

## *Honoring and Perpetuating the Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

The 2014 Charles H. Hackley Distinguished Lecture in the Humanities  
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It is a great privilege to stand before you tonight and deliver the 2014 Charles H. Hackley Distinguished Lecture in the Humanities, and to receive this prestigious award in his name. As a child growing-up in Muskegon in the 1950s and 1960s, the name of Charles Hackley was certainly a respected name, if not an icon from Muskegon's past, after which were named: the hospital in which I was born, the park in which I played, a Manual Training School and Gymnasium, a community college, an athletic field (Hackley Stadium) in which I danced as the Muskegon High School Indian mascot, and an Art Gallery and public library that I frequently visited. Often in going from my home in Lakeside through Glenside and then to Muskegon Heights, we would drive on Hackley Avenue. I have deep feelings about that Hackley name as well as many good memories of this town, Muskegon, where my life journey began. It is really a pleasure to return to Muskegon and accept this honor, after living away in the state of Minnesota for forty-six years. I also want to say thank you to the Friends of the Hackley Public Library, their Board President, Carolyn Madden, and the Director of the Library, Marty Ferriby.

This building, in which we gather tonight, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, also holds a very significant place in the life of my family. My great-grandfather, George Alfred Matthews, came from Bristol, England in 1878, and after living in Newaygo and Fremont, settled here in Muskegon and was a very active deacon in this congregation until his death in 1921. Further, my father was named after Dr. Walter F. Tunks, who

served as rector of St. Paul's for thirteen years; my middle name is also Walter. Finally, on April 23, 1943, my mom and dad were married here. And so, my connection to the Episcopal Church has remained very strong, although our family attended Our Savior's Lutheran Church on Southern Avenue when I was growing-up, which was my mother's home congregation and the reason for my eventual ordination into the Lutheran ministry in 1975. It is wonderful to be here in this church, with all those connections, for this special occasion.

The primary reason I am standing before you tonight delivering this distinguished lecture in the humanities is that, in addition to preaching and providing pastoral care and performing marriages, baptisms, and funerals, I have spent four decades, studying and sharing the legacy of the German pastor/theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was martyred by the Nazis in April of 1945 for his complicity in the plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler. Dietrich Bonhoeffer has been, throughout my professional career, a conversation partner whose credible faith and authentic life have provided significant inspiration and life direction for me. In addition to concentrating on his theological legacy during my graduate study, I was extremely fortunate to become personally acquainted with members of Bonhoeffer's family in Germany, and befriend a number of his colleagues and ministerial associates. I treasure those sacred times we spent together in the 1970s and 1980s. I continue to preach (at Grace Lutheran Church in Apple Valley, Minnesota) and teach (at Augsburg College in Minneapolis) as well as lecture (around the Twin Cities) about Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as well as write books and journal articles about his powerful life witness. I would like to briefly share his life story for those not acquainted with him and then suggest some reasons as to why I think his legacy is worthy of honor and perpetuation.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born in 1906 into an upper middle class family in Breslau, Germany (now Wrocław, Poland). Dietrich's mother, Paula, was of the well-known von Hase family, whose genealogy included generations of church historians, theologians and public leaders. Dietrich's father, Karl, was a renowned psychiatrist/neurologist, who taught first in Breslau and then in 1912 moved to Berlin, to lead that department at the Kaiser Wilhelm University and also direct the psychiatric clinic at the Charite' Hospital. Karl and Paula Bonhoeffer had eight children. Karl-Friedrich, the oldest, born in 1899, studied physical chemistry and, after a very successful career, was honored with an institute named after him in Hamburg. The next of Bonhoeffer's siblings, Walter, became a forester, but as an infantry soldier, was sadly killed in the early days of WWI. Dietrich's next brother, Klaus, was a corporate lawyer with Lufthansa Airlines. Their oldest sister, Ursula, married Rudiger Schleicher, who was employed by the German Air Transport Ministry. Christine Bonhoeffer, next in line, was married to Hans von Dohnanyi, a lawyer employed in the Reich Ministry of Justice who later worked in Military Intelligence (the Abwehr), and who was considered by many to be the intellectual head of the planned assassination of Hitler in July of 1944. Sabine Bonhoeffer, Dietrich's twin sister, married Gerhard Leibholz, a constitutional lawyer; their family was forced to emigrate to England in 1938 to avoid imprisonment - and likely death - because of Gerhard's Jewish ancestry. Sabine and Gerhard were some of the first of the Bonhoeffers that I came to know; I can vividly remember spending an afternoon in their home in Gottingen. Sabine was then seventy-five years old and she shared stories about her close relationship to Dietrich, her twin brother. And finally, Susanne, the youngest of the Bonhoeffer children, was born in 1909 and married Walter Dress, a good friend of Dietrich's who also taught theology at the University of Berlin. Eight Bonhoeffer

