November 17, for members of the Bonhoeffer Society - and their guests - who will be in Denver for the 2001 AAR/SBL meeting. Again, we wish to thank Rev. Charles Sensel for making all local arrangements for the dinner. To allow for adequate planning, Charles asks that anyone desiring/planning to attend the dinner and program on November 17, immediately contact him and place a reservation. A check for \$35/person (made-out to the: *International Bonhoeffer Society/Charles Sensel*) should be sent to:

☐ Rev. Charles Sensel, 3624 Belvoir Drive, Rockford, IL 61107. ☐

Our evening program will include brief remarks and introductions by President Michael Lukens and an address by one of our international guests, Renate Bethge, of Villiprott, Germany. We are greatly honored to have Renate with us for these sessions of the Bonhoeffer Society, remembering so well the times past when she and her husband, Eberhard, graced our meetings with wisdom and humor. Eberhard died in March of 2000 and Renate continues to share the Bonhoeffer legacy of which we remain so grateful.

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**DBW Editorial Board Meeting** . . . is scheduled for Friday, November 16, 2001, in the Adam's Mark Hotel (ADM-Director's Row H ) from 2:00-6:00 PM. For information on the *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works – English Edition Project*, contact either Wayne W. Floyd (General Editor) or Clifford Green (Executive Director).

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### **Society Member Elected Bishop in Pennsylvania**

On June 9<sup>th</sup> the Reverend Carol S. Hendrix was elected the second bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Rev. Hendrix is an active member of the Bonhoeffer Society, contributing to the DBW-English Edition Project. Her official installation as bishop was on October 28<sup>th</sup> at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Hanover, Pennsylvania.

The Bonhoeffer Society extends congratulations to Carol on her election, praying for God's blessings of wisdom and courage as she transitions into this new position of responsibility.

## **YAD VASHEM COMMISSION DECLINES "RIGHTEOUS" TITLE FOR BONHOEFFER**

In a letter dated August 9, 2001, Dr. Mordecai Paldi, director of the Department for the Righteous at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, wrote to Stephen Wise:

*"The Commission for the Designation for the Righteous, at its plenary session on August 7, 2001, debated at length the case of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. A commission member designated for this purpose, who had access to the available material, presented the case, after which each of the 20 commission members who were present were asked to individually voice his opinion and observations. After a lengthy debate, the commission voted unanimously to decline the Righteous title to the late Bonhoeffer.*

*It should be pointed out that the commission's decision in no way meant to diminish Bonhoeffer's stature as a staunch anti-Nazi, which eventually cost him his life. The debate and decision centered only on Bonhoeffer's deeds with regard to the criteria established by the commission for the purpose of the Righteous title.*

*At this occasion, the commission wishes to thank all those who wrote to us on this interesting case, which will certainly add to our awareness and understanding of an important facet in the annals of the Holocaust period."*

This decision comes as a disappointment to many people acquainted with the Bonhoeffer legacy, not least the three official petitioners, Stephen A. Wise, Konrad Bieber, and Rabbi Balfour Brickner. Over a period of four years a tremendous amount of energy, emotion and resource was expended by numerous persons who were committed to seeing Dietrich Bonhoeffer recognized as one of the "Righteous." The petitioners are still convinced that the evidence submitted regarding Dietrich Bonhoeffer satisfied the Knesset's criteria for recognizing persons as 'Righteous among the Nations,' and that he should be so regarded. Very powerful was an affidavit by Marianne Leibholz describing how Bonhoeffer and Bethge drove her family towards Switzerland in their escape shortly before Kristallnacht. Equally important was the copy of Bonhoeffer's indictment quoting his letter asking that "Jewish Professor Perels, in the deportation camp Gurs in the Pyrenees ... be given help." One very credible exhibit was Eberhard Bethge's affidavit (which was in this *Newsletter* #70 of June 1999 and can be read at <http://www.holocaust-heroes.com>); another was the 1945 diary entry by Charlotte Friedenthal crediting Bonhoeffer with having saved her life among the 14 Jews rescued in Operation 7; and finally there was an affidavit by a 92-year-old Jewish psychiatrist, Analiese Schnurmann.

