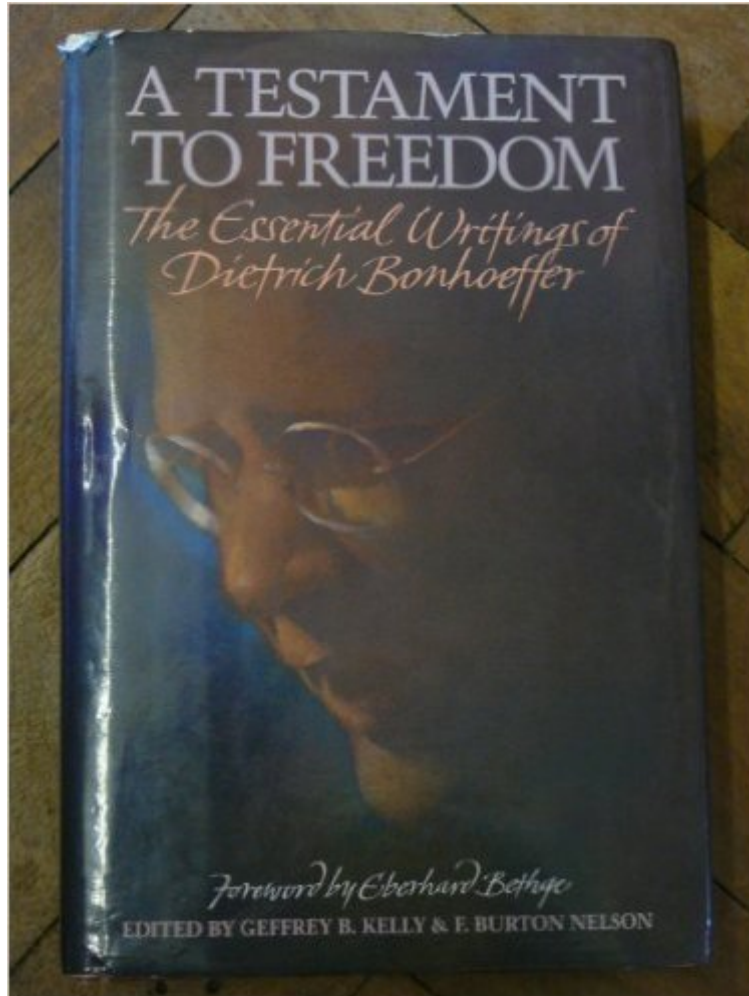


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A Testament To Freedom: The Essential Writings Of Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Synopsis

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was only thirty-nine years old when he was executed in a Nazi concentration camp in 1945, yet his courage, vision, and brilliance have greatly influenced the twentieth-century Church and theology. Particularly through his bestselling classic, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Bonhoeffer profoundly shaped such minds and movements as Martin Luther King, Jr., and Leonardo Boff, civil rights and liberation theology. *A Testament to Freedom*, completely revised and expanded for this edition, includes previously untranslated writings, excerpts from major books, sermons, and selected letters spanning the years of Bonhoeffer's pastoral and theological career. This magnificent volume takes readers on a historical and biographical journey that follows Bonhoeffer through the various stages of his life--as teacher, ecumenist, pastor, preacher, seminary director, prophet in the Nazi era and, finally, as martyr in pursuit of peace and justice. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

Dietrich Bonhoeffer occupies a distinctive niche in modern theology--a focus for both hagiography and theology; a rarity in church history, a martyred theologian. Due to his stature, as well as the profundity of his thought, various interpreters (including some advocates of the deservedly defunct "death of God" movement of the ancient '60's) have latched onto him, portraying Bonhoeffer as an advance advocate of their cause. Consequently, it's better to read Bonhoeffer himself rather than his interpreters. *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, ed. Geoffrey

B. Kelly and Burton Nelson (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, c. 1990) provides a marvelous collection of his writings, supplementing widely-available books such as *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Ethics*. In an illuminating introductory section, the editors chart some of the details of Bonhoeffer's life and provide insights into his character. "His life," they assert, "was a unity in that mysterious oneness where all contradictions are resolved in the experience of God's abiding love and forgiveness. 'Whoever I am, thou knowest, O God, I am thine'" (p. 4). Consequently, in the opinion of Payne Best, a British Secret Service officer who witnessed Bonhoeffer's final days in prison, he "always seemed to diffuse an atmosphere of happiness, of joy in every smallest event in life, and a deep gratitude for the mere fact that he was alive. . . . He was one of the very few men I have ever met to whom his God was real and ever close to him" (p. 45). Following the introduction, the book divides into seven parts, topics within which Bonhoeffer's writings appear in chronological order. The topics include Bonhoeffer as a teacher, a pastor, a leader in the Confessing Church, and a letter writer.

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