

# Remembering Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Force for Good

April 16, 2023, 2:00pm



Dietrich Bonhoeffer in London, 1939  
by Rotraut Forberg  
(bpk Bildagentur / Art Resource, NY)



Bonhoeffer and young Richard Ern  
in Scarsdale, NY, c. 1931  
Courtesy the Ern family



“By the Powers for Good” by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, December 1944  
As printed in *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

The forces for good in wonder surround us,  
Through faith and peace they'll guard and guide.  
And so these days with you I'll live,  
With you, my friends, a new year abide.

The year just past still lingers in our hearts,  
And evil times on us their burdens weigh,  
O Lord, to shaken souls bestow your peace,  
Your promised grace, your solace, on this bleak day.

But should you tend your cup of sorrow,  
To drink the bitter dregs at your command,  
We accept with thanks and without trembling,  
This offering from your gracious, loving hand.

But if joy be once again your gift bestowed,  
To this our world with sunlit skies so fair,  
May we always harken to these days of old,  
And commit our lives to your loving care.

May your waxen candles flaming spread their warmth,  
As their glow flickers darkness into the light.  
May your will be done to make us one again;  
May your love's glimmering hope illumine our night.

When now the silence spreads around us,  
O let us hear the sounds you raise,  
Of world unseen in growth abounding,  
And children chanting hymns of praise.

The forces for good surround us in wonder,  
They firm up our courage for what comes our way,  
God's with us from dawn to the slumber of evening,  
The promise of love at the break of each day.

## PROGRAM

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*As you enter the sanctuary, please silence all electronic devices.*

PRELUDE

Marc Lohse, *piano*

WELCOME

Rev. Samuel T. Clover  
Senior Minister, Greenville Community Church

INTRODUCTION

Manfred Philipp  
Professor emeritus, the City University of New York

OPENING REMARKS

David Gill  
Consul General of Germany in New York

SPEAKERS

Dr. Gary Dorrien  
*Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics Union Theological Seminary, NYC*

Dr. Mary Ellen Schmider  
*Professor of History, University of Maryland Global Campus  
Former Executive Director, Fulbright Association*

Dr. Reggie L. Williams  
*Professor of Christian Ethics, McCormick Theological Seminary*

*All are invited to a reception in the church lobby following the program.*

Today's event is sponsored by 1014—The Space for Ideas; co-sponsored by the US Alumni Association of DAAD, the European Union Studies Center of CUNY Graduate Center, and German Fulbright Alumni E.V.

We are grateful to several friends of Greenville Community Church whose contributions made this program possible.

## PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

**David Gill** has served as German Consul General in New York since October 2017. He grew up in East Germany where he initially studied theology. He participated in the peaceful East German protests that helped bring down the Berlin wall. After German reunification, he worked with others on saving the records of the East German secret police, the Stasi. One cannot overestimate the importance of that work.

He then received a Law degree at the University of Pennsylvania and became an attorney in Germany, working as an adviser for the German government and for the German protestant Church. David Gill became the director of the Office of the German Federal President, ending his work there in February 2017. Several months later he was appointed Consul General in New York. He and his wife Sheila have two daughters.

**Dr. Gary Dorrien** teaches social ethics, theology, and philosophy of religion as the Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary and Professor of Religion at Columbia University. He was previously the Parfet Distinguished Professor at Kalamazoo College, where he taught for 18 years and also served as Dean of Stetson Chapel and Director of the Liberal Arts Colloquium. Professor Dorrien is the author of 21 books and more than 300 articles that range across the fields of social ethics, philosophy, theology, political economics, social and political theory, religious history, cultural criticism, and intellectual history.

Social critic Michael Eric Dyson wrote in 2021: “Gary Dorrien is the greatest theological ethicist of the twenty-first century, our most compelling political theologian, and one of the most gifted historians of ideas in the world.” Philosopher Cornel West describes Dorrien as “the preeminent social ethicist in North America today.”

Dorrien has written about economic democracy and social justice politics, post-Kantian philosophy, and modern theology throughout his career. In recent years he has taught as the Horace De Y. Lentz Visiting Professor at Harvard Divinity School, the Paul E. Raither Distinguished Scholar at Trinity College, and Lowell Visiting Professor at Boston University School of Theology. Dorrien lectures frequently in Germany, England, and Canada, and writes for *Cross Currents*, *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy*, *Tikkun*, *Christian Century*, *Telos*, *Commonweal* and other journals.

**Dr. Mary Ellen Schmider** is professor of history at University of Maryland Global Campus. She has served the Fulbright Association in several capacities for many years, including as Executive Director and President of its Board of Directors. In 2019 she, together with Christiane Amanpour and Manfred Philipp, presented the Fulbright Prize for International Understanding to German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Dr. Schmider’s background in academic administration and teaching led to emerita status as Graduate Dean and Research Officer at the Minnesota State University in Moorhead. Her

board service beyond Fulbright included nearly 14 years for Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and its predecessor bodies, eight as an officer of the Board for Higher Education and Schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and two as chair of the Minnesota Humanities Commission. She has held two Senior Fulbright Lecturer Awards, one in the People's Republic of China, and one in the Republic of Macedonia.

**Dr. Reggie L. Williams'** book *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus: Harlem Renaissance Theology and an Ethic of Resistance* (Baylor University Press, 2014) was selected as a Choice Outstanding Title in 2015, in the field of religion. The book is an analysis of exposure to Harlem Renaissance intellectuals, and worship at Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church on the German pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, during his year of post-doctoral study at Union Seminary in New York, 1930-31.

Dr. Williams' research interests include Christological ethics, theological anthropology, Christian social ethics, the Harlem Renaissance, race, politics and black church life. His current book project includes a religious critique of whiteness in the Harlem Renaissance. In addition, he is working on a book analyzing the reception of Bonhoeffer by liberation activists in apartheid South Africa.

Dr. Williams received his Ph.D. in Christian ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary in 2011. He earned a Master's degree in Theology from Fuller in 2006 and a Bachelor's degree in Religious Studies from Westmont College in 1995. He is a member of the board of directors for the Society for Christian Ethics, as well as the International Dietrich Bonhoeffer Society. He is also a member of the American Academy of Religion and Society for the Study of Black Religion.

**Marc Lohse** is a pianist and music educator from Germany. He holds a Bachelor of Music with Honors from the State University of Music and Performing Arts Mannheim and is currently pursuing a Master of Music in piano studies at the Manhattan School of Music in the studio of Prof. Dr. Inesa Sinkevych. A scholarship holder of the German Konrad-Adenauer Foundation, Marc has won numerous first prizes in national and international piano competitions and has performed in Berlin, Milano and Oslo. Both as a soloist and ensemble member, Marc made recordings for the German radio stations Deutschlandfunk Kultur and SWR (Southwest Broadcasting). As an educator, he enjoys passing on his love for music to students of various ages and backgrounds.



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