children - all total – who were highly educated, and exceptionally gifted. In May of 1978, I visited the youngest, Suzanne Bonhoeffer and her husband Walter, in their Berlin home. I remember her being dressed in black, and sitting in their living room that cloudy day. She shared how April and May were very difficult months each year for them as they remembered their loss (only thirty-three years earlier) of her brother Klaus, her brothers-in-law Rudiger and Hans and, of course, Dietrich. Suzanne, in a very touching way, opened up for me her family pictorial albums and told something about each of her siblings. My university level language skills of German were now put to the test as she spoke only in German, and I struggled to comprehend all that she was saying, for under and behind her German words were deep feelings and profound sorrow, reflections and memories spanning many years. Her husband, Dietrich's good friend and colleague at the university, joined us for most of that afternoon's conversation. As I left their home that day, she gave me the address of her son, Andreas, so that I might make contact and get to know him. As it turned out, a short time later, Andreas did stay with us for a week in Minneapolis when he was attending a conference at the University of Minnesota. He, too, shared lots of stories of what it was like for him to grow-up as a child during those difficult war years in Germany.

It was into this erudite home environment that Dietrich Bonhoeffer nurtured a desire, modeled after his father and older brothers, to make something significant of his life. Interestingly, his father and older brothers had no real interest in religion, and I suppose we would call them today "cautious agnostics." Hence, when Dietrich made known, at about the age of fifteen, his desire to study theology, they were quick to share their opinion that such an uneventful and irrelevant career – that of a preacher - did not seem to them like a very wise choice. You see, Dietrich's interest in religion

had come primarily from his mother, who, with their two Moravian governesses, prayed with the Bonhoeffer children and taught them basic bible stories.

After completing his high school studies in Berlin, Bonhoeffer enrolled in the fall of 1923 at the University of Tübingen, his father's alma mater, to study theology. However, after only one year there, he transferred back to Berlin, where he completed his university study. Indicative of his academic acumen was his successful defense of a doctoral dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio*, at the age of twenty-one, the age when most of us are completing undergraduate study! He then spent a year as a vicar at a German-speaking congregation in Barcelona, Spain, and then in the fall of 1930 he accepted a one-year post-doctoral fellowship to study at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. During that year in New York City he became involved in the vibrant faith community of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, only a few minutes from the seminary. It was during this time that he experienced first-hand the virulent racism toward Black Americans which would later influence his attitude about German racism toward Jews. While at Union Seminary, Bonhoeffer became very good friends with another student, Paul Lehmann, and his wife Marion. In 1982, I arranged a day to spend in New York City at the retirement home of Paul and Marion Lehmann. Paul shared very interesting stories about his theological conversations with Bonhoeffer back then; Marion offered humorous personal anecdotes about Dietrich's impressions of life in depression-era America.

On January 30, 1933, German President Paul von Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler chancellor of Germany, in the hopes of bringing unity and stability to a fragmented, post-WWI, depression-era country. Who then could have known what Adolf Hitler would later lead Germany and Europe into? While many, if not most,

Germans saw Hitler as the needed hope for a brighter future, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's family immediately perceived the threat of war which Hitler's inflammatory rhetoric and Manichean world view implied. Within a very short time, the Fuhrer would outlaw all rival political parties, implement the infamous Enabling Act, and begin the Aryanization of Germany through a boycott of Jewish businesses, to mention only the first and most well-known dictatorial actions of early 1933. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was personally unsure of what Hitler's assumption of power would mean politically and religiously and he decided to accept a call to England to serve as pastor for two German-speaking congregations. He would be there for two years, all the while keeping a keen eye on developments in Germany, where his family and friends continued to struggle.

