



“God is a God who bears”: Bonhoeffer for a Flat World

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“Ten years is a long time in anyone’s life.”¹ That is Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s opening salvo after ten years under Adolf Hitler’s regime. No wonder Dietrich asked his family and fellow conspirators, “Are we still of any use?” (16).

Today, we are more than ten years into an increasingly “flat world.”² As I key these words, missiles, rockets, bombs, and artillery shells are again lighting up the Holy Land—and much of the Middle East—tempting me daily, even hourly, to web-monitor my retirement funds, what with the price of crude oil soaring who knows where. More, the heat index in Saint Paul has surpassed one hundred degrees Fahrenheit for the third day in a row, reminding me that the snows of Kilimanjaro, which have been there for almost twelve thousand years, continue yearly to recede. (I’m monitoring them, too, via a webcam, since I hope to see them soon for myself.) Those meandering thoughts resemble all the “small pieces loosely

¹Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “After Ten Years,” *Letters and Papers from Prison*, enlarged ed., ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997) 3 (hereafter *LPP*). Subsequent page numbers in this section of my text are from “After Ten Years” (*LPP*). “After Ten Years” is Dietrich’s 1942 Christmas letter to his family and closest associates in the conspiracy to assassinate Hitler. For comprehensive historical context, see Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologian, Christian, Man for His Times; A Biography*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000).

²Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005). I use his poignant metaphor without prejudice to his analysis. He puts the flat world’s birthday on August 9, 1995, the day that Netscape went public.

This is one of a series of articles in Word & World commemorating the 100th birthday of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer learned in his own time of crisis that “only the suffering God can help.” As God bears us in Christ, we are given the possibility of bearing the burdens of our brothers and sisters.

joined,” and legions upon legions more, which make up the flattening World Wide Web.³ Are we—U.S. Christians, that is—still of any use? Or are we, now thoroughly www’d, becoming useless, merely more small pieces loosely joined in a loosely joined world?

Of course, Bonhoeffer interrogated himself in the face of “the fundamental wickedness of evil” (4). Evil is surely bad enough, but the Bible, noted Bonhoeffer, discloses evil’s real wickedness. Evil appears “disguised as light, charity, historical necessity, or social justice,” flaunting itself in “great masquerade” (4). I’m not suggesting a fourth “w”—flat-out wickedness—for the www. Rather, I’m asking how Bonhoeffer’s Christian response to his self-interrogation can help form our own response in a flat world.

We will explore four aspects of Bonhoeffer’s response. First, we will focus on Bonhoeffer’s insight that “God is a God who bears”⁴ and situate that insight within the context of his own spiritual crisis. Second, we will examine his criticism of modern subjectivity in the early Karl Barth, because this critique clarified his confession of “God who bears.” Third, we will explore why the God who bears means that “bearing constitutes being a Christian,” thereby shaping discipleship and the church beyond modern individual subjectivity. Finally, we will see where discipleship as bearing will take us autobiographically—as it autobiographically took Dietrich—that is, for a “view from below” the flat world.

“WHO CHRIST REALLY IS, FOR US TODAY”

The question of “Who Christ really is, for us today” always bothered Bonhoeffer, though he didn’t pen that now-famous question until April 30, 1944, in Tegel Prison.⁵ Ten weeks later and just four days before the failed July 20 assassination of Hitler, Bonhoeffer presciently confessed that “only the suffering God can help.”⁶ With this “only” he was consciously rejecting other prevalent “god” proposals. He specifically rejected the “god” proposal popular among Christians of his day—and ours—rooted preeminently, even solely, in divine “omnipotence.” Ironically, this reductionist god of omnipotence spawned a plethora of “modern” deist, pantheist, and atheist counterproposals. Bonhoeffer knew, of course, that the popular omnipotent *deus ex machina* and its counterproposals all remain tied at the tail of power as control. By the 1940s he was thoroughly confident that only cruciform theology promised real help.

³David Weinberger, *Small Pieces Loosely Joined: A Unified Theory of the Web* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus, 2002). He puts the birth of the flat world in late 1993, when Mosaic used a browser link, which was the progenitor of Netscape.

