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Courage in Crisis: Christianity's Response to the Nazi Holocaust

By

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In 1933 Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party took control of the German Parliament, a move that would impact every part of German society, including religion. The Nazi Party was set on purifying the Aryan race from Gypsies, homosexuals, mentally disabled and handicapped, but the minority they were most worried about was the Jewish people. The Nazi's spread the belief that the Jewish people were conspiring at an international level to hurt the German people.¹ This Anti-Semitism was believed and supported by members of the Nazi Protestant church which became a major issue in the Church Struggle. While there was a struggle between the ideology of the Churches, there were individuals who acted to protect and help the Jewish and other invalids from the Nazi persecution. This resistance was not just limited to Germany itself, but in much of the Nazi controlled territory, places like the Netherlands, Hungary and Austria.

As Nazi ideas of anti-Semitism took root across Germany, the Protestant Church was not immune to this Nazi idea. It would result in the creation of the Reich Church, which was the German Protestant Church controlled by the Nazis. Some Protestant Church leaders however became frustrated with the Nazi's involvement in the Protestant church, specifically in church doctrine and fundamental beliefs. This would lead to the creation of the Protestant Confessing Church by church leaders who were against the Nazification, the synthesis of Nazi ideas with the Christian ideas, of the church which would become part of the *Kirchenkampf*, or the Church Struggle. In addition to the Nazi supported Protestant Church, known as the Reich Church, and the Confessing Church, the Catholic Church also played a role in Christianity in Nazi Germany. This struggle was because the values of the Nazi's and the Confessing Church's Biblical, and

¹ Richard Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*. (London: Penguin Press, 2005.) 536.

Christian values did not align and would not mix.² However, the Catholic Church was able to avoid some of the conflict because it was based and located in the Vatican. The distance meant the Pope was not as involved directly as the leaders of the Reich Church and the Confessing Church who lived in Germany or other Nazi controlled territory. This paper will engage with the discussion of the Christian response to the Nazi's abuse of power and the deportation of Jews, debating whether Christians establishments did enough or if they could have done more. Using the diaries and letters of individuals to demonstrate their power and impact they were able to have. While the Churches as establishments were in the strongest position to resist the Nazi's Holocaust, the individuals made the most impact because of the Church's focus on self-preservation, individuals willingness to act, and the motivations of the individuals.

The discussion regarding the institutions specifically has been transformed in recent years, with more scholars being more critical of the Confessing Church groups than directly after the war when many scholars and authors looked favorably on the Confessing Church. The discussion also involves the impact of the Catholic Church, which has generally received strong criticism for the Vatican's lack of action during the deportation of Jews and Nazi takeover. For the Confessing Church, the debate hinges on whether they did enough to help the Jews. Some scholars claim the anti-Nazi church did what it could to protect the Jews, but had to protect its own culture against the Nazi. Other scholars claim that the Confessing Church could have done more in terms of protecting the Jewish people at an institutional level.

The Churches in Nazi Germany, The Reich Church, Confessing Church and Catholic Church, all had their specific goals for their churches. The Reich Church was focused on

² Robert P. Erickson, *Radical Minority: Resistance in the German Protestant Church* (Providence: Berg Publishers, 1990) 115.

integrating Nazi ideals and beliefs into the Protestant church and Protestant culture within Germany. They were not concerned with the treatment of the Jewish people and most of them were in support of the removal of the Jewish people from Germany society and the racial beliefs of the Nazi Party. The Confessing Church was created to counter the creation of the Reich Church. Bonhoeffer and Barth laid out the beliefs of the Confessing Church in the Barmen declaration which focused on the nature of the Christian faith but made no mention of the Jewish problem and made no statement against Hitler and the Nazi party because they were concerned with the survival of their church. There was individual resistance from members of the Confessing Church, but it was specifically not the focus of the Confessing Church. The Catholic Church was tied down after signing the Reich Concordat of 1933 and the Catholic Church was helpless because it had to focus on protecting itself and its establishment. Again, there was individual resistance to the treatment of the Jewish people but at an establishment level there was very little. Overall the Christian faith was in a crisis that it struggled to handle at an establishment level, but individuals acted and were a primary force for resistance to the treatment of Jews by the Nazi Regime. These individuals were the catalysts for resistance because of the difficult position that Christian establishments were in.

When coming to power in 1933, Hitler claimed that the Jewish people were a parasitical element of society and that they needed to be removed. This was partially rooted in his belief that the Jewish people had stabbed the hardworking Germans in the back causing them to lose the First World War.³ The idea was spread by the Nazi party that many Jews were not loyal to Germany but rather the international culture of Judaism, however most Jewish people in

³ Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, 15.

Germany had been fully assimilated into German culture, intermarrying with Christian Germans, and considered themselves Germans above everything else.⁴ On April 7, 1933 laws were put into place that forbid Jewish people from holding any type of state sponsored office, and by 1934 boycotts of Jewish business was in full force as the Nazi party made efforts to marginalize the Jewish people both economically and socially.⁵ Those Jews who could, often younger and wealthier, emigrated to different countries seeking safety from the Nazi regime, but around seventy-one percent of them would stay within Europe which for many would not be far enough to escape the reach of the Nazi party.⁶

The 'Church Struggle' between the Nazi Protestant Church or the Reich Church and the Confessing Church represented a struggle between Nazi values and Christian values.⁷ The Nazi Protestant Church was not just a small fraction of Christians who did not truly believe in Christianity, many were highly regarded theologians and scholars who fully supported Hitler and the Nazi Regime. These included people like Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus and Emanuel Hirsch who were all well-known theologians who supported the Nazi Party while practicing Christianity in their daily lives.⁸ But out of the Nazi Protestant Church would come the Reich Church which was a minority of Protestants, backed by Hitler himself as the official Church of the Nazi State, under the control of Bishop Ludwig Müller. Members and leaders of the Reich Church supported

⁴ Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*. (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1985) 177.

⁵ Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, 537.

⁶ Ibid, 555-557.

⁷ Erickson, *Radical Minority: Resistance in the German Protestant Church*, 115.

