



# Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy

By Eric Metaxas

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WHO BETTER TO FACE THE GREATEST EVIL OF THE 20TH CENTURY THAN A HUMBLE MAN OF FAITH?

As Adolf Hitler and the Nazis seduced a nation, bullied a continent, and attempted to exterminate the Jews of Europe, a small number of dissidents and saboteurs worked to dismantle the Third Reich from the inside. One of these was Dietrich Bonhoeffer—a pastor and author. In this *New York Times* best-selling biography, Eric Metaxas takes both strands of Bonhoeffer’s life—the theologian and the spy—and draws them together to tell a searing story of incredible moral courage in the face of monstrous evil. Metaxas presents the fullest accounting of Bonhoeffer’s heart-wrenching decision to leave the safe haven of America to return to Hitler’s Germany, and sheds new light on Bonhoeffer’s involvement in the famous Valkyrie plot and in “Operation 7,” the effort to smuggle Jews into neutral Switzerland. In a deeply moving narrative, Metaxas uses previously unavailable documents—including personal letters, detailed journal entries, and firsthand personal accounts—to reveal dimensions of Bonhoeffer’s life and theology never before seen.

*“Bonhoeffer is the story of a life framed by a passion for truth and a commitment to justice on behalf of those who face implacable evil. Includes Readers’ Guide “[A] beautifully constructed biography.”*

—Alan Wolfe, *The New Republic*

“Metaxas tells Bonhoeffer’s story with passion and theological sophistication. . . .”

—*Wall Street Journal*

“[A] weighty, riveting analysis of the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. . . .”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Metaxas presents Bonhoeffer as a clear-headed, deeply convicted Christian who submitted to no one and nothing except God and his Word.”

—*Christianity Today*

“Metaxas has written a book that adds a new dimension to World War II, a new understanding of how evil can seize the soul of a nation and a man of faith can confront it. . . .”

—Thomas Fleming, author, *The New Dealers’ War*

“Metaxas has created a biography of uncommon power—intelligent, moving, well researched, vividly written, and rich in implication for our own lives. Or to put it another way: Buy this book. Read it. Then buy another copy and give it to a person you love. It’s that good.”

—Archbishop Charles Chaput, *First Things*

"A definitive Bonhoeffer biography for the 21st century."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

- 2011 ECPA Book of the Year
- 2011 Canterbury Medal by the Becket Fund recognizing courage in the defense of religious liberty

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## **Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy By Eric Metaxas Bibliography**

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In this weighty, riveting analysis of the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Metaxas (*Amazing Grace*) offers a comprehensive review of one of history's darkest eras, along with a fascinating exploration of the familial, cultural and religious influences that formed one of the world's greatest contemporary theologians. A passionate narrative voice combines with meticulous research to unpack the confluence of circumstances and personalities that led Germany from the defeat of WWI to the atrocities of WWII. Abundant source documentation (sermons, letters, journal entries, lectures, the Barman Declaration) brings to life the personalities and experiences that shaped Bonhoeffer: his highly intellectual, musical family; theologically liberal professors, pastoral colleagues and students; his extensive study, work, and travel abroad. Tracing Bonhoeffer's developing call to be a Jeremiah-like prophet in his own time and a growing understanding that the church was called "to speak for those who could not speak," Metaxas details Bonhoeffer's role in religious resistance to Nazism, and provides a compelling account of the faith journey that eventually involved the Lutheran pastor in unsuccessful attempts to assassinate Hitler. Insightful and illuminating, this tome makes a powerful contribution to biography, history and theology.

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## Review

"In Hitler's Germany, a Lutheran pastor chooses resistance and pays with his life. . . Eric Metaxas tells Bonhoeffer's story with passion and theological sophistication, often challenging revisionist accounts that make Bonhoeffer out to be a 'humanist' or ethicist for whom religious doctrine was easily disposable. . . Metaxas reminds us that there are forms of religion -- respectable, domesticated, timid -- that may end up doing the devil's work for him. --*Wall Street Journal*

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"A welcome new biography of one of the twentieth century's leading lights. Metaxas magnificently captures the life of theologian and anti-Nazi activist Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), who 'thought it the plain duty of the Christian-and the privilege and honor-to suffer with those who suffered.' In the finest treatment of the man since Eberhard Bethge's *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Courage* (1970), Metaxas presents a complete, accessible picture of this important figure, whose story is inspiring, instructive, and international in scope. . . Metaxas rightly focuses on his subject's life, not his theology, though readers will learn plenty about his theology as well. The author makes liberal use of primary sources, which bring Bonhoeffer and other characters to vivid life. For the most part, Metaxas allows this epic story to play itself out, unhindered by commentary; where he does add his own voice, the conclusions are sage. A definitive Bonhoeffer biography for the twenty-first century." --*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

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#### About the Author

ERIC METAXAS is the author of *Amazing Grace, Everything You Always Wanted to Know about God (but Were Afraid to Ask)*, and thirty children's books. He is founder and host of *Socrates in the City* in New York City, where he lives with his wife and daughter. His writing has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Atlantic*, *Washington Post*, and other publications. He has written for *VeggieTales* and Rabbit Ears Productions, earning three Grammy nominations for Best Children's Recording

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