⁴Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, ed. Geoffrey B. Kelly and John D. Godsey (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001) 90. *Discipleship* was previously, and erroneously, titled in English *The Cost of Discipleship*.

⁵Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “Letter to Eberhard Bethge” (30 Apr 1944), *LPP*, 279. Bethge has himself demonstrated the deep christological continuity of Bonhoeffer’s theology embedded in his Lutheran identity (see Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 853–870, 885–890).

⁶Bonhoeffer, “Letter to Eberhard Bethge” (16 July 1944), *LPP*, 361.

We pick up Bonhoeffer’s journey to a cruciform “God who bears” in 1932. At the age of twenty-six, Dietrich faced, as twenty-somethings do, a spiritual, even soteriological, crisis. The nature of the crisis can be reconstructed, though the details remain shrouded. In a now well-known letter from Tegel Prison on April 22, 1944, to his best friend Eberhard Bethge, he recalled a “change.” “There are people who change, and others who can hardly change at all. I don’t think I’ve ever changed very much, except perhaps at the time of my first impressions abroad and under the first conscious influence of father’s personality. It was then that I turned from phraseology to reality.”⁷ The reality was heartrending, and the change was “momentous.”⁸

Bonhoeffer did not talk openly about this personal change either with his family and friends or with his seminary students at Finkenwalde. Those who came to know him after 1932 just assumed that the Dietrich they knew was the only Dietrich that ever existed. Prior to 1932, however, he exercised an “ambition that many noticed in me [that] made my life difficult.”⁹ He related to people “in a very unchristian way,” using his considerable intellectual capabilities in a way in which “I turned the doctrine of Jesus Christ into something of personal advantage for myself....I was quite pleased with myself...but I had not yet become a Christian.” In sum, he exercised a powerful, controlling, and “dominating ego.”¹⁰

Bonhoeffer began working on his book *Discipleship* during this 1932 personal crisis, though it did not get published until 1937. He wrote it for explicitly stated churchly reasons, but he also oriented it theologically to resolve his personal crisis. How so? Quite simply, in *Discipleship* Bonhoeffer directs Dietrich to discipline his dominating ego by acknowledging the presence of a bigger, more authoritative ego who commands Dietrich to submit in obedience. Jesus is that commanding presence and this “commanding Christ” of the Sermon on the Mount is the omnipotent God.¹¹

In a prison letter to Bethge on July 21, 1944, the day after the assassination attempt failed, Dietrich reminisced critically on *Discipleship*.

I remember a conversation that I had in America thirteen years ago with a young French pastor. We were asking ourselves quite simply what we wanted to do with our lives. He said he would like to become a saint (and I think it’s quite likely that he did become one). At the time I was very impressed, but I disagreed with him,

⁷Bonhoeffer, “Letter to Eberhard Bethge” (22 July 1944), *LPP*, 275.

⁸Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 202–206.

⁹These words come from a letter that Bonhoeffer wrote to an acquaintance on 27 January 1936. I quote them selectively from Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 204–205.

¹⁰This is Clifford Green’s phrase (see Clifford Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, rev. ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999] 111). I am persuaded by the basic thrust of Green’s analysis. He probes “an ‘autobiographical dimension’ which must be recognized in order fully to understand its [*Discipleship*’s] text, and that it contains unresolved theological and personal problems which grow out of the 1932 experience and point forward to their resolution in the prison letters” (107). While attending to this autobiographical dimension, Green also carefully avoids “psychological reductionism.”

