

Why I Am Inspired by Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life

I. INTRODUCTION: DIVINE MANDATES AND DIVINE POETRY

- A. IHOPKC has a divine mandate to stand faithfully for God's end-time purposes for Israel. Bob Jones had a prophetic word about **Corrie Ten Boom** (marketplace). **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** is a picture of faithful leadership in the Church. I ponder the implications of the divine poetry on April 9, 2021:
- B. Chris Reed received a prophetic riddle about: "**When the prince will pass, it will be 418 at last.**" Chris' first meeting with our leadership team was on Friday morning, April 9, 2021. That morning Chris heard the news that Prince Philip had just died, so he asked if "**418**" meant anything to us.
- C. Paul Cain's mother came out of her coma and prophesied to him that what God did in **Luke 4:18** would happen in his life and those connected to him and many others. **She died on April 18 (4/18) at 4:18pm after giving him Luke 4:18!** The implications of this prophetic event were understood as being part of the Lord's connection between John Wimber (the Vineyard), IHOPKC, and others.
- D. **Eric Metaxas interviewed Ken Fish** (who served with John Wimber) on **April 9, 2021**. I recommend Eric Metaxas' biographies on **M. Luther, D. Bonhoeffer, and W. Wilberforce**. **Bonhoeffer was killed on April 9, 1945** for standing for the Jews and resisting Hitler. **Luther** took a courageous stand at the **Diet of Worms on April 18, 1521 (exactly 500 years ago)**. Many historians consider this to be the most important day in church history since Acts.
- E. The suddenness of the rise of Hitler in Germany, one of the most cultured nations, should alert us.
- F. **World War I** (1914-18) was followed by 20 years of turmoil leading to **World War II** (1939-45).
 - 1. **The Weimar Republic** (1919-1933) was Germany's government following World War I until the rise of Nazi Germany in 1933. It was named after the town of Weimar where Germany's new government was formed by a national assembly after Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated.
 - 2. **The Treaty of Versailles** was signed in 1919 at the Palace of Versailles in Paris at the end of WW I to force Germany to pay reparations for the damages caused in the war.
 - 3. Germany's economic crisis and significant political polarization was exacerbated by the Treaty of Versailles (1919-1939) and the Great Depression (1929-1939).
- G. Hitler was Chancellor from 1933 to 1945 (12 years). He started posing as "a man of peace." Hitler rapidly gained popularity and power from 1933 to 1939 (6 years) before the war started. Hitler started World War II by invading Poland—the war continued from 1939 to 1945 (6 years).
 - 1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a recognized theologian and/or pastor from 1930 to 1945 (15 years).
 - 2. The Hitler Oath or the Führer Oath (1934-1945) forced all military personnel to promise to be loyal and obedient personally to Hitler in place of loyalty to the national constitution. Many clergy embraced this oath; in 1938, church laws required its pastors to make this oath.
- H. The Confessing Church started in 1934—3,000 out of 18,000 clergy joined it (700 were arrested).

II. ABOUT DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

- A. He was born into privilege in 1906 and was headed toward a brilliant career as a theologian. Then he came to see life “from the perspective of those who suffer” in Nazi Germany, and it cost him his life. Some see him as one of the most important leaders in the body of Christ in the 20th century.
- B. Dietrich Bonhoeffer stood up for the Jews in his zeal for justice, though without a strong reference to the biblical narrative of the end times which stands for justice together with covenantal zeal.
- C. Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s life message was the Sermon on the Mount: living in Christ and expressed in loving one another (Jn. 13-17) as seen in his classics: *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Life Together*.
- D. He was well known for his preaching against “cheap grace.” His biographer, Eberhard Bethge, wrote: “The witness of Bonhoeffer began with the attempt to live and say what it is to be with Christ, and it ended with teaching what it is that Christ is with us.”
- E. His life and ministry can be used to equip and inspire the Lord’s end-time messengers.
- F. While a student at Union Theological Seminary in 1930 at age 24, he regularly attended the *Abyssinian Baptist Church* in Harlem and taught a weekly Sunday school class. He was deeply marked by his time there seeing how the oppressed live and witnessing vibrant Christianity.
 - 1. In his words: “We have for once learned to see the great events of world history from below, from the perspective of the outcast, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed, the reviled—in short, from the perspective of those who suffer.” Bonhoeffer’s life moved to action: standing for those suffering. His life took him from a comfortable life to the isolated leadership of a bold opposition with the compromising church and against his government.
 - 2. He moved from the safety of privilege to the dangerous life of a resister and a messenger.
- G. He was outspoken in his defense of the Jews, starting in 1933 at age 27, when he preached to a group of pastors on “The Church and the Jewish Question.” In his message, he urged them to start by challenging the government to justify its immoral laws. Second, he called the church come to the aid of victims. Finally, he declared that the church should “jam the spokes of the wheel” of state should the persecution of Jews continue. Many of the clergy left angry at his divisive position.
- H. Most of the Confessing Church’s leaders eventually proved to lack the fortitude to speak up for the Jews and to speak out against Hitler. Most of them remained silent, to his great grief.
- I. He was in prison for two years, April 1943-April 1945. He refused to escape to save his family. While in prison, Bonhoeffer wrote inspiring letters and poems that are now regarded as classics, after the posthumous publication of these *Letters and Papers from Prison* (by Eberhard Bethge), relentlessly probing into the genuine faith. The only fight which is lost is that which we give up.
- J. Eric Metaxas’ amazing award-winning book *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* has sold over 1 million copies in the last ten years.
- K. The YouTube link for “**Hanged on a Twisted Cross**,” a documentary on Dietrich Bonhoeffer:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dLwudaSq90&t=1443s>