

Preface

The modern-day Church in England has withdrawn from healthcare in a way that it has not withdrawn from education. In an age when the National Health Service is under strain and the Church is witnessing a persistent decline, the question is raised as to whether there are theological reasons why healthcare should be seen as an important part of the mission of the Church. This book seeks to provide an answer to that question.

In Part One, an example is provided as to how the Church could be involved in healthcare from an institutional perspective. Whilst it is recognised that the precise formation, constitution, management and governance of healthcare institutions differs from country to country, the general underlying aims and principles remain comparable. So, for the purpose of this book, a brief account is provided in respect of just one such institution using the National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom as the exemplar, with reference to the Church's involvement in healthcare in other countries being given in Chapter 4 as a comparison. Alongside the latter, an account is provided as to the historic relationship of the Church and healthcare, together with reference to the Scripture underpinning such involvement. Comparison is also made with the Church's historic and ongoing involvement in the field of education, again using the situation in the United Kingdom as an exemplar. A further chapter considers the interlinked concepts of suffering, health and healing, and dying and death, along with how these concepts interrelate to healthcare. Part One ends with an overview of the effect of poverty on health, what the Christian gospel says about poverty, and how the Church has responded to that challenge. These accounts are not intended to be

comprehensive, but to function as a platform on which to build the discussions in Part Two.

Part Two examines the relationship between the theology of the German, Lutheran priest and theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, alongside the theology and praxis of the French-German, Lutheran priest, physician, missionary and musician, Albert Schweitzer. It assesses how that relationship might play into the twenty-first-century debate on the role of the Church and healthcare, particularly in terms of the preservation and redemption of the penultimate – the penultimate, according to Bonhoeffer, being our present reality. In Bonhoeffer's words, it is 'all that precedes the ultimate' and is where 'Jesus lets human reality exist'.

Central to the work of both Bonhoeffer and Schweitzer are shared questions regarding the value of Christianity to the modern world and an emphasis on the practical application of the tenets of Christianity to improve the life of humankind. This shared philosophy links Schweitzer's work with Bonhoeffer's focus on the importance of redeeming the penultimate, the combination having a natural affinity with the work and *raison d'être* of healthcare and thereby making the work of Schweitzer and Bonhoeffer pertinent today.

Furthermore, if 'being human' is to be revered amidst questions around artificial intelligence, trans-humanism and the post-human, the ethical work of Bonhoeffer and Schweitzer assumes increased importance. Through the dual lens of their work, this research reveals the possibility of re-envisioning the praxis of healthcare as theologically central to the mission of the Church.

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Robert M Jaggs-Fowler
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List of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used for books in the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works in English (DBWE) series, published by Fortress Press, Minneapolis. Earlier dates of publication refer to the original German editions.

- DBWE 1 *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church*, ed. Clifford J. Green, trans. Reinhard Krauss and Nancy Lukens (1930; 2009)
- DBWE 2 *Act and Being*, ed. Wayne Whitson Floyd Jr, trans. Martin H. Rumscheidt (1931; 2009)
- DBWE 3 *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1-3*, ed. John W. de Gruchy, trans. Douglas Stephen Bax (1937; 2009)
- DBWE 4 *Discipleship*, ed. Geoffrey B. Kelly and John D. Godsey, trans. Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss (1937; 2003)
- DBWE 5 *Life Together and Prayerbook of the Bible*, ed. Geoffrey B. Kelly, trans. Daniel W. Bloesch and James H. Burtness (1987; 2005)
- DBWE 6 *Ethics*, ed. Clifford J. Green, trans. Reinhard Krauss, Charles C. West and Douglas W. Stott (1949; 2009)
- DBWE 7 *Fiction from Tegel Prison*, ed. Clifford J. Green, trans. Nancy Lukens (1994; 2010)
- DBWE 8 *Letters and Papers from Prison*, ed. John W. de Gruchy, trans. Isabel Best, Lisa E. Dahill, Reinhard Krauss and Nancy Lukens (1998; 2010)
- DBWE 9 *The Young Bonhoeffer, 1918-1927*, ed. Clifford J. Green, Marshall D. Johnson and Paul Duane Matheny, trans. Mary C. Nebelsick and Douglas W. Stott (1986; 2003)

- DBWE 10 *Barcelona, Berlin, New York: 1928-1931*, ed. Clifford J. Green, trans. Douglas W. Stott (1992; 2008)
- DBWE 11 *Ecumenical, Academic, and Pastoral Work: 1931-1932*, ed. Victoria J. Barnett, Mark S. Brocker and Michael B. Lukens, trans. Isabel Best, Nicholas S. Humphrey, Marion Pauck, Anne Schmidt-Lange and Douglas W. Stott (1998; 2012)
- DBWE 12 *Berlin: 1932-1933*, ed. Larry L. Rasmussen, trans. Isabel Best and David Higgins ([1997] 2009)
- DBWE 13 *London, 1933-1935*, ed. Keith Clements, trans. Isabel Best (1994; 2007)
- DBWE 14 *Theological Education at Finkenwalde: 1935-1937*, ed. H. Gaylon Barker and Mark S. Brocker, trans. Douglas W. Scott (1996; 2013)
- DBWE 15 *Theological Education Underground: 1937-1940*, ed. Victoria J. Barnett, trans. Claudia D. Bergmann, Peter Frick and Scott A. Moore (1998; 2012)
- DBWE 16 *Conspiracy and Imprisonment, 1940-1945*, ed. Mark S. Brocker, trans. Lisa E. Dahill (1996; 2006)

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The following abbreviations have been used for the major works of Albert Schweitzer:

- Bach* *J.S. Bach*, trans. by Ernest Newman, 2 vols (1905; London: A. & C. Black, 1911)
- Civilization* *Civilization and Ethics*, trans. John Naish (1929; London: Unwin Books, 1961)
- Forest* *The Primeval Forest: Including On The Edge Of The Primeval Forest and More From The Primeval Forest* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998)
- Indian* *Indian Thought and Its Development*, trans. Mrs Charles E.B. Russell (1936; Boston: Beacon Press, 1952)
- Letters* *Albert Schweitzer Letters, 1905-1965*, ed. Hans Walter Bahr, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Macmillan, 1992)
- Life* *Out of My Life and Thought, An Autobiography*, 60th Anniversary Edition, trans. Antje Bultmann Lemke (1933; Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2009)

- Memoirs* *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth*, trans. C.T. Campion (1924; New York: Macmillan, 1931)
- Mystery* *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God: The Secret of Jesus' Messiahship and Passion*, trans. Walter Lowrie (1901; London: Adam & Charles Black, 1914)
- Mysticism* *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. William Montgomery (1931; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988)
- Philosophy* *The Philosophy of Civilization*, trans. C.T. Campion (1932; Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1987)
- Quest* *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, trans. William Montgomery (1911; New York: Dover Publications, 2005)
- Reverence* *Reverence for Life*, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (1966; New York: Harper & Row, 1969)
- Sermons* *The African Sermons*, ed. and trans. Steven E.G. Melamed (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003)

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