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A black Bonhoeffer?

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The most important theological book of this year has just been published. *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity* by Robert P. Jones, CEO of Public Religion Research Institute, was released in July, with a backdrop of a summer of Black Lives Matter protests in every US state.

Jones told CNN's Dan Burke in a recent interview that this is a critical moment for white US Christian churches which have been both 'complacent and complicit.'

He said,

> I see the last four years as a moment of reckoning for white Christians. The election of President Trump, who has put white supremacy front and center, has brought these issues from just barely below the surface into plain view. Charlottesville changed things. Charleston changed things. […] White Christians have inherited a worldview that has Christians on top of other religions, men over women, whites over blacks. There is a top-down authoritarian structure to it.[1]

This article was written in 2019 and refers to two important moments for white Christianity, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, viewed through James Cone's angry response, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's reflections and responses while observing the treatment of blacks by whites in New York in the 1930s. These influential theological thinkers

are compared and some background to the current issues in the United States of America are aired.

The cost of discipleship

In several articles and books Dietrich Bonhoeffer has been compared with another black leader, Martin Luther King. J. Deotis Roberts, in his contribution *Bonhoeffer and King*, offers this summary of the work of these two globally influential theologians, both killed aged 39 years: they left 'footprints on the sands of time'. Roberts' core finding could also be applied to James Cone, as these men 'spoke truth to power'.[2]

James H. Cone (1935–2018) lived out a costly discipleship, facing hatred and death threats until the end of his days. He spoke out about race and injustice, wrestling with issues affecting the black community in America. Cone and Bonhoeffer both served at the prestigious Union Seminary, New York; both appreciated the empowering spiritual songs created by the enslaved African-American community; both were prophets; both understood the role of the church to reshape the world's future through a Christ-centred vision; and both understood suffering was part of the journey. Professor Cornel West of Harvard said of Cone, 'James Cone was the theological giant and genius in our midst! He was the greatest liberation theologian to emerge in the American empire – and he never ever sold out.'[3] Cone completed a memoir, *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody* and these telling words from this work were released for his funeral: 'I write because writing is the way I fight. Teaching is the way I resist'.[4]

New York connections

Bonhoeffer spent a year, 1930–31, in New York studying at Union Theological Seminary. He returned briefly in 1939. These visits made a significant impact on an intelligent, sensitive and thoughtful young man. He did not find the American seminary up to his exacting academic standards, yet had life-changing experiences there. Mentored by America's leading theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, he befriended Franklin Fisher, a black fellow seminarian who introduced him to a black Baptist congregation in Harlem. Here he became immersed in the life of this congregation, occasionally preaching, teaching Sunday School and

forging a love for the spirituals. An outstanding pianist himself, he carefully selected a collection of spiritual records, taking them to Germany and London and using them in his teaching. Cone, albeit decades later, acknowledged how difficult it was for non-blacks to really connect with the black experience. Cone said, 'it takes a whole lot of empathic effort to […] see the world through the eyes of African Americans.'[5]

In America, Bonhoeffer heard passionate preaching on social justice and became sensitised to the injustices experienced by minorities. He was helped in this by another student, Paul Lehmann.[6] Bonhoeffer understood the ineptitude of the church to bring about change. Gradually he began to see things 'from below—from the perspective of those who suffer oppression.' He observed, 'Here one really could still hear someone talk in a Christian sense about sin and grace and the love of God [...] "the black Christ" is preached with rapturous passion and vividness.'[7]

He referred to this period as the point at which he 'turned from phraseology to reality.'[8]

James Cone arrived in New York in 1969, becoming an influential theologian at the seminary, eventually having global significance. Serene Jones, the current President of Union Theological Seminary, paid tribute to Cone on his passing on the Union website,

> In so many ways, James Cone has *been* Union Theological Seminary for the past 50 years […] his death leaves a void […] His prophetic voice, deep kindness, and fierce commitment to black liberation embodied not just the very best of our seminary, but of the theological field as a whole […][9]

