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SUFFERING AS AN ECUMENICAL PARADIGM IN DIETRICH BONHOEFFER AND EDITH STEIN

Introduction

In his introduction to the encyclical *Ut unum sint*, Pope John Paul II acknowledges the “courageous witness of so many martyrs of the [20th] century, including members of Churches and Ecclesial Communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church.” It is this witness which “gives new vigour to the Council’s call and reminds us of our duty to listen to and put into practice its exhortation [of unity].” The Pope described the martyrs of the Church as “united in the selfless offering of their lives for the Kingdom of God,” and it is their sacrificial lives given for the “sake of the Gospel” which are the most “powerful proof that [...] division can be transcended and overcome in the total gift of self for the sake of the Gospel.” Here, in his introduction to the encyclical, Pope John Paul suggests that the motif of a theology of the cross, of cruciform sacrificial discipleship, is the pre-eminent ecclesiological motif: “believers in Christ, united in following in the footsteps of the martyrs, cannot remain divided. If they wish to truly and effectively oppose the world’s tendency to reduce the Mystery of Redemption to powerlessness, they must profess together the same truth about the Cross.”¹ For Pope John Paul II, the suffering of the martyr represents the ecumenical paradigm.

In this paper, I suggest that the interpretation of suffering given by Bonhoeffer and Stein, which they considered an essential consequence of Christian discipleship, can represent this “ecumenical paradigm.” The Protestant theologian Jürgen

¹ Ioannes Paulus PP. II, *Ut unum sint. On commitment to Ecumenism*. <http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint.html> [accessed 1 March 2017].

Moltmann also believes that we need to look to the past for inspiration from the church's common witnesses, and among the shared saints which Moltmann proposes are Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Edith Stein.² Moltmann considers that it is "under the cross" that the world-wide ecumenical fellowship exists beyond all confessional borders. He writes:

under the cross of Christ we all stand with empty hands. Under the cross of Christ, we are not counted up and differentiated as Catholics, Protestants, or Orthodox. Under the cross of Christ our empty hands are filled with the same grace. The nearer we come to the cross, the nearer we also come to each other. Under the cross of Christ we discover ourselves as children of the same grace and as friends in the same fellowship of the Spirit.³

In his article, Moltmann explores the ecumenical nature of the *theologia crucis*, which he described elsewhere as, "the key signature for all Christian theology."⁴ According to Moltmann, this *theologia crucis* represents not only Christ's absolute costly commitment to the world, but that it also describes both the nature and the necessity of the Christian disciple's active participation in God's mission. Moltmann sees here not only the heart of Martin Luther's theology,⁵ but also that of Teresa of Ávila. It is this *theologia crucis* which, because of its Christological origins, can function as a unifying ecumenical narrative and point to a fundamental and essential ecclesial characteristic. A recognition of this is critical in the modern period, marked by increased fragmentation and individuality.

Bonhoeffer and Stein – Biographical Convergence

The life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German Lutheran, pastor, theologian, ecumenist and political conspirator, has been described according to the different stages provided in the sub-title of Eberhard Bethge's biography: *Theologe – Christ – Zeitgenosse*.⁶ Hanna-Barbara Gerl has interpreted Edith Stein, the Jewish-Catholic,

2 Jürgen Moltmann, "Teresa of Avila and Martin Luther," in *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 13.3 (1984), 266. Moltmann writes: "Still today 'the world is ablaze,' as Teresa said of her time. And Christians cannot afford to settle the arguments of the last four hundred years in their churches while revolution has erupted in the streets of the world. Together we must seek the certainty of salvation which sustains us and gives us hope in the face of the catastrophe. Together we must seek an authentic form of Christian life and community in this time of upheaval. The situation has become so grave that we need all the help available from the witnesses of the past, no matter what confession they ascribe to: Teresa and Luther, Edith Stein who was killed in 1942 in Treblinka and Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was killed in 1945 in Flossenbürg."

3 Ibid., 278.

4 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (London: SCM, 1973), 72.

5 Moltmann quotes Luther, "It is not sufficient or even useful for one to recognize God in his glory and majesty if at the same time one does not see in him the baseness and shame of his cross [...]. In the crucified Christ is true theology and knowledge of God." Otto Clemen, ed., *Luthers Werke*, vol. 5 (Berlin: Walther de Gruyter, 1933), 388.

6 Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologe – Christ – Zeitgenosse. Eine Biographie* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967). Bethge, in the Alden-Tuthill Lectures in 1961, described the three chronological developments as: 'Foundation' (1927–1933), 'Concentration' (1933–1940), and 'Liberation' (1940–1945). Bethge suggested that these 'periods' might also be called the dogmatic, the exegetical, and the ethical periods: "The Challenge of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life

philosopher, educator and Carmelite, in a similar sequential form: *Unerbittliches Licht: Edith Stein: Philosophie – Mystik – Leben*.⁷ Although it is uncertain whether they actually met, Bonhoeffer and Stein share considerable biographical associations, which includes their common historical, social, political, national, aesthetic, academic, geographical, and religious *Sitz im Leben*.

Although the difference between a Jewish-Catholic philosopher and Carmelite and a German Lutheran pastor and theologian has been described as “unbridgeable,”⁸ it is the premise of this paper that biographical and philosophical ‘hermeneutical bridges’ not only exist between Bonhoeffer and Stein, but that they can be positively used to illuminate a fundamental ecclesial reality: suffering, *pathos*, experienced and endured for the other or vicarious suffering.

Both Stein and Bonhoeffer were born in Breslau, in the German Empire’s eastern Prussian Province of Silesia, known for its large Jewish and Polish communities. Unlike the Bonhoeffers, who moved to Berlin in 1912, the Stein family home remained in Breslau. Like many Europeans of the early 20th century, Bonhoeffer’s and Stein’s historical and personal context was one of ‘trauma.’ Bonhoeffer’s experience included the death of his brother Walter, and Stein’s experience of loss of many close friends and relatives during the war.⁹ The trauma for both is present throughout their lives through the existential choices that they made and the suffering they experienced. This paper is not concerned with their personal experience of suffering, but their experience and understanding of the suffering of others. Both Bonhoeffer and Stein, whether consciously or unconsciously, used their experience of *pathos* theologically, and it is surely of interest and relevance that both developed a *theologia crucis*.

Religious Background and Ecumenical Sympathies

The Bonhoeffer family was only nominally religious, and was surprised at Dietrich’s early decision to pursue a church career. However, both Stein and Bonhoeffer benefited from significant maternal religious influences. Bonhoeffer’s mother had

and Theology,” in *The Chicago Theological Seminary Register* 51.2 (1961).

7 Hanna-Barbara Gerl, *Unerbittliches Licht. Edith Stein: Philosophie – Mystik – Leben* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1991).

8 Alasdair McIntyre described the division between the Catholic French mystic Thérèse of Lisieux and her contemporary, the German Lutheran theologian and church historian Adolf Harnack, as “unbridgeable.” Alasdair McIntyre, *Edith Stein. A Philosophical Prologue* (London, and New York: Continuum, 2006), 69. Sylvain Destrempe would disagree, given that he has identified significant dialogical links between Thérèse and Bonhoeffer. Sylvain Destrempe, *Thérèse de Lisieux et Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Kénose et laterite* (Montréal: Les Éditions Médiaspaul, and Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2002).

9 Friends who were killed during the war included Eduard Mentis, Hugo Hermsen, Fritz Frankfurter, Rudolf Clemens, Husserl’s son Wolfgang and, most significantly, Stein’s academic mentor and friend Adolf Reinach. Joyce Avrech Berkman, “The Intellectual Passion of Edith Stein,” in Joyce Avrech Berkman, ed., *Contemplating Edith Stein* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 29.

benefited from an early Moravian contact, which included a period at the Moravian centre at Herrenhut. This influence marked Bonhoeffer as unconventionally Lutheran, and was demonstrated in his use of the Moravian *Losungen* throughout his life. Stein's maternal influence is more controversial, touching as it does on her conversion from Judaism to Roman Catholicism.