In 1935, Bonhoeffer was called back from England to direct a Preachers' Seminary that would be preparing candidates for ordination and service in the anti-Nazi Confessing Church (created out of the Barmen and Dahlem Synods in 1934). This was a significant and formative time in Bonhoeffer's life, as he (with his colleagues in the Confessing Church) attempted to navigate the turbulent waters of conflict with the *Deutsche Christen*, that is, the German Christian/Nazi Church. With each passing month, the death grip became tighter as the Nazi church leaders sought to silence the opposing Confessing Church. By the fall of 1937, the Confessing Church seminaries were closed (Pastor Martin Niemoller, the founder and fiery leader of the Confessing Church, had been arrested and imprisoned at Dachau) and all resistance to the Nazi take-over of Germany and the church was virtually ended. I remember a week in about 1981 when Werner Koch and his wife Deta stayed in our home in Brooklyn Park. Werner was a student in Bonhoeffer's second group of pastoral candidates; I brought him to us to speak at colleges and churches in the Twin Cities. He shared a very

interesting story which revealed how serendipitous some occasions were during those Nazi times. Not long after studying with Dietrich Bonhoeffer, that would have been about 1936, Werner was imprisoned at Sachsenhausen for leaking information to some journalists in the United States and England about Hitler's required Oath of Allegiance. Werner told us of how he miraculously got out of prison; a very interesting story. One evening his father was at a party, at which Heinrich Himmler was present, and the alcohol flowed rather freely. Werner Koch's father took Himmler aside, bought him another drink, and convinced Himmler to have his son, Werner, released from prison, which Himmler did the next day. I've discovered since, that many lives were saved during that chaotic time by such fortuitous actions.

It was at this "low point" in the life of the Confessing Church (the fall of 1937) when Dietrich Bonhoeffer seriously considered other paths of resistance, as Hitler marched onward toward war and Continental dominance. By 1938 Bonhoeffer was becoming increasingly aware, through his brother-in-law, von Dohnanyi, in the Reich Ministry of Justice, of the details, the plans, within military intelligence that were being laid for removing the Fuhrer. In 1940, Bonhoeffer was officially offered employment by Admiral Wilhelm Canaris in the Abwehr (that is, within military counter intelligence) where he (Bonhoeffer) would travel and use his international church contacts to 'outwardly' foster positive public relations for the Reich, but 'secretly' would be informing the outside world what was really transpiring within German military intelligence to bring Hitler down. This double life of "patriotic agent" and "traitorist conspirator" would continue until April of 1943, when Bonhoeffer was arrested on charges of "anti-war activity" and taken to Tegel Prison in northwest Berlin. At this same time his brother-in-law Hans von Dohnanyi was arrested, and eighteen months later his brother Klaus and brother-in-law Rudiger Schleicher would

be arrested; all four of these relatives would be murdered in the last days of the Third Reich. In the summer of 1984 I was traveling in Germany and arranged a time to be with Klaus Bonhoeffer's wife, Emmi, who then lived in Dusseldorf in her retirement. She told a very intriguing story about their difficult days, when her husband was secretly involved in the plot to kill Hitler. She told of one afternoon when she came home and told Klaus how proud she was that she stood-up to some people in their town who were saying that all this talk about the Jews being persecuted was pure fiction. She scolded them, saying, "No, it is absolutely true, and you can believe me." (Of course, she did know from family members closely involved in the highest levels of government intelligence.) When she told this story to her husband Klaus, he responded quite negatively, saying that such public talk would only get her killed and put their family at risk. He said, "When dealing with a tyrant, a dictator like Hitler, it was like handling a snake. If you grab it by the tail, it will simply turn and bite you." He shared that the conspirators were doing what was really needed, and that was to cut off the snake's head. Emmi shared how this was so hard for most Americans to understand because we have never lived under such a dictatorship. In that situation, things would only change by removing the head of state who held absolute power. Now one can read history books about such things, but to hear from her, first hand, how they understood such matters, has forever changed my perspective.

Well, following the unsuccessful attempt to end Hitler's life on July 20, 1944, (about which the movie *Valkyrie* was made), Bonhoeffer was transferred to the maximum security prison at the Gestapo headquarters on the Prinz Albrecht Strasse. Life for him there became increasingly difficult, with interrogation and cross examination, because the conspirators, imprisoned in different locations, were all trying to keep their testimonies consistent, to save the lives of their compatriots. They

had very cleverly devised ways of communicating to avoid contradiction and implication. Christoph von Dohnanyi, the son of Hans and Christine, described for us one way in which they communicated with each other while imprisoned: using the books they could request for reading, they would underline in faint pencil one letter on each page of the book, beginning from the back and moving forward, and putting those letters together, it would spell a message the others needed to know about the interrogations. They would then send that book back in exchange. Very interesting!

