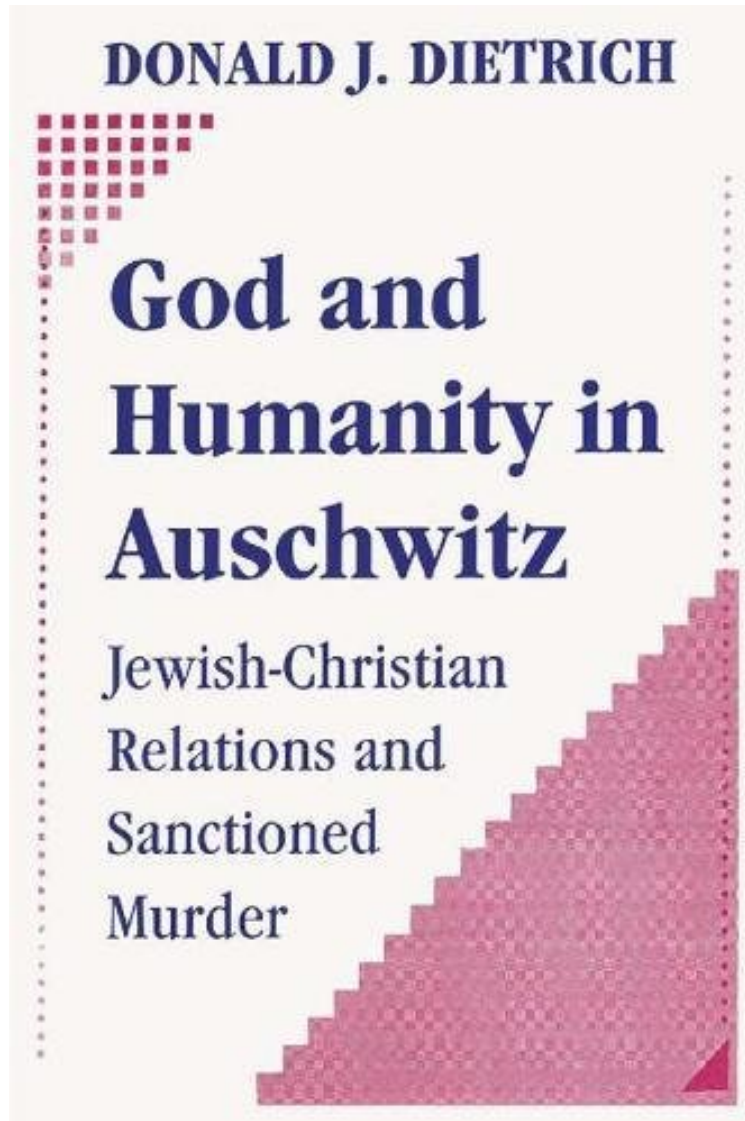


# God and Humanity in Auschwitz: Jewish-Christian Relations and Sanctioned Murder

*Donald Dietrich*

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**Donald Dietrich : God and Humanity in Auschwitz: Jewish-Christian Relations and Sanctioned Murder** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised God and Humanity in Auschwitz: Jewish-Christian Relations and Sanctioned Murder:

God and Humanity in Auschwitz synthesizes the findings of research developed over the last thirty years on the rise of anti-Semitism in our civilization. Donald J. Dietrich sees the Holocaust as a case study of how prejudice has been theologically enculturated. He suggests how it may be controlled by reducing aggressive energy before it becomes overwhelming. Dietrich studies the recent responses of Christian theologians to the Holocaust and the Jewish theological response to questions concerning God's covenant with Israel, which were provoked by Auschwitz. Social science has dealt with the psychosocial dynamics that have supported genocide and helps explain how ordinary persons can produce extraordinary evil. Dietrich shows how this research, combined with theological analyses, can help reconfigure theology itself. Such an approach may serve to help dissolve anti-Semitism, to aid in constructing such positive values as respect for human dignity, and to point the way to restricting future outbreaks of genocide. God and Humanity in Auschwitz surveys which religious factors created a climate that permitted the Holocaust. It also illuminates what social science has to tell us about developing a strategy that, when institutionally implemented, can channel our energies away from sanctioned murder toward a more compassionate society. The book has proven to be an essential resource for theologians, sociologists, historians, and political theorists.