Stein says in her autobiography, *Life in a Jewish Family*, that at fifteen she gave up prayer.¹⁰ This turning away from an active participative faith is interpreted by most of Stein's biographers and commentators¹¹ as an embrace of atheism. Sr. Teresia Renata Posselt,¹² Stein's novice mistress and later prioress in Cologne, and Rachel Feldhay Brenner¹³ both state that Stein came from an 'orthodox' Jewish background, although this is not accurate.¹⁴ This presentation of Stein as initially orthodox Jewish, then atheist and finally Christian, would support a narrative of Christian supersessionism, particularly when Stein is presented as a person in search of 'truth,' as is the case for many of Stein's biographers. However, Stein's emotional, intellectual and spiritual journey is more complex and nuanced than these biographers suggest.

For Stein's reception into the Catholic Church she asked the Lutheran Conrad-Martius to act as her godmother. This biographical detail illustrates Stein's broader ecumenical convictions, which resonate clearly with Bonhoeffer's own considerable ecumenical sympathies and convictions. Ecumenical attitudes and practices confirm the significance of *alterity* as a significant psychologically motivating phenomena for both Stein and Bonhoeffer. Ecumenical activity and sympathy demonstrate the willingness to transcend their particular confessional identity.

I would suggest that it was not only *alterity* but more significantly *pathos*, or their experience of the suffering of others, which for Stein and Bonhoeffer functions as epiphanic episodes that profoundly influenced their subsequent religious attitudes and life choices. For Bonhoeffer it was his experience in the U.S.A. in 1931, and in

10 Edith Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family* (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1986), 148.

11 The narrative of Stein's atheism is fairly consistent amongst her biographers. However, there are a few who question this, including Benjamin Gibbs, who sees Stein as being influenced by secularism rather than rejecting her Judaism ("My Long Search for the True Faith: The Conversion of Edith Stein," in *Mount Carmel* 60.3 (July 2012)); and Florent Gaboriau, who describes Stein's spiritual journey as a gradual transition (*The Conversion of Edith Stein*, trans. Ralph McNerny (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2002)).

12 Teresa Posselt, *Edith Stein*, trans. Cecil Hastings, and Donald Nicholl (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1952).

13 Rachel Feldhay Brenner, "Ethical Convergence in Religious Conversion," in *The Unnecessary Problem of Edith Stein*, Studies in the Shoah 4, ed. Harry James Cargas (Lanham, NY, and London: University Press of America, 1994), 77.

14 The Stein family were members of the Reform New Synagogue in Breslau and not Orthodox. Stein's mother Auguste regularly attended synagogue but the children were only expected to attend on High Holy Days. Susanne Batzdorff, Edith's niece, suggests that religious observance in the Stein home was minimal (Susanne Batzdorff, *Aunt Edith: The Jewish Heritage of a Catholic Saint* (Springfield, IL: Templegate Publishers, 2003), 95–96). Edith attended a Protestant elementary school, and her autobiography describes an assimilated Jewish German, conscious of her Jewish ethnicity but only nominally Jewish in religious practices. Her intellectual and social milieu had similarities to Bonhoeffer and both were conventionally German and secular.

particular the contact that he had with the black community in Harlem; for Stein it was her experience serving as a nurse during the First World War at the Military Hospital for Contagious Diseases in Mährisch-Weisskirchen in Moravia.

The sociology of Ferdinand Tönnies and his book *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* was one of Bonhoeffer's and Stein's shared academic interests. Tönnies' sociological analysis was undertaken during this period of extreme trauma and social upheaval.¹⁵ Bonhoeffer's and Stein's social context was one which included social fragmentation and the desire for community, and this desire for genuine community partly helps to explain their shared academic interests and subsequent personal choices. They shared not only significant social, political and religious contexts, but they also explored similar philosophical interests. Such interests were fostered by significant early twentieth century philosophers studied by Bonhoeffer and who were also friends or associates of Stein. These included Edmund Husserl,¹⁶ Max Scheler, Martin Heidegger,¹⁷ Erich Przywara,¹⁸ and Eric Peterson.¹⁹

In 1917 Stein was awarded *summa cum laude* for her thesis *Zum Problem der Einfühlung*; and in 1927 Bonhoeffer's doctoral dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio*, was also awarded *summa cum laude*. Bonhoeffer completed the second thesis necessary for his *Habilitationsschrift: Akt und Sein*, a required qualification for a German University professorship. However, the philosophy faculty at the University of Göttingen refused to examine Stein's work because, as a woman, she was disqualified from being a University professor. Stein's second attempt for habilitation at the University of Kiel was also rebuffed. Stein then appealed to the Prussian Ministry for Science, Art and Education, to end sexual discrimination in the process of habilitation and, although they agreed, they were not able to enforce their ruling. Stein published her two treatises in the fifth volume of Husserl's *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* in 1922.

15 Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936) was a major contributor to sociological theory and field studies and the co-founder of the German Society for Sociology. In *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1887), Tönnies distinguished between two types of social groupings. *Gemeinschaft*, often translated as community, refers to groupings based on a feeling of 'togetherness' (e.g. family or a neighbourhood); and *Gesellschaft*, often translated as society, refers to groups that are sustained by an instrumental goal (e.g. a company or a state).

16 Stein edited Husserl's writings and was his assistant from 1917 until 1919.

17 In *Akt und Sein* (DBW 2), Dietrich Bonhoeffer quotes only Luther more than Heidegger. Stein's admiration for Heidegger is clear: "It is impossible to sum up in a few pages the richness and power of the truly enlightening explorations that are contained in Heidegger's great torso *Being and Time*." John Nota, *Edith Stein and Martin Heidegger*, Carmelite Studies 4 (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1987), 66.

18 Przywara was a spiritual mentor to Stein and organised many of her lectures and translation projects.

19 Peterson was a Stein's friend and one of the few in this period writing about the importance of suffering for the Early Church. He was the Lutheran New Testament scholar, and Dean of the Faculty of Evangelical Theology at Bonn University, but he later converted to Catholicism. Peterson wrote: "The Apostolic Church, based upon apostles who were martyrs, is also the suffering church, the church of the martyrs." Eric Peterson, "Zeuge der Wahrheit," in *Theologische Traktate* (München: Kösel Verlag, 1951), 173.

Empathy, Pathos, and Alterity

When Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Stein's friend and 'sister' phenomenologist, asked Stein as to why she had chosen to become a Catholic, Stein replied, "*Secretum meum mihi.*"²⁰ Stein's use of this expression provides an example of her competence in Latin, which she utilised in various translation projects. Stein's predilection for languages also highlights another interesting biographical comparison with Bonhoeffer. Although Stein was probably more competent linguistically than Bonhoeffer, both were willing to transcend their particular language milieu: an indicator of a deeper and more significant openness to the experiences and belief of those beyond their particular social and cultural communities. Bonhoeffer's and Stein's response to their shared social and political crisis demonstrates a philosophical concern with issues of sociality and of personalism but also a theological and existential commitment to issues of *alterity* and *pathos*. *Alterity* is one of the more significant markers that Stein shares with Bonhoeffer.²¹ Stein takes up the phenomenological notion of otherness, specifically transposing the concept onto the ethical realm of persons, the realm of 'who' more than 'what.'²² Bonhoeffer demonstrates his *alteritic* sympathies in his ecumenical work, in his chaplaincy work in London, but most clearly in his friendships and experiences in the U.S.A.