⁸ Ibid, 119.

the Nazi Regime in every aspect, including anti-Semitism, and wanted Nazi ideas tied tightly with Christianity.⁹

The Reich Church contained a very anti-Semitic view on the Jewish problem and supported the Nazi regime's anti-Semitic views. For members like Kittel, Hirsch and Althaus they accepted enough of the traditional anti-Semitic Christian views that they were not bothered by the anti-Jewish ideology of the Nazi party. Many of them voiced their support, specifically Kittel who claimed that it was the job of Christians to deal with the Jewish problem harshly if necessary, claiming that this was the will of God.¹⁰ When Müller became leader of the Reich Church the anti-Semitism increased as many listened to Reinhard Krause call for the eradication of all Jewish influence in Christianity, he would even go as far to say the Old Testament should be removed from the Bible and that any and all Jewish impact and influence should be removed from the Bible. Perhaps the most interesting claim was that Jesus himself was not actually Jewish but rather of Aryan descent.¹¹

The members of the Reich Church were firm Nazis, supporting the Nazi ideal of racial purity for the Reich. They believed the Jews needed to be killed, but that they should leave Germany and be removed from society. They supported Hitler's attempt to intimidate the Jewish population to leave Germany in 1938.¹² The Reich Church was the Nazi attempt to impact religion, and tie together Nazi values and ideals with the traditional Protestant Christian principles that was a major part of German society. The Christian culture would be too

⁹ Ibid, 120.

¹⁰ Erickson, *Radical Minority: Resistance in the German Protestant Church*, 119.

¹¹ Ibid, 121.

¹² Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, 581.

fragmented for the Reich Church to ever have the desired impact, but it did lead to many Christian Germans not resisting or speaking out against the treatment of Jews because of the propaganda projected by the Nazi state sponsored Reich Church.

The Confessing Church was the main Protestant group that would resist Nazi intervention in Church affairs. However, it is extremely important to understand that the Confessing Church never saw itself as a political organization. They viewed themselves as a Christian group in opposition to the Reich Church.¹³ The leaders of the Confessing Church included theologians such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Karl Barth and Martin Niemoeller. These men became outspoken about Nazi involvement in the Church and the heresy of the Reich Church, but very few, spoke against, the relocation and deportation of the Jewish people.¹⁴ An exception was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who did publicly speak out against the injustice of the treatment of the Jewish people. The Confessing Church took one major stand in terms of race by not accepting the ‘Aryan Paragraph’ which would have restricted access to their Church to only members of the Aryan race. The Confessing Church leaders believed that membership should be based on faith and scriptural teachings rather than race and the Reich Church’s non-scriptural based theology developed by Reich Bishop Ludwig Müller.¹⁵ Bonhoeffer, Barth, and Niemoeller, created the Confessing Church not as a political resistance movement, but as a resistance to the Reich Church and Nazi involvement in Christian issues with the primary desire to protect the Protestant Church from Nazi influence.

¹³ Ibid, 120.

¹⁴ Ibid, 122.

¹⁵ Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, 225-226.

The founders of the Confessing Church were not focused on the treatment of Jews in Germany. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was the most proactive in resistance to the Nazi regime and the treatment of Jews within the Confessing Church but even for Bonhoeffer protecting the Jewish people was not his first priority, which was the survival of the Confessing Church. Karl Barth who was also a very important leader and founder of the Confessing Church did not see the importance of the Jewish questions to Christians for much of the 1930s until he fled to Switzerland and could speak out with more freedom.¹⁶ The goal of the Confessing Church was not to protect the Jewish people from deportation and relocation but to protect traditional Christianity. It was a counter-movement to the creation of the Reich Church by the Nazi regime, not a resistance movement against the Nazi regime itself.¹⁷ However this did not mean that members of the Confessing Church did not actively resist the Nazi regime, as some pastors and theologians did speak out or work against the Nazi regime. They spoke out as individuals, rather than as a collective Church or organization. This can be traced back to the original purpose and goals of the Confessing Church which was to protect itself, the message it was spreading, and the right to not have Nazi intervention in the beliefs of the Church.¹⁸

Bonhoeffer and Barth produced the Barmen Declaration which stated their beliefs about revelation and the nature of the Christian faith, but what is more impactful is what is missing from the document. In the Declaration, there is no mention of the Jewish problem or directly resisting the Nazi regime and the evils it carried out.¹⁹ The Confessing Church lacked a sustained

¹⁶ Erickson, *Radical Minority: Resistance in the German Protestant Church*, 122.

¹⁷ Ibid, 120.

¹⁸ Ibid, 122.

¹⁹ Karl Barth, *Barmen Declaration*.

effort of resistance to the Nazi treatment of Jews. Like the Catholic Church, they were simply trying to survive as an organization which left the resistance to their individual members who were able to act with more freedom because they did not have to protect themselves as much as the establishment did. But counter to the power of the Reich Church, more members of the Confessing Church acted against the Nazi Regime like Bonhoeffer and Martin Niemöller. In the end, the Confessing Church as an establishment, was concerned with the survival of the Protestant Church and its ability to be free from Nazi control and not the injustices toward the Jewish people.

The other major religious establishment in Nazi Germany at the time was the Catholic Church. Because Catholicism was not the most popular denomination in Germany, survival was the main concern for the Catholic Church in 1933 and throughout the Nazi's time in power. This is important because it would shape how the Catholic Church would respond to the Nazi's racism and treatment of Jews. Many Catholic leaders called publicly for justice and charity for the poor and needy, but privately the Catholic Church was diplomatic and tried not to upset Hitler and the Nazi regime.²⁰ In 1933, the Catholic Church would sign the Reich Concordat, with the goal of protecting the Catholic Church in Germany as well as all their assets and organizations. The Catholic Church was quick to reach an agreement with the Nazi leaders. This would prove to be a worthless endeavor as the Nazis quickly violated the agreement, taking whatever assets, they desired and disbanding any organizations they were opposed to.²¹

Similar to the Confessing Church, the Catholic Church had become focused on survival

²⁰ Donald Dietrich, *Catholic Resistance to Biological and Racist Eugenics in the Third Reich*. (Providence: Berg Publishers, 1990) 138-139.

²¹ Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, 13-14.

and members of the Catholic Church started to value survival of the Church over the lives of the Jews who were being deported and relocated. Again, much like the Confessing Church, individual action was more effective and more frequent than large scale action from the Catholic Church because the establishment was more concerned with protecting itself from the Nazi regime than protecting others. The Catholic Church struggled to speak out against the Nazi Regime as an establishment because of the Reich Concordat they made in 1933.²² Even Church leaders that did speak out in regard to the treatment of the Jewish people were diplomatic. They did not want to upset the Nazi's too much as to where the Catholic Church would suffer more. This did not stop individuals in the Catholic Church from speaking out and more importantly acting in protection of the Jewish people.²³

The Catholic Church was an establishment in Nazi Germany that was in a tough position because unlike the Reich Church or the Confessing Church they are based at the Vatican. The goals and ideas of the Vatican did not always help those who were in Germany dealing with the repercussions of the Nazi's rise to power. When the Nazi's and the Vatican agreed to the Reich Concordat of 1933, which kept the Catholic Church out of the Nazi Government affairs and in return the Nazis would not take any of the Catholic Church's property or harm any of the Catholic priests.²⁴ It was in large part because of the panic within the Catholic Church that their power and control within Germany would be confiscated. So, they signed the agreement in hopes

²² Dietrich, *Catholic Resistance to Biological and Racist Eugenics in the Third Reich*, 138.