¹¹Green, *Bonhoeffer*, 140–179.

and said, in effect, that I should like to learn to have faith. For a long time I didn't realize the depth of the contrast. I thought I could acquire faith by trying to live a holy life, or something like it. I suppose I wrote *The Cost of Discipleship* as the end of that path. Today I can see the dangers of that book, though I still stand by what I wrote.¹²

Bonhoeffer's acknowledgment of *Discipleship's* semi-Pelagian undertow helps us see something else as well. His confession only a few days earlier—"only the suffering God can help"—means that even *Discipleship's* commanding Christ cannot help. In fact, by entwining a commanding-Christ christology with a semi-Pelagian, obedience-focused anthropology Bonhoeffer blurred his rightful exposure of a church mired in cheap grace, which he stood by in his time just as we ought to do in ours. Further, his prison-situated criticism and confession exposes for our time just how imprisoned U.S. Christian cultures truly are. How often don't we dangerously entwine a commanding-Christ christology with a semi-Pelagian anthropology? Are we surprised that various U.S. Christian cultures succumb so readily to imperial and Constantinian theocratic temptations? Is a flat world all that safe from temptations of power as control and obedience as submission?

“only the suffering God can help”—Bonhoeffer's acknowledgment of Discipleship's semi-Pelagian undertow helps us see that even Discipleship's commanding Christ cannot help”

Once we, with Bonhoeffer, “see the dangers of that book,” we position ourselves for *Discipleship's* true treasure. For buried beneath its dominant themes of command and obedience awaits a “subordinate Christological motif.”¹³ Here we meet a different Jesus, a crucified Christ, “the suffering God.” Bonhoeffer's rich metaphor is God as bearer: “God is a God who bears.” Bonhoeffer continues: “The Son of God bore our flesh. He therefore bore the cross. He bore all our sins and attained reconciliation by his bearing.”¹⁴ In this way bearing constitutes incarnation, cross, resurrection, and ascension. Indeed, bearing constitutes “that kind of Lord” that Jesus is, rather than some other kind of lord.¹⁵ In the submerged motif of bearing we meet Bonhoeffer the Lutheran, tipping his critical christology of lordship in a cruciform direction. We also find the continuity between the early (1927–1932) and the late (1939–1945) Bonhoeffer.

¹²Bonhoeffer, “Letter to Eberhard Bethge” (21 July 1944), *LPP*, 369.

¹³Green, *Bonhoeffer*, 173.

¹⁴Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, 90.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 85.

DISPELLING THE MODERN SUBJECT

In 1930 Bonhoeffer honed his critical christology of lordship in an incisive critique of the early Karl Barth, from whom he had learned much. Bonhoeffer wrote *Act and Being*, a complex academic treatise, in order to clarify the theological concept of revelation.¹⁶ In 1922 Barth had introduced the concept of revelation in order to criticize modern liberal Protestant theology. He aimed to take theology and the church in a new direction. Modern liberal Protestantism had reduced theology to anthropology and Christian faith to mere “religion.”¹⁷ He claimed that a singular focus on the concept of divine revelation would expose liberal Protestantism’s bankrupt anthropocentrism, its modernism. Bonhoeffer agreed with this basic criticism. Liberal theology had, as he would say years later, “conceded to the world the right to determine Christ’s place in the world”; it became a “compromise” with modernity’s assumed optimism, progressivism, and superiority.¹⁸ Still, Bonhoeffer did not find Barth’s theology of revelation completely satisfying.

Barth had framed his theology of revelation around the notion of God’s absolute “freedom.” Divine lordship, sovereignty, and glory mean God’s absolute, free will to do anything God wants to. God can reveal God’s self, or not. Only in this way, thought Barth, is God safe from being distorted, manipulated, or exploited by human reason, will, and pretension. Bonhoeffer explains Barth’s project:

God is free inasmuch as God is bound to nothing, not even the ‘existing,’ ‘historical’ Word. The Word as truly God’s is free. God can give or withhold the divine self according to absolute favor, remaining in either case free. Never is God at the disposal of human beings; it is God’s glory that, in relation to everything given and conditional, God remains utterly free, unconditioned. (82)

God’s revelation must be pure act, argued Barth. Bonhoeffer quotes him at length:

The relation between God and human beings, in which God’s revelation to me, to a human being, is truly imparted, would have to be free and not static in the sense that its constancy could never mean anything other than the constancy of an action that is not only continuous but in every instance beginning, in all seriousness, at the beginning. This relation should never be thought of as already given, already obtaining, nor from the viewpoint of a law of nature or a function of mathematics but always as *a matter of action* [aktuell], that is, with all the instability of a deed being done right now. (82–83)¹⁹

¹⁶Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being: Transcendental Philosophy and Ontology in Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996). This is his *Habilitationsschrift*, which is a second dissertation required in the German system for those headed toward university teaching. Subsequent page numbers in this section of my text are from *Act and Being*.

