

Bonhoeffer

A Film by
Martin Doblmeier

2000, Beta, 92 Minutes, Color & B/W



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BONHOEFFER
USA/2003/90 Min.
Dir. Martin Doblmeier
Produced by Journey Films

BONHOEFFER is a new 90-minute documentary film that tells the dramatic story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the young German theologian who offered one of the first clear voices of resistance to Adolf Hitler. Bonhoeffer openly challenged his church to stand with the Jews in their time of need, and eventually joined his family in the plots to kill Hitler. His books, *Cost of Discipleship*, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, *Ethics*, were written during the struggle and are considered classics in the world of religion and ethics.

The film, shot on location in Germany and the United States, features interviews with family members, friends, students and associates who knew Bonhoeffer personally - including the last interview given by Bonhoeffer's closest friend and biographer, Eberhard Bethge, and an interview with Ruth Alice von Bismarck, the sister of Bonhoeffer's fiancée, Maria von Wedemeyer.

It also features interviews with outstanding historians and theologians including John de Gruchy and Geoffrey Kelly, as well as comments from Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Extensive research in archives both in Europe and the US yielded extraordinary archival footage - including a speech by Hitler praying for God's blessing on him and the German people - and Bonhoeffer family footage that features the only known moving footage of Dietrich. The production team was also given access to never-before seen personal and family photographs that help bring visual context to Bonhoeffer's life.

Reading for the voice of Bonhoeffer is actor Klaus Maria Brandauer (*Out of Africa*, *Russia House*, etc). The film also features an original score by Emmy-award winner John Kelton.

"Bonhoeffer is one of the great examples of moral courage in the face of conflict," explains director/writer Martin Doblmeier. "I believe part of the reason the film is getting attention now is because many of the issues Bonhoeffer faced - the role of the church in the modern world, national loyalty and personal conscience, what the call to being a "peacemaker" really means - are issues we continue to struggle with today."

Martin Doblmeier,
Producer and Director of BONHOEFFER

BIOGRAPHY

Martin Doblmeier, President and founder of Journey Films combines a lifelong interest in religion with a passion for documentary filmmaking. He holds a MS in Broadcast Television from the Boston University and a BA in Comparative Religions from the Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island. Over the past 15 years he produced and directed twenty award-winning television programs for national and international broadcast. His programs explore the moral and philosophical struggles of visionaries and examine how faith leads individuals to extraordinary actions, how spirituality creates and sustains communities, and how religion evolves to meet the needs of a changing society. BONHOEFFER is his first feature length documentary on film.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 2001 *Church Without Borders* (ABC)
looks at the church's role in bringing together the First and Third World.
- 2000 *American Byzantine* (PBS)
follows the creation of a new sculpture in the old Byzantine style.
- 1999 *Author of Reform: The Cardinal Suenens Story* (PBS)
profiles the little known progressive reformer of the Second Vatican Council.
- 1998 *Bernardin* (PBS)
tells the story of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago.
- 1997 *Final Blessing* (PBS, NBC)
examines the spiritual dimensions of the terminally ill.
- 1996 *Thomas Jefferson, A View from the Mountain* (PBS, History Channel)
explores the Third President's struggle over race and slavery

JOURNEY FILMS is a film and television production company based in Alexandria, VA that specializes in religion, history and social issues.

Begun by Martin Doblmeier, Journey Films has produced more than 20 major documentaries for national broadcast including:

Thomas Jefferson: A View from the Mountain (Jefferson, race and slavery)
Bernardin (the story of Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago)
Final Blessing (spiritual issues for the terminally ill)
Taize: That Little Springtime (the ecumenical community in France)
and many others.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

BONHOEFFER

Director: Martin Doblmeier

I was first introduced to Dietrich Bonhoeffer as a high school student when our class began studies in the Holocaust period. I will never forget how moved all of us were by what seemed to be Dietrich Bonhoeffer's extraordinary courage in the face of overpowering evil.

Now, nearly 30 years later, as I approached making the film of his life, I see Dietrich Bonhoeffer somewhat differently. My focus was less on the decision he made but on the deep inner struggles that brought him from Christian pacifist priest to an active member in the plots to kill Adolf Hitler. It was a struggle that eventually allowed him to "take over the guilt" of his actions, knowing full well the consequences.

I also wanted to focus on the isolation Bonhoeffer felt as he stepped further and further away from his fellow pastors who were falling over themselves in support of Hitler. Early in his career Bonhoeffer wrote extensively about the church's great potential for changing the world for the better in the name of God. Later that enthusiasm would turn to deep disappointment. Bonhoeffer would discover that for many of his fellow pastors following the will of God meant standing in full support of the nation's agenda - God and country united. For Bonhoeffer, the will of God was calling him to do something very different.

CREDIT LIST

Producer:	Martin Doblmeier/ Journey Films
Director:	Martin Doblmeier
Associate Producer:	Adele Schmidt, Janna Wicklund Morishima
Cinematography:	Peter Schultz, Dave Goulding
Editor:	Matthew B. Kelly, Tim Finkbiner
Voice Bonhoeffer:	Klaus Maria Brandauer
Narrator:	Martin Doblmeier
Music:	John Keltonic
Sound:	Matthew B. Kelly
Publicity:	Dan Juday, Nancy Briggs