²³ Dietrich, *Catholic Resistance to Biological and Racist Eugenics in the Third Reich*, 138.

²⁴ Reich Concordat of 1933.

to protect their assets, however this would be a worthless agreement and by the end of 1933 many Catholic assets had been taken by the Nazi regime.²⁵

Anti-Semitism would only increase and intensify the longer the Nazi's stayed in power. The Nazi's quickly built seventy concentration camps around Germany when they came into power in 1933 under the supervision of SS leader Heinrich Himmler. In the beginning, most of these camps were for political rivals such as the Communists, Social Democrats and trade unionists who opposed the Nazi regime.²⁶ Many of these camps were closed quickly as well, however, but a couple of labor camps remained opened around Germany. In 1938 Jewish people were moved to some of these Concentration camps. Initially the idea of wiping out the Jewish population was not the goal of most in the Nazi party, but rather to force the Jewish people out of the Reich.²⁷ Concentration camps were not just for Jews but other undesirables in society, like the mentally handicapped, physically handicapped and other groups under the undesirable label. As the war started to progress and intensify, Hitler became more determined to solve "the Jewish problem". This meant moving as many Jewish people as possible to Concentration camps and if need be, exterminating them, which the SS under Himmler was quick to carry out. The arrests in 1938 marked only the beginning of the deportation and relocation of Jews.²⁸

The Reich Church, was a major establishment in Nazi Germany and was the result of the Hitler's and the Nazi party's effort to unify Germany religiously.²⁹ Religion was seen as a way to

²⁵ Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, 14.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 81.

²⁷ Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, 179-181.

²⁸ Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, 591.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 221.

unite the people of Germany, if the Nazi's could control the church and religion they would have stronger support and loyalty from the people of Germany who may have not been involved politically. Religion was a way to bring more people under Nazi control. In terms of resistance towards the Nazi treatment of Jews, there was close to none from the Reich Church. Most in the Reich Church accepted the Nazi anti-Semitism, at least to the point that they ignored the crimes against the Jews and actively partook in the deportation and discrimination against the Jews.³⁰ What Hitler wanted from the German people was the idea of "blind discipline" which meant they should trust the government without questioning them and their actions.³¹ Hitler and the Nazi regime knew that the Protestant Church did not have a worldwide center, like Rome for the Catholic Church, so the Protestant Church would be more easily swayed to be under Nazi control than the Catholic Church.

Hitler saw the Reich Church as a way to his final means, Hitler knew and understood the power of the church. He knew that if he could control the church many of the church followers would become his followers, or at least to the point of they would not resist his actions. By appealing to the sense of nationalism that rose within Germany after the First World War Hitler was able to gain control of many institutions, including the Reich Church. While it would be unexpected for the Reich Church to act against the government that controlled it, there were many within the Reich Church that were the not Nazi's but refused to act. Those people who considered themselves Protestants and would attend the churches but were just every day average people who had jobs during the week. Those who either trusted Hitler or the Church enough to practice the blind discipline desired by the Nazi Party.

³⁰ Erickson, *Radical Minority: Resistance in the German Protestant Church*, 119.

³¹ David, Bankier. *The Germans and the Final Solution* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1992), 28.

One of the groups within Germany that was not a minority were Pastors and Clerics of the German Protestant Church. The Clergy within the German Protestant Church created a pressure group that had political focuses in May 1932. The group was 600,000 people strong and in the 1932 election they took over one-third of the seats in the Prussian Church Election and by the 1933 elections they would control a majority of the seats in the Prussian Church Election. This led to the reform of the German Protestant Church into the Reich Church. Reich Bishop, Ludwig Müller, was selected and supported by Hitler and the Nazi Party. The previous Reich Bishop, who won the popular vote, was overthrown after only a few weeks in control.³² The Reich Bishop was essentially the figurehead of the Reich Church and a puppet for the Nazi party to control the Church in Germany. Once the Reich Church was created they were able to initiate the Nazi Agenda.

The controlling members of the Reich Church claimed that even before the Nazi Party came into power the goal of true German Christians was to oppose the Jewish mission in Germany, reject the spirit of Christian cosmopolitanism and to fight racial mixing. Thus, creating a belief in an Aryan race. ³³ The Reich Church supported the Nazi party and offered no resistance to their methods of achieving their goals of an Aryan nation. The Reich Church's lack of resistance was not due to fear of Hitler, but rather due to its beginning from within the Nazi party. The Reich Church's goal was to support and help Nazi anti-Semitism.

The Confessing Church was a part of the German Protestant Church; however, it was the result of pastors and clergy within the German Protestant Church that believed the government should stay out of church affairs. The Confessing Church became the Anti-Nazi Church and the

³² Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, 223.

³³ *Ibid*, 223.

Reich Church became the Nazi state supported church. The Confessing Church was a newer counter-movement and did not have the longstanding prestige and renowned establishment of the Catholic Church, However, it was well connected outside of Germany because of important members like Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. After the Reich Church, the Confessing Church was founded to protect Christian values deemed important, for instance the Old Testament and the equality of Jewish-Christian pastors in Germany.³⁴ But the Confessing Church was not founded to be a political force or a path of resistance for the German people.

When Karl Barth wrote the Barmen Declaration, a statement from pastors who did not want the Nazification of the Church, there were no mention of the Jewish problem or condemnation of other injustices in Nazi Germany, it was merely a theological statement.³⁵ Even though both Barth and Bonhoeffer wanted to make a more powerful statement but other members of the Confessing Church were concerned that if a more politically strong statement was made they would lose support.³⁶ The problem with the Confessing Church was they were concerned with survival and protecting their beliefs. By becoming too involved in political issues or becoming a resistance movement, they risked failure in their first task of protecting Christianity from Nazification. While some, like Bonhoeffer, wanted to do more they were concerned with the well-being and health of the Confessing Church and were worried about how actions of the individuals would impact support of the Confessing Church.

At an institutional level the Confessing Church did not provide much resistance to the Nazi deportation of Jews because of the worry that resistance would cause the Confessing

³⁴ Erickson, *Radical Minority: Resistance in the German Protestant Church*, 121.

³⁵ Karl Barth, *Barmen Declaration*.

³⁶ Erickson, *Radical Minority: Resistance in the German Protestant Church*, 121.