Learning from experience

Bonhoeffer's background was European academic theology, which has sometimes been criticised for floating 'above the world'. Cone emerged from a black culture that was very much 'in the world'. However, their hinterlands and families helped prepare them for the exceptional challenges they would face. Bonhoeffer was one of eight children, deeply affected when an older brother died in battle in April 1918 during the First World War. His mother took to her bed in response, while Dietrich and his twin sister tried to 'get nearer eternity in their prayers'. He kept his brother's Bible close to him throughout his life. Bonhoeffer was close to

his grandmother, who revealed her moral courage by opposing the boycott of Jewish businesses in 1933. His father, Karl, was a wonderful role model and a stickler for avoiding 'empty speech'. This was a prominent, cultured, privileged family with similar friends. This environment helped shape Bonhoeffer's thought patterns. Adolf von Harnack, the brilliant theologian, was a neighbour following the Bonhoeffers move to Berlin in 1916; later Dietrich became one of Harnack's top students. Some of the children from this highly educated community intermarried and many reunited as adults in the struggle against Nazism.

James Cone was brought up in a financially poor family in Arkansas. His parents valued education, but were vulnerable in a tense southern state where lynching was a topic of conversation at their dinner table. His father was not intimidated but did not want his wife to work in a white household in case she was sexually molested or attacked, while his mother worried that the father would speak out and that could lead to a vicious attack from a racist mob. Theirs was a loving, committed church-going family, in a town called Bearden, bringing up their three sons to be active, able citizens of the United States. James' father, Charles Cone, did challenge the school board by seeking equal schools for blacks. The family took their due part in the community's affairs, but lived with the threat of reprisal. On at least one occasion the Cone family received the terrifying news of a lynching mob coming to their house for Mr Cone senior. Concerning the legacy received from his parents Cone said:

> She was closer to Martin Luther King Jr., a Christian, always looking for a way to conciliate, appealing to non-violence and love. My father was more like Malcolm X, a militant, truth-speaking man, refusing to compromise the truth.[10]

It is not surprising that later James Cone utilised his personal experience to compare the cross of Christ with the 4,000 lives ended by lynching. Cone admitted that after fourteen-year-old Emmett Till's brutal murder in Money, Mississippi in 1955, he realised as a black teenager he could easily become another victim. When, as he describes it, he 'removed his mask' and began to write without fear, he spoke vividly concerning the impact of white dominance:

> Lynching became a white media spectacle, in which prominent newspapers […] announced to the public the place, date, and time of the expected hanging […]. Often as many as ten to twenty thousand […] attended the event. It was a family affair, a ritual celebration of white supremacy, where women and children were often given the first opportunity to torture black victims—burning black flesh and cutting off genitals, fingers, toes, and ears as souvenirs. Postcards were made from the photographs taken of black victims with white lynchers […].[11]

Cone knew that without disciplined theological interpreters, preachers and their listeners would simply repeat the same limiting pre-packaged messages. He took the role of the theologian seriously, undertaking the lonely work of deconstructing mainstream theology. He then constructed a rich alternative, a model which had its roots in Africa, made manifest in the spiritual and secular songs accompanied by enthusiastic preaching. He put it this way, 'Black theology's spirit did not come from Europe but from Africa, from American slavery and its auction blocks, the spirituals and the blues.'[12]

He was rather like the boy who spotted that the emperor had no clothes as he realised many theologians were only communicating with each other within a racially white elite. To be taken seriously they wanted you to quote from their sources and join their small club. When he asked why leading thinkers like the German Paul Tillich, who had spoken against Nazism, did not face up to racism in the USA, Cone received the response, 'his American audience would reject him.'[13] He reflected soberly, 'Using Barth, Tillich, Niebuhr, as my theological authorities would never liberate my mind and black people from white supremacy.'[14] The opening sentence in his second book startled even him, 'Christian theology is a theology of liberation.'[15] No-one had ever said it quite like that. Liberation became a central plank in his thinking and he started to influence others.

