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The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Documentary Collection

Collection Summary

Creator: Doblmeier, Martin
Dates: 2001, 2003
Extent: 11 Boxes (4.4 linear feet)
Language(s): English, German (with English subtitles)
Repository: Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries. Special Collections.

Biographical Information

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German pastor and theologian, is particularly well-known because of his activism against Nazi principles, as a leader of the Christian opposition, his role in plots to assassinate Adolf Hitler, and his hanging at a concentration camp just weeks before the end of the war.

He was born February 4, 1906 to a large upper middle-class family in Breslau. He studied college at Tübingen and earned his doctorate at the University of Berlin. He then spent a year in New York City studying at Union Theological Seminary. He often attended the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, and was particularly affected by African American spirituals.

After coming back to Germany in 1931, he was a founding member of the Confessing Church, and supported Karl Barth's Barmen Declaration of 1934. The declaration reaffirmed the Church's allegiance to Christ alone. He briefly served as pastor for two German churches in London before returning to head an underground seminary for Confessing Church members. German authorities, particularly the Gestapo, gradually reduced his freedoms to speak out before arresting him in 1943 for sponsoring the escape of Jews to Switzerland. After German authorities discovered his association with the group that unsuccessfully plotted to assassinate Hitler in 1934, he was moved to a concentration camp at Flossenbug and was hanged on April 9, 1945.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of the visual materials used in the creation of Martin Doblmeier's 2003 documentary on Dietrich Bonhoeffer for PBS: the still images and the interviews with Bonhoeffer friends, relatives, contemporaries, scholars, and commentators. The still images are stored on CD and have also been printed out on paper. Interviews have been recorded both on beta and VHS, and transcripts have been included as well. Two copies of the final documentary, on DVD, have been placed in the first folder.

Subjects

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, 1906-1945.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, 1906-1945--Biography.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, 1906-1945--In motion pictures.

Bonhoeffer family.

Princeton Theological Seminary. Library. Manuscript collections.

Anti-Nazi movement--Germany.

Anti-Nazi movement--Religious aspects.

World War, 1939-1945--Germany--Biography.

World War, 1939-1945--Christianity--Germany.

World War, 1939-1945--Germany--Religious aspects.

Administrative Information

Processing Information

This collection was transferred to Special Collections, Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, in January 2006 by Martin Doblmeier and Philip Ziegler of Journey Films. Its accession number is 2006.2.

Access

There are no special restrictions to access of this collection. It may be examined by library patrons under the normal rules and conditions of Special Collections.

Use of Materials

The following is the acceptable citation for publication: The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Documentary Collection. Special Collections, Princeton Theological Seminary Library.

Related Material

Special Collections also holds [The Paul Louis Lehmann Manuscript Collection](#), a theology professor at Princeton Theological Seminary who was a close friend of Bonhoeffer and studied his thought and life after the war. The Lehmann papers contain correspondence with Bonhoeffer, his family, and Bonhoeffer's biographer Eberhard Bethge as well as outlines for Lehmann's courses that focused on Bonhoeffer. Special Collections also contains the Facsimile of the first edition of Martin Luther's Bible (SCD #2863) that was given to Bonhoeffer by his students at the underground seminary. The students, who gave the two-volume set to Bonhoeffer on his birthday in 1937, signed their names on the inside cover.

Arrangement

Materials are arranged alphabetically by topic (documentary, images, and interviews) and then by medium.

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5. Images (printouts): 1-175, 2003

6. Images (printouts): 176-350, 2003
7. Images (printouts): 351-500, 2003
8. Images (printouts): 501-563, 2003
9. Images (printouts): thumbnail catalog, 2003

Box 2

1. Interviews--transcripts (CDs), 2003
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- Interviews--videos (VHS): 1, Barnett (beta 10-11), 2003
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- Interviews--videos (VHS): 3, R. Bethge (beta 5-6, 7), 2003
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