Church to collapse and fail. Individuals did act, but as an institution the Confessing Church failed to make a stand for the Jewish people, or to even make a strong statement against the Nazi treatment of Jews. Bonhoeffer, in order to project the Confessing Church, cut all ties with the church before he joined the Abwehr to actively resist Hitler and the Nazi Party.³⁷ Bonhoeffer was concerned that his resistance could lead to his arrest and that the Nazi's would turn their focus towards destroying the Confessing Church and leaving the Reich Church as the only Protestant Church in Germany. The Confessing Church was slow to act, due to fear, in protecting the Jewish people or speaking out against the Nazi party, their fear that the Confessing Church would be disbanded and there would be no Christian institution to protect true Christian values in Nazi Germany paralyzed them from offering resistance to Hitler's rule.

The other major Christian institution in Nazi Germany was the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church was different than the Protestant Church, its allegiance was to the Vatican and the Pope who was in Rome. This meant that the Catholic often did not see themselves as simply Germans but also as Catholics. This sense of religious pride was unique to Catholics, as opposed to many Protestants who were patriotic Germans whose sole allegiance was to Germany, not Germany and the Vatican. A difference between the Catholic Church and the Confessing Church was their political involvement, up until 1933 the Catholics in Germany supported the Centre Party until it started to mix with other parties that were being removed from power by Hitler and the Nazi Party.³⁸ Not long after was the Reich Concordat of 1933 agreed to by the Nazis and the Catholic Church in Rome, which basically stated the Catholic Church would stay out of political issues and in return the Nazis would leave the Catholic Church's property and people alone and

³⁷ Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, 359.

³⁸ Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, 235.

allow the Catholic Church to continue to carry out actions within reason of the law.³⁹ This would end the possibility of the Catholic Church being able to resist the treatment of Jews from a political standpoint. .

The Catholic Church would fail to resist the Nazi treatment of Jews for similar reasons as the Confessing Church. They were focused on surviving and not being removed from Germany. This perspective kept them from trying to help the Jewish people at an institutional level. Many Catholic Bishops and high-ranking members from the Vatican spoke out against the treatment of Jews but in reality, they practiced appeasement and diplomacy. Appeasement meant they would allow the Nazi's to do what they were doing as long as they did not try to destroy the Catholic Church. Many in the Catholic Church viewed survival of the Church as a value that was most important.⁴⁰ Because of this desire to protect themselves from the Nazi Party they did not resist the Nazi treatment of Jews. The Catholic Church at an institutional level was more concerned with the survival of the Catholic Church in Germany than protecting the Jews. The Catholic Church also struggled because the decisions were being made in Vatican in Rome about the Catholic policy regarding the actions of the Nazis and those in Germany were expected to follow it because it was Church doctrine. This would put the German Bishops and Church leaders in Germany in a difficult position because if they wanted to act there would in some situations not only be defying the government but also the Catholic Church. While individuals within the Catholic Church acted like Bishop von Galen, the Catholic Church failed to act because they were afraid of losing their power and influence as an institution.

³⁹ "Reich Concordat of 1933." Accessed October 20, 2017. http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1570.

⁴⁰ Dietrich, *Catholic Resistance to Biological and Racist Eugenics in the Third Reich*, 138-139.

During the holocaust the individuals have more of an impact because they were more willing to act, and they were motivated to act for different reasons. For individuals who resisted some were pushed by a religious cause. Others, often the non-Christians were motivated for a different reason but one connector between all the instances of resistance was they were helping people they knew.

Individual resistance was not just limited to those who were leaders of the church that had taken individual action. While it would be impossible to show every point of view from each Christian person in Nazi Germany or Nazi controlled territories, it is important to show how the average Christian person reacted against the treatment of Jews by the Nazis. Corrie Ten Boom and her family were Christians that worked as watchmakers in the Netherlands. They were members of the Dutch Reformed Church, a Protestant church that protested the treatment of Jews.⁴¹ In 1940, the Netherlands became part of Nazi Germany and faced many of the same restrictions and issues that were faced by Christians in Germany. The Ten Boom's lived in Haarlem and were well known watchmakers in the city and surrounding areas. The family consisted of Corrie Ten Boom, her Father Casper, her sister Betsie, and her brother Willem.⁴²

The Ten Booms were a very religious family, Kasper Ten Boom would often read chapters of the Bible to his children both in the morning and at night. It was a very structured system and the family's beliefs were structured as well. In response to seeing Jews being arrested in the town square Corrie expressed worry and pity for the Jews who were being led away. Her father also felt pity to the Germans because he said they have touched the apple of God's eye,

⁴¹ "Corrie Ten Boom" *USHMM*, Accessed December 1, 2017.
<https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10006914>.

⁴² Corrie, Ten Boom, *Hiding Place* (New York: Bantam Publishing, 1974.) 19.

which would surely lead to their downfall.⁴³ Corrie and Betsie spent many hours praying together during the war and Betsie would even pray for the Germans because the Bible calls for Christian to pray for their enemies, something which Corrie admittedly struggled to do.⁴⁴ To understand the motives behind the actions of the Ten Boom's it is important to understand what was most important to them. It was not money or fame because they did not see the value of either, but they wanted to serve God and their faith by serving and caring for others in a time of need and despair. Their response was genuine, they were not concerned with the survival of their business because they valued people higher than money or their shop. Their response was not to save an institution or an established church either. They simply acted how they felt they should act with little thought to how they might be impacted because the Jews and others needed their help.

Also in the Netherlands was a woman by the name of Miep Gies, she was also a self-described Christian.⁴⁵ She would become famous as the woman who hid Anne Frank. Her motives were apparent as one strong motivation. It was to help her boss and his family in their time of need.⁴⁶ While she was a Christian her first motive for helping was not a religious one. The action was out of kindness to a friend. Religion did not play a role for her, at least according to her. Gies's situation was different than the Ten Boom Family because they lived in different parts of the Netherlands. They also had different initial motives for their actions, but both Corrie Ten Boom and Miep Gies were willing to act in a time of crisis. This willingness to act had an

⁴³ Ibid, 85.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 79.

⁴⁵ Miep, Gies, *Anne Frank Remembered* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987) 91.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 90.

impact, it could have been small, even just one family but it was the effort of resistance that mattered. Both women acted.

The Ten Boom's had advanced knowledge of the treatment and issue with the Jews for two reasons; first was business related, the Ten Boom's being watchmakers got many of their parts and tools from shops in Germany and found many of these companies that they had done business with were failing. Jews owned all of these shops that went out of business.⁴⁷ The second reason was their brother Willem Ten Boom, who was the head of the Dutch Reformed Church's program to reach Jews, which simply meant he was supposed to convert Jews to Christianity. Because he regularly interacted with the Jewish people, he was aware of the problems the Jewish people faced coming from Germany and those still in Germany. He had built a home in the Netherlands for elderly Jewish people but in 1937 and found this home being flooded with younger Jewish people from Germany.⁴⁸ The high number of younger Jews were there because they were the ones who were more willing to move away from Germany. They had money and were young, so they could afford to leave and would be able to find work somewhere else. Sadly, many felt they would be safe in neighboring countries, but this would not be the case, as they would soon find out. Many of the older Jewish people would remain in Germany, either because they could not afford to move or did not want to leave their lives they had. Those who left for places like the Netherlands soon found themselves within the grip of Nazi Germany again after the Germans invaded.