¹⁷Barth’s *The Epistle to the Romans* epitomizes the “early” Barth. Bonhoeffer first read the second German edition of 1922 in winter 1924–1925, bringing Barth into classroom discussions with Adolf Harnack. See Andreas Pangritz, *Karl Barth in the Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000). Pangritz offers rich resources for the Bonhoeffer–Barth connection, though I differ from his overall assessment.

¹⁸Bonhoeffer, “Letter to Eberhard Bethge” (8 June 1944), *LPP*, 327; and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005) 153–157.

¹⁹The quotation is from Barth’s *Die christliche Dogmatik im Entwurf* [Christian Dogmatics in Outline] (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1927).

This is Barth's actualism. "How could it be otherwise," muses Bonhoeffer, since, as sovereign, "God has sole control" (83)?

Still, Bonhoeffer is not satisfied. He suspects that philosopher Immanuel Kant, the epitome of Western modernity, is "lurking here." Like Kant, Barth was out to limit human reason. God is in control, not human "conceptual form or... systematic thought" (84). But, argues Bonhoeffer, limiting reason *in this way*, that is, by keeping God "at a distance," means that Barth surrendered true temporality. "It follows that, even though Barth readily uses temporal categories..., his concept of act still should not be regarded as temporal. God's freedom and the act of faith are essentially supratemporal" for Barth (84). Barth's theological attempt to give the Kantian concept of act a historical meaning is "bound to fail," argues Bonhoeffer, since for Barth, as for Kant, "no historical moment is *capax infiniti*," capable of bearing the infinite (84).

"Barth's theological attempt is 'bound to fail,' argues Bonhoeffer, since for Barth 'no historical moment is capax infiniti'"

Bonhoeffer's criticism of Barth draws on a neuralgic Lutheran-Calvinist dispute:

God [according to Barth] recedes into the nonobjective, into what is beyond our disposition. That is the necessary consequence of the [Calvinist] formal conception of God's freedom, which might be demonstrated without difficulty also in the relationship between nominalism and the concept of contingency at the close of the Middle Ages.

God remains always the Lord, always subject, so that whoever claims to have God as an object no longer has *God*; God is always the God who 'comes' and never the God who 'is there' ([says] Barth). (85)

Barth's God can never "be there." There is only "act," not "being." Not so for Bonhoeffer. God is "act and being."

It is noteworthy how readily Barth's "formal" concept of God's lordship, sovereignty, and freedom accommodated itself to the modern Western notion of the human "subject." That is Bonhoeffer's worry! First, the modern free individual self adopts an "objectivating attitude," which makes everything that is not oneself into an object for the self. Under this objectivating attitude the free individual self is "always subject" and thus "nonobjective." By objectivating the other, the modern free subject seeks to master these objects, to control them, to have them at its disposal and, therefore, never vice versa.²⁰ Barth had reversed modernity but not overcome it! The modern subject remained, more emphatic now than ever. Barth merely relocated modern subjectivity in deity rather than in humanity. While Barth's approach surely exploded Western human pretensions, that is still not good enough

²⁰See Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being*, 124–125.

news for Bonhoeffer. Barth’s doctrine of God hadn’t traveled far enough from the modern. So, how far has our flat world really traveled from the modern?

Bonhoeffer couples his critique of Barth’s purely formal concept of God’s lordship with a provisional way forward, a Lutheran christological way.