Stein in Mährisch-Weisskirchen

Following the outbreak of war, Stein voluntarily left her university studies to train as a Red Cross nurse at the Allerheiligenhospital. Stein was then sent to a lazaretto (*Seuchenlazarett*), a large isolation hospital in Mährisch-Weisskirchen, Moravia, for soldiers who had been wounded and those suffering from contagious diseases. Many of the soldiers were dying and it was "a place of great suffering."²³ Stein served there for six months, for which she was awarded a Medal of Bravery. The war casualties and the medical staff at the hospital included many different nationalities from throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire and beyond, and Stein relied on a manual in nine languages to communicate with them.²⁴ Stein met

20 From the Vulgate: 'My secret is for myself,' or 'That's my secret.' *Edith Stein: Briefe an Hedwig Conrad-Martius* (München: Kösel Verlag, 1960), 73.

21 Edith Wyschogrod distinguishes an ethic that appeals to *alterity* from one which would be concerned with a "conception of the good." Edith Wyschogrod, *Saints and Postmodernism: Revisioning Moral Philosophy* (Chicago, and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), xx.

22 Michael B. Smith sees this as an innovation of Levinas on Husserl's understanding of *alterity*, but this ethical interpretation is also evident in Stein's approach, particularly in her concept of empathy. "Transcendence in Merleau-Ponty," in Dorothea Olkowski and James Morley, eds., *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and the World* (Albany, NY: State University Press of New York, 1999).

23 Joseph Redfield Palmisano, *Beyond the Walls: Abraham Joshua Heschel and Edith Stein on the Significance of Empathy for Jewish-Christian Dialogue* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2012), 64.

24 The nationalities at the Mährisch-Weisskirchen hospital included: Russians, Turks, Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, Slovaks, Slovenians, Italians, Poles, Ruthenians, Czechs, and Roma gypsies.

a wide “range of types of human being[s], drawn from different social classes”²⁵ at the *Seuchenlazarett*, and her compassion and admiration for the non-German staff and casualties led Stein to reject any nationalistic assumptions. Stein’s empathic sympathies later provided practical support for her dissertation on the need to suspend all presuppositions and on the nature of empathy itself, but Stein’s experience at Mährisch-Weiskirchen was also one of deep *pathos*.

Bonhoeffer in Harlem

The Afro-American district of Harlem and the Abyssinian Baptist Church were critical contributors to Bonhoeffer’s American experience. Frank Fisher, one of Union’s few black students, introduced Bonhoeffer to the area and to the Abyssinian Church, where Bonhoeffer served as a Sunday School teacher. Bonhoeffer was able to visit the homes of some of the church members and to learn at first-hand the daily experience of the suffering and prejudice which the Afro-American community regularly endured.²⁶ Bonhoeffer was particularly impressed with the church’s commitment to practical care and support of the local community. During the winter Bonhoeffer was in Harlem, their suffering increased with the deepening economic depression, but the Abyssinian Church responded with a dramatic increase in its social provision.²⁷ This provision, along with the preaching of the Reverend Adam Powell Sr., minister of the Abyssinian Church, provided Bonhoeffer with an impressive example of the Gospel’s response to suffering.²⁸ It was also during this period that Bonhoeffer discovered the lyrics and melodies of the spirituals, which expressed not only the deep suffering of the Afro-American community, but also their hope and faith.

According to William Vincent Johnson, Bonhoeffer’s experience in Harlem inspired him, on his return to Berlin, to work with disadvantaged young people and families, and also to seek pastoral employment in the over-crowded tenements of East Berlin. Johnson also suggests that it was Bonhoeffer’s empathic

25 Alasdair MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue* (London: Continuum, 2006), 71.

26 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, ed. Eberhard Bethge (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1958), 97; see Ruth Zerner, “Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s American Experiences: People, Letters, and Papers from Union Seminary,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 31.4 (Summer 1976), 261–282; Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Courage*, ed. Edwin H. Robertson, trans. Eric Mosbacher, Peter and Betty Ross, Frank Clarke, and William Glen Doepel (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 122.

27 During the period of Bonhoeffer’s attendance at the church in 1931, the church responded to 40,000 requests for assistance, including 28,500 free meals and 525 food baskets, and 17, 928 items of clothing and 2,500 shoes were distributed. A soup kitchen provided 2,400 people with two meals a day. William Welty, “Black Shepherds: A Study of the Leading Negro Clergyman in New York City, 1900–1940,” unpublished PhD diss., New York University, 1970, 292. Quoted in William Vincent Johnson, “Suffering in the Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Critical Analysis,” unpublished PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992.

28 Bonhoeffer stated that it was in the “black churches” that he heard the Gospel preached (*Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, 97).

concern, following the “rise of the Nazis,” which motivated him to focus on the, “plight of the Jews.”²⁹

Stein’s experience of death in the hospital informed her *Beiträge* in Husserl’s *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* and her response to Heidegger’s philosophy, *Martin Heideggers Existentialphilosophie*.³⁰ Brenner recognises the philosophical significance of Stein’s nursing experience at the lazaretto: “It seems that Stein’s personal and direct experience of human interaction in the extreme situation of war engendered a life-long preoccupation with ‘the constitution of the human person’ and reaffirmed her interest in the problem of empathy.”³¹

The experiences of Stein and Bonhoeffer, rather than functioning as a divergence or disruption, helped shape established theological convictions (Bonhoeffer) and direct philosophical impulses (Stein). It is the experience of Harlem and Abyssinian Baptist Church which contributed to Bonhoeffer’s decision regarding the ‘Jewish Question’ and ultimately his participation in the political conspiracy; and for Stein it was her nursing experience that influenced her analysis of *Einfühlung* (empathy), and which subsequently contributed to her decision and understanding of her Carmelite vocation.

Religious Convictions

The phenomenological term ‘empathy’ (*Einfühlen*) is conceptually and philologically linked (and contrasted) with the related term ‘sympathy’ (*Mitfühlen*).³² Although the English word *sympathy* is now commonly used as a synonym for pity, the etymology of the word suggests a deeper meaning: *pathos* from the verb *paschein*, with the prefix *syn-* denotes literally ‘to suffer with.’ A deeper sympathy would include recognition of the *pathetic* needs of the ‘other.’ Heidegger suggested that it is because the human being is a ‘being-towards-death’ that we are capable of *compassion* (*con-passio*, Ger. *Mitleid*).³³

For Husserl’s *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, Stein produced her *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften*. It was this *Jahrbuch* which Bonhoeffer used for his doctoral dissertation,

29 Johnson, “Suffering in the Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer,” 36.

30 Antonio Calcagno considers that Stein’s war-time experience was fundamental to her philosophical development. Antonio Calcagno, “Assistant and/or Collaborator?,” in Berkmann, ed., *Contemplating Edith Stein*, 246.

31 Brenner, *Ethical Convergence in Religious Conversion*, 80.

32 The terms share the root “feeling” but differ in the prepositional prefixes of *ein* (‘in’ or ‘into’) and *mit* (with). Sympathy: ‘feeling with’ may seem desirable but it also suggests emotional distance and possible dissonance. *Einfühlung* ‘feeling into,’ is by contrast is an experience of entering into a foreign experience.

33 For a discussion of the etymology of *sympathy*, see Douglas John Hall, *God and Human Suffering: An Exercise in the Theology of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1986), 45, 61, 202 n. 16.

Sanctorum Communio.³⁴ The various sociological approaches considered by Bonhoeffer in *Sanctorum Communio* failed to take seriously the notion and significance of personhood, and consequently Bonhoeffer was initially attracted to 'Stein's' phenomenological approach. Stein's *Beiträge* (contribution) to the *Jahrbuch* is in two sections; it is the second section, *Individuum und Gemeinschaft*, which Bonhoeffer utilises, and in particular Stein's discussion of Max Scheler and Ferdinand Tönnies. However, it is the first section, *Psychische Kausalität*, which Mary Catherine Baseheart considers includes a description of a religious experience which "is often regarded as [Stein's]."³⁵ *Psychische Kausalität* represents Stein's attempt to connect psychology and philosophy.

