

Editorial Foreword

In January 2020, the 13th International Bonhoeffer Congress was hosted by the Faculty of Theology and the Beyers Naudé Center for Public Theology of Stellenbosch University, South Africa, in partnership with the Department of Religion and Theology of the University of the Western Cape. This congress took as its theme the question, “How is the coming generation to go on living?” – a question drawn from Bonhoeffer’s remarkable text, “An Account at the Turn of the Year 1942-1943” (written as a Christmas gift for his friends and co-conspirators Eberhard Bethge, Hans von Dohnanyi, and Hans Oster). There we read:

The ultimately responsible question is not how I extricate myself heroically from a situation but how a coming generation is to go on living. Only from such a historically responsible question will fruitful solutions arise, however humiliating they may be for the moment. In short, it is much easier to see a situation through on the basis of principle than in concrete responsibility. The younger generation will always have the surest sense whether an action is done merely in terms of principle or from living responsibly, for it is their future that is at stake (*DBWE* 8:42).

Bonhoeffer expresses his concern that one should take responsibility not only for one’s own personal and communal life but also for the kind of ethos and society one will leave as an inheritance for future generations.

Against this backdrop, the 2020 International Bonhoeffer Congress invited participants to reflect anew on Bonhoeffer’s question, “How is the coming generation to go on living?”

In this supplementum of the Stellenbosch Theological Journal we are proud to include eleven of the papers that was read at the conference. These articles (by Joanna Tarassenko, Ulrich Duchrow, Kevin Lenehan, Alexander Schultze, Martin Pavlík, Christoph Barnbrock, Katharina Oppel, Chris Dodson, Jeremy Rios, Luís Cumarú, and Aad van Tilburg respectively) can be seen as companion articles to the 26 other papers from the conference collected in the book *Bonhoeffer and the Coming Generations: Doing Theology in a Time Out of Joint*, with Robert Vosloo, Teddy Sakupapa,

Karola Radler and Ashwin Thyssen as editors (T&T Clark, forthcoming, 2024).

Shortly after the 2020 Bonhoeffer Congress, the world fell into the grip of the Covid-19 pandemic, and since then new challenges arose and old problems intensified that invite continuing responsible theological engagement (including with conversation partners such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer). It is our hope that the essays collected here (together with the other published papers from the 2020 International Bonhoeffer Congress) will be of service to this conversation. A special word of thanks also to the STJ editorial team (including Amanda Carstens, Danny Fourie, Marnus Havenga and Khegan Delpert).

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(guest editors)

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