The entire situation raises the question whether the formalistic-actualistic understanding of the freedom and contingency of God in revelation is to be made the foundation of theological thought. In revelation it is not so much a question of the freedom of God—eternally remaining within the divine self, aseity—on the other side of revelation, as it is of God’s coming out of God’s own self in revelation. It is a matter of God’s *given* Word, the covenant in which God is bound by God’s own action. It is a question of the freedom of God, which finds its strongest evidence precisely in that God freely chose to be bound to historical human beings and to be placed at the disposal of human beings. God is free not so much from human beings but for them. Christ is the word of God’s freedom. God is present, that is, not in eternal nonobjectivity but—to put it quite provisionally for now—‘haveable,’ graspable in the Word within the church. Here the formal understanding of God’s freedom is countered by a substantial one. (90–91)

Bonhoeffer’s “haveable” retrieves Luther’s stress on the God who gets “handled.” Quoting Luther: “It is the honor of our God, however, that, in giving the divine self for our sake in deepest condescension, entering into flesh and bread, into our mouth, heart and bowel and suffering for our sake, God be dishonorably handled, both on the altar and the cross.”²¹ God’s “substantial,” “true” freedom is Christ *being there for us by bearing us*. In Christ “God binds God’s self to human beings” (112). God’s being as bearing, we might say, always dispels the modern subject, in God and in a discipling church.

BEARING AS DISCIPLESHIP AND CHURCH

Because Christ’s bearing definitively identifies God’s being, “bearing constitutes being a Christian” as well.²² Through word and sacrament Christ’s cross becomes every Christian’s in a twofold way: “The first Christ-suffering that everyone has to experience is...the death of the old self...The cross is not the end of a pious, happy life. Instead, it stands at the beginning of community with Jesus Christ” (87). Famously, Bonhoeffer announces: “Whenever Christ calls us, his call leads us to death” (87).²³ The bearing Christ bears our old sinful self on his cross and in this way puts sinners to death. This critical or negative side of the cross is necessary.

Still there is another side. The second “Christ-suffering” forms the church of Christian discipleship.

²¹I have used the English translation of Bonhoeffer’s transposition of Luther into modern German (*Act and Being*, 82, note 1). See Martin Luther, “That These Words of Christ, ‘This is my body,’ etc., Still Stand Firm against the Fanatics” (1527), in *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut Lehmann, 55 vols. (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia and Muhlenberg, 1955–1986) 37:72 (hereafter *LW*).

²²Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, 91. Subsequent page numbers in this section of my text are from *Discipleship*.

²³Reginald H. Fuller’s famous 1948 English translation still rings in many people’s ears: “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die” (*The Cost of Discipleship* [New York: Macmillan, 1948] 79).

Jesus Christ passes on the fruit of his suffering to those who follow him....So Christians become bearers of sin and guilt for other people. Christians would be broken by the weight if they were not themselves carried by him who bore all sins. Instead, by the power of Christ's suffering they can overcome the sins they must bear by forgiving them. A Christian becomes a burden-bearer—bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2). As Christ bears our burdens so we are to bear the burden of our sisters and brothers...[which] is not only his or her external fate, manner, and temperament; rather, it is in the deepest sense his or her sin. I cannot bear it except by forgiving it, by the power of Christ's cross, which I have come to share. (88)

***“as Christ bears our burdens so we are to bear the burden
of our sisters and brothers”***

Through word and sacrament Jesus Christ himself shares his own bearing of our human finitude, frailty, fate, and failure as the very form of his body the church. A bearing church is the generative form of Christian discipleship through which we experience “the joy of discipleship” (86). Paraphrasing Bonhoeffer, let us call this “rich grace.”

“THE VIEW FROM BELOW” THE FLAT WORLD

In Bonhoeffer's 1927 dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio*, he had already laid the christological groundwork for the “bearing God” and for his critique of Barth's modernism.²⁴ Bonhoeffer's technical German word for Jesus' bearing is *Stellvertretung*, translated “vicarious representative action,” or more useably translated “place-sharing.”²⁵

Bonhoeffer develops his bearing, place-sharing theology of sociality by exploring Luther's “wonderful and profound” understanding of Jesus' “happy exchange.”²⁶ According to Luther, Jesus' own place-sharing becomes the very form of the communion of saints through the sacrament of Holy Communion. Thus Luther:

Christ with all saints, by his love, takes upon himself our form [Phil. 2:7], fights with us against sin, death, and all evil. This enkindles in us such love that we take on his form, rely upon his righteousness, life, and blessedness. And through the

²⁴Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998).