Stein's philosophical work addressed itself to the issue of the phenomenology of the ethical self and her phenomenological concept of the person. This concept was developed in Stein's *Zum Problem der Einfühlung*,³⁶ and provided the philosophical basis of her preoccupation with moral self-actualisation.³⁷ Empathy, Stein wrote, "offers itself to us as a corrective for self-deception."³⁸ Stein argued for a dynamic interpersonal mutuality capable of recognising that the 'I,' whether as perceiver or as agent, is partially constituted in and through relationships with others. According to Stein, formative relationality "involves situating myself bodily in relation to others" in such a way that this "makes a significant difference to the kind of human being that we become."³⁹ The *pathic* encounter with the other, as proposed by Stein, can lead to a transcendent⁴⁰ or transforming experience: "Empathic encounters change those who open themselves to the other."⁴¹ Bonhoeffer's (and Stein's) witness to the cross, through their kenotic praxis and phenomenological considerations, reveals a solidarity with the suffering of others which is consistent

34 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church*, DBWE 1:31, 77, 90.

35 Mary Catherine Baseheart, *Person in the World: Introduction to the Philosophy of Edith Stein* (Dordrecht, Boston, and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), 23.

36 The term *Einfühlung* is believed to have been conceived by the German philosopher Theodor Lipps, from the Greek *empathia*, literally means 'feeling into.' *Einfühlung* refers to the phenomenon of feeling (or thinking) one's way, "into the experimental life of another." Palmisano, *Beyond the Walls*, 160, n. 7. For Stein, empathy was not perception, representation or a neutral 'positing,' but *sui generis*. It is the experience of being led by a foreign experience and takes place on three levels: 1. The emergence of the experience (the encounter with the other); 2. The fulfilling explication (the comprehension of the other); and 3. The comprehensive objectification of the explained experience. Empathy does not simply exist of itself, but it requires an experience of *alterity*.

37 Stein criticized Husserl's insistence on the absolute primacy of consciousness, because this ultimately meant an abstract disengaged intellectualism; a self (ego) which 'gazes' at the world from a disinterested, disengaged, a-historical position, with a sovereign, free consciousness, responsible only to (and for) itself. Colin Davis, *Levinas: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).

38 Patricia Hampl, "Edith Stein (Poland, 1942)," in Berkmann, ed., *Contemplating Edith Stein*, 61.

39 This is Alasdair MacIntyre summary of Stein's *Einfühlung*. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Edith Stein*, 136–137.

40 *Transcendence*, etymologically "indicates a movement of crossing over (*trans-*), but also of ascent (*scando*)," and suggests a transformative encounter. Pierre Hayat's Preface to Levinas' *Alterity and Transcendence* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1999), ix.

41 Palmisano, *Beyond the Walls*, 75.

with a hermeneutic based upon empathy.⁴² Bonhoeffer's and Stein's shared praxis represents an *Einfühlungsethik*, demonstrated in their differentiated but 'responsible' reaction to their political and social context, including their different but complementary response to the 'Jewish Question.'

Both Bonhoeffer and Stein progressed from an academic philosophical interest to a more personal (existential) religious commitment. Stein, like Bonhoeffer, was convinced that the answer to the social, spiritual, and political crisis was a commitment to Christ: "It is not human activity which can help us, but the sufferings of Christ."⁴³ Furthermore, both Stein and Bonhoeffer understood that their 'vocation' was to participate in that suffering.

Stellvertretung as 'Vicarious Suffering'

Bonhoeffer's hermeneutical, ecclesiological principle: "church for others," as expressed in *Letters and Papers from Prison*, was developed following the experience of the *Kirchenkampf* and the catastrophic failure of the church to respond in faithfulness to the challenge of National Socialism. However, what 'church for others' fundamentally describes is a concept of a *sacrificial* serving church, a *stellvertretende Kirche*:

Either the world must bear [suffering] and be crushed by it, or it falls on Christ and is overcome in him. That is how Christ suffers as vicarious representative for the world (*Stellvertretung*). Only his suffering brings salvation. But the church community itself knows now that the world's suffering seeks a bearer. So in following Christ, this suffering falls upon it, and it bears the suffering while being borne by Christ. The community of Jesus Christ vicariously represents (*stellvertretend*) the world before God by following Christ under the cross.⁴⁴

In an editorial note in *Sanctorum Communio*, Clifford Green describes Bonhoeffer's use of *Stellvertretung* as "one of Bonhoeffer's fundamental theological concepts [used] throughout his writings."⁴⁵ The editors of the English Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works translate *Stellvertretung* as "vicarious representative action." Green writes that *Stellvertretung* as a theological concept is "rooted in Christology" and refers to the work of Christ in his "incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection," but that it also has ecclesial consequences: "By anthropological analogy, *Stellvertretung* involves acting responsibly on behalf of others and on behalf of communities to which one belongs."⁴⁶

42 Ibid., 7.

43 Maria-Baptista a Spiritu Sancto Pohl, *Edith Stein, Schwester Teresia Benedicta a Cruce: Kleines Lebensbild der grossen Philosophin und Karmelitin* (Cologne: Cologne Carmel, 1962), 66.

44 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, DBWE 4:90, 84.

45 DBWE 1:120, n. 29. The meaning of the German word *Stellvertretung* is to represent in place of another; to act, or advocate, or intercede on behalf of another.

46 Clifford Green, in DBWE 1:120, n. 29.

It is the conviction of this author that *Stellvertretung* is better translated as 'vicarious suffering' and I am suggesting this for a number of reasons: because of the etymological historical development of *Stellvertretung*; because of its use by Bonhoeffer's contemporaries, particularly in the religious literature of Reinhold Schneider and Gertrud von le Fort; and also its translation in biblical exegesis. Primarily, however, I suggest that *Stellvertretung* is translated as 'vicarious suffering' because of its essential Christological association.

In his biography of Bonhoeffer, Eberhard Bethge writes:

Mit der Interpretation des schwachen Wortes rühren wir an das Tiefste, was Bonhoeffer auszudrücken vermag: die Nachfolge als Teilhabe am stellvertretenden Leiden Christi, als Gemeinschaft mit dem Gekreuzigten [...]. Das Element der Stellvertretung bewahrt die Nachfolge davor, zum Selbstzweck und selbstbezogen zu werden. Nachfolgende sind solche Menschen, die auf sich nehmen, was andere abzuschütteln begehren. "Das Leben Jesu Christi ist auf dieser Erde noch nicht zu Ende gebracht. Christus lebt es weiter im dem Leben seiner Nachfolger."⁴⁷

These words by Bethge touch upon a fundamental challenge in exploring Bonhoeffer's understanding of *Stellvertretung* because of the need to: "interpret with inadequate words" Bonhoeffer's "*das Tiefste*": discipleship as participation in Christ's suffering for others, as communion with the Crucified One: 'vicarious suffering.' In this passage, Bethge says that this idea is expressed by Bonhoeffer from *Sanctorum Communio*, until the last year of his life.⁴⁸

It is evident that vicarious suffering was not a concept which Bonhoeffer developed, but that he drew upon various theological and literary resources throughout his life, including aspects of Lutheran and Catholic theology. For Bonhoeffer, the willingness to become 'guilty' for the sake of others included the willingness to suffer, although "the point of suffering guilt for the sake of others was not to suffer *as* Christ suffered, but rather to suffer *with* Christ, to 'watch with him in Gethsemane.'"⁴⁹ Extraordinarily for a Protestant theologian, Bonhoeffer says that there is "another suffering and another indignity from which no Christian can be spared," and that is, like Christ whom they follow, the disciple who is called to become a *Schuldübernahme* (trespasses/guilt bearers):

47 Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Theologe Christ Zeitgenosse* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967), 522. "With the interpretation of inadequate words touches on the most profound idea Bonhoeffer was able to express: discipleship as participation in Christ's suffering for others, as communion with the Crucified One. The element of vicarious suffering in discipleship prevents it from becoming self-centred and for personal benefit. Disciples are the sorts of people who take upon themselves what others would like to shake off."