Those acquainted with Bonhoeffer's life are keenly aware of the authenticity and ambiguity of his actions then and his mixed reception now. Although Yad Vashem's Commission for the Designation of the Righteous "voted unanimously to decline the Righteous title to the late Bonhoeffer," we, in the International Bonhoeffer Society, who share deeply in the disappointment of the petitioners, are all the more challenged to continue sharing the wisdom and ministry of Bonhoeffer who strove to meet and serve Jesus Christ "in the middle of the village," knowing ourselves that all "righteous" engagement in the world ultimately requires engagement with "unrighteousness." Perhaps the commission's refusal to place this admiral title on Dietrich Bonhoeffer might occasion, in each person who encounters him, reflection as to whether or not one observes - in this man - biblical righteousness incarnate.

### **Publication of Biography of Rev. Clayton Powell**

This fall will see the publication of Ralph G. Clingan's doctoral dissertation on the life of Reverend Clayton Powell (1865-1953), pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem. This book will be published by Peter Lang in their series, "Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Studies in Religion, Culture and Social Development." Until publication, "Against Cheap Grace in a World Come of Age: A Study of the Hermeneutics of Clayton Powell, 1865-1953, in His Intellectual Context" can be ordered from UMI at 1-800-521-0600. This book will be of great interest for all students of Bonhoeffer's legacy because it was the preaching of Clayton Powell that captivated Bonhoeffer, luring him to attend Abyssinian Baptist rather than the nearby Lutheran, Presbyterian and Riverside churches!

## ***Bonhoeffer Session at the German Studies Association***

A session on Bonhoeffer was held for the first time at the German Studies Association meeting in Washington, D.C., October 4-7, 2001. Entitled "Dietrich Bonhoeffer: New Perspectives," the session featured three papers and a response by Robert Eriksen of Pacific Lutheran University, author of *Theologians under Hitler* and co-editor with Susannah Heschel of *Betrayal: German Churches and the Holocaust*. Gerhard Besier of the University of Heidelberg presented a paper on "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Rolle in der protestantischen Kirche vor Beginn des Zweiten Weltkrieges." Victoria Barnett's paper was "Bonhoeffer and the Wartime Response of International Church Leaders to Nazism." Clifford Green's paper was "Beyond the 'Two-Kingdoms' Doctrine: Bonhoeffer's Doctrine of Mandates."

Another session was devoted to "German universities in transition: from 'stronghold of National Socialism' to postwar reckoning." Susannah Heschel's paper was "The Theological Faculty at the University of Jena as a 'stronghold of National Socialism'" and Robert Eriksen treated "Denazification at Goettingen: a strange exercise in transition." Claudia Koontz responded to the two papers. Victoria Barnett reports that it was a very good session with both papers reviewing the records of the professors at the two universities, and then examining the initial postwar period when people scrambled to cover up their pasts.

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## ***Bonhoeffer Jahrbuch Announced***

Gütersloher Verlagshaus has announced the first publication in a new series, the *Dietrich Bonhoeffer-Jahrbuch*. Produced in cooperation with the sections of the International Bonhoeffer Society, the first of these annual volumes is scheduled for publication in February 2002. Recent information is that the editors of this first volume are Hans Pfeifer and Christian Gremmels. In addition to the two editors the editorial board currently consists of Ernst Feil, John de Gruchy, Wolfgang Huber, Christoph Strohm, and Sabine Bobert-Stützel.

The Yearbook aims to publish contributions to Bonhoeffer research and reports on the influence of Bonhoeffer's legacy. Specifically, the following types of materials are envisaged: (1) newly discovered primary sources--some 150 pages of such material was included in volume 17 of the *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke*, and additional sources continue to be found as seen, for example, in the latest German *Rundbrief*; (2) papers on issues of Bonhoeffer research; (3) reviews of publications; (4) announcements of research projects; and (5) reports of international events.

Society members are invited to make such information and material available to the editors. The advance subscription price is DM 32.00.

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## ***Berlin 2000 International Conference Proceedings . . .***

. . . to be published in the Spring of 2002

Gütersloher Verlagshaus will be publishing *Religious Heritage. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Future of Christianity*, the proceedings of the VIII International Bonhoeffer Congress held in Berlin. Speakers at the conference, whose presentations will be printed in their entirety in this volume, were not only from Germany but from many parts of the world. Under the chapter *Positionen* are articles by Wolfgang Huber, Ernst Feil and Victoria J. Barnett; under *Religion und Moderne* are articles by Jean Bethke Elstain, Ronald Thiemann, Frits de Lange and Robert Vosloo; under *Kontextualität und Pluralität* are articles by John W. de Gruchy, David N. Field and Larry Rasmussen; under *Vorbild und Zeugnis* are articles by Henry Mottu and William Apel; under *Zukunft der Ökumene* are articles by Keith Clements and Johann Baptist Metz; under *Perspektiven der "Ethik"* are articles by Clifford J. Green, Martin N. Walton and Wolfgang Gerlach; finally under *Erkenntnis und Vermittlung* are articles by Christiane Tietz Steiding, Sabine Dramm and Peter Zimmerling. This valuable collection will be dedicated to Eberhard Bethge. To learn more about the volume and the details of its publication go to: <http://www.gtvh.de>

† *In Memory of Robert McAfee Brown* †

(The following information is taken from the San Jose *Mercury News* on September 5, 2001.)