In February of 1945, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was transferred to Buchenwald, then to Regensburg, on to Schonberg and finally to Flossenburg, the place of his eventual execution. Hundreds of people were murdered in the final months of the war, as Hitler futilely attempted to exact retribution against anyone known to be affiliated with the plot to assassinate him, to end his Thousand-year Reich. Only two weeks before the war's end, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, his brother Klaus, and his two brothers-in law would all die brutal deaths by summary execution. The camp doctor at Flossenburg, where Bonhoeffer was hanged on that gray Monday morning, April 9<sup>th</sup> of 1945, later recalled what transpired:

“On the morning of that day between five and six o'clock the prisoners, among them Admiral Canaris and General Oster were taken from their cells, and the verdicts of the court martial read out to them. Through the half-open door in one room of the huts I saw Pastor Bonhoeffer, before taking off his prison garb, kneeling on the floor praying fervently to his God. I was most deeply moved by the way this lovable man prayed, so devout and so certain that God heard his prayer. At the place of execution, he again said a short prayer and then climbed the steps to the the gallows, brave and composed. His death ensued after a few seconds. In the almost fifty years that I worked as a doctor, I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God.” (Bethge, p. 830-831)

Eberhard Bethge, Bonhoeffer's closest friend, has written an excellent biography, in which many more details about Dietrich's life and ministry and teaching and

imprisonment are carefully sketched-out. And recently, a monumental sixteen volume *English Edition of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Works* was completed (containing all of Bonhoeffer's extant letters and lectures and writings).

My first time with Eberhard Bethge, Bonhoeffer's closest friend, was in the fall of 1975 at a retreat house in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. Fifteen of us were gathered with him for a week, as he lectured on Bonhoeffer's legacy. I remember so clearly sitting on the end of my bed one afternoon in the retreat center, with Eberhard next to me, as he explained parts of the Bonhoeffer biography he wrote, words that were hard to decipher in German, telling me what he or Dietrich meant by those words. I remember him saying, "Dietrich was my best friend." It was during that same week in Fitchburg that Bonhoeffer's fiancée, Maria (von Wedemeyer), joined us for those lectures and discussions. We learned later, from Eberhard Bethge, that she had had little contact with the Bonhoeffer family since the war times, and that in Fitchburg those days, she was hearing words about Dietrich that she had not heard before. Maria was an executive for Honeywell in Boston in the IT department at that time; only two years later, in 1977, we heard of her death from cancer at the age of fifty-two. That week with Eberhard Bethge began a friendship with him - and later his wife Renate (Dietrich's niece) - and in the years to come, they stayed with our family a number of times when they came to the United States to lecture at colleges and universities. I will be forever grateful for those times we spent together and the friendship we enjoyed.

Let me now offer some concluding thoughts about why I believe that Bonhoeffer's legacy should be honored and perpetuated. First, although I have not spoken in detail about his prolific writings from his academic and ministerial career, it

is the case that Bonhoeffer gifted the world with some incredible Christian theology. From his doctoral dissertation, *The Communion of Saints*, through his books *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Life Together*, to his posthumously compiled *Ethics* and finally his *Letters and Papers from Prison*, we have a treasure chest of wisdom and inspirational material. Bonhoeffer studied theology under some of the greatest scholars of the early twentieth century: Adolf Schlatter, Karl Heim, Karl Holl, Adolf Diessmann, Hans Lietzmann, Reinhold Seeberg, Adolf von Harnack. He was significantly influenced by the neo-Orthodox theology of the Reformed theologian, Karl Barth. Bonhoeffer produced scholarly materials that will continue to challenge pastors and theologians well into the future. His final writings, which were smuggled out of prison in 1943 and 1944, have given us profoundly challenging insights; ideas such as “The World Come of Age,” “The Non-religious Interpretation of Biblical Concepts,” and “The Church for Others.” Bonhoeffer is usually known and recognized for his heroic confrontation with the evils of Germany’s National Socialism and then dying on the gallows at Flossenburg; unfortunately his theological reflections and writings rarely get the attention they deserve. The two books that I have written attempt to lift-up all of his writings, organizing them around his central theme of Christology, focusing on Jesus Christ. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Christian martyr, no question; yet, even though dying at the tender age of thirty-nine, he remains one of the twentieth century’s most stimulating theologians. We have so much to learn from his reflections and writings.

