

READING BONHOEFFER IN 2025 AMERICA

Dietrich Bonhoeffer is presently receiving renewed attention as numerous countries turn to authoritarianism with racist, fascist, nativist and triumphalist overtones. This renewed interest shows itself in a feature-length movie, **Bonhoeffer**, together with shorter YouTube videos, and the publication of his Christmas gift to fellow resisters, *After Ten Years*, with an Introduction by Victoria J. Barnett. *After Ten Years* is Bonhoeffer's account of the lessons resisters learned in battling fascism for a decade. It is also an account of how the Hitler years changed the German people.

Our United class will use the Adult Forum Hours of January 12 and 26, February 9 and 16, and March 2 to discuss Bonhoeffer's experience together with our own in and for 2025 America. The time is 11:15 – 12:15 each of these dates. The place, depending on class size, will be the Learning Center or an Education Wing room.

The sessions are as follows.

January 12: first half of the documentary on Bonhoeffer by Martin Doblmeier of www.journeyfilms.com. This will present the Protestant church's experience of German fascism and Bonhoeffer's participation in the Confessing Church (the resisting church). Our discussion will focus on what the German churches failed to do, or did wrong (and right), and what might be learned for our setting.

January 26: second half of the Bonhoeffer documentary. The attention here is to the military/political conspiracy to end the Hitler regime, Bonhoeffer's role in that and his reflections on it. His essay, *After Ten Years*, is to be read by this date. Copies will be available on Jan. 12 to all who have signed up for the class.

February 2 and 16: a close reading of *After Ten Years* with attention to what might shed light on our own context as well as what differs to the extent that Bonhoeffer's experience doesn't transfer. While the essay is not long (14 pages), it invites extensive reflection and careful interpretation for both Bonhoeffer's setting and ours. We may choose only selected portions for the February dates. That's yet to be determined.

March 2: an open-ended discussion focused entirely on what we see as our own path in 2025, given our experience of the preceding forum time together. What stays with you? And why?