After the Nazi's invaded Netherlands, there was not much of a change with the treatment of Jews in the Netherlands at first. But as Corrie Ten Boom would explain, the first to change

⁴⁷ Ten Boom, *Hiding Place*, 29.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 29.

were signs that Jews would not be served in businesses, then the burning of a Synagogue, and then the yellow Star of David would need to be worn by all Jews. However, it was when they started to round up Jews for deportation that the Ten Boom's felt they needed to take action.⁴⁹ Willem, who had many Jewish people in a home he built, started to move those Jews from Germany to places in the countryside where there were fewer German troops to catch the Jews.⁵⁰ This became an important part of the resistance to the deportation of Jews. People like Willem who had addresses and connections with people who could and would be able to protect Jewish people from the Nazi's was vital. Without these connections, those resisting would have only had a small network to work within. Instead they could help more Jews because they knew who could be trusted and where to hide the Jewish people. Miep Gies main connection was her husband who was part of the Dutch Resistance, they had fully stocked the Annex where the Franks would hide before the Franks had to move in.⁵¹ Corrie and the rest of the family, her sister Betsie and father Kasper, became involved in the resistance to the German's treatment of the Jews when they went to help a Jewish friend whose home was being ransacked by Germans. They got in contact with Willem, Corrie's brother, who sent his son, Kik, to pick up the man late at night.⁵²

The beginning of the resistance was not for personal gain or fame but a reaction to the way a friend was being treated, as the Ten Boom's did not want to see their Jewish friend and his wife taken away by the Gestapo. But they were motivated to act from their religious beliefs

⁴⁹ Ibid, 84.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 85.

⁵¹ Gies, *Anne Frank Remembered*, 91.

⁵² Ten Boom, *Hiding Place*, 87.

because they believe that it was their Christian duty to protect the Jewish people in need.⁵³ They merely reacted to the situation they saw unfolding before them, which was more than many others did. Many native Dutch people went along with the Nazi movement in now occupied Holland. Some did it because they wanted the benefits from joining the National Socialist movement. The benefits included extra food, extra clothes, and the best jobs and houses available, while others joined because they felt convicted. The first to join were those with Anti-Semitic views.⁵⁴

By 1941 and into the beginning of 1942 the deportation of Jews was already happening, however some Jews in Haarlem were still there and attempting to live as normal lives. But as Miep Gies explained in her memoirs, *Anne Frank Remembered*, it became common for Jewish families to disappear in the night. They would either escape to hiding or try to leave the country, but there were those who were taken by the Nazi's in their brutal round-up of the Jews.⁵⁵ Corrie and her father, Kasper, met a Jewish man named Harry De Vries and his wife Cato, she was a Christian but not of Jewish ethnicity. However, he had also converted to Christianity, but this made no difference to the Germans, a Jew was a Jew.⁵⁶ What this shows was the Nazis did not care about the religion of a Jew, but rather the race and ethnicity. Anti-Semitism was popular within Germany and surrounding regions even from those who did not like the Nazi Party, they still believed in Jewish inferiority. Those who were Christians but wanted and welcomed the Nazi party at least accepted anti-Semitism enough to not speak up against it.⁵⁷

⁵³ Ibid, 94.

⁵⁴ Ten Boom, *Hiding Place*, 84.

⁵⁵ Gies, *Anne Frank Remembered*, 91.

⁵⁶ Ten Boom, *Hiding Place*, 89.

⁵⁷ Erickson, *Radical Minority: Resistance in the German Protestant Church*, 120.

The Jewish people had almost no control over when or where they were taken. They could try to sneak away from Nazi controlled territory but at this point the Germans controlled most of mainland Europe and many had families with kids which made it difficult to go far distances fast. They were stuck, waiting for their time to be taken away by the Gestapo. The first Jewish person to stay at the Ten Boom's came at night in mid-1942, a single woman who was looking for a place to stay because she did not have anywhere to go. While many might have turned her away because of the trouble they could have got in for hiding a Jew, Kasper Ten Boom stated, "In this household God's people are always welcome."⁵⁸ It was dangerous and illegal to hide Jews – the Ten Booms could easily be arrested for this, but they took in the woman without hesitation. For them it was their duty as Christians because the Jewish people were God's chosen people. Their actions were religiously based but also based in a willingness to help any person who needed it.

An important and often overlooked area of the resistance was the logistics behind hiding Jewish people. This was even a problem for the Ten Boom's, they needed ration cards and identification cards for the Jewish people they were hiding to move them to a safer location. However, Willem was being watched by the Germans now, so he could not help much other than to provide addresses of where to send the Jewish people. Corrie, who did most of the errands for the family, was the one who had to gain contacts around the city to get the supplies they needed. Corrie organized a hold-up of the food office to steal the ration cards that could not be counterfeited unlike the identification cards.⁵⁹ This was often an overlooked problem for those looking at resistance, it is easy to overlook that ration cards were a necessity to have food and it

⁵⁸ Ten Boom, *Hiding Place*, 93.

⁵⁹ Ten Boom, *Hiding Place*, 94-96.

was not an option to have a Jewish person get a ration card. This is the reason why Jews were often sent to farms, because they had plenty of extra food on farms at the start of the war and ration cards were not needed. By 1942, even the farms were beginning to have food shortages.⁶⁰

Also, being well connected within the underground was very important. The Ten Boom's knew many people in Haarlem that worked in many different types of jobs. Through the connections of Willem, who often sent his son Kik, Corrie was able to expand her network to people who worked all around Holland protecting Jews. These people all went by the name of Mr. Smit, including an architect who according to Corrie's memoirs was an extremely famous architect but she never found out his real name. His job was to create a secret room to hide Jews in, with the design and construction done in secret.⁶¹ Often the logistical side of the resistance movements was the most difficult, even Dietrich Bonhoeffer had relatives who acted as contacts or provided contacts for him. The Ten Booms were able to do so much of the work they did because they were well connected through Willem and also throughout their own town. For example, Corrie used her connections to get ration cards for the Jewish people that were hiding in their house before they moved on to a safer location.