48 *Ibid.*, 456.

49 Bernd Wannenwetsch, "The Whole Christ and the Whole Human Being: Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Inspiration for the 'Christology and Ethics' Discourse," in *Christology and Ethics*, ed. F. LeRon Shults and Brent Waters (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010), 89–90.

because Christ has suffered for the sins of the world, because the whole burden of guilt fell on him, and because Jesus Christ passes on the fruit of his suffering to those who follow him, temptation and sin fall also onto his disciples. Sin covers the disciples with shame and expels them from the gates of the city like scapegoats. So Christians become bearers of sin and guilt for other people.⁵⁰

Guilt is an inadequate translation for *Schuldübernahme* because guilt can be considered as temporary and variable. If this word had been translated in the English translation of the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works as: 'trespass or sin-bearing,' its full significance in Bonhoeffer may have been more obvious. Support for an alternative translation is provided in the text from Bonhoeffer's *Lutherbibel* Luke 11:4b: "Und vergib uns unsere Sünden; denn auch wir vergeben allen, die uns schuldig sind." In English this is: "and forgive us our sins/trespasses as we forgive those who sin/trespass against us" and I would suggest that this parallels the text from *Nachfolge*: "So wird der Christ zum Träger von Sünde und Schuld für andere Menschen. (Christians become bearers of sin and guilt for other people)."⁵¹ The significance of a Protestant theologian suggesting that a Christian can be a *Schuldübernahme* seems to be ignored by most commentators, although Christine Schliesser has drawn attention to the centrality of *Schuldübernahme*, which she translates as 'bearing guilt.'⁵²

The importance of *Stellvertretung* is "underlined by the fact that Bonhoeffer uses *Stellvertretung* to describe the very essence of Christ's being, [of] man's, and the Church's."⁵³ In Bonhoeffer's theology it is the concept of *Stellvertretung* which "enabled him to keep Christology, ecclesiology and ethics connected."⁵⁴ The Church is: "Christ existing as church-community,"⁵⁵ and *Stellvertretung* describes its social form or *Gestalt*.⁵⁶ Jesus as the one who establishes a community predicated upon an existence, orientation and life given for the other. Bonhoeffer's ecclesiological

50 DBWE 4:88.

51 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Nachfolge*, DBW 4:81; DBWE 4:88.

52 Christine Schliesser, *Everyone Who Acts Responsibly Becomes Guilty: Bonhoeffer's Concept of Accepting Guilt* (Louisville, and London: John Knox Press, 2008).

53 Larry L. Rasmussen, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Reality and Resistance* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 38, n. 33.

54 Schliesser, *Everyone Who Acts Responsibly Becomes Guilty*, 39, n. 9.

55 "We believe in the church as *una* [one], since it is 'Christ existing as church-community.'" DBWE 1:280.

56 In *Sanctorum Communio*, to act in a *stellvertretend* way for the other includes the renunciation of possessions, honour and life: "This being-for-each-other must now be actualised through acts of love. Three great, positive possibilities of acting for each other in the community of saints present themselves: self-renouncing, active work for one's neighbors; intercessory prayer; and finally, the mutual forgiveness of sins in God's name. All of these involve giving up the self 'for' my neighbor's benefit, with the readiness to do and bear everything in the neighbor's place, indeed, if necessary, to sacrifice oneself (*Stellvertreter*), standing as a substitute for my neighbor." DBWE 1:184. *Stellvertretung* describes faithful service within the church-community and beyond, not only to victims but also the poor: "They [the disciples] share in other people's need, debasement, and guilt. They have an irresistible love for the lowly, the sick, for those who are in misery, for those who are demeaned and abused, for those who suffer injustice and are rejected, for everyone in pain and anxiety. They seek out all those who have fallen into sin and guilt" (DBWE 4:106). In Bonhoeffer, *Stellvertretung* is even extended to the enemy: DBWE 4:140.

deliberations are thoroughly *other-centred*. The Church is the Church only when it exists for the other. The Christ who becomes present for the Church community in the broken bread, his body, is present in the world as the body of Christ, broken for the world.

Bonhoeffer said that the church was to be understood as “Christus als Gemeinde existierend’ und als Kollektivperson zu verstehen,”⁵⁷ and that this rests on “diese ruht auf dem soziologischen Grundgesetz der Stellvertretung”⁵⁸ vicarious suffering.

Stellvertretung: A Unifying Theme in Bonhoeffer and Stein

In 1947, Helmut Gollwitzer, a German prisoner of war in Russia, was sent, in a church periodical, a copy of the farewell letter of Colonel Alexis von Roenne, written in October 1944 before his execution following the failed assassination attempt on the 20 July. In his letter, Roenne interpreted his suffering and imminent death as a vicarious offering and he linked his suffering with that of Christ’s: “Vor allem sollte ich mir doch in voller Realität mein Sterben vergegenwärtigen und erst mit Seinem vergleichen! Das hat mir unendlich geholfen: Dort der Sündenlose, freiwillig von seinen ‘Erlösten’ viele Stunden zu Tode gemartert.”⁵⁹ Roenne’s testimonial prompted Gollwitzer to collect similar stories which were subsequently published in *Du hast mich heimgesucht bei Nacht*. This was translated into English and published in 1956, as *Dying We Live. The Final Messages and Records of the Resistance*. Käthe Kuhn’s editorial introduction to *Dying We Live* includes a quotation by Gertrude von le Fort, in which le Fort described those whose testimonies were included in *Du hast mich*, including Stein⁶⁰ and Bonhoeffer as witnesses of Christ and as witnesses of a noble humanity.⁶¹

57 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Jugend und Studium, 1918–1927*, DBW 9:477–478; Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Young Bonhoeffer: 1918–1927*, DBWE 9:440. See DBWE 1:120f, 140f, 189ff, 213–215; and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being: Transcendental Philosophy and Ontology in Systematic Theology*, DBWE 2:110–111. Bonhoeffer’s concept of the church as *Christus als Gemeinde existierend* merits attention, not only because of the significance of this theme in Bonhoeffer’s writings, but also because of its resonance with the ecclesiology of communion. A central theme of Pope Benedict XVI’s ecclesiology was the presence of the Crucified and Risen Christ, who encounters us through the church. During Benedict’s homily which marked the inauguration of his pontificate, Benedict repeatedly stated that the Church was alive, because Christ is alive, because Christ is truly risen (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 97 (2005), 707–713, at 708). In presenting his book, *Salt of the Earth*, the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger stated that “the Christian of the future will be mystic or will not be,” and when asked who his models might be, he indicated, among others, Bonhoeffer. Piersandro Vanzan, “Dietrich Bonhoeffer 50 anni dopo: un bilancio,” *Civiltà Cattolica* 3524 (1997), 149–159, at 158–159, n. 14. See Joseph Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth: Christianity and the Catholic Church at the End of the Millennium* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997); Yves Congar, “The Conciliar Structure or Regime of the Church,” *Concilium* 167 (1983), 3–9, at 6.

58 DBW 9:478.

59 Helmut Gollwitzer, Käthe Kuhn, and Reinhold Schneider, *Du hast mich heimgesucht bei Nacht. Abschiedsbriefe und Aufzeichnungen des Widerstandes 1933–1945* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1955), 186: “I should imagine the full reality of my death, and then compare it with His death. That has helped me immeasurably: there the innocent victim, voluntarily suffering a death after many hours of torture, at the hands of those he ‘redeemed.’”

60 “Sister Teresa Benedicta,” in Gollwitzer, Kuhn, and Schneider, *Du hast mich heimgesucht bei Nacht*, 229–231.