Cone revealed his motivation during his Martin Luther King lecture at Duke University in 2015. He had learned from his parents, their peers and ancestors seeking to represent all black people in America, 'There is only one thing I dread, not to be worthy of the life that the suffering of my ancestors made possible for me.'[16]

The influence of music

The spirituals were central to Cone's theology. He remembered standing at his Mother's knee: 'I can hear it now – my mother singing her favourite song:

> This little light of mine,
> I'm goin' to let it shine'[17]

James Cone's own light shone through all his days; it was not always a gentle, soft light however it was always strengthened and focused by the music of his people. He became enraged as the Detroit riots of 1967 unfolded. He was fired to write from his experience following the murder of Martin Luther King in the following year. Suddenly he heard activist Stokely Carmichael's views on Black Power from a new perspective, 'powerlessness breeds a race of beggars',[18] and was attracted to the activism of the Black Power movement. As he undertook the task of deconstructing the oppressive theologies, he opened himself to the rich treasure of black religious tradition. He listened afresh to the key black voices from the slavery years. To feel secure and grounded, he set up a desk in his brother's church in Little Rock, Arkansas and listened to black music as he wrote. Anger fuelled his writing. He was not subtle and he caused offence:

> 'Because American theology has ignored the black poor, and the poor generally, it is not Christian theology.' […] 'Period.'
> 'Christ is black, baby!'
> 'the white church is the Antichrist'
> 'White supremacy is America's original sin. It is found in every aspect of American life' [19]

Cone was strengthened by listening to and interpreting the spirituals, which contain the collective memory of his African-American ancestors: 'The power of song in the struggle for black survival – that is what the spirituals and the blues are about. [...] black music was essential for identity and survival.'[20] His desire for revolution was fired by the thousands of songs which emerged from the bitter experience of enslavement. He connected with the hope in these songs, as well as their

cry for liberation: 'Such songs as "Go Down Moses," "Oh Freedom," and "No More, No More, No More Auction Block For Me" are signs of rebellion "against earthly conditions […]".'[21] Cone affirmed, 'the reality of the spirituals and blues as authentic expression of my humanity […] *I am the blues* and *my life is a spiritual*.'[22] He articulated the issues and the hopes: 'And we will be free. […] Resistance births hope. Hope pushes people forward and makes them believe nothing is impossible.'[23]

Bonhoeffer, a skilled musician, also made a connection with the beauty of the spirituals and the staggering oppression which created them,

> Every white American knows, sings and loves these songs. It is barely understandable that great Negro singers can sing these songs before packed concert audiences of whites, to tumultuous applause, while at the same time these same men and women are still denied access to the white community through social discrimination."[24]

He valued them, 'I still believe that the spiritual songs of the southern Negroes represent some of the greatest artistic achievements in America.'[25]

It is easy to acknowledge in retrospect that Bonhoeffer was a major thinker and, owing to his martyrdom, one of the most famous theologians of all time. He has a statue in Westminster Abbey, but his lived experience was conflict rather than popularity, facing challenges from all points of the theological and political spectrums. In a similar way, Cone faced hostility all his days. The theologies of these men engaged their guts, as well as their heads, coming out of lived experience, perhaps not so intellectually pure or as tidy as some. They both dealt with the contradictory world of their eras and endured difficulties. Cone focused on sharing his insights:

> What did it mean "to steal away to Jesus" when one had been stolen from Africa and enslaved in white America? […] What did it mean to be a "child of God" and a black slave in a white society? All these questions touch the very […] "gut" of black religion as reflected in the spirituals.[26]

His 1972 book *The Spirituals and the Blues* shows how his love of this music and theology intertwined. He found this interface vital for his perspective, 'Black music must be lived before it can be understood.'

Theological thinking was crucially important to Cone, and in his mind, 'Black music is […] theological.'[27]

Rugged engagement

Could the lack of recognition of black suffering among white theologians in America be one of the triggers for Bonhoeffer's challenging statement, 'the theological atmosphere of the Union Theological Seminary is accelerating the process of the secularization of Christianity in America'?[28]

Cone also phrases his personal perspective boldly, 'Theology is a Western concept, created by Europeans to dominate and denigrate non-Western peoples, and thus completely alien to the black religious experience.'[29] [28]

One clear difference with many other theologians was that these two men engaged in costly personal ways with the pertinent issues of their eras. In 1939 Bonhoeffer wrote to Niebhur:

> I made a mistake in coming to America. […] I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people. [...] Christians in Germany will have to face the terrible alternative of either willing the defeat of their nation in order that Christian civilisation may survive […] I cannot make that choice in security.[30]