The Dutch Churches banded together to protest the treatment of Jews, they sent several telegrams to the Nazis. But these were ignored by the Germans.⁶² There is no copy of those telegrams in English but according to Miep Gies they argued against the treatment of Jews:

“We were encouraged to learn that the Christian churches in Holland had banded together and issued a public protest in the form of a telegram sent to the highest German authorities. Together, these Christian churches expressed profound “outrage” at the German deportations of

⁶⁰ Ibid, 95.

⁶¹ Ibid, 98.

⁶² Gies, *Anne Frank Remembered*, 100.

Jewish people. They called the measures “illegal” and accused the Germans going blatantly against all Dutch morality and God’s “Divine Commandments of justice and charity.”⁶³

While the telegram was ignored, it did show a different response to the Jewish question than the responses of the churches in Germany. It demonstrates Miep Gies’s religious beliefs, but she was motivated by a willingness to help her friends, which is a Christian value, many times in the Bible Christians are called to love their neighbors. In this way Gies was doing her Christian duty.

There were dangers to hiding Jewish people, it was difficult to know who to trust in the resistance. If someone talked to the wrong person it could lead to several raids on the homes of people hiding Jews. Both Miep Gies and Corrie Ten Boom would find their hiding places being stormed by Nazi troops. Anne Frank and her family was taken but Miep Gies was not arrested by the Nazi soldiers because of her Austrian descent she stayed safe.⁶⁴

The cost of resistance was high though. Corrie Ten Boom and her family would be arrested on February 28, 1944 when the Gestapo were tipped off to the fact that the Ten Booms were hiding Jewish people and other resistance workers in the secret room built by Mr. Smit. During the arrests the Gestapo would be unable to find the secret room and any of the six people who were hiding in the room at the time of the raid.⁶⁵ People who decided to resist had to give up their way of life. They could no longer live freely and worry free, at least to the extent they could while being in a country controlled by Nazi Germany. There was the constant threat being raided or having your home destroyed and being separated from loved ones. It was well-known that hiding Jews was illegal and that it could lead to imprisonment or death. The Ten Boom’s had to face these as their family was arrested. Kasper died ten days into imprisonment, while Corrie and

⁶³ Ibid, 100.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 189.

⁶⁵ Ten Boom, *Hiding Place*, 139-145.

Betsie were sent to a concentration camp for women called Ravensbruck where Betsie would eventually die because of disease and lack of proper care by the doctors at the camp.⁶⁶ Corrie herself would be released at the very end of 1944, only weeks after Betsie had died.

Many of the Germans soldiers and even officers, like those involved in the arrests of the Ten Boom's, followed Hitler's orders blindly, trusting his leadership. There were others in the German military that joined in the resistance. Major Claus von Stauffenberg, who is famous for his assassination attempt against Hitler, believed Hitler must be removed from power because he was using German soldiers to cover up crimes against the Jews and other systematic killings.⁶⁷ This blind trust and following without question was what allowed for the Jewish problem to become so large and deadly. Average German citizens were afraid to speak out or act like Corrie did because they feared the punishment that may follow.

Corrie and her family acted and were an example of the resistance that Christians in Nazi controlled countries took part in to help the Jews. While much of the resistance work started because they tried to help their friends and neighbors, their Christian faith did play a large role in their willingness to help those in need like the Jews.⁶⁸ But rather than their faith being something that caused them to hide, they felt as though their task was to help the Jewish people in any way they could. While this was not always the response from Christians, it was the response for some Christians, like Miep Gies, and those who responded risked their own lives to protect others.

Some were unable to actively hide Jews, for those located in Germany it was much more difficult to hide people in their homes. However, those who wanted to resist did, like Dietrich

⁶⁶ Ibid, 230.

⁶⁷ Peter, Hoffman. *The German Resistance and the Holocaust* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004) 109.

⁶⁸ Ten Boom, *Hiding Place*, 93.

Bonhoeffer would demonstrate some resistance would be against the systematic problem. That meant getting rid of Hitler and the other Nazi leaders. Then replacing them with leaders that would help the Jewish people.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was theologically unpredictable, his one goal in his theology that he always came back to was living like Jesus commanded in the Sermon on the Mount, which was given in Matthew 5, 6, 7 and they were Jesus's commands and most prominent moral teachings. Not just being a theologian but living as a disciple of Christ.⁶⁹ This was the basis for his action, he did not view his task as a man to sit in an office and think of the answers to hard theological questions but rather to live out what is in the Bible in his own life. The Reich Church claimed that their actions were continuing the actions of Martin Luther, who had founded the Protestant Reformation away from the Catholic Church in the early 16th century and that Christian faith is an unbridgeable religious opposite to Judaism. Bonhoeffer was in the group of Protestant Pastors that drafted a manifesto that claimed race, nationality or ethnic background had nothing to do with the Christian faith and that the Christian church should rejoice in any Jewish person who accepts the Gospel.⁷⁰ This declaration was one of many that had to do with the Nazi claims and involvement in Christian faith, but politically the Confessing Church and its leaders were powerless politically to make any type of changes, they were fighting a losing battle. It was this that lead Bonhoeffer to start to take more individual action against the Nazis.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was one of the first German Pastors to speak out against the Nazi treatment of Jews. In 1933, Bonhoeffer would write an essay titled 'The Church and the Jewish Question' he looked at how anti-Semitism was a historical problem that must be dealt with. It

⁶⁹ Dietrich, Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1995) 43.

⁷⁰ Eric, Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010.) 326-327.

would discuss that the Churches must react to the treatment of the Jews, but it also argued for the civil liberties of the Jewish people.⁷¹ While also engaging with the idea that there should be even handed justice in which people are treated and judged equally.⁷² Often it is believed that the Nazis were the ones who created the anti-Semitism culture in Germany. But it had stemmed from a long history of anti-Semitism in not just Germany but Europe itself. It was prevalent in German society before World War I except there was no major violence against the Jewish people. The Nazis were the ones who blamed the Jews for the Germans loss in World War I that invoked a new more violent form of anti-Semitism.⁷³

The problem Bonhoeffer had was that he was the leader of the Confessing Church and that his actions would impact more than just himself but also others including the other members of the Confessing Church.⁷⁴ However, Bonhoeffer would soon find himself conspiring against Hitler because he knew that something had to be done so he started working with his brother in law in the Abwehr which was military intelligence for the Nazis, however much of it was devoted to bringing Hitler down. It was here that Bonhoeffer transformed from being an objector who was willing to stand out to a person who wanted to blend in, so he could work in resistance.⁷⁵ It was this change in persona that showed Dietrich Bonhoeffer was changed, it was no longer about just saving the Confessing Church it was about more, it was about resisting Hitler. Bonhoeffer's resistance would be different than Corrie Ten Boom's and her families was. Bonhoeffer had joined Abwehr so he was rarely in the same place for an extended period of time,

⁷¹ "The Church and the Jewish Question" USHMM. Accessed December 1, 2017.

