

0. BONHOEFFER'S LEGACY - Story Preface

1. SUICIDAL RESISTANCE

2. UNLIKELY CHOICE

3. A BUDDING INTELLECTUAL

4. HITLER'S 'FINAL SOLUTION'

5. STALKING A MADMAN

6. ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF HITLER

7. HITLER'S HORRORS WORSEN

8. A MARTYR'S DEATH

9. FINAL MONSTROUS ACTS

10. BONHOEFFER'S LEGACY

11. POLITICALLY INCORRECT HEROES

Years after Bonhoeffer's death, people still recall the courage of a pastor who was willing to actively resist the evils of the Third Reich.

Decades after he wrote his last words, Bonhoeffer's books still give encouragement to those trying to make sense of their lives. In fact, his greatest influence came after his death, when people were able to read - and take comfort from - everything he wrote in prison.

In 1996, fifty-one years after Bonhoeffer's execution, a German court declared him not guilty of the treason charge that condemned him. The same is true for the men who died with him: Admiral Wilhelm Canaris and Hans Oster.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum honored Bonhoeffer with a significant article on his [life and legacy](#) while [Westminster Abbey](#) created a [martyr's statue](#) in his memory.

In the coming years, others would do more than read his books or discuss his sacrifice. Some would personally adopt Bonhoeffer's attitudes and convictions. Dr. King, for example, admired not only Dietrich's courage but his influential leadership as a Christian pastor:

Martin Luther King Jr. understood that there is a limit to nonviolent civil disobedience. He counseled that if your enemy has a conscience, follow Gandhi and the way of nonviolence. If your enemy is like Adolf Hitler and has no conscience, follow Bonhoeffer and the way of armed resistance.

After much agonizing, Bonhoeffer finally concluded that not only did he have a responsibility to pray for the defeat of his own nation, but because it had become such an embodiment of evil, he had an obligation to take action in seeking its demise - therefore, he participated in the plot to assassinate Hitler. ("The Divided States of America: What Liberals AND Conservatives are Missing in the God-and-Country Shouting Match!" by Richard Land - [page 74](#).)

Dying for what he believed in, and fought against, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's legacy continues to this day.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/BONHOEFFER-S-LEGACY-Dietrich-Bonhoeffer>

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