61 Helmut Gollwitzer, Käthe Kuhn, and Reinhold Schneider, eds., *Dying We Live: The Final Messages and Records of the Resistance*, trans. Reinhard C. Kuhn (New York: Pantheon Books, 1956), xii.

Patrick Sherry, in his article, "Redemption, Atonement and the German Opposition to Hitler,"⁶² specifically links vicarious suffering to the self-understanding of those whose biographies are included in *Du hast mich* and of those who, like Bonhoeffer, gave their lives, according to Sherry, as a 'vicarious sacrifice' in their opposition to Hitler. Sherry writes, "It is striking how often these Christians explained and justified their actions, and their sufferings, in terms of concepts of redemption and atonement."⁶³

Bonhoeffer's testimonial in *Du hast mich heimgesucht bei Nacht* includes the following quotation: "Wenn ein Wahnsinniger mit dem Auto durch die Straßen rast, kann ich als Pastor, der dabei ist, nicht nur die Überfahrenen trösten oder beerdigen, sondern ich muß dazwischen springen und ihn stoppen."⁶⁴ The other quotations in the Bonhoeffer section are from Bonhoeffer's retrospective essay, written for his friends and fellow conspirators, Eberhard Bethge, Hans von Dohnanyi, and Hans Oster: "Rechenschaft an der Wende zum Jahr 1943"⁶⁵ including the sections, *Einige Glaubenssätze über das Walten Gottes in der Geschichte* ("Some Statements of Faith on God's Action in History");⁶⁶ *Vom Leiden* ("On Suffering");⁶⁷ and *Gefährdung und Tod* ("Peril and Death").⁶⁸ In addition *Du hast mich heimgesucht bei Nacht* included Bonhoeffer's *Gebete für Gefangene* ("Prayers for Prisoners"): *Morgengebet*,

62 Patrick Sherry, "Redemption, Atonement and the German Opposition to Hitler," *Theology* (1995), 431–440. Sherry quotes from "Ten Years Later: At the Turn of the Year 1943: "On Suffering" (p. 192) from *Letters and Papers from Prison*. See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, DBWE 8:49–50: "It is infinitely easier to suffer in obedience to a human command than in the freedom of one's own responsible action. It is infinitely easier to suffer in community with others than in solitude. It is infinitely easier to suffer publicly and with honour than in the shadow and in dishonour. It is infinitely easier to suffer through putting one's bodily life at stake than to suffer through the spirit. Christ suffered in freedom, in solitude, in the shadow, and in dishonour, in body and in spirit. Since then, many Christians have suffered with him."

63 Sherry, "Redemption, Atonement," 431–440. Sherry references the testimony of Peter Graf Yorck von Wartenburg, a close friend of Count Helmuth von Moltke, and a member of the resistance group Kreisau Circle. Von Wartenburg believed that his death and execution was "for the fatherland" and that he hoped his death would "be accepted as an atonement for all [his] sins and as a vicarious sacrifice in expiation of the guilt [they] all harbour in common. May it also help to lessen, if only by a hair's breadth, the alienation of our era from God." "Mein Tod, er wird hoffentlich angenommen als Sühneopfer für das, was wir alle gemeinschaftlich tragen," Gollwitzer, Kuhn, and Schneider, eds., *Dying We Live*, 15; see Gollwitzer, Kuhn, and Schneider, *Du hast mich heimgesucht bei Nacht*, 91.

64 "When a madman is tearing through the streets in a car, I can, as a pastor who happens to be on the scene, do more than merely console or bury those who have been run over. I must jump in front of the car and stop it." There are various sources for Bonhoeffer's quotation including Otto Dudzus recollection in "Arresting the Wheel," in Wolf-Dieter Zimmermann and Ronald Gregor Smith, eds., *I Knew Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Reminiscences of His Friends* (London: Collins, 1966), 82. For a further discussion of "seizing the wheel" as it relates to vicarious suffering, and in particular *Die Jüdische Frage*, see chapter below. Bonhoeffer explained his reasoning in joining the resistance to his sister-in-law, Emmi Bonhoeffer. He told her: "If I see a madman driving a car into a group of innocent bystanders, then I can't, as a Christian, simply wait for the catastrophe and then comfort the wounded and bury the dead. I must try to wrestle the steering wheel out of the hands of the driver." Glimpses of Christian History, Diane Severance, "Theologian Bonhoeffer Executed on Order from Hitler," *Christianity Today International* (2007), <<http://www.christianhistorytimeline.com/GLIMPSEF/Glimpses/glmp063.shtml>> [accessed 2 March 2017].

65 "Rechenschaft an der Wende zum Jahr 1943," see Gollwitzer, Kuhn, and Schneider, *Du hast mich heimgesucht bei Nacht*, 80–81; Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, DBW 8:20–39. "An Account at the Turn of the Year 1942–1943," DBWE 8:37–52. See Gollwitzer, Kuhn, and Schneider, eds., *Dying We Live*, 213–218.

66 DBW 8:30–31; DBWE 8:46.

67 DBW 8:35; DBWE 8:49–50.

68 DBW 8:37; DBWE 8:51.

Abendgebet, and *Gebet in besonderer Not*.⁶⁹ The final quotation in the Bonhoeffer section was an extract of Bonhoeffer's letter to Eberhard Bethge, from Tegel Prison dated August 23, 1944.⁷⁰

Bonhoeffer's essay *Rechenschaft an der Wende*, includes a number of themes which would appear in *Ethik* and "prefigures much that became the substance of the 'theological letters' written to Bethge, commencing with that of April 30, 1944."⁷¹ Bonhoeffer explores the theme of vicarious suffering, and also the relationship between the suffering of the disciple and the suffering of their Lord, in the sections *Vom Leiden* and in *Gefährdung und Tod*. After describing the ultimate and complete *stellvertretendes Leiden von Christi*, Bonhoeffer writes that, although

[W]e are not Christ, nor are we called to redeem the world through our own deed and our own suffering [...]. We are not lords but instruments in the hands of the Lord of history; we can truly share only in a limited measure in the sufferings of others. We are not Christ, but if we want to be Christians it means that we are to take part in Christ's greatness of heart, in the responsible action that in freedom lays hold of the hour and faces the danger and in the true sympathy that springs forth not from fear but from Christ's freeing and redeeming love for all who suffer [...]. Christ suffered in freedom, in solitude, in the shadow, and in dishonour, in body and in spirit. Since then, many Christians have suffered with him.⁷²

Stellvertretung in Edith Stein

The section for Sr. Teresia Benedicta (Edith Stein), in *Du hast mich heimgesucht bei Nacht*, is included in the *Opfergang* section of the anthology.⁷³ In an introductory biography it states that "Nach der Invasion Hollands fand ihre Bitte, sich als Sühneopfer für den wahren Frieden anbieten zu dürfen, im Jahre 1942 Erhörung."

Stein's section includes a quotation from *Endliches und ewiges Sein*;⁷⁴ and the request that Stein made to her prioress on Passion Sunday, 26 March, 1939: "Liebe Mutter, bitte erlauben Eure Hochwürden mir, mich dem Herzen Jesu als Sühnopfer"

69 Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Prayer in Particular Need; DBW 8:204–208; DBWE 8:194–198. Bonhoeffer's *Gebete für Mitgefängene* were written in verse and distributed by the Chaplains among the inmates of the prison at Tegel.

70 Ibid., 517–519.

71 John W. de Gruchy, "Editor's Introduction to the English Edition," DBWE 8:11.

72 DBWE 8:49–50. DBW 8:34–35: "Wir sind gewiß nicht Christus und nicht berufen, durch eigene Tat und eigenes Leiden die Welt zu erlösen [...], wir sind nicht Herren, sondern Werkzeuge in der Hand des Herrn des Geschichts [...]. Wir sind nicht Christus, aber wenn wir Christen sein wollen so bedeutet das, daß wir an der Weite des Herzens Christi teilbekommen sollen in verantwortlicher Tat, die in Freiheit die Stunde ergreift und sich der Gefahr stellt, und in echtem Mitleiden, das nicht aus der Angst sondern aus der befreienden und erlösenden Liebe Christi zu allen Leidenden quillt. [...] Christus litt in Freiheit, in Einsamkeit, abseits und in Schanden, an Leib und Geist, und seither viele Christen mit ihm."