<https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/special-focus/dietrich-bonhoeffer/church-and-jewish-question>.

⁷² Hans, Mommsen. *Alternatives to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) 262.

⁷³ Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, 4-5.

⁷⁴ Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, 359.

⁷⁵ Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, 362.

he did not have a house like the Ten Boom's had, so he would have to resist the Nazi treatment of Jews in a much different way. Bonhoeffer drafted a letter to the armed forces pleading with the Christians in the armed forces to see what they were supporting, that was Nazi leadership that was killing the Jews and the other "unworthy" clearly revealed the government anti-Christian stance therefore they need to speak out.⁷⁶ Bonhoeffer was attempting to find a way to turn as many as he could to the cause by telling them the truth about the Jews and their responsibility as Christians. But few would listen and fewer would act.

After joining the Abwehr Bonhoeffer took part in Operation 7, which was an operation that was supposed to smuggle seven Jews out of Germany into Switzerland.⁷⁷ Bonhoeffer's part in this was to convince Swiss church members to take in the Jewish people because the Swiss government did not want to take them in because they were a neutral country and therefore refused to help any German Jews, however they were paid off and with the help of Bonhoeffer the Jews were sent to Switzerland. This was one of the major operations that Bonhoeffer took part in directly when it came to the Jewish people and helping them to escape from Nazi controlled Germany. The Abwehr struggled to justify moving Jews out of the country and even sneaking them out because it often costed large sums of money that were noticeable to leaders like Heinrich Himmler. Himmler and other Nazi leaders would eventually use the money trail to arrest members of the Abwehr involved Operation 7 so most other operations had a different focus or sneaking Jews out of the country was done at a more discreet level than Abwehr.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Dietrich, Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (New York: Touchstone, 1953.) 58.

⁷⁷ Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, 389.

⁷⁸ Mark, Nation, *Bonhoeffer the Assassin?* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013) 3-6.

Bonhoeffer and many of Bonhoeffer's close friends and family joined Abwehr because of the treatment of Jews. For some it was their primary reason for joining and resisting the Nazis.⁷⁹ The option of joining the Abwehr was in the eyes of Bonhoeffer the most effective way to end to war and in turn solve the Jewish issue with deportation and the death camps. If Hitler was overthrown, then whomever the Abwehr had taken over control of the government could stop the deportation of Jews.⁸⁰ It was a different form of resistance than Corrie Ten Boom and her family, but the circumstances were also different. Bonhoeffer and his associates had nowhere to send the Jewish people because the most sensible option was to send them to Switzerland, but they were not accepting any of the Jewish people to protect their neutrality. The Ten Booms could hide people more easily and send them to the countryside and safer areas. Bonhoeffer and his group had to take a more political approach to the situation because to them it was the only way they saw any change happening soon.

Bonhoeffer also understood that he would have to keep his Abwehr actions secret from members of the Confessing Church because he had to protect the image of the Church and he did not want them to be implicated in something that he was doing alone.⁸¹ Bonhoeffer took action to help the Jews he could, using Abwehr to help his cause but in the end, he knew that Hitler would have to be killed or overthrown because Hitler would not stop his purge of the Jewish people.

⁷⁹ Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, 389.

⁸⁰ Dietrich, Bonhoeffer, *The Collected Sermons of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).

⁸¹ Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, 388.

When Bonhoeffer was arrested in spring 1943 much of his work returned to theology and working on his books while he was in prison.⁸² He was mostly cutoff from the outside world other than a few letters to his parents and brothers. Bonhoeffer does not mention the Jewish problem much after he is arrested, at least not in the letters. While he was outspoken before being arrested about protecting the Jewish people, after his arrest he felt unsafe talking about this with his family members fearing that they may be implicated.⁸³ Similar to while he was with the Confessing Church and Abwehr, he was worried his Abwehr actions would harm those in the Confessing Church or that his actions would be misunderstood by members of the Church.⁸⁴ Once in prison there was very little Bonhoeffer could do to help the Jewish people, similar to Corrie and Betsie when they were sent to the concentration camp. But both Bonhoeffer and the Ten Boom's suffered for their individual actions in resistance to the Nazi treatment of Jews.

The next person involved in active resistance against the Nazi Government was Bishop Clemens von Galen, a Catholic Bishop in the city of Münster, Germany.⁸⁵ He was extremely outspoken about issues of euthanasia and the ethnic cleansing of race happening within Nazi Germany. Race rather than religion was the main reason behind the deportations and killings of Jews. This is seen when Jewish people who had converted to Christianity were still persecuted.⁸⁶ Von Galen gave a sermon in August 1941 concerning the Nazi's use of euthanasia against Jews and other unwanted types.⁸⁷ Bishop von Galen referenced the Ten Commandments from the Bible, which were the most important laws given by God to the Jewish people. The one he

⁸² Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 57.

⁸³ Ibid, 57.

⁸⁴ Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, 389.

⁸⁵ Clemens Von Galen, "Useless Eaters" (Sermon, Münster, Germany, August 3, 1941).

⁸⁶ Ten Boom, *Hiding Place*, 89.

⁸⁷ Clemens Von Galen, "Useless Eaters" (Sermon, Münster, Germany, August 3, 1941).

focuses on the most is “Thou shalt not kill”. His sermon does not strictly argue against the killings in a theological manner, but rather addresses the laws within Germany that forbid the plotting of a murder or the act of killing another person.⁸⁸ By addressing the laws against killing another person, no matter what kind of person they are in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, or mental ability, Bishop von Galen did what others who resisted failed to do. He publicly spoke out against the actions of the Nazi’s and not just for theological reasons or to protect the church but to protect the people who were facing euthanasia.

Bishop Von Galen confronted the Nazi ideal of a racially pure society, meaning a society without invalids, mentally and physically handicapped, Jews, and Gypsies.⁸⁹ Bishop von Galen’s sermons addressed specifically a call for resistance of his followers against the euthanasia of German people.⁹⁰ Racially purity was important to Hitler and other strict Nazi followers. Hitler often cited religious reasons for persecution, Von Galen exposed the persecution as something much greater. The main reason for the Jew’s persecution and deportation was their race. This was evidenced in the memoirs of Corrie Ten Boom, a Jewish man converted to Christianity, yet was still at danger simply because he was born a Jew.⁹¹ This idea of racial purity was indoctrinated in the Nazi ideals and values that were preached by the leaders within the Nazi party.⁹² Bishop von Galen spoke out against the euthanasia of innocent people because they were unable to speak up and protect themselves.

⁸⁸ Clemens Von Galen, “Useless Eaters” (Sermon, Münster, Germany, August 3, 1941).