²⁵“Vicarious representative action” is the now agreed-upon translation of *Stellvertretung* throughout the new sixteen-volume authoritative English edition of *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works* (Minneapolis: Fortress). I gratefully borrow “place-sharing” from my colleague Andrew Root (see Andrew Root, “Reexamining Relational Youth Ministry: Implications from the Theology of Bonhoeffer,” *Word & World* 26/3 [2006] 274–276).

²⁶Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 179; also 146–156, 178–192. Of course, “bearing” is a broadly based biblical metaphor (see Frederick J. Gaiser, “I will carry and will save”: The Carrying God of Isaiah 40–66,” in *And God saw that it was good”: Essays on Creation and God in Honor of Terence E. Fretheim*, ed. Frederick J. Gaiser and Mark A. Throntveit, *Word & World* Supplement Series 5 [St. Paul: Word & World, Luther Seminary, 2006] 94–102). Luther employed it often. See, for instance, his famous “joyous exchange” lecture on Gal 3:13 where he explicitly inquires, “But what does it mean to ‘bear’?” (Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians* [1531/35], in *LW* 26:276–291).

interchange of his blessings and our misfortunes, we become one loaf, one bread, one body, one drink, and have all things in common. O this is a great sacrament, says St. Paul, that Christ and the church are one flesh and bone. Again through this same love, we are to be changed and to make the infirmities of all other Christians our own; we are to take upon ourselves their form and their necessity, and all the good that is within our power we are to make theirs, that they may profit from it. That is real fellowship, and that is the true significance of this sacrament.²⁷

Jesus’ place-sharing generates both the internal form of churchly discipleship and the church’s missional form relative to the world. This brings us back full circle to Bonhoeffer’s “After Ten Years.” He concluded that letter with “the view from below”:

There remains an experience of incomparable value. We have for once learnt to see the great events of world history from below, from the perspective of the out-cast, the suspects, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed, the reviled—in short, from the perspective of those who suffer....This perspective from below must not become the partisan possession of those who are eternally dissatisfied; rather, we must do justice to life in all its dimensions from a higher satisfaction, whose foundation is beyond any talk of ‘from below’ or ‘from above.’ This is the way in which we may affirm it.²⁸

Jesus’ place-sharing always desires to take his churchly body *somewhere*, always surprising his disciples.²⁹ Neither disciples nor the world assign Jesus his place. Unbeknownst to Dietrich, his early view from below began with the death of his older brother during World War I; continued when the privileged Dietrich met and ministered to unemployed workers on his internship in Barcelona, Spain; intensified when he witnessed racial discrimination against Harlem African Americans during his study year in New York; and culminated in the Nazi nightmare and his own martyrdom. Dietrich’s “view from below” responds to “Are we still of any use?”

“our bearing, place-sharing view from below will be no less ‘an experience of incomparable value’ in an ever-flattening world”

Our bearing, place-sharing view from below will be no less “an experience of incomparable value” in an ever-flattening world. God’s now flat world is surely, and sorely, ambiguous. It can easily “loosely connect,” but it can just as readily, and just as likely, flatten those living below. Merely follow international events! In the

²⁷Martin Luther, *The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ, and the Brotherhoods* (1519), in *LW* 35:58.

²⁸Bonhoeffer, *LPP*, 17.

²⁹Bonhoeffer structured his formal christological lectures in the summer of 1933 around the themes of “who” and “where” (see Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978]).

opening paragraph of “After Ten Years” Bonhoeffer made an admission about the view from below: “There is nothing new about [the things we have learned], for they were known long before; but it has been given to us to reach them anew by first-hand experience.”

What do you think? Where in the flat world will our place-sharing, bearing God place you? ⊕

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