Outstanding Title! Dietrich's ambitious study makes an important contribution to understanding the interrelationship of the historical role of antisemitism in Christian theology, the Holocaust, and the ongoing dialogue between Christians and Jews. Dietrich argues that although religious antisemitism alone was not a sufficient condition for the Holocaust, it was a necessary one. Making good use of the vast interdisciplinary literature that deals with the origins and results of the Holocaust, he traces the development of Christian antisemitism within its various historical contexts and examines in detail the ways in which Christian and Jewish theologians have been forced to rethink their view of themselves and of each other in the post-Holocaust era. W. Smaldone, *Choice* God and Humanity in Auschwitz is a carefully argued and meticulously researched book dealing with how the experience of the Holocaust has radically changed a considerable segment of contemporary Christian theology. . . . Dietrich's book is a good representation of the fruitful theological field for Jews and Christians both together and apart at this time in history. David Novak, *The* of Politics Dietrich has provided something more unusual among the contemporary flood of books on the Holocaust learned and engaged analysis of the theological debates arising from the fact of the Holocaust. . . . This is a thorough . . . thoughtful confrontation with Christianity and the Holocaust, and should be read by all who wish to understand the religious roots and implications of that event. Celia Applegate, *Journal of Church and State* Dietrich's study . . . will provide rewarding for anyone concerned about building up relations between Jews and Christians. Here one finds a study comprehensive enough in theology and history to enable a person to participate fruitfully in dialogue on religion and morality in an era when Christianity continues to adjust itself to the contemporary world. Vincent A. Lapomarda, *The Catholic Historical* Donald J. Dietrich's grasp of history and theology is enormous and inspiring. It is difficult to think that any serious person would not benefit greatly from reading this volume. He convinces us that no church can exist apart from human history now that the Holocaust is a part of our heritage. But this is a work that offers hope instead of despair. Dietrich suggests how a redirected theology might impact an atmosphere of hatred which saturates a vast part of the contemporary international scene. We can only express gratitude to this profound thinker for sharing a lifetime of study and great insight with us. Harry James Cargas, *Webster University- St. Louis* Donald Dietrich's God and Humanity in Auschwitz is a fine discussion of the moral and religious issues confronting Christians in the shadow of the Holocaust. His control of the factual side is masterful, and his insight as to the meaning(s) of the event is both keen and sensitive. He brings in to the dialogue the major spokesmen. He highlights the critical points in rethinking the interpretation of the Bible and the proclamation of Christian teachings. In addition, he provides useful endnotes and forty pages of bibliography. The book is an excellent contribution to the effort to put Christian/Jewish relations on a new footing, after the costly failure of a monolithic and monochromatic Christendom. Franklin H. Littell, *Temple University, Professor Emeritus* President, the Philadelphia Center on the Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights The Holocaust did not end when the Allies liberated the Jewish survivors from Nazi Germany's killing centers and concentration camps in 1945. Half a century later, the consequences of that catastrophic event still cast shadows on the world's moral, political, and religious life. In this impressive book, Donald J. Dietrich penetrates those shadows. His vast learning cannot make them go away, but the comprehensive scholarship and sensitive writing in God and Humanity in Auschwitz show the ways that humankind Christians in particular must take to mend a world that remains deeply scarred by anti-Semitism, genocide, and indifference. John K. Roth, *Claremont McKenna College* Professor Dietrich presents us with a goldmine of information on recent Holocaust theology as developed by Christian and Jewish scholars as well as Church leaders. His overview of the literature in the field, coupled with the comprehensive bibliography at the end, alone makes the book an invaluable addition to any personal or institutional library. John T. Pawlikowski, *Catholic Theological Union* About the Author Donald J. Dietrich was a professor of theology at Boston College. He is the author of *God and Humanity in Auschwitz: Jewish-Christian Relations; Sanctioned Murder and Catholic Citizens in the Third Reich: Psycho-Social Principles and Moral Reasoning*; and has edited *Christian Responses to the Holocaust: Moral and Ethical Issues*. He was a member of the Church Relations Committee at the

United States Holocaust Museum.