⁸⁹ Dietrich, *Catholic Resistance to Biological and Racist Eugenics in the Third Reich*, 137.

⁹⁰ Clemens Von Galen, “Useless Eaters” (Sermon, Münster, Germany, August 3, 1941).

⁹¹ Ten Boom, *Hiding Place*, 89.

⁹² Dietrich, *Catholic Resistance to Biological and Racist Eugenics in the Third Reich*, 137.

Bishop von Galen used the Germans own law to try and protect a number of invalids being killed by the Nazis. During a sermon he explained to his congregation:

““According to information I have received it is planned in the course of this week (the date has been mentioned as 31st July) to move a large number of inmates of the provincial hospital at Marienthal, classified as ‘unproductive members of the national community’, to the mental hospital at Eichberg, where, as is generally believed to have happened in the case of patients removed from other establishments, they are to be killed with intent. Since such action is not only contrary to the divine and the natural moral law but under article 211 of the German Penal Code ranks as murder and attracts the death penalty, I hereby report the matter in accordance with my obligation under article 139 of the Penal Code and request that steps should at once be taken to protect the patients concerned by proceedings against the authorities planning their removal and murder, and that I may be informed of the action taken”.⁹³

Von Galen showed his attempts to resist and protect those in need, he appealed to the law, but the Nazis were not concerned with the laws. Much like the telegraph Miep Gies discussed that was sent to the Nazi authorities, Bishop von Galen’s appeals were ignored.

Two examples of other individuals who acted with motives to help people were Raoul Wallenberg and Osker Schindler. Schindler submitted a list with the names of several Jewish prisoners that he needed to work in his factory. This list would save a number of Jew’s lives from Nazi extermination. His list contained Jews of all ages and occupations, both men and women. The only similarity that they all had on the list was that they were Jews.⁹⁴ He just took advantage of the position he was in right place at the right time. Raoul Wallenberg was a Swedish diplomat in Budapest, Hungary. As Hungarian Jews were deported, Wallenberg acted to hand out protective Swedish passports. He even jumped on top of a train about to deport Jews then handed out the passports to the Jews inside, after jumping down he demanded the release of

⁹³ Clemens Von Galen, “Useless Eaters” (Sermon, Münster, Germany, August 3, 1941).

⁹⁴ “Schindler’s List” *Schindler’s List*, Accessed December 2, 2017. <http://www.oskarschindler.com/list.htm>.

those who had Swedish passports.⁹⁵ Wallenberg used any means he could to free and protect Jews, he threatened and bribed to get more passports for Jews. His motivation was to help people in a time of need, there was no obvious religious motive for his actions but like many of the other resisters he was motivated by the need to help others.

Corrie Ten Boom, was in a different situation than Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Bishop von Galen, she was an everyday person, both Bonhoeffer and von Galen were leaders of churches. Much of Bonhoeffer's resistance work became underground, von Galen's work remained very public and was often in the form of sermons that spoke out against the actions of the Nazi's. Bishop von Galen was never arrested because of his elevated status in the Münster area, as well as the loyalty of many of the people within this area. Von Galen was protected by his position within his society, he was viewed as a leader by many in his region. The Nazis understood that arresting von Galen could have more political ramifications than arresting Corrie Ten Boom and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, neither who had political protection or a large loyal following. Von Galen resistance was more public and outspoken than Bonhoeffer and Ten Boom who were more living out their values in their specific situations. However, this is not a slight towards Bonhoeffer and Ten Boom as it would have been impossible for them to be outspoken about their actions without substantial repercussions against them and those they were working with.

For Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Corrie Ten Boom, and Bishop Clemens von Galen, personal resistance to the Nazi treatment of Jews was motivated by different reasons. For Corrie Ten Boom it was viewed as the right thing for the family to do, for both religious reasons and just for

⁹⁵ "Raoul Wallenberg" *USHMM*. Accessed December 1, 2017.
<https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005211>.

caring about people.⁹⁶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer was motivated by the desire to remove Hitler from his power and to protect those he could through his position in the Abwehr.⁹⁷ Bishop von Galen used his power as a Bishop in the Catholic Church within Germany to speak out against the euthanasia of all the unwanted people in Nazi controlled areas, these people included the Jewish people.⁹⁸

Those who resisted did what they could within their individual situations. For example, Corrie Ten Boom was at a much higher risk than Bishop von Galen because Ten Boom had no political protection against the Nazi regime. She simply believed she was to help the people that came across her, and her family's, path. While Bishop von Galen was a church leader in the Catholic Church and had much more protection from Nazi Party, therefore he could be more publicly outspoken and reach a broader scope of people. Although they used different means of resistance one was not more important than the other. Each offered a unique resistance to Hitler's reign. Often when looking at personal resistance it is easy to look back and say people could have done more or done something differently, however, it is much more complex than doing something. There are logistics, location and opportunity that are involved in resisting and the three-people highlighted in this section acted when and how they were able. They understood the risk to what they were doing and one, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, would pay the ultimate price, his life, for his resistance against the Nazi party and the protection of the Jewish people.

If people do not act on one another's behalf as Martin Niemoller expressed after the war:

⁹⁶ Ten Boom, *Hiding Place*, 85.

⁹⁷ Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, 362.

⁹⁸ Clemens Von Galen, "Useless Eaters" (Sermon, Münster, Germany, August 3, 1941).

“First, they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.”⁹⁹

Then there can be more times of crisis like the holocaust, when individuals see people’s human rights being oppressed it is their duty and responsibility to act. Especially Christians who preach a religion of love and compassion, but also one of courage and moral values. People like Corrie Ten Boom, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Miep Gies, Bishop von Galen, Raoul Wallenberg and Oskar Schindler all acted on their values, and what was the right thing to do despite the possible punishment for their actions.

In closing, the establishments in Germany did not move to protect the Jewish people from deportation because the Reich Church had anti-Semitic views and ideas, the Confessing Church and the Catholic Church were focused and concerned with their own survival at institutions to act. There was no major stand against the Nazis treatment and deportation of Jews by the institutions. The individuals, like Corrie Ten Boom, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Bishop von Galen, were the ones who acted. They did not have to worry about an entire establishments well-being. They were willing to risk their own lives to protect the Jewish people from the Nazis. There was also those people in Germany and Nazi controlled territories that never spoke out, those who did not agree with the actions of the Nazis but never acted or spoke out. In times of trouble, when action is needed fast often individuals are the ones who act rather than institutions.

⁹⁹ “Martin Niemoller” *USHMM*. Accessed December 1, 2017.
<https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007392>.

must protect themselves and there is often why they act slower. Individuals are more able to act on emotions and faster because they can do what they want, they do not need a group or approval of a majority. In times of crisis individuals are the catalyst for change, not establishments.

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