Second, Bonhoeffer’s legacy has an incredible amount to offer our world which is so embroiled in conflicts of race and ideology, and even religion. Our world is becoming increasingly polarized, not for all, but for many: Northern and Southern hemispheres, Christian and Muslim religions, rich and poor nations, liberal and conservative citizens, Native and European American, young and old peoples, male

and female, heterosexual and homosexual, first and third worlds, Arab and Israeli occupants . . . the list goes on, and I am keenly aware that my brief list of opposites here reveals my own limited experience of such polarities. Diversity and pluralism are given realities today, yet they can be either embraced (and celebrated) or resisted (and rejected). Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German living in the 1930s, and we could assume that this post-WWI German man would name as his adversaries the French, the British, the Americans and the Jews. Ironically, beautifully, his best friends included Jean Lassere, a pastor from France, George Bell, and English bishop, Paul Lehman, and American student, and Franz Hildebrandt, whose mother was a Jew. Bonhoeffer is a role model for his affirmation of “others,” in a world that often rejects those who are different. Dietrich Bonhoeffer ended-up dying in the attempt to defeat a totalitarian regime that exalted only Aryans and sought to destroy all “others” who were deemed “undesirable.” He lived in a country infected with an “ideology of death,” yet he affirmed life, especially in those who were despised and rejected: the handicapped, the mentally ill, the Slavs, all Africans, homosexuals, and most despised of all, those declared ontologically infectious, the Jews. Bonhoeffer crossed all kinds of humanly erected boundaries, in the name of the One God of all creation, not the Teutonic god of Hitler’s imagination. From Dietrich Bonhoeffer we can learn – and relearn – about the sacredness of all of life so that we not only tolerate our pluralistic world, but affirm and celebrate the marvelously diverse humanity created and given to us by God, Yahweh, Allah.

In July of 1998, my wife, Patty, and I were invited to be a part of the dedication of ten statues, of twentieth-century martyrs for the Christian faith, which were being placed above the main entrance of Westminster Abbey in London. I was then the vice-president of the International Bonhoeffer Society and, since one of the statues being

dedicated was of Bonhoeffer, we joined the family and friends of all those being commemorated, in a service of worship and then dedication. Other martyrs being memorialized included Martin Luther King, Jr., Archbishop Oscar Romero, Maximillian Kolbe, Manche Masemola, Esther John, Janani Luwum, Lucian Tapiedi, Wang Zhiming, and the Grand Dutchess Elizabeth of Russia. That would be our closest brush with royalty, for sitting ten yards from us, also at the front of the sanctuary, were Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip, and playing cello right there was Bonhoeffer's godson and namesake, Dietrich.

How was it that Dietrich Bonhoeffer – and his family – saw beneath the thin veneer of Nazi propaganda, and resisted the superficial promises of the self-proclaimed messiah, Adolf Hitler? How was it that Bonhoeffer was able to worship the God of Israel and affirm all of humanity, resisting the idolization of “blood and soil,” of only Germany? How was it that Bonhoeffer somehow avoided the anti-Semitic racism which infected the minds of most Germans, allowing him to see in the face of all human beings the image of God? Of course, he wasn't the only one to walk this high road, but he was one of the few; so from him we can set our plumb line and steer our course. I believe that honoring his life and perpetuating his legacy can offer us insight in our day as we face similar, although different, challenges. While anti-Judaism still remains a curse to be challenged, that is embraced by many Christian people (and some churches), and while white-supremacist, anti-Semites still tragically attack Jewish Centers and synagogues, it is today the contempt for Islam (and false images of Muslims) that appears to increasingly threaten our global community. Especially after 9-11 it has been incumbent upon us, who are not Muslims, to educate ourselves about the difference between Islam, as a monotheistic faith in the family of world religions deserving of respect and affirmation, and radical terrorism which abuses and

prostitutes the name of Islam. The witness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer can assist us in our life journey of living with others and affirming the divine goodness of all humanity.