In a curious twist, Bonhoeffer's friend Lehmann was still at Union, though now a lecturer, when Cone arrived in 1969 for his interview to join the staff. Lehmann asked him the first question, 'Why in the hell did you write that book?' Cone shot back 'I had no other choice, as a theologian […] White American theologians have ignored the gospel of God's liberation of black people from white supremacy.'[31] Despite clashes Cone's view was that Lehmann took black theology more seriously than any other white theologian.[32]

Cone raised the central issues for blacks: 'the history of black-white relations […] from the Civil War to the present unmistakably shows that as a people, America has never intended for blacks to be free. To this day, in the eyes of most white Americans, the black man remains subhuman.'[33]

He was frustrated as the situation of blacks in America was so stuck after Dr King's death that anything, even violence, was justified to bring the necessary changes. He said,

> We have had too much of white love, the love that tells blacks to turn the other cheek and go the second mile. What we need is the divine love as expressed in black power, which is the power of blacks to destroy their oppressors, here and now, by any means at their disposal.[34]

He does take both political change and the biblical witness seriously, particularly the Exodus story, the Prophets, and Christ in the Gospels, stating,

> […] by focusing on Scripture, theology is granted the freedom to take seriously its social and political situation without being determined by it. [...] Whose social situation does our theology represent? For whom do we speak? [...] we are forced by Scripture itself to focus on our social existence, but not merely in terms of our own interests. [...] there can be no Christian speech about God which does not represent the interest of the victims in our society.[35]

Bonhoeffer and Cone can be accused of being too narrow in their interests, but both men thought carefully, writing about faith from their context, living out their conclusions with considerable courage. These two men consistently placed the cross and injustice at the centre of their thinking. Cone records, 'Bonhoeffer […] read widely in African American history and literature […] including […] on the history of lynching […] and expressed his outrage over the "infamous Scottsboro trial."'[36]

Willing to die to shape the future

Bonhoeffer's promising career was dramatically altered with the Nazi ascension to power in January 1933. He was a determined opponent of the regime from its earliest days. Just two days after Hitler was installed as Chancellor, Bonhoeffer delivered a radio address in which he attacked Hitler. He warned Germany against slipping into an idolatrous cult of the leader who could very well turn out to be Verführer (a mis-leader, or

tempter). Whether by chance or accident, this radio broadcast was halted while he was mid-sentence.[37] Then in April 1933, Bonhoeffer raised the first voice for church resistance to Hitler's persecution of Jews, declaring that the church must not simply 'bandage the victims under the wheel, but jam the spoke in the wheel itself.'[38]

Several spirituals spoke powerfully to Bonhoeffer,

> Swing low, sweet chariot […]
> Sometimes I'm up, and sometimes I'm down […]
> But still my soul feels heavenly bound,
> Coming for to carry me home.

Reggie L. Williams offers an insight on Bonhoeffer's time in New York in his carefully researched *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus*:

> He recovered Jesus disassociated from oppressive structures, as Bonhoeffer describes in his Christological lectures, is present in the African American tradition of Jesus that stimulated Bonhoeffer's service to Germany's proletarian neighbourhoods. The audience can hear it in the Negro spirituals and gospel music of Bonhoeffer's great fondness. The musical forms recover Jesus from representations that associate Christ with domination.[39]

In Cone's thinking, Bonhoeffer can be termed 'black': 'Being black in America has little to do with skin color. To be black means that your heart, your soul, your mind, and your body are where the dispossessed are.'[40] For Cone, Christ was 'black' – meaning a peasant, isolated, lacking clout. Christ was vulnerable all through his days. Cone heard of Christ's vulnerability from the spirituals of his early years,

> Oh, dey whupped him up de hill an' he never said a mumbalin' word,
> He jes' hung down his head an' he cried.[41]

He knew that black slaves had actually experienced something of the pain and shame of Jesus' death on the cross, so easily found themselves 'by his side', a thought best expressed in their spiritual "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" He also quotes Bonhoeffer, 'Bonhoeffer was

right: "The Bible directs [us] to God's powerlessness and suffering. Only a suffering God can help."'[42]

Over time, the communal musical expressions of black theology spoke deeply to Cone. It contrasted with mainstream academic theology: 'I got my Ph.D. in systematic theology and left to teach European theology to black students […] who had little interest in what was clearly irrelevant to their daily lives in the land of Jim Crow.'[43] The spirituals strengthened him through his challenges. His writing provoked controversy and death threats even in his final years, as he compared Christ's crucifixion with lynching in *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. This award-winning book, published in 2011, had to be reprinted and Cone was interviewed on national television concerning the issues raised. He revealed a broad vision:

