

in the 'Lions led by Donkeys' framework. This misinterpretation has only been seriously challenged since the mid-2000s, and Beaken's monograph is another valuable addition to this growing canon of work which examines the interplay between Christianity and global warfare in the twentieth century. This also suggests that the First World War was not the catalyst for the secularisation process, as has been widely assumed.

Interestingly, Beaken speculates on the trajectory that the historiography of the currently 'good' Second World War, and the role that Christianity played in the latter conflict, might take, with a potential greater emphasis on Britain's largely overlooked military disasters in Norway and Singapore, and the lingering negative psychological impacts on those who served. The microhistory approach has previously been successfully applied to the domestic wartime experiences of the twentieth century by Sarah Williams and Stephen Parker in their studies of popular religion in Southwark and Birmingham respectively.<sup>3</sup> Further work remains to be done on the perspectives of Christian civilians who were called upon to serve in the armed forces a generation after their fathers between 1914 and 1918. Beaken's work is a further step on the journey which is revising the view that Christianity in general, and the Church of England in particular, had a 'bad' First World War. This monograph joins an expanding historiography which suggests that the Church of England, from the laity upwards, managed the best that it could in unprecedented circumstances, and, moreover, performed a significant role in Britain's war effort. Whilst stopping short of concluding that it had a 'good war', Beaken's compellingly presented evidence leads him to conclude that the Church of England in Colchester had a 'mixed' First World War. This perspective is drawn from the nuances of the varying trajectories of the individuals and parishes that Beaken has presented, and serves as a timely reminder of the importance of ecclesiastical history having a strong voice during this period of centenary commemorations.

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*Bonhoeffer's black Jesus. Harlem renaissance theology and an ethic of resistance.* By Reggie L. Williams. Pp. xii + 184. Waco, Tx: Baylor University Press, 2014. £33.50 978 1 60258 805 9

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Reggie Williams offers the reader real insight into Bonhoeffer's year at Union Seminary in New York (1930–1). Yet *Bonhoeffer's black Jesus* goes beyond biographical description of his time there, first through a fairly detailed look at the Harlem Renaissance and important theological impulses that Bonhoeffer encountered there, and secondly through following these impulses as they continued in his thought and life when he returned to Germany. This study has a number of strengths to commend it. First, Williams gives a lively account not only of the

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Williams, *Religious belief and popular culture in Southwark, c. 1880–1939*, Oxford 1999; Stephen Parker, *Aspects of church life and popular religion in Birmingham, 1939–1945*, Oxford 2005.

intellectual world of the Harlem Renaissance that Bonhoeffer encountered in his studies, but also of the lived discipleship being practised in Abyssinian Baptist Church where he worshipped in Harlem. Secondly, Williams is able to trace important themes through Bonhoeffer's writings to advance his thesis. And thirdly, Williams shows sophistication in his discussion of the nature of empathy, and how, as a privileged white man, Bonhoeffer could experience empathy for people whose experience differed in almost every way from his own. As might be expected, there are also some weaknesses, at least in my view. One may be a matter of taste, but there are a number of places where Williams seems to overstate the case and the insertion of some caveats would have helped. Another weakness relates to Williams's repeated discussion of *Stellvertretung*. Given that this is a key term in Bonhoeffer's later theology (referring to Christ's being and action for us, and the need for Christians to live for others also), it is less than confidence-inspiring when it is not handled well by his interpreters. Another weakness is related to the choice of working with the ideological critique of (what in Europe might be called) nineteenth-century liberal Protestant theology as 'colonial'. Although this provides sharp insights in terms of the impact of how Christianity was received by people who first encountered it together with colonial settlers, and no doubt has much to say about the theological emphases within the Harlem Renaissance, for me there was too little nuance in the critique. Williams refers often to a veil being lifted on hidden black lives, but I wonder if there are not further veils which also need to be lifted to reveal more complex realities. However, these weaknesses do not outweigh the value of Williams's contribution. He makes a compelling case that Bonhoeffer was (I would suggest, at least in part) enabled by his experience in Harlem to recognise the racist evil of Nazism much earlier than most and oppose it vigorously as being unChristian. It was in Harlem that he first learned to stand alongside the oppressed. As Williams writes, 'For Bonhoeffer, Christians must see society from the perspective of marginalized people since faithful Christianity is calibrated from the perspective of suffering rather than from dominance. This is costly yet crucial to true Christian discipleship' (p. 140).

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*English cathedral music and liturgy in the twentieth century.* By Martin Thomas. Pp. xvii + 265 incl. 5 tables and 20 music examples. Farnham–Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015. £65. 978 1 4724 2630 7  
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The musical history of the English cathedrals has long wanted for a single treatment, being hitherto treated only briefly in histories of individual cathedrals, or as part of the history of religious music as a whole. Martin Thomas's welcome new study fills that gap in the literature. Based on extensive research both in printed primary sources and in cathedral archives, it documents in detail the shifts in cathedral musical practice and repertoire between 1900 and 2005. Its principal argument, which is effectively made, is that the period saw a divorce