73 The *Opfergang* section of the German anthology also includes "Schwester M. Magdalena Dominica," Anne Frank, and Jochen Klepper. Bonhoeffer is included in the *Dein Wille geschehe* section. The English translation is organised differently, with different groups. Bonhoeffer is included in "Blessed Are the Peacemakers," and Stein in "The Way of Sacrifice."

74 Edith Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein*, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe [further, ESGA] 11 (Freiburg: Herder, 2006).

fer für den wahren Frieden anzubieten."⁷⁵ Jan H. Nota, who knew Stein during the period of her life as a Carmelite in Echt, Holland, believed that suffering and sacrifice for their own sake was not what motivated or interested Stein: "the active yearning for suffering and the retreat into subhuman passivity were both equally foreign." According to Nota it was in an identification with Christ that Stein discovered "the meaning of suffering."⁷⁶

In her devotional article, *Das Weihnachtsgeheimnis*, Stein's focus was not primarily upon the birth of the Christ-child but rather on *Nachfolge*, and for Stein this meant the *Fiat volutas tua* of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In *Kreuzerhöhung. Ave Crux, Spes Unica!*,⁷⁷ a meditation prepared for her sister Carmelites, Stein described the obedience of Christ in self-surrender and suffering, as something that Christ's disciples were required to do. In this essay, Stein described the world as in flames, reminiscent of the comments of St. Teresa but that the sisters "enclosed in [their] cell," through their union with Christ were able, through their vicarious prayers and suffering, to minister to the suffering, "in the power of the cross."⁷⁸

The motif of surrender and suffering was also evident in Stein's *Kreuzeswissenschaft: Studie über Johannes vom Kreuz*,⁷⁹ although this was not the first time Stein had written about St. John. In *Kreuzesliebe: Einige Gedanken zum Fest des hl. Vaters Johannes vom Kreuz*,⁸⁰ Stein described *freiwilliges Sühneleiden*⁸¹ (voluntary expiatory suffering) and wrote:

Christi Kreuz tragen helfen, das gibt ein starke und reine Freudigkeit, und die es dürfen und können, die Bauleute an Gottes Reich, sind die echtsten Gotteskinder. Und so bedeutet die Vorliebe für den Kreuzweg auch durchaus kein Absehen davon, daß der Karfreitag vorbei und das Erlösungswerk vollbracht ist. Nur Erlöste, nur Kinder der Gnade können ja Christi Kreuzträger sein. Nur aus der Vereinigung mit dem göttlichen Haupt bekommt menschliches Leiden sühnende Kraft. Zu leiden und im Leiden selig zu sein.⁸²

75 Gollwitzer, Kuhn, and Schneider, *Du hast mich heimgesucht bei Nacht*, 159 ("Dear Mother, please will Your Reverence allow me to offer myself to the heart of Jesus as a vicarious sacrifice for true peace." Stein's letter to Mother Ottilia Thannisch, O.C.D., prioress of the Carmel in Echt, cited in Sr. Teresia Renata de Spiritu Sancto Posselt, *Edith Stein: The Life of a Philosopher and Carmelite*, ed. Susanne Batzdorff, Josephine Koeppel, and John Sullivan (Washington: ICS Publications, 2005), 212.

76 Jan H. Nota's introduction in Waltraud Herbstrith, *Edith Stein: A Biography*, trans. Bernard Bonowitz (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1971), XI.

77 Edith Stein, "Kreuzerhöhung. Ave Crux, Spes Unica!," in *Geistliche Texte*, vol. 2, ed. Sophie Binggeli, ESGA 20 (Freiburg: Herder, 2007), 118–122.

78 Edith Stein, "Elevation of the Cross, September 14, 1939: 'Ave Crux, Spes Unica! [Hail Cross, Our Hope],'" in L. Gelber and Michael Linssen, eds., *The Hidden Life. Essays, Meditations, Spiritual Texts*, trans. Waltraut Stein, The Collected Works of Edith Stein [further, CWES] 4 (Washington: ICS Publishing, 1992), 94–96.

79 Edith Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft: Studie über Johannes vom Kreuz*, ed. Ulrich Dobhan, ESGA 18 (Freiburg: Herder, 2003); *The Science of the Cross*, trans. Josephine Koeppel, CWES 6 (Washington: ICS Publications, 2002). Stein was asked to write this as a *Festschrift* for the 400th anniversary of the birth of St. John of the Cross (1942).

80 Edith Stein, "Kreuzesliebe: Einige Gedanken zum Fest des hl. Vaters Johannes vom Kreuz," in *Verborgenes Leben: hagiographische Essays, Meditationen, geistliche Texte* (Freiburg: Herder, 1990), 110–113.

81 *Ibid.*, 112.

82 Stein, "Kreuzesliebe: Einige Gedanken zum Fest des hl. Vaters Johannes vom Kreuz," 112: "To help carry

Stein's life as a Carmelite, and the name she adopted for her vocation: Teresia Benedicta a Cruce, signified the suffering of the cross to which she was consecrated.

Stein, unlike Bonhoeffer, was not primarily a theologian, but her theological writings occur in the devotional tracts and writings which she wrote for her Carmelite Sisters; in her biographical essays on Teresa of Ávila,⁸³ St. Elizabeth of the Trinity, St. Teresa Margaret of the Sacred Heart, Sr. Marie-Aimée de Jésus,⁸⁴ and Elisabeth von Thüringen;⁸⁵ in her study on St. John of the Cross; and in her correspondence.⁸⁶

A number of the Stein scholars describe her self-understanding, her *imitatio Christi* life and death, in terms of *Stellvertretung*.⁸⁷ Gabriele Waste believes that a communal orientated view of atonement as a theology of *Stellvertretung* is evident in Stein's writings following her conversion in 1922 and her study of *Natur, Freiheit und Gnade*.⁸⁸ Stein believed that it was possible for people to become *Stellvertreter*, an agency of grace, although for Stein, *Stellvertretung* as atonement and merit is only possible through God's mercy. *Stellvertretung* is not a 'legal' religious requirement but it is entirely dependent upon God's grace. It is through prayer and this grace of God that Stein believes it is possible to become co-responsible for those who are not in a place of grace. To become for them and with them: *mitschuldig* — sharing their guilt. Stein writes:

Christ's cross gives a strong and pure joy, and whoever may and could build God's kingdom, are the most authentic children of God. This means that we are to choose the way of the cross, not anticipating that Good Friday has passed and that all that needs to be accomplished has occurred. Only the redeemed, the children of grace, can be bearers of Christ's cross. It is in uniting with the Godly head that human suffering is given its atoning power. To suffer and to be blessed in suffering."

83 Edith Stein, "Die 'Seelenburg' der Teresa von Ávila," *Zeitwende* 58 (1987), 210–231.

84 Stein, *The Hidden Life*, 19–90; Edith Stein, "Lebensgestaltung im Geist der heiligen Elisabeth," in *Verborgenes Leben: Hagiographische Essays, Meditationen, geistliche Texte*, Edith Steins Werke [further, ESW] 11 (Freiburg: Herder, 1983).

85 Edith Stein, "Elisabeth von Thüringen. Natur und Übernatur in der Formung einer Heiligengestalt," in *Ganzheitliches Leben: Schriften zur religiösen Bildung*, ESW 12 (Freiburg: Herder, 1990), 126–138.