I have attempted in over forty years of Christian ministry to help Minnesota Lutherans think outside of Lake Wobegon, and I believe we are making progress. In the realm of interfaith conversation and dialogue, we Christians are, at long last, coming to believe what the late Bishop of Stockholm, Krister Stendahl (who often visited Muskegon to lecture on interfaith relations) said about affirming our faith without diminishing others: “Just because I say my wife is beautiful does not mean all other women are ugly!” I, a white, male, Christian, heterosexual pastor of European decent, am so grateful to be living in a world – in 2014 - where my historically Scandinavian/white Lutheran congregation now includes Black Americans; where my associate pastor is female and my closest teaching colleagues at Augsburg College are Jewish and Muslim; to be in a world where my heterosexual children be-friend and defend their gay and Lesbian neighbors and where some of my most trusted friends are Native American Indians. This diverse and beautiful reality, to which my life and vocation have been dedicated, to me resembles the Kingdom of God for which Dietrich Bonhoeffer gave his life. This reality is what I believe the Torah envisions and Jesus incarnates and the Koran requires. As I have followed the interfaith activities of the religious community here in Muskegon, I have been impressed with the openness and depth of respect and understanding that exists. That isn’t happening everywhere. But it is happening here.

My life journey, which began in the early morning hours of November 19, 1949, at Hackley Hospital, has taken me through Bunker Junior High School on Denmark Street in Lakeside to Muskegon Senior High School on Southern Avenue; from the

lunchroom of Muskegon County Community College to the lecture halls of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota and Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and to the International Center for Holocaust Study in Jerusalem. I have been blessed with incredible opportunities for education and travel, a loving and supportive family, and a time in history when monumental strides in human justice and global reconciliation are taking place. I said earlier that Dietrich Bonhoefer was my “conversation partner.” That’s true professionally, in that his reflections and writings have deeply influenced my work as a pastor – preaching and teaching and caring for souls. But, perhaps even more profoundly, Dietrich Bonhoeffer has been a “conversation *soul* partner” for my faith. I discovered early-on that I shared many of the same life questions and convictions as Bonhoeffer, always realizing that his intelligence and innate capabilities far outweighed mine. In every chapter and at every turn, he has been my theological mentor and faith partner. It would not be an exaggeration to say he has been my link to Jesus, much as Jesus is a link to God.

Let me end with two experiences that might well serve as bookends that highlight why I’m here tonight with you.

One bookend - or memory - for me goes back to 1967, when I can still picture sitting around a lunch table in Muskegon’s newly constructed college on Quarterline Road that we called JC, the Muskegon County Community College. I remember talking with my friend, Randy Grossman about the Western Civilization history class we were both taking from Jack Rice. Randy Grossman, a young Jewish man whose family owned one of Muskegon’s department stores at that time, was informing me about Martin Luther’s anti-Judaic diatribes from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He knew more than I, a Lutheran kid from Our Savior’s on Southern Avenue, knew about how Luther’s

vitriolic words against Jews, that had been used by the Nazis to stigmatize and finally contribute to the Holocaust. I felt ashamed that I, as a Lutheran, had never heard about that sinister part of Luther's legacy. Not only did my education about Lutheranism rapidly expand from that day on, but my knowledge about - and love for - Jews and Judaism took flight. My Christian faith and belief today would be quite deficient without affirming those roots in Judaism. Not only was Jesus Jewish, but every Christian is Jewish, not by blood perhaps, but by faith and theology.

Now, come with me twenty-seven years later for bookend number two. I was asked by my bishop in 1990 to create a Consultative Panel for Lutheran Jewish Relations for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Four years later, I was sitting around a conference table in our church's Chicago office, co-authoring an ELCA Lutheran "Statement to the Jewish Community," a statement including words of contrition and repudiation for those damnable words of Luther that my friend, Randy Grossman, referred to twenty-seven years earlier. Of course, I, on this panel, was just one small current in the tributary flowing out from the Vatican Council's marvelous statement on interfaith relations, *Nostrae Aetate*, in the mid-1960s. The statement which we six Lutherans crafted in 1994, and which the Jewish community received with unbelievable gratitude, is now part of the permanent display on anti-Semitism that hangs in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. That statement stands as a historic symbol of repentance and reconciliation. We are making progress. And what we continue to need are authentic and courageous witnesses for dialogue and justice and reconciliation, such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and you and me, because so much still needs to be done. Hopefully, the legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer can serve to inspire you and me, as has the name and generosity of Charles Hackley, in whose memory this evening is dedicated.

Thank you for your presence tonight and to the Friends of the Hackley Public Library for bestowing this honor on me. I am deeply grateful.

Rev. John W. Matthews