> "Writing is a form of prayer," Franz Kafka wrote in his diary. *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* is my prayer, my invocation to God on behalf of black people in the hope that their nearly four centuries of suffering will be redemptive for our children and grandchildren. […] It is also my hope that whites, too, will be redeemed from their blindness and open their eyes to the terror of their deeds so they will know we are all of one blood, brothers and sisters, literally and symbolically, and that what they do to blacks, they do to themselves.[44]

Frustration with the church

Bonhoeffer had a critical view of the phenomenon of religion. Having witnessed the failures of the German Protestant church as an institution in the face of Nazism, he still perceived an opportunity of renewal for Christianity. He argued that Christians should not retreat from the world but act within it. He believed that two things were necessary for faith: the implementation of justice and the acceptance of divine suffering. Bonhoeffer insisted that the church, like the early Christians, had to take 'seriously, not our own sufferings, but those of God in the world'[45] if it were to be a true church of Christ. His hymn written in prison reveals this thinking,

1. We turn to God when we are sorely pressed;
   we pray for help, and ask for peace and bread;
   we seek release from illness, guilt, and death:
   all people do, in faith or unbelief.

2. We turn to God when he is sorely pressed,
   and find him poor, scorned, without roof and bread,
   bowed under weight of weakness, sin, and death:
   faith stands by God in his dark hour of grief.

3. God turns to us when we are sorely pressed,
   and feeds our souls and bodies with his bread;
   for one and all Christ gives himself in death:
   through his forgiveness sin will find relief.

(from *Church Hymnary*, 4th ed., 2005)

By June 1932, in a sermon, Bonhoeffer is clearly aware of the issues, 'The blood of martyrs might once again be demanded.'[46] Later he reflects, 'The Church is the Church only when it exists for others [...] not dominating, but helping and serving. It must tell men of every calling what it means to live for Christ, to exist for others.'[47] He thought action was necessary, not just words, and the action should spring from a readiness for responsibility.[48] Cone took a similar stance, 'Without concrete signs of divine presence in the lives of the poor, the gospel becomes simply an opiate; rather than liberating the powerless from humiliation and suffering [...]'[49] and he was prepared to challenge the style and content of theological discourse: 'I brazenly broke every theological rule they [the European-style theological leaders] created – like a blues or jazz artist improvising and permutating'.[50] In tune with one of his mentors, the outstanding black writer James Baldwin, he could see the church was often too pious and hypocritical to reveal the authentic Christ.

Baldwin affirmed black music had been essential in dealing with the suffering of the black community. Baldwin's writing assisted Cone as his books and lectures authenticated black experience in America. Baldwin was able to allow the community to begin to own the horrendous pain of their past. Paradoxically he did affirm being an American while sharing his powerful words about owning the misery of being black in America:

> I do not mean to be sentimental about suffering—…but people who cannot suffer can never grow up, can never discover who they are. […] The man who is forced each day to snatch his manhood, his identity, out of the fire of human cruelty […] knows […] to look beneath appearances, to take nothing for granted, to hear the meaning behind the words.'[51]

Bonhoeffer was executed for participating in a plot to kill Adolf Hitler. His thoughts about the future are critical for comprehending the work he, then later Cone, undertook. Behind all the effort lies the thought that the ultimate test for a responsible person is whether their contribution will affect for good or ill for future generations.

Was James H. Cone a black Bonhoeffer?

In my view Cone meets the high standard set by Bonhoeffer in his *Letters and Papers from Prison*: 'Who stands fast? Only the man […] called to obedient and responsible action in faith and in exclusive allegiance to God.'[52] Cone made a decision in 1968, grounded in his discipleship of Christ, to represent the black community. He stood up, spoke out and owned their long destructive treatment in his homeland, accepting the consequences for himself. Though not martyred, he was prepared to die for this cause. His style of following Christ has enabled others to find both courage and their voice. He always spoke from a considered theological position. His consistent goal was always to change the world. His experience shaped his thinking as did his engagement with the theology of the spirituals. He is worthy of comparison with the great German, not forgetting their links with Union Seminary. He is the father of the influential school of black theology and, like Bonhoeffer, remained selflessly committed to Jesus Christ and to his path. Reinhold Niebuhr's insightful tribute article to Bonhoeffer only weeks after his execution, could equally well be applied to James H. Cone:

> […] his actions and precepts contain within them the hope of a revitalised [faith]. It will be a faith, religiously more profound than that of many of its critics; but will have learned to overcome the one fateful error […], the complete dichotomy between faith and political life.[53]

Notes

[1] https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/19/us/white-christians-racism-robert-jones/index .html
[2] J. Deotis Roberts, *Bonhoeffer and King: Speaking Truth to Power* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), ix, 101ff.
[3] Cornel West, Funeral Reflection, Riverside Church, New York, 7 May 2018, https://www.trcnyc.org/james-cone/
[4] James H. Cone, *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody: The Making of a Black Theologian* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2018), 172.
[5] James H. Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2011), 40.
[6] Geffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson, *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), 11.
[7] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, New York, 1928–1931*; *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, vol. 10 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 315.
[8] Bonhoeffer's letter of April 22, 1944, where he says that 'at the time of my first impressions abroad and under the first conscious influence of father's personality [...] I turned from phraseology to reality'. *Letters and Papers from Prison*, ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 275.
[9] "In Memoriam: Dr. James Hal Cone", https://utsnyc.edu/james-cone/
[10] Cone, *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody*, 78.
[11] Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, 9.
[12] Cone, *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody*, 79.
[13] Cone, *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody*, 74.
[14] Ibid., 41.
[15] James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, Fortieth anniversary edition (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2010), 1.
[16] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziEGUYKkVGY
[17] James H. Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1972), 27.
[18] Cited in James H. Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore, eds., *Black Theology: A Documentary History, 1966–1979* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1979), 23.
[19] Cone, *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody*, 71, 46, 51, 54.
[20] Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues*, 1.

[21] Ibid., 18.
[22] Ibid., 7.
[23] Cone, *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody*, 172.
[24] Cited in Josiah Ulysses Young III, *No Difference in the Fare: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Problem of Racism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 22; cf. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Theological Education Underground, 1937–1940; Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, vol. 15 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 458.
[25] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Barcelona, Berlin, New York*, 269.
[26] Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues*, 3.
[27] Ibid., 6.
[28] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures and Notes, 1928–1936; Collected Works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 91.
[29] Cone, *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody*, 85.
[30] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, from a letter to Niebuhr, quoted in "Memoir", written by Gerhard Leibholz as a foreword in *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans. R. H. Fuller (London: SCM, 1980), 13.
[31] Cone, *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody*, 71.
[32] Ibid., 79.
[33] James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York: Seabury Press, 1969), 10.
[34] Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 74.
[35] James H. Cone, *Speaking the Truth: Ecumenism, Liberation, and Black Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), 7–8.
[36] Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, 42.
[37] Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologian, Christian, Contemporary*, trans. Eric Mosbacher et al. (London: Collins, 1970), 259f.
[38] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Who is Christ for Us?*, ed. & trans. Craig Nessan and Renate Wind (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 59.
[39] Reggie L. Williams, *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus: Harlem Renaissance Theology and an Ethic of Resistance* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2014), 118.
[40] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power*, 151.
[41] Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues*, 48.
[42] Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, 157.
[43] Cone, *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody*, 62.
[44] Ibid., 143.

[45] Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 370.
[46] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ecumenical, Academic, and Pastoral Work: 1931–1932; Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, vol. 11 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 459.
[47] Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (rev. ed.; New York: MacMillan, 1967), 203f.
[48] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics; Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, vol. 6 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 297.
[49] Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, 155.
[50] Cone, *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody*, 63.
[51] Cited in Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, 162–63.
[52] Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 5.
[53] Reinhold Niebhur, tribute article, "The Death of a Martyr", *Christianity and Crisis*, 5 (1945): 6. In 1966, a group of radical black clergy who would later name themselves the National Committee of Black Churchmen (NCBC), released a statement in *The New York Times* which included the words, 'Powerlessness breeds a race of beggars. We are faced now with a situation where conscienceless power meets powerless conscience, threatening the very foundations of our nation.'