86 Edith Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters 1916–1942*, ed. L. Gelber, and Romaeus Leuven, trans. Josephine Koepfel, CWES 5 (Washington: ICS Publishing, 1993); Edith Stein, *Letters to Roman Ingarden*, ed. Maria Amata Neyer, trans. Hugh Candler Hunt, CWES 12 (Washington: ICS Publishing, 2014); Edith Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen III: Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4 (Freiburg: Herder, 2001); Edith Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen I: Briefe von 1916–1933*, ESGA 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 2000); Edith Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen II. Briefe von 1933–1942*, ESGA 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 2000).

87 Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz, "Auschwitz — und kein Ende? Zur 'Stellvertretung' durch Edith Stein," *Edith Stein Jahrbuch* 14 (2008), 99–109; Claudi Mariéle Wulf, "Dein Leben ist das meine wert — Stellvertretung und Mittlerschaft bei Edith Stein," *Edith Stein Jahrbuch* 19 (2013), 183–205; Karl-Heinz Menke, "Stellvertretung oder: Die versöhnende Macht der gekreuzigten Liebe. Edith Stein als Wegweiserin Europas," *Edith Stein Jahrbuch* 19 (2013), 61–92. Harm Klüeting, "Teresia Benedicta a Cruce: Theologie der Kreuzesnachfolge," in Joachim Meisner, ed., *Edith Stein — Teresia Benedicta a Cruce: Jüdische Christin und christliche Jüdin* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 2006), 61–95. For a full bibliography see: Sarah Borden, *Edith Stein* (New York, and London: Continuum, 2003); and Sarah Borden, "Review of Literature in English on Edith Stein," in Berkmann, ed., *Contemplating Edith Stein*, 320–342. John Sullivan provides a useful collection of Stein's writings in English: *Edith Stein (St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, O.C.D.): Essential Writings* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002). Antony Kavungualappil has written a summary of Stein's theology of the Cross: *Theology of Suffering and Cross in the Life and Works of Blessed Edith Stein* (Frankfurt, New York, and Bern: Peter Lang, 1998).

88 Gabriele Waste, *Genuin katholisch* (Norderstedt: Kardinal-von-Galen-Kreis, 2012), 77. Edith Stein's "Natur, Freiheit, und Gnade," originally appeared as "Die ontische Struktur der Person und ihre erkenntnistheoretische Problematik," in *Welt und Person: Beiträge zum christlichen Wahrheitsstreben*, ESW 6 (Freiburg: Herder, 1962).

Eben hier [in der Barmherzigkeit] liegt der Schlüssel zum Verständnis der Möglichkeit einer Stellvertretung in Schuld und Verdienst [...]; jeder [hat] die Möglichkeit [...] durch sein Gebet dem andern die Gnade zu erwirken, so erscheint er mitverantwortlich für jeder, der noch nicht im Stande der Gnade ist, und mitschuldig an jeder Schuld, die ein anderer aufladet.

However, Stein wonders whether an individual who offers themselves for *stellvertretendes Leiden* (vicarious suffering) is actually only trying to compensate for their own sin: “anbietet, sucht er nur gut zu machen, was er zuvor durch sein Versäumnis dem anderen gegenüber verschuldet hat.”⁸⁹

In 1930, while she was staying with the Benedictine nuns at Speyer, Stein received a letter from Sr. Adelgundis Jaegerschmid, who had written regarding her contact and conversation with Stein’s former Professor, Edmund Husserl. Husserl was Jewish by birth, but a baptized Lutheran. Sr. Adelgundis had been discussing with Husserl issues relating to mortality and the state of the soul, and had encouraged Husserl to consider matters relating to *der letzten Dinge* – ‘the last things.’ Stein wrote back discouraging such discussions. She believed that what was required was not primarily verbal encouragement, but rather prayer and sacrifice. Stein wrote: “Gebet und Opfer sind sicher viel wichtiger als alles, was wir ihm sagen können, und sind – daran zweifle ich nicht – sehr nötig.”⁹⁰ According to Stein, it is only *Gebet und Opfer* – prayer and sacrifice – that are essential and necessary. Remarkably, in this letter Stein elaborates on her understanding of the nature of Christian responsibilities, and how she understood her own life as a sacrifice, an offering for others: “Wir haben nicht zu urteilen und dürfen auf Gottes unergründliche Barmherzigkeit vertrauen.” It was not a question of passing judgement, and all may be left to God’s unfathomable mercy, and “den Ernst der letzten Dinge,” which for Stein would refer to death, judgement, heaven, and hell.⁹¹ Stein then writes “Nach jeder Begegnung, in der mir die Ohnmacht direkter Beeinflussung fühlbar wird, verschärft sich mir die Dringlichkeit des eigenen holocaustum.”⁹² She believed that what was immediately necessary was to work for her salvation and for those entrusted to her care: “Aber daß wir hier und jetzt stehen, um unser Heil zu wirken und das derer, die uns auf die Seele gelegt sind, daran kann kein Zweifel sein.”⁹³ It would seem that Stein, like Bonhoeffer, believed that it was possible for the Christian disciple to become be a *Schuldübernahme* for others and that this was only possible through suffering.

89 Stein, *Welt und Person*, 168. See Waste, *Genuin katholisch*, 79–80.

90 From the letter to Sr. Adelgundis Jaegerschmid, OSB, Freiburg Günterstal, 16th Feb. 1930. Edith Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil 1916–1933*, intro; and rev. Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz, ed. Maria Amata Neyer (Freiburg, Basel, and Wien: Herder, 2005), 109–110. English trans.: Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 59–60.

91 Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, Editorial note, 60, n. 1.

92 Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil*, 110.

93 Ibid.

Conclusion

The question of the propriety of the church claiming Edith Stein or Bonhoeffer as martyrs of the church rests fundamentally on 'the problem of empathy,' Edith Stein's defining subject and *leitmotif*. "Empathy," Edith Stein wrote, "offers itself to us as a corrective for self-deception."⁹⁴ In Stein's own words, she was both a *holocaustum*⁹⁵ and a modern Queen Esther who offered herself to save her people.⁹⁶ I would acknowledge that Stein's (and Bonhoeffer's) self-understanding is neither definitive nor complete; but this thesis, highlighting suffering for others, or vicarious suffering, as an essential ecumenical paradigm, represents an interpretation which is consistent with the trajectory of their lives and consonant with their own self-understanding. Furthermore, this interpretation does not 'read back' into their lives any preconceived ideas of holiness and sacrifice, but rather it builds upon their own intellectual commitments and academic endeavours. Stein and Bonhoeffer's response to their shared social and political crisis was an attempt to understand their context, which is why both 'witnesses' were philosophically concerned with issues of *alterity* and *pathos*. There is something final and significant for all churches in these lives which were lived and then *offered* – sacrificed, however unintentionally, for the sake of others.

Suffering as an Ecumenical Paradigm in Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Edith Stein

Abstract

Edith Stein and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, were both twentieth century 'martyrs,' who experienced personal loss and suffering. However, it was suffering for others, deliberately chosen and consciously endured, that was of theological significance for both of them. This paper seeks to demonstrate that for Stein and Bonhoeffer suffering was understood by them as providing an essential example or model of Christian discipleship and that both utilised the expression *Stellvertretung* – vicarious suffering – to describe this. This theological interpretation of suffering for others illustrates a fundamental ecclesial reality which is of ecumenical significance because of its Christological significance, which is why such suffering transcends confessional and denominational differences and is of paradigmatic significance. Furthermore, this paper will suggest that both Stein and Bonhoeffer understood that the Christian disciple, in vicarious suffering, becomes a *Schuldübernahme*: a bearer of the sins of others.

⁹⁴ Hampl, "Edith Stein (Poland, 1942)," 61.

⁹⁵ Stein in a letter to Sr. Adelgundis Jägerschmid, O.S.B., in Edith Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 60.

⁹⁶ Stein, in a letter to Mother Petra Brüning, O.S.U., Dorsten, October 31, 1938, in *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 291.