*Robert McAfee Brown, a celebrated religious educator and writer whose name was linked for nearly half a century to the great causes of liberal theology, died Tuesday (September 4) at age 81. Mr. Brown, who lived in Palo Alto, but died in Massachusetts where he kept a summer home, was a leading voice of that generation of clerics who came of age during the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War. Handsome and square jawed, with a thatch of white hair as he grew older, Mr. Brown was a popular Stanford professor of religious studies who also taught at seminaries in New York and Berkeley. During his long career, he was jailed as a Freedom Rider, preached and wrote against American involvement in Vietnam, and emerged in later years as one of the best-known advocates of the liberation theology movement in Latin America. Mr. Brown was also an important player in Protestant-Catholic dialogue. In 1962, at the behest of Pope John XXIII, he was invited to serve as a special observer for the Reformed and Presbyterian churches at Vatican II in Rome. His 28 books ranged from a Bible primer for Sunday School children to biographies of such persons as Gustavo Gutierrez and Elie Wiesel.*

*Oxford trained, a Fulbright scholar and a Presbyterian minister, Mr. Brown was born in Carthage, Illinois in 1920. In 1944, he married Sydney E. Thomson, who became a well-known labor activist as well as a teaching colleague of Mr. Brown. He attended Amherst College, while Sydney went to Smith College, she working as a nanny to the children of Reinhold Niebuhr, whose writings profoundly influenced Brown.*

*Mr. Brown received his Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York in 1945, and he served as a Navy Chaplain in the Pacific. When the Browns moved to Palo Alto in 1962, Mr. Brown became a popular campus speaker and co-founded the group 'Clergy and Laity Concerned about Vietnam.'*

*A scholarship has been established at Union Theological Seminary in New York City in his honor and, in the next year, Westminster John Knox Press will be publishing Mr. Brown's autobiography titled "Reflections for the Long Haul: A Plea for Companions." He died at a nursing home in Greenfield, Massachusetts, and is survived by two sisters, his wife, Sydney, and their four children.*

† † †

(We have chosen to print this glimpse of Bob's life because he was deeply influenced by the theology and witness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, evidenced - in part - by his membership in the Bonhoeffer Society for over twenty years. The information shared here was compiled for the *Mercury News* by Richard Scheinin)

International Bonhoeffer Society, German Section

**Appeal to the Bundestag (Federal Parliament) and the  
Bundesregierung (Federal Government)**

(passed by the members of the IBG at their convention September 22nd 2001 in  
Eisenach)

The IBG at their annual convention September 20th - 23rd in Eisenach discussed the international development after the terrorist attacks in the USA. Together with millions of people we are shocked by the dimension of terror which now threatens international peace. Dietrich Bonhoeffer taught us that Christians, together with others, are responsible for peace, justice, and the international rule of law. Fearing for the cause of peace we address the members of the Bundestag and the Bundesregierung.

We appreciate that the Bundesregierung will not adopt a policy of revenge. As the USA was attacked by terrorists the response should be directed only against them and not take the form of attacks on other states. The terrorists must be accused before, and dealt with by, an international court of justice. Military offensives endanger peace world-wide and lead to countless additional victims of innocent people. The means must be adequate. The actions of terrorists have violated international law and threatened world peace. Measures taken should therefore aim at restoring both. We expect the Bundesregierung to insist on decisions and sanctioning by the United Nations concerning military operations.

We believe that the causes of the present dangerous situation include the conflict in the Near East. We encourage the Bundesregierung to increase its efforts for peace in the world continuously. The causes for the present crisis must be named and dealt with.

We request the members of the Bundestag and the Bundesregierung - likewise the churches and religious groups - though their decisions and actions to contribute to peace in the world.

Eisenach, Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> 2001

Signed: Prof. Dr. Christian Gremmels, President,

Enno Obendiek, Secretary



**ibg**

# Bonhoeffer Rundbrief

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der Internationalen  
Bonhoeffer-Gesellschaft  
Sektion Bundesrepublik  
Deutschland

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